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***Investigating the Use of Cognitive Inferencing
Listening Strategies to Learn Vocabulary
The Case of Third Year Students in the Department of
English at MMUTO.***

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to

My beloved parents

My sweet sisters

My dear brothers

My cute friend Sabrina

All my friends and those who love me

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Abstract

The present research is concerned with the investigation of the English language learners' use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies to improve vocabulary learning. Third year students, option: Linguistics and ESP at Mouloud Mammeri University have been taken as a case for this study. It aims at investigating whether the inferencing listening strategies are used by third year students to learn vocabulary. This research relies on Vandergrift's taxonomy (1997) of listening strategies. This study, in fact, is based on mixed method research. It combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. Therefore, two different research instruments are used. A questionnaire is distributed to fifty five students and an interview is conducted with three teachers of the listening module. SPSS was used for statistical data analysis and a qualitative content analysis theory is adopted to interpret and explain the results of the interview. The results revealed that third year students view listening as an interesting component of foreign language learning. Also, it is concluded that students are somehow aware of the implementation of the cognitive inferencing listening strategies to improve the learning process as well as the acquisition and the storage of the lexical items. Furthermore, the findings indicate that students tend to employ some strategies and neglect others. The paralinguistic inferencing strategies and linguistic inferencing strategies are given more importance than the voice inferencing, extra-linguistic inferencing and inferencing between- parts strategies.

Key Words:

Listening, Listening comprehension, Listening strategies, Inferencing Strategies.

List of Abbreviations

ALM: Audio-lingual Method

BUP: Bottom-up Processing

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

DM: Direct Method

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

GTM: Grammar-Translation Method

HP: Hypothesis

LC: Listening Comprehension

L1: Mother Tongue

L2: Second Language

LLS: Language Learning Strategies

MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

Q: Question

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

S/FL: Second or Foreign Language Learning

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Listening comprehension has historically received only minimal treatment in teaching English as a foreign language; however, it remains one of the most prominent skills in language learning (Berne, 1998; Clement, 2007; Oxford, 1993; Rubin, 1994). Learning a second or foreign language requires different language skills among them the listening skill. Feyten's (1991) study claims that more than forty five (45%) communication is spent on listening. The latter is considered as the first skill that a child acquires and it includes all the aspects of language: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, accent, etc. Thus, it helps to develop the other skills: speaking, reading, and writing (Oxford, 1990).

Listening comprehension is defined by many scholars as an act of hearing, decoding, and understanding the meaning of what has been taught during the listening comprehension activities (Vandergrift, 2011). Listening comprehension has gained the interest of educators, especially those dealing with foreign and second language learning and teaching (Morley, 1999). It is considered to be one way for learning vocabulary. To facilitate the acquisition of lexical items, some listening comprehension strategies should be taught (Goh, 2000) so as to improve learners' vocabulary listening competence. In English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) learning vocabulary items plays a vital role in all language skills .i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing (Nation, 2001). Thus, teachers should realize that teaching English vocabulary is something new and different from student's native language. They moreover need to prepare good strategies and suitable material in order to get the target of language teaching (Alqahtani, 2005).

Because authentic materials, which refer to oral and written language materials used in daily situations by the native speakers of the language (Rogers and Medley, 1988), are rarely used; learners do not acquire the English lexical items as done in L1. Consequently, cognitive inferencing listening strategies are required when dealing with specific vocabulary listening

selection. The inspection of cognitive inferencing listening strategies is not a new one. Many research have been conducted about this notion. Among them the study of Jones (2003) called 'Supporting Listening Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition with Multimedia Annotations'. She found that English college- students of French that were tested with verbal and visual annotation scored the best. In this respect, learners are in need of both linguistic and non-linguistic signals that facilitate to them the learning of vocabulary items because the combination of verbal language with the so called non- verbal language (the gesture, body movements, facial expression...) enhances the acquisition of foreign language vocabulary. There are also other research such as the one of Rost and Ross(1991) who investigated the listening comprehension of Japanese-speaking English learners at four levels(beginners, elementary, intermediate and advanced).They found that intermediate and advanced levels who were regarded as proficient learners employ inferencing strategies(forward inferences) than the others. Another research of this kind has been conducted by Chao (1997) who examined the strategies use of 229 Chinese-Speaking learners of English. He concludes that advanced learners use inferencing strategies more frequently than the beginning and intermediate learners. Thus, inferencing strategies are of paramount importance for all the four skills of the foreign language, specifically for L2 listeners. All these studies have investigated listening comprehension strategies with regard to inferencing strategy as one way to learn and acquire the foreign language vocabulary. This is done only through making predictions and guesses about the linguistic input. Indeed, inferencing strategies are of a great help to L2 students to ameliorate their vocabulary learning.

