

Speaking Strategy Use by the EFL Students in Japan and Bangladesh

Quadir Mst. Moriam

Graduate Student, Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation

Hiroshima University, 1-5-1 Kagamiyama, Higashi-Hiroshima 739-8529, Japan

E-mail: mquadir@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

Abstract

This study investigates the differences of speaking strategy use by the EFL-major university students in Japan and Bangladesh. EFL speaking strategies were measured by a speaking strategy use questionnaire with items selected, combined and simplified from two sets, Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen and Chi, received from internet on July 17, 2004) and The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) on 165 EFL-majors, 102 Japanese (70 females and 32 males) and 63 Bangladeshi (26 females and 37 males). To determine the learners' confidence in their own speaking skill levels a self-evaluative format was joined with the questionnaire. The major findings were that the Bangladeshi learners reported more frequent use of cognitive and interpersonal strategies than the Japanese learners. The Japanese females reported more use of cognitive strategy than the males. On the other hand, the Bangladeshi learners showed no gender difference in any category. The Japanese females showed communicative-experiential strategy as the most frequently used category, whereas the males showed almost equal frequency to communicative-experiential, management & planning and interpersonal strategies. The Bangladeshi females reported almost the same frequency to use communicative-experiential, interpersonal, and cognitive strategies and the males showed almost the same tendency including management & planning strategy with the above categories. Cognitive and affective strategies had the strongest correlations with the other categories in both cultures. The Japanese learners' self-evaluation had the strongest correlations with the use of affective and interpersonal strategies. The Bangladeshi learners' self-evaluation had the strongest correlations with the use of cognitive and communicative-experiential strategies. Some pedagogical implications of the findings are discussed along with suggestions for further research.

Key words: Speaking strategy, EFL-major university students, Japan and Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Language researchers have been continually showing an intense interest in investigating what makes some learners more successful in learning a target language than others. This has led them to examine the characteristics of 'good language learners' (Rubin, 1975). One of these characteristics is the use of language learning strategies. Oxford (1992/1993) provides a specific and helpful definition of language learning strategies:

...language learning strategies—specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability. (Oxford, 1992/1993, p.18)

Speaking skill being a part of L2 learning skills, speaking strategy is a crucial part of the whole of language learning strategy. Speaking strategies are assumed to be used by foreign and second language learners to exercise their oral performance in the target language. In Japan and Bangladesh a large number of students are majoring in English every year at the university level. The EFL learners of these countries use speaking strategies to enhance speaking skill in English.

The major purposes of this study are

- (1) to investigate the frequency differences in speaking strategies used by the EFL- major university students in Japan and Bangladesh.
- (2) to identify the relationship of nationality, gender, self-evaluated speaking level, with the preferences of speaking strategy use.

There have been few studies on the use of speaking strategies of EFL-major university students in Bangladesh as well as in Japan. This study aims to provide potential information about EFL-major university students' tendency to use English-speaking strategies in Japan and Bangladesh.

2. Review of Literature

Over the past decade the effort to explore the relationship of the use of language learning strategies with other variables such as motivation, gender, cultural background, type of task, age, level of L2 and learning style has been given tremendous importance (Oxford, 1993).

The literature is full with studies suggesting that higher-proficiency learners use more strategies (Green and Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1985; Rubin, 1975, 1981) and are able to choose strategies more appropriately than lower proficiency learners (Vann and Abraham, 1990), but sometimes using more strategies does not confirm better performance (Cohen, 1997). Lee (2003) in her research on Korean EFL learners argues about less successful learners that they might be very limited in number and quality of their strategies.

There have been relatively few studies investigating the use of speaking strategies of EFL learners, particularly university EFL-majors. Cohen, Weaver and Li (1996) investigated the impact of strategy-based instruction on 55 intermediate learners of French as a foreign language at the University of Minnesota and revealed a positive impact of the teaching approach. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) compared the effect of certain language tasks on three different groups of learners. They found that the group given explicit training in metacognitive, cognitive and social effective strategies in the speaking tasks, improved their performance significantly more than the control group. Dörnyei (1995) also found a positive impact of strategy instruction on communicative strategy training.

Language learning strategies have been classified in several ways by many researchers (Wenden and Rubin, 1987; O'Malley et al. 1985; Oxford, 1990; Stern, 1992). Most of the categorizations, however, reflect more or less the same classifications without any major difference and with large overlaps among the classes (Oxford, 1990).

