

Listening Strategies Used by Arabic Education Student Teachers: A Survey Study

Maimunah¹, Lenny Marzulina¹, Dian Erlina¹, Annisa Astrid¹, Amirul Mukminin^{2,*}, Akhmad Habibi²,
Nunung Fajaryani², Elfa Eryani³, Retno Wahyu Ningsih³

¹Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teaching Sciences, State Islamic University of Raden Fatah, Indonesia

²Doctoral Program in Education, Universitas Jambi, Indonesia

³Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan-YPM, Indonesia

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Abstract The study aimed to explore the listening strategies used by Arabic education student teachers at one Indonesian Islamic university in Indonesia. The participants were students who were taking and passed in the listening subjects in the Arabic education study program. The total sampling was 564 participants. This study used a quantitative design with a survey approach. The researcher used SPSS to find out the reliability and to describe the percentage and frequency of the data. There were three categories of listening strategies. They were metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. The results showed that the most strategy used by the respondents was metacognitive strategy to increase their ability in listening. In addition, male students tended to use cognitive strategies, while female students focused more on metacognitive strategies in their listening activities. Students of higher institution could use the results of this study as a reference in understanding listening strategies.

Keywords Arabic Education Student Teachers, Listening Strategies, Listening Comprehension

1. Introduction

Listening has an important role in communication. Listening is a process where students must understand grammar structures, and vocabularies to acquire the meaning of the communication (Mianmahaleh & Rahimy, 2015). Additionally, Rivers (1984 as cited in Chelli, 2013) states that listening has 30% to 40% of position in communication. Moreover, according to Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) in daily communication, people spend 45% of time in listening, 30% in speaking, 16% in reading, and only 9% in writing. However, it seems that listening

skill gets less attention than any other skills in language learning. Teachers do not want to spend more time to pay attention to listening skill in order to increase students' ability in listening (Mianmahaleh & Rahimy, 2015). It also proves that the students are not interested in learning listening because many new vocabularies and different dialects make them confused as a result although listening has a vital role in language learning, it is ignored from other skills (Chelli, 2013).

The ignorance of the listening skill in learning a foreign language may prevent language learners from understanding speech in a foreign language, which may finally make learners confused if they cannot comprehend what people intend to express to them. There may be other factors that influence their comprehension, including learning strategies in listening. Listening strategies help students to get success in learning language (Vandergrift, 1997). According to O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, and Kupper (1985), there are three types of learning strategies. The first is metacognitive strategies referring to the all of components of learning process from students such as planning, thinking about the process of learning monitoring, and evaluating of all activities in learning process. The second is cognitive strategies referring to knowledge that students use to learning (making a note, giving a question, and make a summary). The last is social-affective strategies referring to the individual behavior to other persons to get the information in learning process.

The importance of listening strategies in foreign language studies has been documented by several studies (e.g. Al-Alwan, Asassfeh & Al-Shboul, 2013; Bidabadi & Yamat, 2011; Chulim, 2008; Jou, 2010; Mukminin et al., 2018; Teng, 1998; Watthajarukiat, Chatupe, & Sukseemuang, 2012; Yang, 2009). However, the studies of listening strategies for Arabic education student teachers in

developing countries such as Indonesia are hardly found. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill the gap in the literature. Three research questions guiding this study are:

1. What types of listening strategies do Arabic education student teachers at one Indonesian Islamic university use to cope with listening problems?
2. What are the common strategies (frequency) used by Arabic education student teachers?
3. What are the different listening strategies between the male and female Arabic education student teachers?

2. Review of Literature

In learning language, learners need a technique, a strategy, or a tactic to obtain the success in learning a language. Language learning strategies make learners become a competent learners (Rahimi, 2012). According to Bidabadi and Yamat (2013), learning strategies have contributed to success in language learning. "Strategy plays its role as a key factor that influences the English language learning to gain achievement" (Ikeda & Takeuchi, 2006 as cited in Souriyavongsa et al., 2013). In this case, with a language learning strategy as a tool, students could improve their ability in learning language.

There are some experts that explain about types of language learning strategies such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) - metacognitive strategies (advanced organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, and self-evaluation), cognitive strategies (repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, keyword, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, and inference), and socio-affective strategies (cooperation and question for clarification).