This dissertation therefore is a case study that aims at identifying the cognitive inferencing listening strategies used by third year students in the department of English at MMUTO to improve learning new lexical items. Then it tries to find out which strategies are used more by the learners.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The overall aim of this study is to determine whether the cognitive inferencing listening strategies are used by third year students to enhance their vocabulary learning. That is, it investigates EFL students' ability to activate certain strategies to comprehend the aural input to learn vocabulary successfully. The main reason behind focusing on the acquisition of vocabulary is driven by personal interest in the way EFL students learn vocabulary. The objective of the study is to identify the cognitive inferencing strategies used by third year students in the department of English to improve the acquisition of new lexical items. This research is original because there is no previous research conducted at the level of the department of English regarding this issue. This dissertation, then, will help us to gain a deeper understanding to what extent the use of listening comprehension strategies helps to learn new vocabulary and improve learners' lexical competence.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

A focus on investigating the use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies raises forcefully some fundamental research questions:

Q1. Do third year students use cognitive inferencing listening strategies to improve learning new vocabulary?

Q2. What are the cognitive inferencing listening strategies used by the third year students?

In attempt to answer these research questions, we advance the following hypotheses:

Hp1: Third year students use cognitive inferencing listening strategies to improve learning new vocabulary.

Hp2: Third year students do not use cognitive inferencing listening strategies to improve learning new vocabulary.

Hp3: Third year students' use linguistic, voice, paralinguistic, extra-linguistic, and inferencing between- parts strategies.

Research Techniques and Methodology

To conduct this research, we adopt a Mixed Research Method which consists of combining both quantitative and qualitative methods for the collection and analysis of data. The quantitative method will help in collecting numerical data while the qualitative method will be used to gather and analyze qualitative data. The research data are gathered both from third year students and teachers of the listening module at the department of English at MMUTO.

Structure of the Dissertation

The present dissertation follows the traditional complex model. It consists of a general introduction, four sections and a general conclusion. The introduction presents the general topic of the study, states the issue of the research, the aim and significance, and the organization of the dissertation. The first chapter is labelled "*Review of the Literature*" the second chapter is named "*Research Design*" introduces the procedures of data collection and data analysis. The third chapter is called "*Presentation of the Findings*". It is concerned with the results reached after collecting and analyzing the data. The fourth and the last one entitled "*Discussion of the Findings*" discusses and interprets the findings included in the previous section (Presentation of the Findings), and tries to bring answers to the research questions. The general conclusion provides an overall summary of the important points of the research.

Chapter 1: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter reviews the main concepts and terminology related to cognitive listening strategies, and their importance in vocabulary learning. It is designed to account for major works related to the theories of listening skill and listening strategies. It starts with the definition of listening and its teaching and learning in a second/foreign language context. Next, it describes the bottom-up and top-down processes. In addition, it tackles the learning and listening strategies as well as their types. Finally, this chapter deals with the theoretical framework to be used in this research.

1- Defining Listening

Listening as a fundamental language skill is a crucial process of language learning. Different definitions have been given by many scholars and to shed light on how listening comprehension has a significant role in enhancing second/foreign language acquisition. Listening is usually viewed as synonymous with listening comprehension (Richards, 2008: 18). The listening skill is a vital and an important part in second and foreign language learning. It has a significant role not only in acquiring the mother language, but also in learning second/foreign languages; hence, this receptive skill has gained a prominent role in teaching and learning second/ foreign languages. Nunan (1998) states that listening is the basic skill in language learning. Vandergrift (1999: 168) also claims that:

Listening comprehension is anything but a passive activity. It is a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance.

As described above, although listening comprehension is a passive activity, it is an active process. This means that, learners do not only receive the linguistic input and contribute in the learning process because they are able to construct the meaning of the oral input by

discriminating sounds, deciphering the lexical items, comprehending the syntactical structures, as well as interpreting stress and intonation. All these are retained and interpreted from the socio-cultural context. Although listening and hearing are used interchangeably, they are distinctive. While hearing is the process that permits listeners to perceive sound waves, listening is the process that depends on hearing and eventually listeners make use of understanding and decoding the input. As defined by Rost (2011: 103) listening is “*the intentional process of trying to make sense of the input, usually input that has an oral component*”. Rost (2002: 47) affirms that listening is:

a process of receiving what the speaker actually says (receptive orientation), constructing and representing meaning (constructive orientation), negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding (collaborative orientation), and creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy (transformative orientation).