3. Methodology

Participants

A total number of 165 EFL-major university students from Japan and Bangladesh participated in this project. 102 Japanese participants were the students of Department of English, Faculty of Education, Hiroshima University and 63 Bangladeshi participants were students of Department of English, Arts Faculty, University of Dhaka. Of the 102 Japanese participants 70 were females and 32 were males, of the 63 Bangladeshi participants 26 were females and 37 were males. Their academic grades ranged from under-graduate to graduate levels.

All the participants were native speakers of the nationality they belong to. The Japanese and Bangladeshi learners have their own L1 remarkably different in phonological and orthographic tradition from that of English, which may interfere with the efficient oral production in English. The lack of sufficient exposure to the target language outside the classrooms has another negative influence on the productive skill of speaking. The Japanese learners have been taught English as a subject from grade one of junior high school, whereas the Bangladeshi learners have been taught English from grade three of elementary school.

Instruments

The instrument used for data collection was a combination of adapted and simplified items selected from 'Language Strategy Use Survey' (Cohen and Chi, received from internet on July 17, 2004) and 'The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning' (SILL) version 7.0 (Oxford, 1990). The speaking strategies had been exclusively selected from the above sets in order to compose the questionnaire for this study. It became a self-reporting questionnaire in requiring the EFL-major students to answer how often they used 14 speaking strategies with a five-point scale ranging from "almost never" to "always" (Appendix 1). The numerical rating scales were 'almost never=1', 'rarely sometimes=2', 'sometimes=3', 'usually=4', and 'always=5'. The questionnaire supplied among the Bangladeshi students was in simple English and the Japanese students used the Japanese translated version. The questionnaire was divided into the following five categories classified by Stern (1992):

1. Management & planning (Q 2,8, Appendix 1)
2. Cognitive (Q 7,9,11,14, Appendix 1)
3. Communicative-experiential (Q 5,10, Appendix 1)
4. Interpersonal (Q 1,12,13, Appendix 1)
5. Affective (Q 3,4,6, Appendix 1)

According to Stern (1992) the management & planning strategies express the learners' intention to direct their own learning, as they decide what commitment to make to language learning, set themselves reasonable goals, decide appropriate methodology and resources and monitor progress. The cognitive strategies are defined as steps and operations used in learning and problem solving, for example practice, clarification, verification, memorization, monitoring, guessing, inductive inferencing etc. The communicative-experiential strategies are circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrase, asking for repetition etc. used by the learners so as to keep the conversation going. Learners use interpersonal strategies to monitor their own development by using the language in real life situation and to become familiar with target language culture. Affective strategies are those that help the learners to regulate emotions or attitude and to remove the feelings of strangeness and anxiety to communicate in a new language.

A self-evaluation format attached to the questionnaire asked the participants to report their own confidence levels of their English speaking skill with the four scales as “poor”, “fair”, “good” and “excellent”. 10, 20, 30, 40 points were given to ‘poor’, ‘fair’, ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ levels respectively. A note was provided within the format in order to help the participants to determine their levels.

Procedures

The data was collected in Bangladesh in September, 2004 and in Japan in January, 2005. The researcher was physically present in both places to respond to any gap of understanding. The participants were assured of its having no impact on their academic reports and were encouraged to resolve any confusion by asking questions. Most of the participants had no difficulty in understanding the questionnaire. Full confidentiality was confirmed in both settings. The questionnaire administration took 15 to 25 minutes. The analysis of the data was carried out using ANOVA4 on the Web: Copyright (c) 2002 Kiriki Kenshi and the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 13.0. The participants were divided into four groups; Japanese females (Group 1), Japanese males (Group 2), Bangladeshi females (Group 3), Bangladeshi males (Group 4). A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated-measures was performed on the participants’ scores with the four groups and the five categorical strategy uses.

4. Results

The means and standard deviations of the categories of speaking strategies used by the groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of different category strategy use (N=165)

Categories		MP	C	CE	IP	A
Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Group 1	70	3.43 (.58)	3.27 (.66)	3.78 (.69)	3.11 (.59)	2.95 (.67)
Group 2	32	3.30 (.63)	2.76 (.69)	3.48 (.93)	3.11 (.70)	2.89 (.79)
Group 3	26	3.40 (.68)	3.90 (.46)	3.92 (.76)	3.91 (.39)	2.86 (.82)
Group 4	37	3.73 (.72)	3.99 (.74)	3.84 (.88)	3.68 (.66)	3.03 (.84)

MP: Management & planning, C: Cognitive, CE: Communicative-experiential, IP: Interpersonal, A: Affective

In order to investigate the existence of statistically significant differences among the four groups a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated-measures and multiple comparisons (Ryan’s method) were performed on the frequency scores of the four groups on the five strategy categories.