In metacognitive, learners plan the strategies, monitor and evaluate strategies in understanding the tasks (Vandergrift, 1990 as cited in Jou, 2010). Meanwhile, Bacon (1992 as cited by Nowrouzi et al., 2014) stated, types of metacognitive strategies are pre-listening strategy, while-listening strategy, and post-listening strategy. According to Nowrouzi et al., (2014), "Pre-listening strategy is the learners' preparation for listening through manipulating the environment, focusing attention, applying advance organizer, selecting attention, and deciding to think in English." While-listening strategy is the learners' focuses on monitoring their listening and attracting their attention, post-listening strategy is the evaluation of their understanding in listening. Additionally, Vandergrift (1997) states that cognitive strategy is the specific way from the students' self to learn the lesson such as making an important note or summary, and trying to find the meaning of difficult words to get the information from the speakers. Cognitive strategy is divided in two categories; they are top-down and bottom-up processing strategy (National Capital Language Resource Center,

2004 as cited in Nowrouzi et al., 2014). Top-down processing strategy refers to predicting what the speaker says by the signal given (Jou, 2010). In top-down processing strategy, students guess the meaning from the topic and also make a summary about what a speaker says while bottom-up processing strategy is a process of understanding the meaning of sound by finding out the meaning of word, semantic content, and syntactic level (Suwarni, 2014). For social-affective strategy, it is divided in social strategy and affective strategy (Bacon, 1992 as cited in Nowrouzi et al., 2014). Social strategy refers to sharing the idea to others to get the comprehension in listening and affective strategy refers to learners' confidence during the listening process (Vandergrift, 1997).

A number of studies have documented related the importance of listening strategies in English as a second or foreign language. For example, Teng (1998) elaborated that compensation strategies were more frequently used by the students in the research followed by cognitive, metacognitive, memory, and social strategies. The least strategy used by the students was affective strategies. Also, Jou (2010) found that the students prepared their mind to concentrate before listening, the students had troubles when speakers had different accents while listening, and also the students evaluated about how far they understood about the material after listening. In another study, it was found that all students used their thinking in learning process, planning strategies for learning, paying attention to the main points and paying attention to details in the listening task (Bidabadi & Yamat, 2011). Meanwhile, Wathajarukiat, Chatupe, and Sukseemuang (2012) found there was no significance between MAS (students group who had the highest score) and LAS (students group who had the lowest score) in using the strategies. Additionally, Chelli's (2013) study in Turkey found that the students often guessed the meaning of some words if they cannot understand; sometimes they asked to peers. There were no significances in English listening strategies for students (Ghoneim, 2013). Ratebi and Amirian (2013) found that 40 students were in higher group and 20 students were in lower group based on the scores of the students in IELTS test. The highest level of metacognitive awareness was problem solving, and directed attention in the second highest frequently, the third was the mental translation and the fourth was planning evaluation and the lowest level of metacognitive awareness was personal knowledge. Nowrouzi, Shim, Zareian, and Nimehchisalem (2014) found all of participants had low level of their perceived strategies in using listening comprehension.

3. Method

We used a quantitative method with a survey approach to investigate the strategies students used in listening comprehension. Quantitative method is an approach used

to describe a research problem from the data with a statistical analysis and the result is compared with previous studies (Cresswell, 2012). We chose one Indonesian public Islamic university. To get access in obtaining the data, we asked permission from the stake holders; dean of school of education and head of the program. The sample of this study was Arabic education student teachers (564) of one Indonesian Islamic university. They were 432 female respondents (76.6%) and 132 male respondents (23.4%). In terms of semester, 126 participants were in the second semester (22.3%), 114 participants in the fourth semester (20.2%), 324 participants were the sixth semester students (57.5%).

We used a questionnaire for data collection. Questionnaire is the instrument which all parts have a relation with a topic that researcher chooses. Then all of the participants should answer it or choose with their knowledge (Creswell, 2012). In questionnaire the researchers obtained the information about the attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, values, interests, opinions, and other information from the participants that had relation with the topic and it became the results of a study. The questionnaire of this research was adapted from previous studies that had the same topic (Jou, 2010; Wathajarukiat, Chatupote, & Suksemuang, 2012; Abdalhamid, 2012). The strategies in the instrument are divided into three categories, metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. We used close-ended questions. Likert scales were used with five options; SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree), SD (Strongly Disagree). Besides, we addressed demographic questionnaires to know the respondents' background. The questionnaire was piloted to find out the reliability of the questionnaire. The score of reliability of the questionnaire was 0.909 (reliable). The standard point of reliability was 0.7 based on Cronbach alpha.

