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LISTENING COMPREHENSION ORIENTATIONS AND STRATEGIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A REVIEW PAPER

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Abstract

This paper reviews the listening comprehension orientations and strategies in learning English language among L2 learners. Listening skill is one of the most critical key in learning English language. Listening comprehension is a process of understanding the language input in which helps the EFL learners to receive and interact with language input and enables the emergence of other language skills. Heavy research was carried out concerning listening comprehension problems and strategies. Thus, this paper reviews approximately 50 papers with a time span from 2010 to 2019. By searching on Google Scholar and Research Gate for the terms: listening comprehension, listening comprehension orientations, listening comprehension difficulties, and listening comprehension strategies. In general, most studies found that whenever EFL learners face a difficulty in listening, they try to find out the most effective listening strategies to solve their listening difficulties. By doing this, they could improve their listening comprehension. Further research is recommended in order to review papers that dealt with the strategies of other skills i.e. reading strategies and speaking strategies since they are under researched.

Keywords: listening comprehension, listening difficulty, listening strategies

Introduction

Despite it is an essential skill for learning a language, yet listening is a hindrance that students still suffer from. Many researchers have studied these problems and suggested some strategies to enable them pass those problems. This area was heavily researched by previous researches. Thus, this paper tries to review them in order to make that rich literature approachable to future researchers.

This paper was produced after searching on Google Scholar and Research Gate with a time limit between 2010 and 2019 for the following terms: listening comprehension, listening comprehension orientations, listening comprehension difficulties, and listening comprehension strategies. Almost more than 50 papers were reviewed.

Number of definitions of the term in "listening comprehension". Rost (2013) posted that listening comprehension is the first-order goal and noteworthy for the listener. Many people may define it as the isolated purpose of listening. Meanwhile in the vernacular the term listening comprehension is commonly used to discuss to all aspects of listening, which is used in a more definite sense.

Sanders and Gernsbacher (2004) posted that listening comprehension is the process of building, concerning language to concepts in one's memory and to references in the real world in a way which purposes to discover coherence and relevance

(Sanders & Gernsbacher, 2004 as cited in Rost, 2013). Moreover, Gallese and Lakoff (2005) stated listening comprehension as concepts that are the primary units of reasons and understanding, and also are anticipated to be the outcome of neural activity inside the brain (Rost, 2013).

To understand how the ESL and EFL listener interprets the spoken language, it is necessary to understand listening comprehension process obviously. According to Rost (2013) defined and classified listening process into four orientations as follows:

A. Listening as receiving what the utterer actually speaks (receptive orientation):

    i.   Listening means grasping what the utterer said.

    ii.   Listening means getting the knowledge of the speaker.

    iii.   Listening means decoding the message of the utterer.

B. Listening as construction and representation of meaning (constructive orientation):

    i.   Listening means considering out what is in the speaker's mind.

    ii.   Listening means discovering something interesting in what the utterer is saying.

    iii.   Listening means discovering what is related to listeners.

C. Listening as negotiation of meaning with the utterer and answer (collaborative orientation):

   i.   Listening means coordinating with the utterer on the choice of a context.
   ii.   Listening means responding to what the utterer said.
   iii.   Listening is the procedure of negotiating shared principles of the utterer.

D. Listening as creation of meaning through immersion, creativity, and understanding (transformative orientation):

   i.   Listening means concerning with the utterer, without judgement.
   ii.   Listening is related to a utterer and a listener.
   iii.   Listening means expressing identification with the utterer.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

Goh (2000) posted that it is quite essential to teach listening strategies to EFL learners and before doing this, teachers should improve learners' knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and phonology. According to Vandergrift (1999) said that the advance of strategy is crucial for the teaching or training of listening and EFL learners in which they can monitor and evaluate by their own understanding and responses.

Numerous researchers stated that there are three types of strategies in listening comprehension (Conrad, 1985; O＇Mallay & Chamot,1990; Rost & Ross,1991; Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, & Tugrul Mart, 2014; Serri, F., Boroujeni, A. J., & Hesabi, A.,2012; Vandergrift & Cross, 2018).   They are cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. These strategies can adjust based on the level of EFL learners.