Table 2. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated-measures summary table (N=165)

Effect	SS	df	MS	F	P
Group (MP)	3.73	3	1.24	2.55	0.054 +
Group (C)	36.07	3	12.02	24.68	0.000 ****
Group (CE)	3.92	3	1.31	2.68	0.046 *
Group (IP)	17.83	3	5.94	12.20	0.000 ****

Effect	SS	df	MS	F	P
Group (A)	0.66	3	0.22	0.46	0.713
Error		805	0.48		
Category (Group 1)	14.60	4	3.65	10.88	0.000****
Category (Group 2)	12.59	4	3.14	9.40	0.000****
Category (Group 3)	31.82	4	7.96	23.73	0.000****
Category (Group 4)	19.34	4	4.84	14.43	0.000****
Error		644	0.34		

MP: Management & planning, C: Cognitive, CE: Communicative-experiential, IP: Interpersonal, A: Affective.

Table 2 shows that there were statistically significant frequency differences among the groups in cognitive [$F(3,805) = 24.68, p < 0.000$], communicative-experiential [$F(3,805) = 2.68, p < 0.046$] and interpersonal [$F(3,805) = 12.20, p < 0.000$] strategies. The multiple comparison test with repeated measures was then performed to find out how the groups differed in using these three categories at $p < 0.001$, but at this test no significant difference among the groups was revealed in communicative experiential strategy. Therefore, the results of the other two strategies are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Multiple comparison test summary table (N=165) (Cognitive strategy use)

Pair (group)	<i>r</i>	nominal level	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> level	Significance
4-2	4	0.008	7.292	0.000	<i>s.</i>
4-1	3	0.012	5.040	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-2	3	0.012	6.218	0.000	<i>s.</i>
4-3	2	0.025	0.463	0.643	<i>n.s.</i>
3-1	2	0.025	3.945	0.000	<i>s.</i>
1-2	2	0.025	3.448	0.000	<i>s.</i>

Group1: Japanese females, Group2: Japanese males, Group3: Bangladeshi females, Group4: Bangladeshi males

Table 4. Multiple comparison test summary table (N=165) (Interpersonal strategy use)

Pair(group)	<i>r</i>	nominal level	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> level	Significance
3-1	4	0.008	5.005	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-2	3	0.012	4.305	0.000	<i>s.</i>
4-1	3	0.012	4.067	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-4	2	0.025	1.261	0.207	<i>n.s.</i>
4-2	2	0.025	3.372	0.000	<i>s.</i>
2-1	2	0.025	0.060	0.952	<i>n.s.</i>

Group1: Japanese females, Group2: Japanese males, Group3: Bangladeshi females, Group4: Bangladeshi males.

Table 3 reveals that for cognitive strategy use there was statistically significant difference between the Japanese female and male participants. Here the females showed higher score ($M=3.27$) than their male ($M=2.76$) peers. The difference between the genders was not found significant in the Bangladeshi participants. In this category a significant difference was revealed between the Japanese (Group 1, 2) and

the Bangladeshi (Group 3, 4) participants. The Bangladeshi learners (female: $M=3.90$, male: $M=3.99$) reported more frequent cognitive strategy use than the Japanese learners (female: $M=3.27$, male: $M=2.76$).

Table 4 indicates that in interpersonal strategy use there was no significant difference between the genders, but a statistically significant difference was found in strategy use frequency between the Japanese (Group 1, 2) and the Bangladeshi (Group 3, 4) learners. Here also the Bangladeshi learners (female: $M=3.91$, male: $M=3.68$) reported the higher use than the Japanese learners (female: $M=3.11$, male: $M=3.11$).

In the other three categories, management and planning, communicative-experiential and affective strategies no significant difference was revealed among the four groups.

In order to investigate the strategy preferences a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated-measures and multiple comparisons on each group were performed at $p < 0.001$.

