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Abstract

Listening and speaking strategies are the ways that are taken by ESL learners to improve their language learning. This study aims to measure the preferred learning strategies for listening and speaking skill among sub-urban school students in the Kuala Selangor district. Total 30 students of low-intermediate ESL learners were selected to complete the task required for the research. 10 questions in each questionnaire were prepared respectively, for listening and speaking skill to collect the result. The data were collected and analysed descriptively. The research found that the majority of the students preferred media as a major strategy for listening skill while seeking help from others to develop their speaking skill in learning the language.

Keywords: Learning Strategies, ESL Learners, Speaking Strategies, Listening Strategies, Primary Learners

Introduction

In Malaysia, English is designated as the second official language used by Malaysians and introduced in educational context. English is a compulsory language that every Malaysian should learn. The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 highlights the importance of English Language in schools and provides many teaching and learning strategies to enhance the English proficiency among ESL students in schools. The current level of English language in Malaysia is not used efficiently by the people, especially among youngsters (Chong, 2016). There was less focus given to the use of the English language in schools (Arukesamy, 2015). Primary schools in Malaysia are following the Primary School Standards-based Curriculum which is known as KSSR. This curriculum standard confirms that each student must have six traits: knowledge, thinking ability, leadership, bilingual competence, ethics, spirituality and national identity.

Listening and speaking skills are two major skills among the four skills. These two skills are the frequent skills that are used by all in our everyday life style. In order to master the skills people need to practice in their daily life. The best strategies will lead to mastering the listening and speaking skills. As young learners, students don't only focus on the strategies, but students need to practice using the strategies in their daily life. In order to learn a

language, learners employ a variety of language learning strategies. This is due to a number of factors that contribute to the wide range of preferences among ESL students.

Although listening skills are the foundation for all other aspects of language learning, English language teachers continue to emphasise other skills over listening skills (Arvand & Gorjian, 2022). Appropriate strategies are required to improve one's listening skills. Listening strategies entail a specific method of obtaining information from speech (Putri, 2019). Language learners face a variety of listening challenges, including cultural differences, unfamiliar vocabulary, speech clarity, and speech length and speed (Maulida, 2018). According to (Vandergrift 2011), listening difficulties are caused by a failure to recognise the importance of focusing on the overall meaning rather than translating word for word. (Hedge 2006) discovered that the difficulties stem from a lack of visual support, as learners listen to the recording without seeing the expressions and body language.

The distinctions between learners are based on their level of proficiency, motivation, and cultural background. As a result, an initiative was launched to ascertain the students' preferences for learning strategies in listening and speaking skills.

The objectives of the studies are to measure:

- The preferred learning strategies for listening skills among ESL students in sub-urban school.
- The preferred learning strategies for speaking skill among ESL students in sub-urban school.

Literature Review

The meaning of language learning strategies can be defined in a variety of ways. Several studies on LLS use have been conducted in order to identify the most commonly used strategies by language (Griffiths, 2008; Dawadi, 2017; Alhaysony, 2017; Charoento, 2017). Language strategies are a set of operations, steps, plans or routines used by learners to facilitate information acquisition, storage and use in learning language retrieval (Pezhman Zare, 2012). In other words, learning strategies assists learners in acquiring successful language learning knowledge. This paper discussed on the listening and speaking strategies encounter by ESL learners. There are several studies proved that ESL learners encounter difficulties in learning the language especially through listening and speaking skill.

Learners place a higher value on variety of listening strategies and prefer to listen in different ways to gain a better understanding of a specific language. Listening is influenced by the ear, communication, environmental characteristics or location. As a result, there are a number of hearing issues and it is difficult to determine what caused the issues (Shah et al., 2021). A variety of factors can contribute to listening issues including listening content, language characteristics and lack of attention.

Besides, learners find speaking being difficult to express themselves because they are tentative, hesitant and fearful of making mistakes. They frequently lack adequate vocabulary and practice making it difficult for them to converse fluently in English (Syafiq et al., 2021) When learners are poor in language content, they are unable to speak and become anxious. Even when they have something to say, they are unable to express themselves because afraid of making grammatical errors and being mocked by peers (Meinawati et al., 2020) .This paper also discussed on the variety of listening and speaking skills as well on the strategies used by the learner and teacher in enhancing the language.