This means that it is viewed that the listening skill promotes the development of different aspects of language, accordingly, the communicative language competence. In the past, many approaches have ignored the listening comprehension as part of S/FL teaching and learning. It was till the 1980s that listening has gained a central position in teaching and learning S/F languages (Morley, 2001). Then, learners were no longer viewed as passive listeners but active (Vandergrift, 1999). Currently, many classroom language laboratories provide various equipments and instructional tools and materials that facilitate the teaching and learning process (Boulfelfel, 2016). This is for the sake of supplying learners with an L1 environment since the L1 is acquired by means of every day listening. Therefore, the facts that normal children have internalized and acquired their mother tongue without relying on the other skills, especially reading and writing, has led many scholars and researchers to value listening comprehension (LC) as the most integral skill for S/ FL learners. Eventually, it should be studied for its own sake. Nowadays, many universities have integrated listening as a vital language skill that should be surrounded with a special environment such as language laboratory. The use of authentic materials including audio-visual aids has become a necessity

as the social aspects of learning and has become more important (Arosenius, 2011). It is true that the S/ FL learning is not easy as first language acquisition, but many studies prove that learning listening comprehension to communicate in S/ FL is a clue to develop all aspects of language: phonology, lexis, morphology, pronunciation, and syntax, etc (Oxford, 1990). This receptive skill is an ongoing process that makes learners good communicators and productive participants in S/ FL. As Nancy and Bruce (1988: 1) assert that *“Listening is the first language mode that children acquire. It provides a foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, and it plays a life-long role in the processing of learning and communication essential for productive participation in life.”*

The four skills of language learning are viewed as complementary; however, as emphasized by many researchers listening is the most used among the other language skills. Strickland (1957: 116) study asserts that *“listening is the first skill to operate in the life of the normal individual and the one he uses more than any other”*. Therefore, learners who spend much more time enhancing the receptive input have more chance to improve their foreign language learning and hence communicative competence. Holden (2004) adds that the biggest proportion in communication is spent on listening (40-50%) to understand the spoken language to act appropriately in any conversation. This fact explains the crucial role of listening in the learning process.

2. Background of Teaching Listening Comprehension

Listening itself is an active mental process. As argued by Vandergrift (2002: 2) listening comprehension is *“an invisible mental process”*. Listeners receive and try to comprehend or make sense of the message they hear at the same time. Thus, the teaching of listening should be emphasized since it helps students to actively understand the listening input; and provide them with vital linguistic information about grammar, vocabulary, and

pronunciation as well as the cultural context of the target culture. In addition, Helgesen, (2003: 24) asserts that:

Listening is very active. As people listen they process not only what they hear but also connect it to other information they already know. Since listeners combine what they hear with what their own ideas and experiences, in a very real sense they are “creating and meaning” in their own minds.

This means that listening is an active process because listeners associate the linguistic input with their background knowledge to reach reasonable interpretations.

2.1. The Monolingual Approaches to Teaching Listening Comprehension

Before the 1970s, listening was only viewed as a receptive skill in language learning (Johnson, 2008). In fact, “*students...listened to repeat and develop a better pronunciation*” (Vandergrift, 2011: 24). This means that listening was taught by implementing a monolingual approaches such as the Grammar -Translation Method (GTM), the Direct Method (DM), and the Audio-lingual Method (ALM).The students had no role in the learning and acquisition of second/ foreign language; they were regarded as vessels that should be filled. Accordingly, they do not take part in the learning process since the teacher is the authority in the class.

The aim of Grammar-translation method was to teach the second / foreign language to have access to its literature and not communication or developing students’ linguistic competence. Thus, the listening skill was totally ignored (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The Direct method (known as both the natural method and the conversational method) also restricted the teaching of listening to listening and answering questions. Contrary to both the GTM and the DM, no interest was given to listening as an active process. The Audio-lingual method or the Osmosis Approach brought into language teaching and learning new ways of presenting foreign/ second language, and that was the language laboratories. The latter is based on the tape-recording to emphasize the pronunciation through drills and dialogues. Besides, aural fluency was stressed in this method as Richards and Rodgers (2001: 58) claim “*the teaching of listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary are all*

related to aural fluency”. This method has dominated the teaching and learning of foreign languages between the 1960s until the 1970s. Indeed, the 1980s is the period when listening has received a central role in functional language and communicative approach instructional frameworks (Morley, 2001). Much more attention was given to the receptive input all through the 1990s (Osada, 2004). Today, listening comprehension is viewed as being an essential part of language learning (Morley, 2001).

