

The Language Learning Listening Strategies of EFL Students in the Jordanian Context

Dina Al-Jamal*

Received on: Feb. 4, 2007

Accepted on: June 20, 2007

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the listening comprehension processes and listening strategies used by two groups of students from Mu'tah University (namely English majors and English class-teachers). Three different types of listening strategies were used to elicit the data: metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective. Sixty-four Jordanian 2nd year university students (English majors $n=32$ and English class teachers $n=32$) participated in the study. Qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) methods were adopted. The data analysis indicated the participants were likely to pay selective attention, to take notes, and to ask their colleagues when they do not understand English in class. To maintain students' positive attitudes, the teacher might consider providing interaction by allowing the students to express themselves in the classroom. A major recommendation of this study is that greater emphasis be on interactive listening which would, in turn, promote the communicative language ability of Jordanian university students of English in their English lessons. (**Keywords:** Teacher, Student, English, Foreign Language, Teaching).

استراتيجيات تعلم الاستيعاب السمعي اللغوي لدى طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في الأردن

دينا الجمال، كلية العلوم التربوية، جامعة مؤتة، الأردن.

ملخص: بحثت هذه الدراسة في العمليات العقلية والاستراتيجيات لمهارة الاستيعاب السمعي لدى مجموعتين من (طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية وطلبة معلم صف اللغة الإنجليزية) من طلاب السنة الثانية في جامعة مؤتة. استخدمت في الدراسة ثلاثة أنواع من الاستراتيجيات المختلفة من أجل الحصول على المعلومات: استراتيجيات فوق معرفية، واستراتيجيات معرفية، واستراتيجيات اجتماعية. وشارك في الدراسة أربعة وستون طالباً وطالبة (لغة إنجليزية = 32 طالباً وطالبة ومعلم صف اللغة الإنجليزية = 32 طالباً وطالبة). وتبنت الدراسة منهج البحث الكمي (استبانة) والنوعي (مقابلات). وقد أظهر تحليل البيانات ميل الطلبة لاستخدام استراتيجية الانتباه الانتقائي واستراتيجية أخذ الملاحظات، واستراتيجية سؤال الزملاء عما يقوله المدرس باللغة الإنجليزية. وخلصت الدراسة إلى ضرورة الحث على إدامة التفاعل الصفي في اللغة الإنجليزية، والذي بدوره يعطي الطلبة الفرص الكافية للتعبير عن أنفسهم. ومن أهم ما أوصت به الدراسة ضرورة التأكيد على أن تكون عملية الاستماع تفاعلية، كي تزيد من قدرة الطلبة اللغوية الاتصالية خلال محاضرات طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية وطلبة معلم صف اللغة الإنجليزية. (الكلمات المفتاحية: تدريس اللغة الأجنبية، اللغة الإنجليزية، الطالب، المعلم).

Introduction: Listening plays a significant role in the lives of people. Of the four major areas of communication skills and language development - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - the one that is the most basic is listening. It is evident that children listen and respond to language before they learn to talk. When it is time for children to learn to read, they still have to listen so that they gain knowledge and information to follow directions. In the classroom, students have to listen carefully and attentively to lectures and class discussions in order to understand and to retain the information for later recall.

In a language classroom, listening comprehension plays a significant role in the development of other language skills. When students first learn a language, they generally have to listen to the words several times before they are able to recognize and pronounce those words. Listening can also help students build vocabulary, develop language proficiency, and improve language usage. Kim (2004) found that students' ability to comprehend written material through reading and to express themselves through speaking and written communication is directly related to students' maturity in the listening phase of language development. Curtain and Pesola (1988) also asserted that developing proficiency in listening comprehension is the key to achieving proficiency in speaking. To Curtain and Pesola, listening skills are not only the basis for the development of all other skills; but they are also the main channel through which students make initial contact with the target language and its culture.

