

LISTENING STRATEGY PREFERENCE BY NON-NATIVE ENGLISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract : *The current study investigated some problems on: 1) the frequency use of learning strategy categories in listening deployed by university students, and 2) the distinguished use of the learning strategies by the high and low achiever university students. There were 140 second semester students and were majoring at English Education Department of Universitas Islam Malang. The students were required to answer the 85 strategy items provided in the Posteriori Taxonomy of Strategies of Learning English Listening Skill (Zuhairi & Hidayanti, 2014). Besides, the students' listening scores were compared in purpose to know the significant difference on the use of the learning strategies between the two groups. The finding revealed that the use of strategies were at moderate level. The most frequently used was selective attention strategies category, and social developing strategy was least intensively deployed by the students on learning listening skill. The result also indicated that high achiever students deployed more strategies than their counterparts.*

Keywords: *Learning Strategies, Listening, Non-Native English Students*

INTRODUCTION

The research underlying the use of learning strategies specifically on the English as a foreign language (EFL) is developing and taking much attention from some researchers nowadays. The use of learning strategies is helpful for non-native English students to comprehend the spoken passages by connecting it with their background knowledge (O'Malley, Chamot & Kupper, (1989); O'Malley, Chamot, (1990); Woodrow, (2005)). Learning a language requires them to master the language skills, and the selection of the learning strategies could tackle their difficulties in learning the foreign language.

Among the four skills, listening is the first skill that the students obtain and seen as the complicated skill to learn (Chien & Wei, 1998; Cahyono & Widiati, 2011:15). Further, the listening is also considered as one of skills that could build and develop the learners' 'communicative' competence in their speaking (p.165) and it's the hardest skill to master especially related to both cognitive and metacognitive strategy categories (Maccaro et.al., 2007:167).

To understand such skill, O'Malley, et al (1998) state that to understand the listening passages, language learners need to actively process them by relating and connecting with their previous knowledge.

Brown (1994) as cited in Maleki et al. (2014) defines that “listening comprehension as not only the process of sending and receiving sounds, but also as the interactive and conscious process to send and transmit the message to the brain which will influence in the process of communication”. Besides, students should encounter some aspects of “registration, information, pattern introduction, repetition, and pattern preservation” in learning aural text (Klatzky, 1980 cited in Cahyono & Widiati, 2011: 16). This means that listening the aural text, learners should process what they hear on the recording and connect it with what they have known to build good communication.

There are some related studies concerning about the use of learning strategies to cope with some difficulties in mastering listening skill. One of them was addressed by O'Malley et al (1989) who found that effective and ineffective learners applied three phases of understanding listening texts involving perceptual processing, parsing and utilization processes. The most strategies used by both good and poor language learners were self-monitoring, elaboration, and inferencing strategies. Chien and Wei (1998) found that the use of three strategies categories of linguistic, cognitive and extra-linguistic used by high achiever students affected their listening comprehension, moreover, showed significant different than the low achiever students. Similar study was also conducted by Shang (2008) who investigates the distinguished use of the learning strategies in listening. It was found that the successful students deployed combination of strategies of bottom-up and top-down processing to understand the aural text.

The next study addressed from Hidayanti (2013) who investigated that the foreign language learners at secondary level used the learning strategies at moderate level. The most frequently deployed strategy was resources-processing strategy category. In opposite, the least used strategy was social developing strategy. In the following year, Zuhairi & Hidayanti (2014) found out that the learning strategies choice affected the students' listening proficiency. The most influenced strategies were resources-processing, compensation and input-output strategies. Similar finding was also confirmed that the use of learning strategies was at moderate level found at Indonesian junior high school students (Zuhairi & Hidayanti, 2016). They investigated that the foreign language learners mostly used compensation and deployed the social strategies least frequently.