2.2. The Impact of Krashen’s Theory on Teaching Listening

Krashen’s theory of the Input Hypothesis (1982, 1985) drew attention to listening as a prominent skill at the early phases of language learning (Asher, 1988). This theory states that learners acquire foreign language following the same path they acquire their mother tongue. It is through exposure to oral discourse. Consequently, the field of second and foreign language acquisition witnessed a shift in SLA studies which looked at listening from a cognitive theory perspective. Therefore, it provides L2 teachers with the means to design and teach listening lessons that encourage practice rather than testing (Mendelsohn, 1995, 2006). That is to say, cognitive theory perspective makes learners active by teaching them how to discriminate sounds, identify words, and sentence structures (forms).

2.3. Communicative Language Teaching

It is until the emergence of Communicative Approach, more precisely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that listening gained an important role in the learning process thanks to the integration of the four language skills. As a result, CLT promotes listening, speaking, reading and writing since they are taught together in a given task. However, in oral communication activities, which include both listening and speaking, the focus was mostly on the speaking skill. Listening was taught just to assist students to participate in the communication activities to develop their mental capacities and to communicate in the target

language appropriately. Thus, language listeners did not have enough chance to learn how to process and monitor the listening input they receive.

2.4. Task-Based Approach

In this approach, students have gained an active role. They were encouraged to listen to real life tasks and to use some strategies that are called holistic inferential strategies. These strategies do not seek for the whole understanding of the linguistic input rather what is important is that listeners come up with outcomes to complete the task. As Kumaravadevilu (1991: 100) reinforces *“In the context of task-based pedagogy the learning outcome is the result of an unpredictable interaction between the task and the task situation”*. This approach deals with problem solving tasks to help students develop listening comprehension strategies and use them unconsciously in daily life situation. This means that this approach has stressed a little the importance of listening strategies.

2.5. Learner Strategy Approach

After the emergence of learner strategy –approach, listeners became independent learners because this new approach, which is still used nowadays, encourages learners’ autonomy in learning foreign and second languages. As Gardner and Miller (1996: 23) assert *“autonomous learners are those who initiate the planning and the implementation of their own learning program”*. From this we infer that autonomous learners are allowed to make their own decisions and the strategy they prefer to use to complete a listening task. In fact, Mendelsohn (1994) states that strategy-based approach encourages students to find out which strategy fit the situation. Mendelsohn (1994: 116) states that *“all too often, the fact that we listen to different things in different ways is overlooked in listening courses for second-language speaker”*.

3. Listening Processes

Bottom-up processing (BUP) and Top-down processing (TDP) are two distinct processes involved in listening comprehension.

3.1. Bottom-up Processing

In his book, Vandergrift (2002: 2) states that listeners use BUP *“when they use linguistic knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. They build meaning from lower level sounds to words to grammatical relationships to lexical meaning in order to arrive at the final message.”* This implies that to understand the oral message, it is important for listeners to integrate all the aspects of language: phonetics, phonology, prosodic, lexis, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Osada, 2004). In other words, foreign language listeners rely on language knowledge to understand the meaning of the message. Thus, to decipher the message of the linguistic input, listeners should decode all the aspects of language.

3.2. Top-Down Processing

TDP is defined by Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002: 197) as: *“going from whole to part, and focused on interpretation of meaning rather than recognition of sounds, words and sentences. Listeners actively formulate hypotheses as to speaker’s meaning, and confirm or modify them where necessary.”* In the same line with this, the schemata theory claims that: *“the process of comprehension is guided by the idea that input is overlaid by the pre-existing knowledge in an attempt to find a match”* (Lingzhu, 2003: 1). That is to say, TDP differs from BUP. The former is the process that listeners adopt by using background knowledge to infer, and comprehend an utterance. The latter is the process that learners use to infer the meaning of an utterance from sounds, words, syntactical relationships, stress and intonation. However, according to Vandergrift (1997) both TDP and BUP are considered complementary because the learners need both of them to better understand a message.

4. Definition of Strategy

The word strategy goes back to the 19th century. This word has its origins in the French language, from the word “*strategie*” and the Greek “*stategia*” which signifies generalship. It means the planning of action made for long term and the desired goal. The word strategy is employed in various fields such as military, economics, business, etc. However, in language learning the word strategy is considered as synonymous with “techniques”, “tactics” and “skills” (Ammam and Touat, 2015). As reported by Rubin (1975), strategies are techniques that a learner employ to acquire knowledge.

5. Learning Strategies

In S/FL learning strategies are defined as “*The special thoughts or behaviors that individual uses to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information*” (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990: 1). Oxford (1990) highlights the importance of using learning strategies to develop and promote the S/ FL learning. According to her, learners who employ different techniques when dealing with foreign language skills have the opportunity to develop their communicative competence autonomously. As Oxford(1990: 49) claims that “ *Learning strategies are behaviors that help learners become more fluent in what they already know [and] may lead learners to gain new information about what is appropriate or permissible in target language.*” Unlike O’Malley (1990) and his colleagues who classify the learning strategies into three types: meta-cognitive, cognitive, and social strategies, Oxford’s (1990) classification comprises six categories to facilitate the learning of S/ FL skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), hence communication in S/ FL. The sixth types of learning strategies include:

Memory strategies: these are related to how students remember language.