Despite the importance of listening practice in language instruction, English language classes in many countries still emphasize only the skills of reading and writing. This is especially the case of an English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) situation in which the English

* Faculty of Educational Sciences, Mu'tah University, Al-Karak, Jordan.

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language is taught as a subject at school and used only inside, but not outside, the classroom. Jordanian EFL university students study English in their home country where English is not the dominant native language in Jordan. The fundamental objective of the present study was to examine the listening ability in students of English as a foreign language. In conjunction with the primary objective, the study also identified the learning strategies EFL Jordanian university students used when they experienced listening in class.

Applied research on language learning strategies investigated the feasibility of helping students become more effective language learners by teaching them some of the learning strategies that descriptive studies have identified as a characteristic of the good language learner (Rubin, 1995).

Language learning strategies are thoughts and behaviors that students use to improve their knowledge and understanding of a target language (Cohen, 1998). There are three types of learning strategies: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies (Oxford, Lavine and Crookall (1989); Chamot, 2005). Cognitive strategies involve unconscious interactions with the material to be learned, such as inferencing, resourcing, and note-taking. Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, involve conscious management and control over the learning process, such as planning, paying attention, and monitoring. Social and affective strategies involve interacting with another person or using affective control to assist learning, such as questioning, working with peers, and lowering anxiety (O'Malley, Chamot and Küpper, 1989; Oxford et al. (1989).

This study seeks to discover what learning strategies are reported by EFL learners. The study focuses on the *types* of learning strategies of two EFL classrooms learners. It is hoped that the study provides information about what EFL learners actually do in "learning to listen."

Literature Review

Liynange (2004) stated that listening is the ability to understand spoken language. Purdy (1997) defined listening as "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal), needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings" (p. 8). Listening implies more than just hearing or perceiving a stream of sounds; it also requires comprehension of the speaker's intended message. Byrnes (1984) indicated that listening requires "an interplay between all types of knowledge" (p. 322). A listener needs to have some command over major components of the language; these components are phonology, lexicon, syntax, semantics, and text structure (Bacon, 1989).

In addition to grammatical competence, listeners also rely on other types of knowledge as they perform a listening comprehension process. One is sociocultural competence, which is the listeners' degree of familiarity

with the sociocultural content of the message and knowledge of the social as well as cultural expectations of native speakers of the language. Another is strategic competence, which is listeners' ability to guess meanings of unfamiliar words heard and to use strategies to compensate for their missing knowledge. The other is discourse competence, which is listeners' ability to use cohesive devices to link meaning across sentences and ability to recognize how coherence is used to maintain the unity of the message (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992; Shrum and Glisan, 1999). Listening comprehension is described by Rubin (1995) as an:

Active process in which listeners select and interpret information which comes from auditory and visual cues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to express (p.7)

In summary, listening is an active process of attaching meaning to the speech sounds. As a listener performs a variety of tasks in a comprehension process, he or she has to rely upon various types of knowledge such as grammatical knowledge and sociocultural knowledge

Anderson (2002) distinguished two kinds of mental representations in the information-processing model: declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge refers to static information in memory, or what we already know about and identified later in this research as cognitive strategies. Procedural knowledge includes dynamic information in memory, or what we know how to do and referred later in the present research as metacognitive strategies. Strategic knowledge is categorized as procedural knowledge because it works on the applications of our knowledge of rules to solve linguistic problems. While declarative knowledge or factual information may be acquired quickly, procedural knowledge is acquired gradually and only with extensive opportunities for practice. Fillmore and Swain (1984) highlighted the function of learning strategies as:

They [learning strategies] are used to refer to how they [learners] develop specific skills. It is possible, therefore, to talk of both 'language learning strategies' and 'skill-learning strategies (p. 712).

That was close to Chamot's (2005) definition where she described learning strategies as the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal. She, further, maintained that strategic learners have metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths.

Grenfell and Harris (1999) noted that language learning strategies are identified through self-report. Although self-report may be inaccurate if the learner does not report truthfully, it is still the only way to

identify learners' mental processing. As they aptly stated:

... it is not easy to get inside the 'black box' of the human brain and find out what is going on there. We work with what we can get, which, despite the limitations, provides food for thought...
(p. 54).