Table 5. Multiple comparison test summary table (The Japanese females: $n=70$)

Pair (category)	r	nominal level	t	p level	Significance
3-5	5	0.005	8.442	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-4	4	0.006	6.887	0.000	<i>s.</i>
1-5	4	0.006	4.865	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-2	3	0.010	5.182	0.000	<i>s.</i>
1-4	3	0.010	3.311	0.000	<i>s.</i>
2-5	3	0.010	3.260	0.001	<i>s.</i>
1-2	2	0.020	1.606	0.108	<i>n.s.</i>
3-1	2	0.020	3.576	0.000	<i>s.</i>
2-4	2	0.020	1.705	0.088	<i>n.s.</i>
4-5	2	0.020	1.555	0.120	<i>n.s.</i>

1: Management & planning, 2: Cognitive, 3: Communicative-experiential, 4: Interpersonal 5: Affective

In Table 5 it appears that the Japanese female students used communicative-experiential strategy ($M=3.78$) significantly more frequently than the other four categories. The next preferred categories by this group were management & planning ($M=3.43$) and cognitive ($M=3.27$) strategies. The least used strategies of this group were interpersonal ($M=3.10$) and affective ($M=2.95$) strategies.

Table 6. Multiple comparison test summary table (The Japanese males: $n=32$)

Pair (category)	r	nominal level	t	p level	Significance
3-2	5	0.005	5.020	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-5	4	0.006	4.137	0.000	<i>s.</i>
1-2	4	0.006	3.724	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-4	3	0.010	2.563	0.010	<i>n.s.</i>
1-5	3	0.010	2.841	0.004	<i>s.</i>
4-2	3	0.010	2.457	0.014	<i>n.s.</i>
1-4	2	0.020	1.267	0.205	<i>n.s.</i>

3-1	2	0.020	1.295	0.195	<i>n.s.</i>
4-5	2	0.020	1.574	0.115	<i>n.s.</i>
5-2	2	0.020	0.883	0.377	<i>n.s.</i>

1: Management & planning, 2: Cognitive, 3: Communicative-experiential, 4: Interpersonal 5: Affective

Table 6 represents that the Japanese male students showed slightly different strategy use tendency from their female peers. They reported that they used three categories almost with the same frequency; these are, communicative-experiential ($M=3.48$), management & planning ($M=3.30$) and interpersonal ($M=3.11$) strategies. Affective ($M=2.89$) and cognitive ($M=2.76$) strategies were the least frequently used categories by this group.

Table 7. Multiple comparison test summary table (The Bangladeshi females: $n=26$)

Pair (category)	r	nominal level	t	p level	Significance
3-5	5	0.005	6.647	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-1	4	0.006	3.234	0.001	<i>s.</i>
4-5	4	0.006	6.546	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-2	3	0.010	0.120	0.904	<i>n.s.</i>
4-1	3	0.010	3.133	0.001	<i>s.</i>
2-5	3	0.010	6.527	0.000	<i>s.</i>
4-2	2	0.020	0.019	0.984	<i>n.s.</i>
3-4	2	0.020	0.101	0.919	<i>n.s.</i>
2-1	2	0.020	3.114	0.001	<i>s.</i>
1-5	2	0.020	3.413	0.000	<i>s.</i>

1: Management & planning, 2: Cognitive, 3: Communicative-experiential, 4: Interpersonal 5: Affective.

Table 7 shows that the Bangladeshi female learners reported that they used three categories; communicative-experiential ($M=3.92$), interpersonal ($M=3.91$), and cognitive ($M=3.90$) strategies almost with the same frequency. Next came management & planning ($M=3.40$) strategy. The least preferred category of this group was affective ($M=2.86$) strategy.

Table 8. Multiple comparison test summary table (The Bangladeshi males: $n=37$)

Pair (category)	r	nominal level	t	p level	Significance
2-5	5	0.005	7.086	0.000	<i>s.</i>
2-4	4	0.006	2.265	0.023	<i>n.s.</i>
3-5	4	0.006	5.981	0.000	<i>s.</i>
2-1	3	0.010	1.907	0.056	<i>n.s.</i>
3-4	3	0.010	1.161	0.246	<i>n.s.</i>
1-5	3	0.010	5.178	0.000	<i>s.</i>
3-1	2	0.020	0.803	0.422	<i>n.s.</i>
2-3	2	0.020	1.104	0.269	<i>n.s.</i>
1-4	2	0.020	0.357	0.720	<i>n.s.</i>
4-5	2	0.020	4.821	0.000	<i>s.</i>

1: Management & planning, 2: Cognitive, 3: Communicative-experiential, 4: Interpersonal 5: Affective

Table 8 shows the strategy use tendency of the Bangladeshi male students. This group was found to use four categories; cognitive ($M=3.99$), communicative-experiential ($M=3.84$), management & planning ($M=3.73$) and interpersonal ($M=3.68$) strategies almost with the same frequency. The least preferred category of this group was affective ($M=3.03$) strategy.