Listening Skill
Definition of Listening Skill

There are several studies and researches define the meaning of listening skill. According to (Nurjanah et al., 2018) "Listening is an active process of what we hear". Meanwhile (Habiba & Nur, 2021) define that listening is a skill to understand the spoken information and this statement strongly supported by (Hwaider, 2017). Besides, without listening ability people tent to misunderstand the messages (Mundhe, 2015). A clear explanation given by (Erickzon D. Astorga-Cabezas, 2015) that listening skill is a cognitive process which does not involve any observable result because it often seem as a passive activity.

Types of Listening Skill

Listening skill is a crucial skill to be acquired among the four major skills. Even the majority of new born babies are born with their listening skill before he or she acquires another new skill. Several studies show that babies develop their hearing skill within the womb and are able to respond within the days of birth (Johnson, 2021). Nagendra, 2014 state that,

> *"Listening ability lies at the very heart of all growths, from birth through the years of formal education. The better those learning skills are developed, the more productive our learning efforts".*

Based on the explanation, there are several differences in order to listen to information according to the growth of humans. Here are several types of listening skills such as Appreciative listening, Critical listening, Selective Listening, Patronizing Listening, Fake Listening, Casual Listening, Active Listening and Attentive listening (Reddy, 2013)

· Appreciative listening.
· Critical listening
· Selective Listening
· Patronizing Listening
· Fake Listening
· Casual Listening
· Active Listening
· Attentive Listening

These are several types of listening that people refer to when listening for information. Therefore in order to be an effective listener in different situations, you as a listener must know the purpose for listening. Then decide which type of listener.

Problems in Listening

If a child can have a hearing sense it doesn't mean that the baby is listening. Thus based on the statement to be a good and effective listener students need to acquire certain skills. There are several problems students undergoing to master the listening skill in learning English. Most of the students tend to forget what is heard, could not recognise the words, understand the messages, and take time to think about the meaning (Yilmaza & Yavuza, 2015).

There are several common and major problems identify by (Underwood 1989).
The problems are as follows:

· Lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak
· Not being able to get repeated

· Limited vocabulary
· Failure to recognize the 'signals'
· Interpretation
· Lack of concentration
· Established learning habits.

According to (Yilmaza & Yavuza, 2015) learners have difficulties to listen for the word from a connected speech such as dialog or conversation. Therefore (Yousif, 2006) argues that teachers should identify the listening problems that students encounter by the students and should conduct teaching based on proper strategies.

Speaking Skill
Definition of Speaking Skill

According to Webstar New World Dictionary, the word 'Speaking' means transferring the words orally, communicating through talking, making a request and speech as cited in (Ahmadi et al., 2017). Besides that, speaking can be categorized into two main categories which is accuracy and fluency. Accuracy is the combination of vocabulary, grammar items and pronunciation while fluency is the ability to speak a language fluently and spontaneously without notifying any accuracy errors (Derakhshan et al., 2017). Another three researchers also argue the same definition of the speaking which is an oral interaction that presents information, constructs the meaning and receives information correctly (Sidik, 2013; Kosar & Bedir 2014).

Based on the definitions given, speaking is a language skill that needs oral communication and receiving the information accurately and smoothly. The speaker has to make sure to give full attention to accuracy when speaking a language.

Types of Speaking Skill

· Persuasive speaking
· Ceremonial speaking
· Demonstrative speaking
· Informative speaking

According to the types of speaking the speaker needs to be wise when delivering the speech whether the information should reach the audience through which type of speaking. A best speaker should know the best speaking skills that attract the audience towards the speaker's focus and goals.