Meta-cognitive strategies are arrangement procedures or techniques used by EFL learners to manage or conrtol their learning process through planning, evaluating, and monitoring comprehension (Cross & Vandergrift, 2018; Rubin, 1988). For example, a listener clears the aims of a listening task and apply specific features to understand of aural input. Meanwhile, many researchers (Holden, 2004; Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, & Tugrul Mart, 2014) discovered that in meta-cognitive strategies, EFL learners could learn and understand how to plan, monitor, and access or evaluate the collected information from the listening segment. According to a previous study, Wenden (1998) stated that EFL learners who apply metacognitive strategies have the ability to learn faster and integrate or combine the knowledge dazzlingly, can be ceaseless receivers and deal with different situations, and also have self-confidence to get help or assist from their partners, teachers, or family, and also, can observe and assess themselves.

Socio-affective strategies can help the listener to cope with the feelings, motivation, and attitude while interacting with the speaker to understand the listening task. These strategies are commonly used in social circumstances for interactive listening (Vandergrift & Cross,2018). Also, Vandergrift (2003) and Abdalhamid (2012) stated that socio-affective strategies are ways or techniques in which EFL listeners are able to cooperate or collaborate with others, to check their comprehension, ans to reduce or to decrease their apprehension as well. Habte-Gabr (2006) noted that in socio-affective strategy, learners may have to aware of how to release anxiety, feel confident while they are listening to the input, and nurture or raise the motivation for the improvement of listening skill.

Cognitive strategies are key factors of language use in which comprise the awareness, perception, reasoning, and conceptualizing processes (Baxter, Hastings, Law, & Glass, 2008). Many researchers posted that cognitive strategy is a problem-solving technique in which EFL learners can apply to with the learning activities as well as assist with the learning of knowledge (Suraprajit, 2019; Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, & Tugrul Mart, 2014; Derry & Murphy 1986). Most of EFL and ESL learners use cognitive strategies to operate manipulate components from an oral input or apply a certain technique to their listening activities (Vandergrift & Cross, 2018). Nguyen and Newton (2018) stated that cognitive strategies are classified into two main types: bottom-up and top-down strategies which the researcher aims to discuss more in relation to schemata

content on how EFL learners apply the cognitive listening strategies in their listening comprehension. Anderson (2015) divided the listening comprehension process into interconnected stages:

   A. Perceptual Stage

   B. Parsing Stage
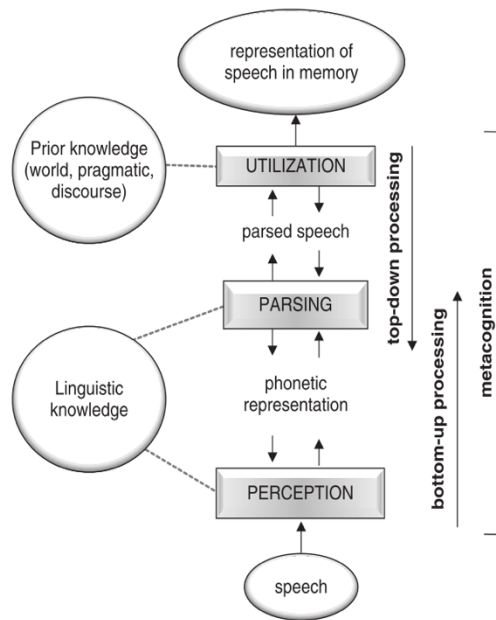
   C. Utilization Stage

Figure 1: Cognitive processes in second language and their interrelationship, Source Goh and Vandergrift (2012)

Anderson (2015) presented on how EFL learners generate meaning on cognitive processing as shown in Figure 1. According to Anderson's (2015) division on the listening comprehension process is categorized into three interconnected stages: perceptual processing (perception), parsing, and

utilization. Of three stages reflect the incorporated nature of how top-down and bottom-up processes take place.

A. Perception Stage

Perception stage involves the identification of phonological sound signals by the listener as words or group of words, sentences, and also significant chunks of language (Anderson, 2015). According to this stage, EFL listeners will handle bottom-up processing to adjust sound (phonemes) classifications of the language, pauses, and acoustic prominences, then grasp these elements in their memory. The first stage in the word segmentation process, listeners decode the incoming sound as follows: (1) Listeners focus on the message and the elimination of different sounds in the situation; (2) Listeners mark resemblances, pauses, and acoustic prominences linked to a specific language; (3) Finally, they categorize the sound according to the identified language.