Chamot and O'Malley (1990) and Chamot (2005) also developed a content-based instruction model for language learners, namely, the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). This approach is perceived as a social-cognitive learning model, in which collaborative learning, learners' prior knowledge, and metacognitive awareness and self-reflection of learners are emphasized. Part of CALLA is devoted to providing on explicit instruction of language learning strategies within the context of academic content areas. CALLA consists of five phases: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. For this purpose, the instruction models for general language learning strategies have established the groundwork for the present study.

Another established instruction model is proposed by Oxford (1990). She provided a guideline for instructors in the teaching of learning strategies. It included eight steps, in which the first five involve planning and preparation, and the last three concern conducting, evaluating, and revising the training program. These steps are:

1. Determine the learners' needs and the time available;
2. Select strategies well;
3. Consider integration of strategy training;
4. Consider motivational issues;
5. Prepare materials and activities;
6. Conduct "completely informed training";
7. Evaluate; and
8. Revise the strategy training.

Other than the content and integration criteria, the affective dimension has also gained attention. For example, MacIntyre and Noels (1996) used social-psychological variables to predict the use of language learning strategies. The variables including anxiety, motivation and attitude toward the language community are considered as important factors when conducting and evaluating strategy instruction.

Based on the relatively extensive research on the range of listening strategies, the concern of the present research is on how best to promote pedagogically more successful listening comprehension.

Language learning strategies

The research by Murphy (1987) explored the types of strategies used and the contrast of strategy usage at different proficiency levels. Murphy investigated college students by analyzing their oral and written responses to listening selections. Seventeen specific strategies were identified and categorized. The results show that both more and less proficient listeners could

be distinguished by the frequency of the strategies they used. For instance, more proficient listeners used the strategies of elaborating, inferencing, anticipating, conclusion drawing, self-description, etc., more frequently than less-proficient learners. Murphy also explored the sequential patterns of the strategies that both more proficient listeners and less proficient listeners followed. For example, more proficient listeners tended to apply "wide distribution" strategies (i.e., in relation to an open and flexible use of strategies) while less proficient listeners were found in use of "text heavy" strategies (i.e., in relation to reliance on the text and paraphrasing).

Rost and Ross (1991) examined the use of certain strategies correlated with language proficiency, and, with training, whether the use of listening strategies increased and listening comprehension improved. They focused on EFL listeners' feedback on paused texts. The use of clarification questions in native speaker vs. nonnative speaker discourse was also investigated. The results showed that more proficient listeners resorted to "hypothesis testing" (asking about specific information in the story), "forward inference" (inquiring by using information already given in the story), and continuation signals or backchannel communication more frequently than "lexical pushdowns" (asking about word meanings), and "global reprises" (asking for general repetition, rephrasing, or simplification). After training, listeners at elementary as well as intermediate/advanced levels showed improvement on listening comprehension tasks and were able to ask more hypothesis-testing questions.

Goh (2002) looked into the mental tactics or specific techniques through which a general strategy is operationalized. The subjects were Chinese learners of ESL in Singapore. Immediate retrospective verbalizations were conducted to collect data. It was found that, for instance, in order to operate the contextualization strategy, learners related new information to a wider familiar context by using tactics such as placing input in a social or linguistic context, finding related information on hearing a key word, or relating one part of a text to another. Similarly, to operate the monitoring strategy, the learners might use tactics such as identifying words or ideas not understood, checking current interpretation within the context of the message or prior knowledge, or confirming that comprehension has taken place. More proficient language learners use a greater variety and often a greater number of learning strategies.

Anderson (2002) shed the light on such differences between more and less proficient language learners, on how the strategies are applied to the task, and on the appropriateness of the strategies for the task. Anderson maintained that students' understanding of the task requirements and whether they could match a strategy to meet those requirements seemed to be a major determinant of the effective use of language learning strategies. Khaldieh (2000) pointed out that higher

levels of language proficiency have also been associated with less anxiety and more confidence, indicating that affective factors in addition to learning strategies can influence performance on a task.