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the data of the respondents' demographic background and questionnaire. According to Cozby and Bates (2012, p. 245), "descriptive statistics allow researchers to make precise statements about the data". According to Dornyei (2003), "Descriptive statistics are used to summarize sets of numerical data in order to conserve time and space" (p. 114). In other words, descriptive statistics has a goal to set of data become a good form in presenting the data. We used SPSS to analyze the data. From the data gained in questionnaire, we found the frequency regarding the strategies used by Arabic education student teachers in listening comprehension. The frequency may arrange the data and also gave the ranked from the lower until higher strategies that is chosen by the students (Johnson &

Christensen, 2008).

4. Findings

4.1. Metacognitive Strategy

The metacognitive strategies in this study are pre-listening strategy, while-listening strategy, and post-listening strategy. First, pre-listening strategies are the ways students prepare before listening. In pre-listening strategies, the survey of this study included five statements (see Table 1). The data showed that statement "I clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening task and/or propose strategies for handling it" got the highest percentage of agreement (86.36%) or 420 participants. As many as 384 participants (68.09%) agreed on "Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen." In addition, 360 participants (69.15%) agreed the statements, "Before listening, I request myself to make progress", and "Before listening, I prepare my mind to concentrate". And the last is "Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to," gained most participants' (258) strong agreement.

The data showed that in while-listening, the highest percentage is "I try to pay full attention to and concentrate on what I am listening to; especially when I do not understand it" with 71.78% (402 participants) who chose "agree." as many as 64.68% (360 participants) agreed that "While listening, I will check what part of content I do not understand". The statement, "While listening, I will double check again for my answer" was agreed by 348 participants (61.70%). Three-hundred and twenty-four respondents agreed that they were aware of their inattention and correct it while doing listening test. The last statement "I decide in advance to selectively listen to some parts of the whole text" was agreed by 258 participants (45.74%).

For post reading, the statement "After listening, I reflect on my problems, such as the key words that I do not understand", and "After listening, I evaluate how much I could understand" is agreed by 70.21% (396 participants). As many as 372 (65.59%) respondents agreed "After Listening, I think back to the quality of my strategy use (for example planning, inferencing). The statement "After listening, I think back to how I listened and about what I might do differently next time" was agreed by 50.00% of the respondents. "I will write down the words I do not know after the listening test and look up the dictionary" was agreed by 258 participants (45.74%).

Table 1. Metacognitive strategy

Strategy	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
(Metacognitive strategy) Pre-listening	I clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening task and/or propose strategies for handling it.	30	420	54	54	6
	Before listening, I prepare my mind to concentrate	204	360	12	6	0
	Before listening, I request myself to make progress	126	360	30	18	0
	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to	258	168	78	42	30
	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen	96	384	42	36	6
While-Listening	While listening, I do not understand if I am unfamiliar with speakers' accents	66	258	96	126	18
	While listening, I will check what part of content I do not understand	72	360	54	60	12
	While listening, I will double check again for my answer	126	348	18	48	24
	I am aware of my inattention and correct it while doing listening test	90	324	42	120	6
	I try to listen for specific details to see whether I can understand them	102	402	30	24	6
Post- Listening	After listening, I think back to how I listened and about what I might do differently next time.	96	282	72	108	18
	After Listening, I think back to the quality of my strategy use (for example planning, inferencing) and about how I can do better next time.	126	372	42	24	0
	After listening, I reflect on my problems, such as the key words that I do not understand	102	396	36	30	0
	After listening, I evaluate how much I could understand	108	396	24	24	12
	I will write down the words I do not know after the listening test and look up the dictionary	90	258	78	108	30

4.2. Cognitive Strategy

Cognitive strategy in this study is divided in two categories: they are bottom-up and top-down strategy (see Table 2). The highest percentage in bottom-up was “I take notes of main points and keywords” with 60% of the respondents agreed with the statement. The statement “while listening, I piece things together from the details” was agreed by 59.57% of the respondents (360). “While listening, I will notice the questions with who, how, when, where and what in the content” was agreed by 276 respondents (48.94%). The statement “While listening, I try to understand each word” was agreed by 288 respondents (51.01%), and the last is “While listening, I repeat words or phrases softly or mentally” with 43.62% of participants.

For top-down strategies, the highest statement was “I try to think in English instead of Indonesia” with 70.21% (396 respondents). The statement, “I make guess about the topic based on what has already been said” was agreed by 69.15% (390 respondents). “I listen for main ideas first and then details” with 68.09%. “I predict or make hypotheses on text by titles” with 58.19%. The last is “I can guess the meaning based on the context” with 57.45% of participants for “agree” option.