Cognitive strategies: these are concerned with how students think about their learning.

Compensation strategies: these enable students to make up for limited knowledge.

Meta-cognitive strategies: these are related to how students manage their own learning.

Affective strategies: related to students 'feeling.

Social strategies: involve learning by interaction with others.

Vandergrift (1997) has proposed a taxonomy that includes only three types of the listening strategies which are cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. Each type of these three strategies has a sub-list of listening strategies; Cognitive listening strategies are the type of strategies that learners use to manipulate the language mentally. Therefore, learning to store vocabulary through listening to foreign material recording necessitates the use of inferencing strategies. The latter involve five sub-strategies: linguistic inferencing, paralinguistic/kenisic inferencing, voice inferencing, extra-linguistic inferencing, and between parts inferencing. However, this taxonomy has been revised later on in 2003. In contrast to Vandergrift's taxonomy (1997) in which the paralinguistic and voice inferencing strategies are separated from each other, his taxonomy (2003) associates both of these two previous strategies as one type. This is why the first taxonomy includes five inferencing sub-skills and the Inventory Listening Strategies combines only four sub- inferencing listening strategies.

6. Listening Strategies

According to O'Malley et al, (1989) the strategies used in listening input comprehension are tactics adopted by listeners to facilitate the acquisition, the storage, retrieval and the use of data.

6.1. Types of Listening Strategies

The majority of researchers (Oxford, 1990, Chamot, 1993; Vandergrift, 1997) agree that there are basically cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategies in listening comprehension. In fact, the use of these techniques facilitates the understanding of the receptive input and consequently the process of learning become more effective.

6.1.1. Cognitive Strategies

Students make use of these strategies to comprehend the linguistic input and obtain information. For instance, learners use guesses to infer the meaning of unknown words from the context. Furthermore, the cognitive listening strategies are linked to the comprehension and storage of linguistic input. This storage may either be for short term memory or for long term memory which may be retrieved later on. Moreover, these kinds of strategies are regarded as problem-solving techniques that learners utilize for the sake of completing a task. In addition, they facilitate the acquisition of the foreign language. In fact, the cognitive strategies consist of repeating, summarizing, note taking, inferencing, and elaboration strategies, etc.

Different explanations have been given to cognitive listening strategies Buck (2001: 104) claims that cognitive strategies are “... *mental activities related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long-term memory*”. According to Buck (2001) cognitive listening strategies involves three processes: comprehension processes, storing processes, using and retrieval processes. Therefore, the process of comprehension in listening is a mental activity which includes bottom up and top down processes. The former includes linguistic knowledge (lexis, phonology, syntax, etc). The latter requires the non-linguistic knowledge; it is concerned rather with the use of schemata (background knowledge). Buck (2001) emphasizes that there are two types of memory storage for both linguistic and non linguistic input: short term memory and long term memory. Furthermore, he asserts that the learner should go back to the memory so as to be prepared for the output. In fact the cognitive listening strategies are derived and investigated from the features of bottom-up and top-down strategies.

6.1.2. Meta-Cognitive Strategies

Meta-cognitive strategies are defined by Vandergrift (1999:170) as strategies which “*oversee, regulate, or direct the language learning process*”. This implies that learners are conscious when they receive the acoustic message. Utilizing these strategies requires monitoring, evaluating, modifying, etc (ibid.). As Rubin asserts (1987) meta-cognitive strategies are techniques used by learners to manage, and evaluate their learning through monitoring and modifying. It means that students use meta-cognitive strategies to know how to use the information appropriately.

6.1.3. Socio-Affective Strategies

According to Vandergrift (2003) socio-affective strategies are techniques that help learners to work together, understand the target language and lower anxiety. This means that learners who employ these types of strategies have the chance to decrease their anxiety and to check their understanding by performing with other learners a given conversation.

7. Cognitive Listening Strategies Classification

All the previous work that researchers have done on listening strategies looked at how many proficient successful learners are conscious about their listening strategies; and how they manage the L2 listening comprehension’s process using the suitable strategies (Murphy, 1985; Chamot and Kupper, 1989; Bacon, 1992). In the 1990s, Oxford has proposed a comprehension inventory of learning strategies for listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Those strategies are divided into two categories each one composed of various sub-strategies. On the one hand, the first category is called direct strategies which include memory, cognitive, and compensation (inferencing) strategies. On the other hand, the second category is nominated indirect strategies which consist of meta-cognitive, social and affective strategies. It is assumed that direct strategies manipulate the target language while the indirect strategies do not involve the target language rather they are concerned with monitoring

learning (Oxford, 1990). In the 1997s, Vandergrift has described listening strategies framework in terms of a taxonomy in which he classifies listening strategies into three main types: cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies.