Problem in Speaking

Speaking your mother language is much easier compared to learning a foreign language. Therefore students, who are learning a new language, especially learning English, face problems because students encounter many barriers. These barriers majorly can be seen in students' speaking skill. According to (Adil, 2021), stated several problems in speaking English. There are six common problems encountered in speaking problems. The problems are:

· Common grammar mistakes
· Lack of confidence
· Shyness in speaking
· Fear of making errors
· Lack of motivation

·   Nervous while speaking

There are even many problems faced by students when speaking in English. The main problem among students is the confidence level. Students need to be confident to speak even though there are errors and mistakes while speaking the language. Teachers need to be the motivator who motivates the students to boost the confidence level in students.

Research Methodology

A quantitative research design will be used for this study. According to (Bhawna & Gobind, 2015), quantitative research is a type of study that describes phenomena by gathering statistical data and investigating them using statistically based methods which supported by (Creswell, 2009) This study will employ a ten-question questionnaire that will focus on two language skills: listening and speaking. The questionnaires were adapted from Language Strategy Use Inventory (Cohen et al., 2006). Due to school closings during the Covid-19 pandemic, students were asked to complete these questionnaires online. This study included 30 year 4 students from a sub-urban school in the Kuala Selangor district. Year 4 students are chosen for this research because they are easily accessible to the researcher. This sample was chosen because they worked at the same school as the researcher. In addition, the researcher created a telegram group for the students. This telegram group assists the researcher in sending the questionnaire link to the students for online responses. As a result, it is quite convenient for the researcher to send the online questionnaire of the study, in addition to being budget friendly for the researcher.

Suitable sampling techniques were used in this study. Suitability sampling is a non-probability sampling method that collects data from members of the general population who are readily available to take part in the study (Lawrence A. Palinkas et al., 2015). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this questionnaire is only available online. First, the researcher gathered data by sending a link to a questionnaire to students, who then filled it out. Language Strategy Utilization Inventory was used to create this questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2006). Students will be sent a link to the survey via telegram, and they will have one day to complete it. After one day, the research team collected the findings.

Findings

The findings of this study will be discussed in terms of two types of language skills: listening and speaking strategies.

Listening Skill Strategies

Table 1: What do I listen more?

Strategy		Frequent		Seldom		Never	
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	I listen to the radio shows in the language	7	23%	16	54%	7	23%
2	I go to the movies that use the language	8	27%	19	63%	3	10%
3	I listen to the songs that use the language	10	33%	17	57%)	3	10%

Students were asked what they do to improve their listening skills based on Table 1. 33 percent of students (10 out of 30) prefer to listen to music as their primary form of

Strategy		Frequent		Seldom		Never	
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	I listen for key words	8	27%	17	57%	5	16%
2.	I Listen to repeated words	13	43%	16	53%	1	4%
3	I listen for specific details.	5	16%	19	63%	6	21%

entertainment, while films and radio are enjoyed by 8 and 7 students, respectively. When compared to films and songs, listening to radio programmes has the highest percentage of unacceptable sources of listening, with 23 percent of students.

Table 2: What I do to understand what I hear?

In order to understand, 17 students, or 57 % seldom pays attention to important words, 63 percent listen to repeated words, and 54 percent listen to repetitive words.

Table 3: Strategies to overcome difficulties in listening
Then, in Table 3, students were asked about the strategies they use when they are

Strategy		Frequent		Seldom		Never	
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	I ask the person to repeat.	15	50%	15	50%	0	0%
2	I ask the person to slow down if they are speaking too fast.	18	60%	10	33%	2	7%
3	I ask for clarification.	8	27%	20	67%	2	6%
4	I ask questions	11	37%	16	53%	3	10%

having difficulty listening. 50% of students, or 15 out of 30, prefer speakers to repeat what they have said, while 60% prefer the person to slow down. 20 students, which are 66% seldom, ask for clarification to understand the meaning. 54 percent of students seldom prefer to ask questions to better understand what the other speakers were trying to say.

Speaking Skill Strategies
Table 4: How I practice speaking?

Strategy		Frequent		Seldom		Never	
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	I watch the movies that use the language	10	33%	18	60%	2	7%
2	I practice singing songs that use the language	12	41%	13	43%	5	16%
3	I practice saying the sound of language to pronounce well	9	29%	20	67%	1	4%

Students 43% choose singing song to hone their speaking skills. 60% watching TV shows and 67 percent practices, saying the sound of the language, contribute the most strategies used seldom by the students.