How the five categories of strategy were related to each other was tested on a Pearson correlation (2-tailed).

Table 9. Correlations among the strategy categories of the Japanese learners

Category	MP	C	CE	IP	A
MP	1				
C	.24*	1			
CE	.13	.44**	1		
IP	.25*	.55**	.38**	1	
A	.10	.51**	.43**	.49**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

MP: Management & planning, C: Cognitive, CE: Communicative-experiential, IP: Interpersonal, A: Affective.

Table 9 shows the correlations in the case of the Japanese learners. The strongest correlation was found between cognitive and interpersonal strategies ($r=.55$). Next came the correlation between cognitive and affective strategies ($r=.51$), followed by the correlation between affective and interpersonal strategies ($r=.49$). The relationships between cognitive and communicative strategies ($r=.44$) and between affective and communicative-experiential strategies ($r=.43$) came next. Then came the correlation between interpersonal and communication strategies ($r=.38$). The other correlations appeared to be weak according to the table. The weakest correlation was recorded between management & planning and affective strategies ($r=.10$).

Here it is shown that the inter-category correlations were stronger in the case of the Japanese learners than the Bangladeshi learners. Table 10 represents the correlations among the strategy categories of the Bangladeshi learners. The highest correlation was found between cognitive and interpersonal strategies ($r=.44$). Next came the relationship between cognitive and communicative-experiential strategies ($r=.37$), followed by interpersonal and communicative-experiential strategies ($r=.36$). Next correlations came between affective and cognitive strategies ($r=.31$) and then affective and management & planning strategies ($r=.30$). The other correlations were rather weak. The weakest correlations were found about management & planning with both interpersonal and communicative strategies ($r=.05$).

Table 10. Correlations among the strategy categories of the Bangladeshi learners

Category	MP	C	CE	IP	A
MP	1				
C	.13	1			
CE	.05	.37**	1		
IP	.05	.44**	.36**	1	

A	.30**	.31**	.28**	.21	1
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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

MP: Management & planning, C: Cognitive, CE: Communicative-experiential, IP: Interpersonal, A: Affective.

For both the Japanese and the Bangladeshi learners cognitive and affective strategies had the strongest relationship with other categories, indicating that the more the participants of this study used cognitive and affective strategy, the more often they were inclined to use other categories too.

Table 11 represents the relationship between strategy use category and learners' self-evaluated speaking level.

Table 11. Relationship between strategy use and self-evaluation

Categories	Japan (N=102)	Bangladesh (N=63)
Management & Planning	.31**	.12
Cognitive	.57**	.46**
Communicative-experiential	.51**	.44**
Interpersonal	.64**	.41**
Affective	.65**	.12

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Here it appears that the correlations of the Japanese learners' strategy use category and evaluation of speaking level were stronger than the Bangladeshi learners. It is found that the affective ($r=.65$) and interpersonal ($r=.64$) strategies had the strongest relation to self-evaluation. It implies that the use of these strategies gave the Japanese learners the confidence to evaluate possessing higher speaking skill. Next came cognitive ($r=.57$) strategy, followed by communicative-experiential ($r=.51$) strategy. Management & planning strategy showed the weakest relationship with participants' speaking level evaluation. In the case of Bangladeshi learners the correlations were rather weaker. The highest correlation was found with cognitive strategy ($r=.46$), followed by communicative-experiential ($r=.44$) and interpersonal ($r=.41$) strategies. The other two strategy categories were not found to have significant correlation with subjects' own skill level evaluation. No negative correlation was reported in any case. The correlations were significant at $p<0.01$.

5. Discussion

Some contextual factors that differ between Japan and Bangladesh are assumed to influence learners' tendency in using EFL- speaking strategies. In Bangladesh the higher education is, to a great extent, dependent on English language proficiency, whereas the dependence is not so much in Japan. During the last two decades the job opportunities in Bangladesh have become highly correlated with English proficiency due to economic and technical dependence on some foreign countries. In Japan, though the motivations to learn English are increasing rapidly, the background reasons are not as same as in Bangladesh.