Wharton (2000) reported two SILL (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning) studies illustrate that some of the learning strategy preferences reported by students in different cultural contexts. A study of ethnically Chinese, bilingual Singaporean university students studying a foreign language (French or Japanese) found that students reported a preference for social strategies as well as a disinclination to use affective strategies.

Another study conducted by Olivares-Cuhat (2002) looked at the language learning strategies of students in a university advanced Spanish writing class and compared achievement on a writing sample between those students speaking Spanish as a first or heritage language and those learning Spanish as a foreign language. As expected, students with a Spanish language background were graded higher on their writing samples than the other students, but they also showed a greater preference for affective and memory strategies and these latter were highly correlated with writing achievement.

In conclusion, this research examined a number of issues in language learning strategies research and practice that are important in helping students become more successful language learners. While we have learned much about the usefulness of including language learning strategy instruction in foreign language education, much still remains to be investigated.

Research Questions

The primary research questions addressed in the study were as follows:

1. What types of learning strategies are most frequently used by two groups of 2nd year Mu'tah university students (namely English major EFL students and English class teacher students) in the classroom?
2. Are there significant differences in listening comprehension strategies between the two groups?

Methodology

The present study aimed at describing the listening strategies (metacognitive, cognitive, social affective) of two 2nd year groups of a Jordanian university (Mu'tah University) in the classroom. The first group consisted of English major EFL students, whereas the second group consisted of English class teacher EFL students. Based on the theoretical frameworks and research discussed earlier, listening strategies could provide a particularly rich opportunity to develop both comprehension and, in turn, language and social skills. The **purpose** of this study was to explore how the skill of listening operates by two different groups who are both studying English language but differently. That is to say, the first group (English major students) is supposed to be qualified to teach upper basic and

secondary stage at Jordanian schools, whereas the second group (English class teacher) is supposed to be qualified to teach the primary stage only. Interviews as well as questionnaires were the means for collecting data for the current study. It is hoped that the suggestions of the study would be highlighted as points of departure, rather than arrival, and that they might serve as useful topics for discussion when the skill of listening is taught.

Sample and Design

The population of the study consisted of all male and female 2nd year students attending two English courses during the first semester, 2005/2006, at Mu'tah University. The population (78 students) consisted of forty English major students, and thirty-eight English class teacher students. However, the sample (64 students), which was purposeful, consisted of all students who voluntarily cooperated in the present study in face-to-face interview sessions for data collection, as well as, for the strategy questionnaire. Sixty-four students from both groups participated in the current study where each group consisted of thirty-two students. The interviews were conducted in order to obtain information about the listening abilities of the two groups of students. To analyze the data, transcripts were made of the interviews; notes were made from the recorded material on the listening performance. These data were triangulated with the information obtained from the strategy questionnaires. All data were examined in order to answer the research questions about students' listening learning strategies.

However, the following **instruments** were used in the present study:

- ☒ A semi-structured interview. The interview contained questions with reference to the students' ability in listening comprehension. The purpose of the interview was to obtain the students' viewpoint about their competence in second-language listening comprehension which could not be elicited by the questionnaire. That is, the interview accounted for the subjects' expression of the assessment of their listening comprehension strategies together with an idea of how to go about improving this skill. In order to determine students' listening ability, each student was requested to give responses to the following questions:

Table 1: Interview questions

Interview Question	Key word answer
1. Give yourself a rating on listening:	-Excellent - Average - Weak
2. What do you do to improve your listening ability?	- Watch television - Use dictionary - Listen to the radio