Table 2. Cognitive strategy

Strategy	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Cognitive Strategy Bottom-up	While listening, I will notice the questions with who, how, when, where and what in the content.	102	276	36	108	24
	While listening, I try to understand each word	114	288	54	96	12
	While listening, I repeat words or phrases softly or mentally	66	246	78	156	18
	While listening, I piece things together from the details	36	336	78	72	12
	I take notes of main points and keywords	132	360	24	42	6
Top-down	I listen for main ideas first and then details	102	384	12	42	6
	I predict or make hypotheses on text by titles	42	300	90	132	0
	I can guess the meaning based on the context	72	324	72	84	12
	I try to think in English instead of Indonesia	90	396	48	30	0
	I make guess about the topic based on what has already been said	90	390	18	54	12

4.3. Socio-Affective Strategy

For socio affective strategy, there were two strategies discussed; social strategy and affective strategy. For social strategy, most of the students (63.83% or 360 respondents) agreed with the statement “I ask others for feedback on how to solve my listening problems.” The statement “After listening, I ask my classmates or teacher question I do not understand” was agreed by 62.77% (354 respondents). As many as 360 respondents (59.57%) agreed with the statement, “I hope teachers can teach me more skills to improve my listening comprehension.” The statement “If I do not understand what someone says in English, I ask them to repeat what they said” was agreed by 330 respondents (58.51%). The statement, “I practice listening and speaking in English with my friends” was opted “agree” by 52.13% of the respondents.

For affective strategy, the statement “I try to relax myself, breathe deeply, meditate, and clear my mind while listening” was agreed by 67.02% (378 respondents). The statement “I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English” with 59.57% of the respondents’ agreement. The statement “I encourage myself through positive-self talk” was agreed by 58.51% of the respondents. Two statements; “I am confident in understanding the whole contents” and “While listening, I can keep calm and not be nervous” in option “agree” were agreed by 294 respondents and 270 respondents.

Table 3. Socio-affective strategy

Strategy	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Socio-affective Strategy Social strategy	If I do not understand what someone says in English, I ask them to repeat what they said	114	330	54	54	6
	After listening, I ask my classmates or teacher question I do not understand	84	354	48	60	12
	I hope teachers can teach me more skills to improve my listening comprehension	216	336	12	0	0
	I ask others for feedback on how to solve my listening problems	108	360	60	24	12
	I practice listening and speaking in English with my friends.	120	294	78	48	18
Affective strategy	While listening, I can keep calm and not be nervous	120	270	72	78	24
	I am confident in understanding the whole contents	120	294	78	48	12
	I encourage myself through positive-self talk	96	330	54	78	6
	I try to relax myself, breathe deeply, meditate, and clear my mind while listening.	108	378	18	42	12
	I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English	150	330	30	12	12

4.4. Listening Strategies by Gender

The findings of the study found that there were 61.10% of female participants who chose “agree” in “metacognitive strategy”, 21.10% of female participants chose “strongly agree”, 8.33% of female participants chose “disagree”, 7.77% of female participants chose “not sure”, and 1.67% of female participants chose “strongly disagree.” The data showed that 58.78% of male participants chose “agree” for “metacognitive strategy”, “strongly agree” was chosen by 14.84% of male participants, “disagree” was chosen by 13.63% of male participants, 10.30% of male participants chose “not sure”, and 2.45% of male participants chose “strongly disagree”.

For cognitive strategy, the data show that 58.89% of female participants chose “agree”, and followed by 16.25% of female participants chose “strongly agree”, 13.05% of female participants chose “disagree”, “not sure” was chosen by 9.44% of female participants, and “strongly disagree” was chosen by 1.94% of female participants for “cognitive strategy” The data above described that 60.90% of male participants chose “agree”, and followed by 19.30% of male participants chose

“disagree”, 10.90% of male participants chose “strongly agree”, “not sure” was chosen by 6.99% of male participants, and “strongly disagree” was chosen by 1.81% of male participants for “cognitive strategy”.

The data showed that 58.61% of female participants chose “agree” for “socio-affective strategy”, “strongly agree” was chosen by 21.94% of female participants, 9.03% of female participants chose “not sure”, “disagree” was chosen by 7.63% of female participants, 2.64% of female participants chose “strongly disagree” and 0.15% of female participants not answer the questions. On the other hand, 55% of male participants chose “agree”, and followed by 19.09% of male participants chose “strongly agree”, 14.09% of male participants chose “disagree”, “not sure” was chosen by 8.63% of male participants, and “strongly disagree” was chosen by 3.19% of male participants for “socio-affective strategy”.