One of the findings of the present study is that the Bangladeshi EFL-major students showed more frequent use of cognitive and interpersonal strategies than the Japanese students. The reasons behind this tendency, however, are not clear. It might be anticipated that severe unemployment problem requires the Bangladeshi learners to do active practice in order to improve their English speaking skill. It is noteworthy that many of the Bangladeshi university graduates intend to go abroad for education and employment. Their interpersonal strategy use may be explained by the social cultures in Bangladesh, where speaking English is considered prestigious as well as fashionable.

Gender difference in strategy use was not found very significant in this study. Only in the cognitive strategy use the Japanese female learners reported significantly higher frequency than the male learners. It is however interesting that no other statistically significant difference between the two sexes was found in these two different cultures. These results appear to match with some studies in the Asian contexts. Kim (1995) found that there is no significant difference on language learning strategy use between males and females in his study on Korean adult ESL learners. In another study Lee (1994, cited in Lee, 2003) found that there are differences in strategy use between the sexes at the middle school level, but less difference or no difference can be observed as learners advance in their level. Again, Oh (1996) in his study on fishery college students in Pusan found no relationship between sexes and strategy use category preferences. He insisted that strategies were used frequently regardless of sex. These results, however, do not match with the work by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) on sex differences explaining that females are superior to or at least very different from males in many social skills and females show greater social orientation. On the contrary, the Japanese females of this study reported significantly more frequent use of cognitive strategy rather than interpersonal strategy. Considering the results of the present study it could be concluded that strong interest of the university level EFL-major students might weaken or diminish sex differences on strategy use. Affective strategy was found to be common as the least preferred category by all the groups of the participants. This finding indicates that these students made little effort to regulate their emotional anxieties that arise in speaking a foreign language. This tendency, however, corresponds with some recent studies on Asian background learners (Park, 1997; Lee, 2003). They found that Korean EFL students make the least use of affective strategy in learning English. Stern (1992) recommends that learning training can help students to face up to the emotional difficulties and to overcome them by drawing attention to the potential frustrations or pointing them out as they arise. The least use of affective strategy by the participants of this study might be caused by the social cultures both in Japan and Bangladesh, where they are not encouraged to modify the initial difficulties in speaking the foreign language.

Another finding of this study is that almost the same correlations among the strategy categories were revealed between the Japanese and the Bangladeshi students. Cognitive and affective strategies had the strongest correlations with other strategies. Why these two categories had the strongest influence on the learners' strategy use is not clear; however, considering the crucial role of taking appropriate steps and operations in learning English (cognitive strategy) and the effort to regulate the emotional problems (affective strategy) to speak English might lead them to use other strategies. Although affective strategy was found to be the least frequently used category, it had a strong influence on the learners' whole process of speaking strategy use. Another finding of this study is that the Japanese learners showed the strongest correlations with affective and interpersonal strategies to evaluate their speaking skill. It implies that the use of these strategies gave them confidence about their proficiency in speaking English. In contrast, the Bangladeshi learners showed the strongest correlations with cognitive and

communicative-experiential strategies to report high confidence in speaking skill. It seems that active practice and the techniques to continue conversation overcoming the gap of knowledge, made the Bangladeshi learners confident in evaluating their speaking skill.

Limitations of the study

The study has much limitation to generalize the findings. To collect data, a self-report questionnaire was administered at a particular place at a particular time in both countries. If data from some other different places at different times could be combined it might have gained more reliability. There is also difference in the number of the participants between the two countries. The study had to depend on learners' self-evaluated skill level since no official assessment record on their speaking skill was available and it was too hard to take oral performance test of all the subjects in limited span of time. More research is needed over time with more combination of data collecting methods to generalize the findings confidently.

6. Conclusions & Implications

This study sought to explore some tendency about English-speaking strategy use of EFL-major university students in Japan and Bangladesh. The conclusions based on the main findings are as follows:

For the comparison of strategy use frequency between the Japanese and the Bangladeshi EFL-major students, significant differences were reported in two categories, cognitive and interpersonal strategy. The different cultural, social and economic backgrounds are assumed to cause this difference in strategy use tendency.