- ☒ A language listening strategy questionnaire. In addition to the semi-structured interviews, the students, after the interview, were asked to fill out the learning strategy questionnaire (see the appendix). The questionnaire, however, was distributed to identify the behaviors employed by

the students when they listened to the target language in the classroom. The language learning strategy questionnaire was derived from the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990). This self-report instrument used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from very strongly disagree to agree strongly, to assess the frequency of the students' use of different techniques for English-language listening. The form of the language learning strategy questionnaire was as follows:

Table 2: Strategy types and their classifications

Strategy type	Strategy name
Metacognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Selective attention ◆ Self-management ◆ Directed-attention
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Translation ◆ Note-taking ◆ Deduction/Induction ◆ Contextualization ◆ Elaboration ◆ Inferencing ◆ Imagery ◆ Summarizing
Social Affective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Questioning for clarification ◆ Cooperation

Validity is a measure of the degree to which the instrument is measuring what it is intended to measure. Reliability, on the other hand, is a measure of the degree to which the same analysis procedure is likely to give consistent results (Gay, 1996). The instruments were subjected to judgment and piloting, as well. All of the semi-structure interview items as well as the strategy questionnaire were validated by a jury of English language specialists. The jury was formed as follows:

1. Seven experienced university professors in TEFL.
2. Three language supervisors.
3. Two evaluation and assessment university professors.

The team was asked to **validate** the content of the instruments concerning their instructions and suitability to the objectives of the research. The team's comments and suggestions were studied carefully, and the necessary modifications were made accordingly. For example, the number of the interview items was five questions; this was reduced later, by the jury, to two questions. Also, the items of the questionnaire, which were initially thirty, were reduced later, by the jury, to nineteen.

The **reliability** of the instruments was field tested and refined through the split-half method on a pilot group of thirty 2nd year students who were randomly chosen from the English language Department (fifteen students) and the Curricula and Instruction Department (fifteen students). The correlation coefficient was found to be 0.90 which was considered to be appropriate to conduct the current study. However, these instruments may not be generalizable to all contexts. Rather, they are intended as adaptable guidelines for foreign language instructors in all their English classes to be used selectively and creatively for various classrooms

scenarios. Some instructors may be hesitant to account for the listening strategies used by students in the classroom of concerns about its efficacy, time constraints, or prior unsuccessful experiences. This study intends to present well articulated and purposeful varied listening strategies.

Procedure

At the outset of the course, students were interviewed first. The purpose of the interview session was for the researcher to establish rapport with students and to assess their listening comprehension skills, such as their former English-language learning experiences and their preceding practice in English-language listening. However, the task of interviewing was not easy, for instance, finding time to schedule the interviews. It was decided that in the interest of a free-flowing relaxed meeting, interviews conducted for the research should not be recorded on a tape-recorder, but rather notes to be taken down by the researcher.

The length of the interview varied from one participant to another and lasted from twenty to thirty minutes. It was noticed that the length of the interviews made with the English major students was longer than that from the interviews by English class teacher participants. The reason is that English class teacher participants were more inclined to criticism, particularly, when they were talking about the major weaknesses of their language.

Results and Discussion

The discussion of the results is organized according to the research questions stated earlier. To answer these questions the researcher integrated quantitative as well as qualitative instruments: namely, the semi-structured interviews as well as the learning strategy questionnaire. To review, the research questions were:

- 1- What types of learning strategies are most frequently used by two groups of 2nd year Mu'tah university students (namely English major EFL students and English class teacher students) in the classroom?
- 2- Are there significant differences in listening comprehension strategies between the two groups?

The following sections present the findings related to research questions involving the learning strategies used by English majors as well as the English class teachers while listening in class.

Results related to the first question

The purpose of the learning strategy questionnaire (see the appendix) was to obtain information on the frequency that the students used different strategies for English listening and language learning. Table 3 displays the mean scores, the standard deviations, and the t-value of both participating groups on each item of the questionnaire.