Theoretical Framework

After collecting the questionnaire items and analysing its factor, Zuhairi and Hidayanti (2014) categorized the Posteriori Taxonomy of Strategies of Learning English Listening into fourteen classifications as follows:

1. Category of Self-developing Strategies

This categories consists of some aspects. To improve their ability in listening, learners think about the learning approach that suit them, spending extra time learning in language laboratory, reviewing and connecting new words by looking at vocabulary cards or lists, and listening English from radio. Beside that learner are memorizing new words, using rhymes to remember new words, planning for memorizing new words at least five words everyday, listening to CD and imitating the

pronunciation, analysing the language, and learning about second language culture. Before practicing listening, the learners prepare a topic, pronunciation or grammatical rules which are the greatest trouble. In whilst listening, students are taking notes some words while listening, checking the phonetic symbols of new words, making summary from the recording, , asking the teacher, using synonyms and guessing what the students hear on the recording. Meanwhile, after a listening practice, learners check and evaluate their understanding

2. *Category of Resources-processing Strategies*

This strategy category involves the activities of listening English song, watching English movies on television or at cinema, looking at the script while listening, connecting the new words with what have been got previously, focusing on visual clues while listening, translating, paying attention to the beginning of word (e.g. Do you....?, Are you.....?, What is.....?) while listening to English.

3. *Category of Interaction-based Strategies*

The following strategies focus on asking for repetition, meaning of sentences/phrases to teacher, asking for repetition to confirm comprehension, asking other people to slow down saying the words, looking up dictionary for new words or grammar book for the sentence structure, asking the speaker to slower the speed, concentrating on somebody's speaking and focusing on the stressed words on the recording.

4. *Category of Scanning Strategies*

This classification includes the learning strategies of looking for and concentrating on key words from picture and/or information on texts before listening, guessing the

meaning based on the context or familiar situation, identifying listening activity clearly (e.g. what should I listen; general idea or facts), trying to understand the different accent or intonation from the speaker, reassuring the understanding after listening to English and paying attention to the subject and verb of the sentence while listening.

5. *Category of Form-focused Strategies*

This part consists the strategies of listening for structure, hearing a word and repeating it, listening to each word one at a time, listening to sounds, rather than meaning, and concentrating on text-based aspects.

6. *Category of Metacognitive Strategies*

The strategies in this part category are thinking about the progress in learning English, having clear goals for improving English listening skill, trying to understand every individual word to understand the passage, listening to what has been spoken to practice listening skill, and trying to guess by using familiar word(s).

7. *Category of Selective Attention Strategies*

This part of category involves five items. They are focusing on familiar expressions, paying attention to speaker's rhythm and intonation, focusing on the first part of the sentence and guessing the speaker's intention, concerning about the interrogative when listening to WH-questions. and paying attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not.

8. *Category of Self-monitoring Strategies*

This category includes the strategy of improving the listening skill by joining and having group discussion, listening to what somebody is saying, trying to be aware of which sounds give the greatest trouble, trying to catch every word that the speaker uses,

and focusing and concentrating on listening to English.

9. Category of Compensation Strategies

The following strategies are making guesses to unfamiliar words, using word or phrase that means the same thing, and looking at the visual aids and/or the title of the text first and predicting its content before listening to it, using clues to guess the meaning, trying to understand the idea by referring to previous experiences.

10. Category of Cognitive Strategies

The strategies in this part address three items of looking for similarities and differences between English and native language, relating the sound of the new word to the sound of a familiar word, and translating the English into native language.

11. Category of Input-output Strategies

This part concerns about the strategies of taking a memo while listening to English, trying to understand the main ideas (rather than pay attention to the meaning of every single word) while listening to English, and refocusing on listening if lossing of attention.

12. Category of Self-negotiating Strategies

The following category focuses on three items of learning strategies of avoiding translation word-for-word, studying English

with friends, and connecting the pronunciation of the word with the Indonesian word which has a similar sound.

13. Category of Context-based Strategy

This classification only has one type of strategy of guessing the contents of the materials based on the words and sentences while listening to English.