A phonetic image of what is kept is handed onto the parsing stage. The word segmentation skill is one of the most challenges for EFL learners. It can be said that unlike readers, EFL listeners may not have much time to dictate word boundaries. This due to stress, elisions, and reduced forms in the listening comprehension, as they must analyze the sound stream into significant elements when word restrictions are hard to identify. Although they might be able to recognize individual words, when the speech is in separation or existing in written form, EFL learners might not constantly be able to identify the

similar words in the specific context of speech. (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012).

In this stage also includes bottom-up processing and turn out to be gradually automatic with training activity. EFL learners may make more speedy progress if they prevail over the natural obligation to listen applying the sound classified by their first language and when they get better phonological understanding in their language. (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012). Other than that, some difficulties are reported by EFL learners during the perception stage include:

 i. EFL learners' inability to recognize the individual words.

 ii. Elision of parts of speech.

 iii. Not chunking the flow of speech.

 iv. Omission of the opening of a message.

 v. Problems in concentration (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012)

B. Parsing Stage

Goh and Vandergrift (2012) indicated that EFL learners divide the phonetic indication of what was kept in their remembrance, then begin to activate the possible word candidates. EFL learners use the parsed utterances to recover the possible word from their long-term memory. Parsing involves the separation of spoken words according to grammatical structures or semantic hints to form a mental representation merged with the meaning of words. The comprehension process is proceeded

at the parsing stage in order to evaluate the phonetic demonstration out-turn from the acoustic-phonetic processor. Researchers also posted that making use of bottom-up processing is notified by top-down processing, the parser seek to piece or divide the sound stream by way of phonological consideration and a word recovery into the meaningful fragments of the listener's mental lexicon (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012).

Perception and parsing process keep on with notifying each other within the available time, until a probable mental image occurs. The outcome of parsing stage is habitually monitored in accordance with the utilization stage of the learner's prior knowledge which is kept in long-term memory (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012). Meanwhile, some difficulties reported by EFL learners during this stage including (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012):

    i. EFL learners may quickly forget what has been heard.

    ii. EFL learners might not able to form a mental representation from the words heard.EFL learners may not understand the subsequent parts if they fail in the earlier said.

C. Utilization Stage

According to this utilization stage, EFL learner finds a connection between the significant units to the information origins in long-term memory so as to elucidate the message. This stage mainly involves top-down processing of the parsed utterances. A key characteristic of this stage is that listeners can

apply the information or knowledge from the experiences or world knowledge to explicate what they have kept (the parsed dialog or speech). Goh and Vandergrift (2012) also cited that it is necessary to use previous knowledge (kept as schemata in long-term memory) and pragmatic as well as any related information in the listening context. For the congruency of prior knowledge and the emerging representation of a text in the memory, EFL learners can intricate the recently parsed information (words analyzed) and monitor the interpretation within the time available (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012). Anderson (2015) also posted that this utilization stage involves generating a mental depiction of what is kept or remembered by the listener and the parsing processes connecting to the knowledge stowed in long-term memory.

Moreover, the utilization stage is top-down in nature. As Goh and Vandergrift (2012) revealed that throughout the process of this stage, the glean meaning from the parsed speech is controlled against the setting of the message, and what the EFL learner is aware about the utterer, and the tone used to carry the message, and any additional related information accessible to the EFL learner, in order to understand the tangible meaning of the message. Other than that, these researchers also detailed during the utilization stage. EFL or ESL learners can produce a clue about which they coordinate with their emerging clarification of conversation go beyond the exact meaning of the input when justified.

The proficient learners enable them to automatically settle the linguistic input with their previous knowledge and experiences which is stored in the working memory in order to ascertain the meaning. But when the automatic processes seize up because of an apprehension disturbance, listening turns out to be a problem. At this stage, EFL learners may need to reconsider the inferences made (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012). The researchers also point out the difficulties faced by EFL learner during this stage as follows:

i. EFL learners may comprehend the words but not the message.

ii. EFL learners might feel confused due to seeming incongruences in the idea or message (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012)

D. Top-Down and Bottom-Up process

Anderson's (2015) division on the listening comprehension process stated that of three interconnected stages (perceptual processing, parsing, utilization) reflect the incorporated nature of how top-down and bottom-up processes crop up. (Anderson, 2015; Goh & Vandergrift, 2012) According to Tokeshi (2003) posted that listening comprehension is considered as interactive process of bottom-up and top-down processes by utilizing linguistic and non-linguistic information. In bottom-up processing, EFL learners use their linguistic knowledge of sounds, word forms and grammatical to understand input, as well as top-down processing, where prior experience,

world knowledge help them to understand an utterance (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012). Kurita (2012) cited that the application of listening strategies can help EFL leaners to archive in listening comprehension of other languages.