7.1. O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) Sub-groups of Cognitive Listening Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) in his taxonomy of cognitive listening strategies suggest that cognitive strategies consist of fourteen (14) strategies which are: repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, summarizing, deduction, recombination, translation, imagery and auditory representation, keyword method, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing.

7.2. Oxford's (1990) Sub-groups of Cognitive Listening Strategies

Oxford (1990) states that cognitive strategies are: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, creating structures for input and output. Although Oxford does not mention inferencing as part of cognitive strategies, she gives to it a great value since she considers it as synonym of compensation strategies.

7.3. Vandergrift's (1997) Sub-Groups of Cognitive Listening Strategies

Vandergrift's taxonomy (1997) comes with another classification to cognitive strategies. He claims that cognitive strategies include twenty strategies(20): linguistic inferencing, voice inferencing, paralinguistic or kinesic inferencing, extra-linguistic inferencing, inferencing between parts, elaboration, personal elaboration, world elaboration, academic elaboration, questioning elaboration, creative elaboration, imagery, summarization, translation, transfer, repetition, resourcing, grouping, note taking, deduction or induction, substitution.

8. Vocabulary

Although vocabulary was neglected for many decades in the area of foreign language learning, during the 80s this prominent component of language has gained the attention of researchers (Alqahtani, 2015). It is believed that the lack of lexical knowledge stands as obstacle to language acquisition, hence to communicative competence (ibid). Neuman and Dwyer (2009: 385) define vocabulary as *“words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)”*. Therefore; receptive vocabulary is that kind of vocabulary that is related to the listening skill. Hornby (1995) also states that vocabulary is all the meaningful words that are known to a person used in a particular language. Similarly vocabulary is described as being a chunk of words, expressions, and not only as a single word as Ur (1998: 67) confirms:

Vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language. However, a new item of vocabulary may be more than just a single word: for example, post office, and mother-in-law, which are made up of two or three words but express a single idea. A useful convention is to cover all such cases by talking about vocabulary "items" rather than "words."

9. Inferencing Strategy

Inferencing as a listening strategy is defined by O'Malley et al. (1989: 434) *“using acoustic, vocal, or lexical information within the text, listening etc. to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words or to fill in missing information”*. That is to say, inferencing means guessing the meaning of unknown words from aural input.

10. Lexical Inferencing

Several studies have demonstrated the integral role of using guesses and inferences and the learner's attitudes towards the utilization of the strategy (Fraser, 1999; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999). Lexical inferencing is closely related to incidental vocabulary learning (Huckin and Coady, 1997; Nagy, 1997). It is viewed that this strategy is concerned with making "informed guesses" about the meaning of unknown words from the available

linguistic and nonlinguistic cues in the text (Haastrup, 1991). This means that during the listening laboratory's session learners are in need of the authentic materials, especially; audio-video tool. Using this kind of device learners can benefit from both linguistic and non-linguistic input which will serve then to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words by using paralinguistic and linguistic listening strategies. Numerous researchers (Tanenhaus et al., 1995) proved that the integration of both verbal and non-verbal cues in listening is of a big importance because when listeners receive an utterance they benefit from both linguistic and non-linguistic information to interpret spoken language effectively.

11. Theoretical Frameworks

11.1. Vandergrift's Taxonomy (1997) of Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies

Vandergrift (1997) identifies inferencing strategies as part of cognitive listening strategies, and classifies it into five sub-strategies: linguistic inferencing, voice inferencing, paralinguistic inferencing, extra-linguistic inferencing, inferencing between-parts. According to Vandergrift(1997) the use of inferencing listening sub-strategies help learner to guess the meaning of unknown words of the foreign language which facilitate the listening task. This following table summarizes all these strategies taken from Vandergrift's taxonomy (1997):

Inferencing	Focus on the learner
Strategy	
Linguistic inferencing	Guessing the meaning of unknown words by linking them to known words
Voice inferencing	Guessing by means of the tone of the voice
Paralinguistic inferencing	Guessing the meaning of unknown words by referring to paralinguistic clues
Extra-linguistic inferencing	Guessing based on other clues, such as what is required in the task
Inferencing Between parts	Making use of certain Words in the text that may not be related to the task to get more information about the task

Table (01): Vandergrift's Taxonomy (1997: 392-4) of Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies

Conclusion

In this chapter, we attempted to put a focus on the important notions related to our work, and it stated the techniques students use in order to make the listening process a successful one. We have tried to shed light on the background of learning and teaching listening comprehension and describing the listening comprehension processes: bottom-up and top-down processing. Then, it dealt with the cognitive inferencing listening strategies definitions as well as their types. Finally, the last part introduced the theoretical framework used in this study, that of Vandergrift (1997), which represents the cognitive inferencing listening strategies that are assumed to be a means to successful learning and facilitate the effective acquisition of vocabulary.