14. Category of Social-developing Strategy

This part also concerns about one item of learning strategy of practice English with native speaker to train someone's listening skill.

METHOD

This study was aimed at profiling the students' use of the learning strategies in listening and investigating its deployment at different proficient learners. The subjects were 140 second semester students enrolling in listening class at Universitas Islam Malang. A posteriori taxonomy of strategies of learning English listening (Zuhairi & Hidayanti, 2014) was taken as the research instrument. Besides, the students' listening scores were used to gain more data on the students' proficiency level, and were compared to know the different use of the learning strategies.

Table 1 Posteriori Taxonomy of Strategies of Learning English Listening

No.	Strategy category	Number of items
1	Self-developing Strategies	24
2	Resources-processing Strategies	9
3	Interaction-based Strategies	9
4	Scanning Strategies	7
5	Form-focused Strategies	5
6	Metacognitive Strategies	5
7	Selective Attention Strategies	5
8	Self-monitoring Strategies	5
9	Compensation Strategies	5
10	Cognitive Strategies	3
11	Input-output Strategies	3

12	Self-negotiating Strategies	3
13	Contex-based Strategy	1
14	Social-developing Strategy	1
Total items		85

Prior to data analysis, this study utilizes SPSS version 20 (Pallant, 2005) especially focusing on the descriptive statistics analysis was used to know the strategy profile of the university students and the frequency of strategy use. Besides, the independent t-Test was applied to gain the

information on the students' different use on the learning strategies. The intensity of use is interpreted as being high if the mean score of use is between 3.45 and 5.00, medium if it is between 2.45 and 3.44, and low if it is between 1.00 and 2.44 (Oxford, 1990)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Question 1: How frequently do the students deploy the learning strategies in listening?

Tabel 2 indicates that the foreign language learners generally used the learning strategies at moderate level. The most

intensively strategies category was selective attention strategies. in opposite, the least frequently used was social developing strategy. This implies that to comprehend the aural text, the students employed the learning strategies, furthermore, to tackle the difficulties listening to the English.

Table 2. The Intensity of Use on Learning Strategies in Listening

Strategy Category	Mean	Frequency of Use	Rank of Use
Self-developing Strategies	3.14	Moderate	12
Resources-processing Strategies	3.43	Moderate	6
Interaction-based Strategies	3.33	Moderate	8
Scanning Strategies	3.12	Moderate	13
Form-focused Strategies	3.47	High	4
Metacognitive Strategies	3.15	Moderate	11
Selective Attention Strategies	3.69	High	1
Self-monitoring Strategies	3.44	Moderate	5
Compensation Strategies	3.50	High	3
Cognitive Strategies	3.19	Moderate	10
Input-output Strategies	3.25	Moderate	9
Self-negotiating Strategies	3.60	High	2
Contex-based Strategy	3.40	Moderate	7
Social-developing Strategy	2.74	Moderate	14
Overall Strategies Use	3.32	Moderate	

Question 2: Are there significant difference on the strategies use on learning listening between high proficient and low proficient students?

Having been analysed utilizing t-Test, Table 3 interprets different use on the learning strategies in listening. The highest

mean difference lies on cognitive strategies, meanwhile the lowest mean is on compensation strategies category. The Table also presents that the successful students focused on nine strategy categories and were at higher mean difference compared to the less successful ones who deployed five

strategy categories. This means that the high achiever students deployed more strategies to achieve and develop their listening skill. However, among fourteen categories, only four strategies showed significant different, they are resources processing, self-

monitoring, self-negotiation, and social-developing strategies.