Table (3): Mean scores, standard deviation and t-value for the two groups

Item	English major students		English class teacher students		Sig.	Degree of freedom	t
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation			
1.	4.375	0.751	4.063	0.840	0.122	62	-1.569
2.	3.781	0.975	3.531	1.164	0.355	62	-0.932
3.	4.219	0.975	3.125	1.238	0.000	62	-3.927
4.	3.844	1.019	3.313	1.355	0.081	62	-1.773
5.	2.781	0.975	3.281	1.114	0.061	62	1.911
6.	3.313	1.256	3.438	1.134	0.677	62	0.418
7.	3.813	1.281	4.156	0.884	0.216	62	1.249
8.	3.594	1.188	4.031	0.967	0.111	62	1.616
9.	3.281	1.373	3.844	0.987	0.065	62	1.881
10.	4.250	0.950	4.156	0.723	0.659	62	-0.444
11.	4.563	0.669	4.156	0.808	0.032	62	-2.191
12.	3.938	0.948	3.719	1.170	0.415	62	-0.821
13.	4.375	0.751	4.094	0.963	0.197	62	-1.303
14.	3.656	1.096	4.094	0.734	0.065	62	1.876
15.	3.906	0.856	4.00	0.842	0.660	62	0.442
16.	3.031	1.204	3.875	0.942	0.003	62	3.122
17.	3.625	1.238	3.594	1.103	0.915	62	-0.107
18.	3.906	1.329	4.250	0.622	0.190	62	1.325
19.	4.500	0.880	3.750	1.136	0.004	62	-2.953

The results of the study showed that both groups of language learners employed a variety of learning strategies as they sought to understand and remember the target language. The data showed that the following strategies were employed by the participants of group one (English major students) foremost: note-taking, elaboration, inductive/deductive, selective attention, directed attention, cooperation, imagery, and inferencing. On the other hand, the strategies which were employed by the participants of group two (English class teacher students) foremost were the following: note-taking, transfer, directed attention, selective attention, and cooperation. It is evident that the common strategies used by both groups tend to be the

Table 4: T-test values for two groups' comparison

Strategy type	English major students		English class teacher students		Sig.	Degree of freedom	t
	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean			
Cognitive	0.514	3.707	0.394	3.750	0.711	62	0.372
Social affective	0.51	4.078	0.704	3.813	0.089	62	-1.728
Metacognitive	0.697	3.969	0.419	3.932	0.801	62	-0.254

It is very clear from Table (4) that all significance values were more than 0.05 for all learning strategies. This pinpointed that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups which may be attributed to strategy type. Also, from the Table, one may note the differences in mean scores between the two groups, again, such differences were not statistically significant. This may be attributed to the small number of the samples.

following: note-taking, directed-attention, selective-attention and cooperation.

Obviously as can be noted from the mean scores, group one participants tend to use more cognitive strategies than the participants of group two. This may be attributed to the fact that Jordanian universities accept only excellent high school scores in English language departments, whereas average high school scores are usually accepted in Curricula and Instruction Departments.

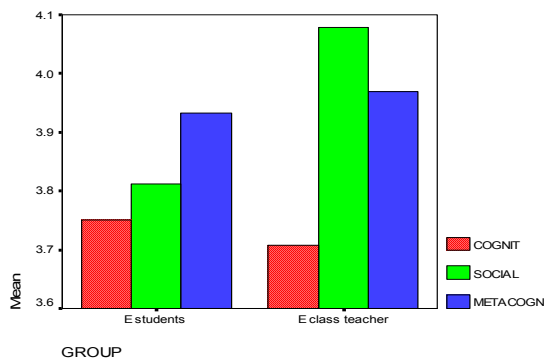
However, group one (English majors) tends to employ more social affective strategies than group two (English class teachers). Many empirical studies confirmed the relationships between the use of language learning strategies and second-language achievement (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Green and Oxford, 1995; Cohen, 1998). Cohen (1998) stated:

No single strategy will be appropriate for all learners or for all tasks, and individual learners can and should apply the various strategies in different ways, according to their personal language learning needs (pp. 266-267).