According to the finding no significant difference was found about category preference of speaking strategy use between the sexes, except the Japanese females recorded more frequent use of cognitive strategy than the males. Affective strategy was found to be the common category as the least preferred strategy by both sexes of both cultures. The EFL-students might be benefited if they are made aware of this tendency. Proper classroom training may also help them in this regard.

In the correlations among the strategy categories the Japanese learners showed stronger correlations than the Bangladeshi learners. In both cultures, however, cognitive and affective strategies were found to have the strongest correlations with other categories, indicating that the learners who used these two categories were inclined to use other categories too.

The correlations of different category strategy use with learners' self-evaluated speaking skill were found stronger in the Japanese learners than the Bangladeshi learners. The Japanese learners showed the highest correlations with affective and interpersonal strategies to evaluate proficiency in speaking English. On the other hand, the Bangladeshi learners showed the greatest correlations with cognitive and communicative-experiential strategies to evaluate their speaking skill.

Pedagogical implications

The findings of the study are expected to have some potential pedagogical implications. The EFL-major university students in Japan and Bangladesh might get a profile of their own process of implying speaking strategies. The less successful learners might get information about the strategies used by the successful and confident ones. The language teachers would get views of their learners' tendency to use speaking strategy and would become aware about the least used and most used strategies. Strategy use

between the sexes has shown a slight but significant difference for the Japanese learners in cognitive strategy and affective strategy is found to be the least preferred category by all the learners; these information might be useful for the educators. Language curriculum designers and materials developers of these two countries might get ideas about the learners' ways of learning in their preparations.

Further research

The findings of the study lead to some recommendations for replications of this study.

- (1) More research is needed through collecting data from different places over time on more subjects according to appropriate sampling methods to get a deeper view about learners' speaking strategy use.
- (2) Research is needed to investigate the impact of strategy instructions on learners' EFL speaking skill in the classroom context.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire of speaking strategy use by EFL [English as a foreign language] learners

Hiroshima University, Japan

Date:

We would like to ask you to help us by answering the following questions concerning learners' strategy use to improve English speaking performance. This survey is conducted by language researchers of Hiroshima University, Japan, to gather information about your strategy use of English speaking as a foreign language learner. We are just interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answer sincerely as only these will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

[Put a tick by your identity]

Nationality:

Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/>	Others	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Sex:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Multiple choice questions will indicate how often you do the following things when speaking in English. [Put a tick on your selection]

- Do you try to speak in English in everyday interaction?
(a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
- Do you try to speak in English whenever you get the opportunity?
(a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
- Do you try to take risk even when you don't have enough confidence to speak right English?
(a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
- Do you try to avoid interference of mother tongue while speaking in English?

- (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
5. When you try to say something but you lack the necessary vocabulary, do you use synonym or describe the idea or object in other words?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
6. When you speak in English, do you worry about your mistakes too much?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
7. When you learn a new English vocabulary do you try to use it in speaking?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
8. Do you plan out in advance what are you going to say in English?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
9. While you watch/listen to some program or music on television/radio in English do you try to pick up some nice sounding phrases or words to use it later in your English conversation?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
10. Do you use fillers (e.g. well, right, anyway, now let me see, as a matter of fact) to have time in conversation when you face difficulty in thinking of appropriate reply?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
11. Do you try to correct your pronunciation to improve your speaking skill?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
12. Do you frequently use expressions that call for cultural knowledge, such as requesting, apologizing, or complaining in English?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
13. Do you try to correct your errors in speaking and welcome others' feedback?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never
14. Do you practice newly learnt grammatical structures in speaking to check your confidence level with the structures?
 (a) Always (b) Usually (c) Sometimes (d) Rarely sometimes (e) Almost never

15. Open ended question

Do you think the above strategies can improve learners' speaking skill in English as a second language? [Put a tick by your choice and give your argument bellow]

Yes		No	
Argument:			

16. Estimate your own EFL speaking skill: [*put a tick by your level*]

Excellent	
Good	
Fair	
Poor	

Note:

Excellent: You speak English fluently without any problem.

Good: You speak English with a little problem.

Fair: You speak English with much problem.

Poor: You cannot speak English without translation.

17. Please put a tick by your educational qualification level.

Secondary school graduate	
Higher secondary school graduate	
Studying at undergraduate level	
Honors' graduate	
Masters' graduate	

[We assure you full confidentiality. Thank you very much for your co-operation.]