Table 3. The Different Use on the Learning Strategies in Listening by High Proficient Students (N=86) and Low Proficient Students (N=54)

Strategy Categories	Groups	Mean (S.D)	Mean Difference	t-value
Self-developing Strategies	Successful	3.15 (.45)	.04	-.007
	Less Successful	3.11 (.49)		
Resources-processing Strategies	Successful	3.43 (.53)	.0	-2.340
	Less Successful	3.43 (.56)		
Interaction-based Strategies	Successful	3.35 (.45)	.06	-1.232
	Less Successful	3.29 (.54)		
Scanning Strategies	Successful	3.13 (.54)	.03	-.322
	Less Successful	3.10 (.61)		
Form-focused Strategies	Successful	3.47 (.54)	.0	-1.191
	Less Successful	3.47 (.60)		
Metacognitive Strategies	Successful	3.17 (.71)	.06	.912
	Less Successful	3.11 (.67)		
Selective Attention Strategies	Successful	3.69 (.57)	-.01	-1.173
	Less Successful	3.70 (.72)		
Self-monitoring Strategies	Successful	3.40 (.62)	-.09	-2.103
	Less Successful	3.49 (.66)		
Compensation Strategies	Successful	3.50 (.59)	.01	-1.134
	Less Successful	3.49 (.55)		
Cognitive Strategies	Successful	3.24 (.66)	.13	.507
	Less Successful	3.11 (.84)		
Input-output Strategies	Successful	3.26 (.60)	.04	-.531
	Less Successful	3.22 (.68)		
Self-negotiating Strategies	Successful	3.65 (.69)	.12	-2.203
	Less Successful	3.53 (.86)		
Context-based Strategy	Successful	3.36 (.93)	-.1	-1.468
	Less Successful	3.46 (.84)		
Social-developing Strategy	Successful	2.81 (1.27)	.18	1.966
	Less Successful	2.63 (1.27)		

DISCUSSION

As it has been presented in the previous section, the current study focuses on identifying the profile of the students learning strategies deployment in listening and investigating the different use of the learning strategies by both groups of successful and less successful students. After being analysed, it was found out that the students

employed the strategies at moderate level. The most intensive use was selective attention strategies and the least frequent was social developing strategies. Meanwhile, the second finding reveals that highest mean difference was on the use on cognitive strategies, in opposite, the lowest mean is on compensation strategies category. In relation to high achiever students, they chose to

employ nine strategy categories and was significantly different from the low achiever students who deployed five strategy categories.

The first result indicates that among fourteen strategies classifications, there are four categories were at high level of use. They involve the strategies of form-focused, selective attention, compensation, and self-negotiating strategies. Meanwhile, ten categories were used at moderate level. They are self-developing, resources-processing, interaction-based, scanning, metacognitive, self-monitoring, cognitive, input-output, context-based, and social-developing strategies. Overall, the learning strategies deployment was at moderate level. This implies that to improve the listening skill, the non-native English students chose to deploy the learning strategies

Thus, this finding confirms the research from hidayanti (2013); Zuhairi & Hidayanti (2016) who also found that non-native English students least frequently deployed the social-developing strategy. This is probably the students found difficult to find the natives to practice their English, moreover, to train their listening ability.

In relation to the second finding, it was obvious that successful students deployed nine strategies of social-developing, cognitive, self-negotiation, metacognitive, interaction-based, self-developing, input-output, scanning, and compensation strategies. Meanwhile, the later five categories of resources-processing, form-focused, self-monitoring, selective attention, and context-based strategies were used not significantly different from the less successful students. This means that the proficient students tend to use the learning strategies to improve their listening.

This finding supports the research from Chien & Wei (1998); Shang (2008) who found that proficient learners chose some strategies of highlighting each word, combining between word and phrase, connecting new words to their previous knowledge, and translating English to their native language. It is also obvious that to comprehend the aural texts easily, learners should correlate what they have heard with what they have known before (O'Malley, et al, 1998; Klatzky, 1980; Cahyono & Widiati, 2011).

In Indonesian context, this study also confirms the finding from Zuhairi & Hidayanti (2016) that as foreign language learners tend to look for some similarities between English and Indonesian, relate the sound of new words and the familiar sound, then followed by guessing the meaning. Thus, such steps could enable non-native English learners be easier to comprehend the listening passages. However, in terms of significance, the proficient learners used four strategies significantly different from the less proficient ones.

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