Chapter 2: Research Design

Introduction

The methodology chapter describes the research design used in investigating students' use of cognitive listening strategies to learn vocabulary. It also explains the methods of data collection and data analysis used for the sake of answering the research questions. The first part deals with the description of the research tools mainly the questionnaire and the structured interview. The second part is concerned with the procedures of data analysis.

1. Context and Subject of Investigation

The investigation is carried out in the department of English at MMUTO and it took place on June 2016. The study is concerned with fifty five third year students (Linguistics and ESP) responding for the questionnaire. This population is selected randomly because it is not possible to deal with all the participants. The other sample of the participants consists of three (03) teachers of the listening module in the department of English at MMUTO who have been selected purposefully to answer the questions of the interview.

2. Data collection procedures

For the sake of collecting data, two procedures were used: a questionnaire and a structured interview. The former is used for obtaining quantitative data while the latter is used for gathering qualitative data.

2.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument that presents respondents with a set of questions or statements used to gather data. It allows obtaining quantitative data with unlimited number of participants. In fact, it is a tool used to collect a great amount of information in a short period of time. According to Richards (2001:61) "*questionnaires are relatively easy to prepare. They can be used for a large number of subjects and they obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze*". My major aim by using a

questionnaire is to generate data about the students' use of cognitive listening strategies to learn vocabulary.

In the light of this investigation the questionnaire is composed of thirteen (13) questions (divided into closed-ended, open-ended.). It is arranged into four (3) sections: students' views about the listening skill, students' preferences when studying listening comprehension, frequency of students' use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies to learn vocabulary. Seventy (70) questionnaires were administered to third year students and fifty five (55) were collected.

2.2. Description of Teachers' Interview

In addition to the questionnaire, an interview is used to reinforce the results gathered through the questionnaire. It is used in the present research because it is the appropriate and useful tool to co-construct data in an authentic setting and face to face contact (Atkinson and Silverman, 2015, cited in Ammam and Touat, 2015). This research instrument helps researchers to collect in depth answer, meaning qualitative data. According to Richards (2001: 61) *"interviews allow for a more exploration of issues than is possible with a questionnaire, though they take longer to administer and are only feasible for smaller groups"*. This implies that this method is time consuming and does not allow for large sampling. Hence, the interview is undertaken to the data gathered by the questionnaire administered to third year students.

The structured interview is conducted with three (3) teachers of listening module in the department of English at MMUTO. The recorded interviews last from 15 to 20 minutes for each teacher. Indeed, the interview's objective is to gather information about the strategies that students opt to use to learn vocabulary in listening comprehension. The five sections comprise open ended questions. The first part includes demographic information about the teachers of the listening module. The second part is concerned with teachers' views on the

listening skill. The third section deals with teachers' perception of students' performance and competence in listening session. The fourth section involves teachers' views about students' interest in listening classes. The fifth section includes the difficulties that students encounter in listening comprehension. The sixth one covers teachers' opinions about students' use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies.

3. Procedures of Data Analysis

The present research uses a mixed-method procedure that seems to suit the research. It describes third year students' use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies to learn vocabulary at MMUTO. The data analysis is both quantitative and qualitative.

3.1. Statistical Package for Social Sciences

The data gathered from the students' questionnaire are analyzed by means of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). This computer program is mainly used in social sciences helping in the description of statistical analysis. It serves to analyze closed-ended questions which will generate numerical data to explore the frequency of inferencing cognitive strategies use among learners and explain the factor behind the choice of strategy type which will be presented in tables and graphs. This will be determined by matching the results of the questionnaire to the results of the interview to sort out which inferencing cognitive listening strategies students use to learn vocabulary at MMUTO in the third year context.

3.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

The structured interview is analyzed with Qualitative Content Analysis. The latter is a method that is adopted to describe and interpret the open-ended questions and the interview of this study. Indeed, Mayring (2014: 10) defines clearly QCA as *“a mixed method approach: assignment of categories to text as qualitative step, working through many text passages and analysis of frequencies of categories as a quantitative step”*. Therefore, the

analysis of the interview of this study is based on the conventional type of content analysis. More precisely, conventional content analysis consists of detecting the frequency of certain aspects of the content (concepts like words, phrases, or sentences). The primary advantage of the conventional approach is “*gaining direct information from study participants without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives*” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2015:3). Hence, this method enables the description, interpretation and explanation of the open ended questions’ outcomes.