Furthermore, the results of the present study may be interpreted on the grounds of the idea that students' attitudes towards language learning tend to vary considerably in the light of the teacher who speaks that language. Research studies showed that a positive attitude towards an English class is an important factor in students' second language learning. Cook (1996) stated, "The student's attitudes towards the learning situation as measured by feelings about the classroom teacher and level of anxiety about the classroom contribute towards the student's motivation" (p. 131). To maintain students' positive attitudes, the teacher might consider providing an appropriate input and interaction to the class by allowing the students to express themselves in the classroom.

It was a further interest of this study to compare the learning strategies between the two groups (English major students as well as English class teacher students). Table 4 below presents t-test values for comparing independent samples.

Studying the mean scores of both groups through the chart below displays the idea that English major students (group 1) tend to use the third strategy (social Affective) foremost. Then they prefer the second strategy (cognitive), and lastly the first strategy (metacognitive).



*Estudent: English language student

Eclass teacher: English language teacher

The students participating in this study used all three types of learning strategies to facilitate their comprehension and language learning. Cognitive strategies frequently used by the students were inferencing: using available information to guess meanings of unfamiliar words, resourcing: and note-taking: writing down key words to assist the listening task. Metacognitive strategies used by the students were directed attention: deciding in advance to attend to the listening task and maintaining attention while listening; seeking practice opportunities: Social and affective strategies used by the students in this study were questioning: asking another person to say again or to slow down.

Results related to the second question

The second question of the present research was mostly concerned with differences, if any, in listening comprehension strategies between the two groups (English major EFL students and English class teacher students). Interviews were the tool for eliciting information about the strategies that the students used to facilitate their English listening and understanding. The

outcomes of the interviews regarding the participants' self-assessment of their listening skill in the classroom are listed in Table (5).

Table 5: The participants' self-assessment report during the interviews

Group	Response	Excellent	Average	Weak	Total
English major sts*	Frequency	6	22	4	32
	Percent	18.75%	68.75%	12.5%	100%
English class teacher sts	Frequency	9	21	2	32
	Percent	28.125%	65.625%	6.25%	100%

*sts: students

It can be noted from the participants' reports about their language listening in English classes that they tend to perceive themselves as mostly having average language levels. This explains the reasons why they do not employ metacognitive strategies in language learning.

The participants reported that when they did not understand what instructors were saying, the students generally asked others to repeat what they just said or to speak more slowly. Sometimes, the students asked for the definition or spelling of an unknown word. Following is what the students normally said when they were unable to catch what the researcher said to them.

- Student G:** "Pardon," "Speak more slowly."
- Student D:** "Would you please say that again?"
- Student L:** "Again, please."
- Student K:** "Not too fast," "I'm not following you," "I'm sorry, I don't understand you."
- Student R:** "Excuse me, please. I couldn't catch your speak," "Excuse me, what do you say?"
- Student A:** "Repeat, please."
- Student M:** "Please repeat," "Speak again," "How to say?"

Table 6: Strategies used by both groups to improve their listening ability

	Response	Watch Television	Listen to the Radio	Use Dictionary	Total
Group 1	frequency	22	6	4	32
	Percent	68%	19%	13%	100%
Group 2	frequency	21	2	9	32
	Percent	66%	6%	28%	100%

The results from the interviews showed that all students taking part in the current study tend to spend time watching television every day so that they practiced listening to the target language. The interviews also revealed some learning strategies that the students used in learning English. Most students mentioned using a dictionary to consult meanings when they encountered an unfamiliar word. Some students reported that they usually tried to guess what the other person would say next. Other students, however, generally thought in their own native language (Arabic) when they listened to the target language. Some other students, on the other hand, tried not to translate

between their first language and the second language they were learning. The students' remarks on the strategies that they applied in learning the English language are the following:

- Student M:** *I had to study by myself, watching TV, listening radio, and the tapes.*
- Student F:** *I listen to the verb and the nouns more carefully. . . . First I, uh, use English-English dictionary; and sometimes the explanation I'm very confused, so I learn from Arabic, English-Arabic dictionary . . . to take notes in class.*

Student I: [I think in] Arabic language [when listening].