Table 5: What I do to talk with others?

Strategy		Frequent		Seldom		Never	
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	I find opportunities to start the conversation	4	13%	23	77%	3	10%
2	I ask questions as a way to involve in a conversation.	10	33%	17	57%	3	10%
3	I plan before starts I start to speak.	10	33%	16	53%	4	14%

In Table 5, starting a conversation is the least favourite thing to do, with 13%, or 4 out of 30 students, never starting a conversation. According to the data, 57% students seldom ask questions as a way to involve in a conversation. However, 53% of students (16 out of 30) prefer to plan what they will say ahead of time.

Table 6: How I overcome the difficulties in speaking

Strategy		Frequent		Seldom		Never	
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	I ask the others to help me.	15	50%	15	50%	0	0%
2	I let other to correct the errors in my speaking.	11	36%	15	50%	4	14%
3	I use words from my own language.	13	43%	16	53%	1	4%
4	I use gestures in a conversation.	6	21%	21	69%	3	10%

In table 6, 50 percent of students will ask others to help them. Following that, 50% which is 15 out of 30 students seldom request assistance from their speaking partners whenever they are having difficulty speaking. The data also shows that only 21% students' use gestures in a conversation to understand the language.

Discussion

Listening Strategies Employ by ESL Learners in Enhancing their Listening Skill

According to the results, television shows are the primary cause of student viewing. In fact, the majority of participants have access to television at all times, unlike those who stay in the inn. Based on the data, students prefer to hear important words and things that sound interesting instead of repetitive words. This proves that the students identify the important and interesting sections of the conversation cleverly rather than struggling to pick up the full discourse in order to embrace the data transmitted by the talker.

Furthermore, when students struggle to listen in a strange language, they opt to utilize a social strategy. Language is a type of social behaviour, and learning it involves other people, social strategies facilitate language learning through interactions with others. These strategies are divided into three categories: questioning, cooperating and empathising (Pezhman Zare, 2012). If they do not understand the speaker's message or ideas, they do not hesitate to ask questions. This symbolises that a good language learner can navigate their own path and accepts responsibility for their own development. Therefore these strategies are very useful for the students to learn the language.

Speaking Strategies Employ by ESL Learners in Enhancing their Speaking Skill

According to the findings, the vast majority of students preferred social and emotional strategies as their preferred speech strategies. When learning a new language, students may feel a variety of emotions. Language learners who are proficient in their language are aware of these feelings and work hard to develop positive attitudes toward the foreign language (Pezhman Zare, 2012). Affective domains are important in language learning because they encompass a wide range of personality traits. English must be taught to students as a second language rather than as a foreign language. This causes students to feel inferior when they use the language. As a result, in order to overcome this situation, they prefer to initiate the conversation by brainstorming the topics in order to boost their confidence level. Students will voluntarily join a conversation once they have gained the confidence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that students employ a variety of learning strategies when learning a language especially listening and speaking skill. As a result, teachers must be aware of their students' preferences in order to create materials and activities that are appropriate for their needs and level of proficiency. Even though these finding benefits the teachers yet teachers need to be more concern on the strategies that they use towards the students. This is because the majority of the students seldom use those strategies instead of using them frequently.

Contribution

Teachers should incorporate more English audio media into the lessons because it will increase students' English input while also providing fun and excitement. Furthermore, in the scope of speaking skill, social strategies are the most commonly used by students to overcome difficulties in speaking the language. The common strategy that students prefer to improve their proficiency in the target language, students need to be voluntarily seeking assistance from teachers and friends for additional explanation, clarification, and error checking. As a result, it is the responsibility of the teachers to find methods or ways to expose them to real-life situations where they can use their skills in learning the language. Engaging students with different and creative interactive activities that can be used in class to allow students to write and communicate in the language. Thou these findings are most beneficial to teachers. Teachers can improve their students' learning styles and strategies as a result of these findings will shows that most students will use the strategies frequently rather than using them seldom

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