Listening Strategies from Previous Studies Perspectives

Many studies referring to the use of listening comprehension strategies among EFL learners have been presented. Researchers posted that metacognitive strategies can bring on listening accomplishment when EFL or ESL learners deal with cognitive strategies (Henderson, 2017; Suraprajit, 2019; Henderson, 2017; Kurita, 2012; Goh & Vandergrift, 2012; Al-Alwan & Asassfeh & Al-Shboul; 2013).

Henderson (2017) investigated the effect of l2 students on the use of cognitive listening strategies: bottom-up and top-down processes and how metacognitive strategy regulated the learning process. The findings pointed out that EFL learners at different rank or level make use of top-down and bottom-up processing inversely. Although the less proficient listeners indicated that there was no furtherance in their outcome or results, they all, remarkably for less proficient listeners, come away with the listening strategies as shown by steadily more consciousness of their own listening progress, and gaining confidence in listening. Previous studies (Al-Alwan & Asassfeh & Al-Shboul, 2013; Vandergrift; Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghodtari (2006)

highlighted that second language learners with top-levels of metacognitive understanding are better at proceeding and accumulating recently details or information and they can make use of and clear up what they have learned. Anderson (1991) noted that metacognitive strategies have a crucial role in developing learners' skills. The application of metacognitive strategies can help EFL learners to take up the listening functioning more effectively (Yang, 2009; Al-Alwan & Asassfeh & Al-Shboul; 2013)

Bozorgian (2012) studied the impact of metacognitive instruction on EFL learners' comprehension. Twenty-eight Iranian EFL learners participated in a strategy-based approach of advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, and self-management in each of four listening lessons which were focused on improving listeners' comprehension of IELTS listening texts. Four listening modules were applied to improve listeners' understanding of IELTS listening test. The findings showed that less-skilled learners notify greater development than more-skilled ones on the listening tests. This information showed the meaningful role of metacognitive instruction could benefit to EFL learners to associate their l understanding on listening skill. According to Al-Alwan, Asassfeh, and Al-Shboul (2013), metacognitive strategies are the application to plot or design and accomplish appropriate activities to reach an individual purpose. EFL learnera applied the metacognitive strategies to achieve the entire learning process. Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, and

Tafaghodtari (2006) stated that use of metacognitive strategies can help EFL learners to organize and achieve the listening comprehension processes.

Cognitive strategies are the most recurrent used among EFL learners. Ratnaningsih (2015) investigated the implementation of the metacognitive listening strategies would bring out higher English listening comprehension compared to the use of the cognitive listening strategies. 60 Indonesian students of Deck Department in Politeknik Pelayaran Surabaya (Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic) were selected at random and surveyed with thirty-two arranged questionnaires and a TOEIC listening test. The findings indicated that EFL students perform better on cognitive strategies than metacognitive strategies in their listening comprehension.

Another study indicated that an ESL learner become more precise at guessing the meanings of a listening text. Accoding to Yi Guan (2014) employed mixed methods to investigate the effects of cognitive listening strategy instruction at the first level of second language listening at a community college in the North of California, United Sates of America. The listener started applying an elaboration strategy while listening to radio programs. The researcher found that the listener was able to use inferencing with non-linguistic clues while watching some movies and television programs with her children. She practiced and became more precise at guessing the meanings of the massage in listening. The above-mentioned scenario

demonstrated that listeners become more perfect in guessing the meaning of the listening.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper reviews the definition of listening comprehension and its orientations. Moreover, the researcher elaborated on the strategies for listening comprehension in addition to students' perceptions on them. Further research is recommended in order to review papers that dealt with the strategies of other skills i.e. reading strategies and speaking strategies since they are under researched.

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