Student S: I try to hear and think in English so I can answer . . . I speak [English] in my home . . . I use the dictionary [in the classroom], watching TV . . . I don't understand words, I ask my father or other what is that mean.

Student A: . . . I don't want to use dictionary, but sometimes it's-sometimes it's what I want because exactly, I want to exactly know meaning . . . sometimes I use the dictionary, but I cannot bring the dictionary, so just guess-just guess; and then is I ask about something somebody.

Student F: Uh, I use dictionary. I watch T.V.

The study determined that listening to foreign language is a task at a high level of difficulty in cognitive terms, and therefore, demands full attention. This result was reported earlier by Liyanage (2004). In the present study, however, EFL students used various learning strategies in the classroom. Frequently used strategies were paying attention when someone was speaking and asking people to slow down or say again. Some of the common strategies used by both groups tend to be the following: note-taking, directed-attention, selective-attention and cooperation. To practice and improve their listening ability outside the classroom, both groups generally watched television. From the outcomes of the present study, it can be summarized that both of English majors and class teachers used several learning strategies when they listen to language in the classroom. Watching television was the most popular strategy for the students to practice the second-language listening skills outside the classroom.

Learning strategies that the two groups frequently used in order to develop their listening comprehension were: watching television programs spoken in the target language and asking the other person to repeat or slow down if they did not understand something. The results from the learning strategy study, also, revealed the strategies that were rarely used by the students. One learning strategy that was infrequently used by the students in this study was listening to the radio, even though they watched television on a regular basis. Kim (2003) studied how to improve English listening comprehension and pointed out that listening to the radio tends to be one of the most effective ways of improving listening comprehension. Yet unfortunately, the results of the present research showed EFL students (English majors and class teachers) as underestimating the radio as a resource of improving their listening comprehension.

Recommendations

A major recommendation of this study is that greater emphasis on interactive listening promotes the communicative language ability of Jordanian university students of English in their English lessons. Future studies might consider the following directions. Firstly,

the derived categories of the present study may be re-examined by using quantitative methods only such as factor analysis. Secondly, a standardized inventory of listening learning strategies could be created to provide instructors and learners with an efficient way to improve listening strategies (e.g. inventories introduced by: Chamot, 2005; Liyanage, 2004). Thirdly, although the present study focused on listening strategies, strategies for other language skills such as reading, writing, communication, etc., could also be further explored in terms of the difficulties in the strategy acquisition process.

This research study was conducted with only a small group of ESL (64) students at Mu'tah university. As a result, the interpretation and the generalizability of the findings are limited. Future study may be administered to a larger group of students or to several groups of universities so that their listening proficiency level could be interpreted.

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APPENDIX

Listening in class questionnaire

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I write down any new words, phrases or rules my instructor says so I will be sure to remember them.					
2. I ask the instructor questions when I don't understand what s/he is saying.					
3. When I hear a new English word that sounds like an Arabic word, I assume it has a similar meaning.					
4. I find myself translating what the teacher says back into Arabic so I can understand.					
5. When listening to the teacher, I apply grammar rules to help myself understand.					
6. When I hear a new word, I think of a sentence in which I might use it later.					
7. I try to relate what I hear to my own experiences or to information I already know.					
8. I guess the meaning of unfamiliar words by using my knowledge of prefixes and suffixes.					
9. I pay more attention to some words and phrases than to others when the instructor is talking in English.					
10. When I listen, I plan in advance to pay more attention to what the instructor says so I'll be sure to remember them.					
11. When I hear a new English word, I try to learn the instructor's pronunciation by copying or imitating it.					
12. After I listen, I try to summarise mentally what the teacher says to understand better.					
13. When I don't understand what the instructor says, I get help from classmates.					
14. When the instructor speaks, I create a mental image of what I hear.					
15. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.					
16. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.					
17. When I hear English, I try not to translate word-for-word.					
18. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.					
19. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.					