5. Discussion

Metacognitive strategy is one of the strategies that demand students to prepare the strategies by themselves in

learning listening. Students plan the strategies, monitor, and evaluate the strategies in understanding the task which refers to metacognitive strategy (Jou, 2010). From the data, the statement “I clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening task and/or propose strategies for handling it” was the most strategy students used in listening. It differs from the result of the research conducted by Jou (2010) where most of the students prepare their mind to concentrate before listening. In this study, before the students joined the listening process, they should have a step or measure to get success in listening. Bidabadi and Yamat (2013) state that the learners who prepare before can help their understanding in learning process and also give the good effect for them. Before the students started the listening, they should prepare themselves related to the listening skill such as preparing the vocabulary and grammar which sometimes become a big problem in listening. Jou (2010) found in his study that the students who had lack of knowledge about grammar and vocabulary led them to have bad results of their listening tasks.

For while-listening strategy that relates to how students monitor their strategies while they are listening, particularly, Abdalhamid (2012) states that in while-listening, students monitor their ways in listening process. From the data of this study, students’ most used strategy was “I try to pay full attention to and concentrate on what I am listening to, especially when I do not understand it.” It means that students focused on what speaker said to easily understand about the speaker’s speaking. The result of this study is similar to Chulim’s (2008) findings where the data showed that the students were worried to miss their focuses and they concentrated more on listening the words making them to not understand the ideas of the talk. The findings in the post reading show that most of students had problems with vocabularies; to know the unknown vocabularies, the students should open their dictionary, but in this case the students could not open the dictionary in the listening process. The studies by Jou (2010) and Lin (2000) found similar results where students having lack of vocabularies faced a problem in post listening.

For cognitive strategies that are divided in two categories; bottom-up and top-down strategies. The result of this study indicated that taking notes was the highest statement chosen by the respondents as one of the bottom-up strategies. The result is in line with the finding of the study done by Chelli (2013) who revealed that most strategy used by the student in the study was taking notes. Furthermore, Watthajarukiat et al. (2012) in their study found that when the student took notes, they would remember the information longer. Meanwhile, Chulim (2008) found that taking a note was the least strategy chosen by the respondents. For the top-down strategy, the results of this study revealed that “trying to think English instead of Indonesia” was the most chosen item by the students suggesting that when learning something, they

tried to focus on the topic to succeed in learning, especially in learning language (Jou, 2010).

For the socio-affective strategy which refers to the environments that have a role play to increase the students’ ability in listening (Mianmahaleh et al., 2015). In socio-affective strategies, there are two categories, they are social and affective strategies. In social strategies, the students need peers to help them when they have a problem to share the idea to get the meaning of the listening topic. In this study, the students asked the others to help them and got the feedback from the others as the most strategy used by the respondents. These strategies were chosen in order to increase their understanding in listening. The findings of the study are in line with what Jou (2010) found that students shared the idea and got the conclusion on how to cope their problems in listening. The last strategies in socio-affective strategies are affective strategies referring to the self-confidence of the students. For this strategy, most of students need a concentration while they are in the listening process. It also helps the students enjoy listening and getting more focuses on the listening.

On the other hand, in this study, it was found that male and female participants had different strategies. Based on the data from figure 40 until figure 46 showed that female participants most frequently used “*metacognitive strategy*” with 61.10%, and followed by “*cognitive strategy*” with 58.89%, and last was “*socio-affective strategy*” with 58.61% for the option of “agree”. It is different from male students who often used “*cognitive strategies*” with 60.90%, followed by “*metacognitive strategies*” with 58.78%, and the last was “*socio-affective*” strategies with 55%. The findings of this study showed that there were different strategies that male and female students used to increase their ability in listening. Female students were more organized about what should they did before listening, monitored while-listening, and after listening process. They evaluated about what they had done in listening and what should the do after it. Male students chose cognitive strategy, where they used their knowledge spontaneously to solve the problem in listening without planning before listening. So, there was a different strategy that was used by female students and male students in listening comprehension. This finding implied that all of strategies that male and female participants used in the listening activities was not always efficient and successful; it is based on the ability of the students in using the strategy actively (Mianmahaleh, 2015).

6. Conclusions

The study aimed to explore the listening strategies used by Arabic education student teachers at one Indonesian Islamic university in Indonesia. The participants were students who were taking and passed in the listening subjects in the Arabic education study program. There

were three categories of listening strategies. They were metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. The results showed that the most strategy used by the respondents was metacognitive strategy to increase their ability in listening. In addition, male students tended to use cognitive strategies while female students focused more on metacognitive strategies in their listening activities.

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