Conclusion

The chapter has laid out the methodology used in the study. It has presented the setting and the participants under investigation. It has showed the means of data collection and data analysis that is followed in this work. Concerning the data collection, two research tools have been used: the questionnaire and the interview. The former is used to gather information about the third year BMD students. The latter is intended to reach reliable and valid information from the teachers of the listening module. Then, the collected data are interpreted through their suitable methods either with quantitative method or qualitative one.

Chapter 3: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the results reached after the analysis of the 55 questionnaires collected from third year linguistics section. It also reveals the analysis of the interviews conducted with three (3) teachers of listening (teachers of linguistic section) at the department of English at MMUTO. The analysis aims at rating the frequency of the different types of cognitive inferencing strategies used to learn vocabulary and at sorting out the most used strategies by students of the department of English. Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire are presented in percentages and displayed using pie charts, tables and histograms. As for the results of the interview, they are interpreted according to the qualitative content analysis. The section is organized into two main parts, the findings related to the analysis of the questionnaire and the findings obtained from the structured interview.

1. Presentation of the Results of the Questionnaire

1.1. Results of Section One: Students' Views on the Listening Skill

The first section of the questionnaire concerns the students' views on the listening skill. Clearly, it shows how students view listening.

Q1: Do you think that the listening skill is very important in foreign language learning?

All the participants (100%) perceive listening as a very essential skill to learn foreign language and defend their views justifying that the listening skill “*helps to enrich the vocabulary and improve pronunciation as well as gaining speech fluency*”; and “*helps understanding the meaning of words from context*”.

Q2: Understanding the meaning of words is easier when listening to an Audio-tape text:

Justify your answer?

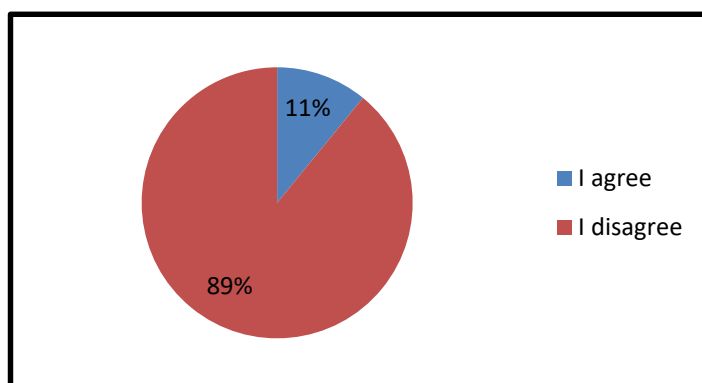


Diagram (01): Students' Opinions about Listening to Audio-Tape Text

As indicated in diagram (01), the majority of the participants disagree with the idea that understanding the meaning of word is easy when listening to an audio tape text 89 % that represent 49 participants do not enjoy learning listening through audio tape. This is due to the lack of concrete cues and paralinguistic signals that help them to infer the meaning from an utterance when encountering difficulties while listening. In contrast, the rest of the participants (6) 11% say the contrary. The six participants justify their answer by saying that they used to study listening in private schools and spend more time listening to English music, and watching programs.

Q3: Which factor distracts you from storing new vocabulary during an audio-tape listening session? Justify?

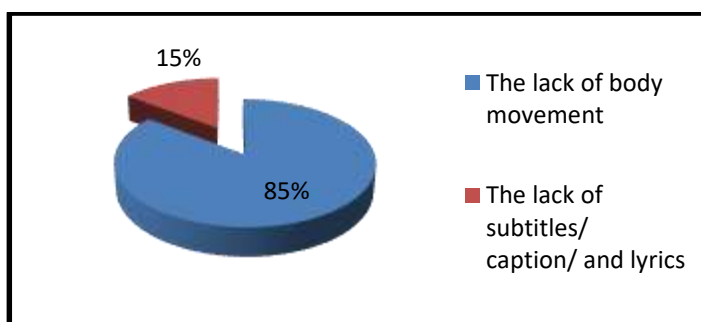


Diagram (02): Factors that Distract Students from Storing new Vocabulary during an Audio-Tape Listening Session

The results gathered in question 3 show that 85% of the participants agree that the lack of body movements distracts them when listening to foreign language. However, the 15% of the participants claim that they are distracted when they are not provided with subtitles/captions/lyrics while listening. For some of them, listening to English music should be associated with lyrics because it helps to understand what the song is about.

1.2. Results of Section Two: Students' Preferences when Dealing with Listening Comprehension

Q4: What tool do you prefer to study with in order to store new vocabulary when dealing with listening?

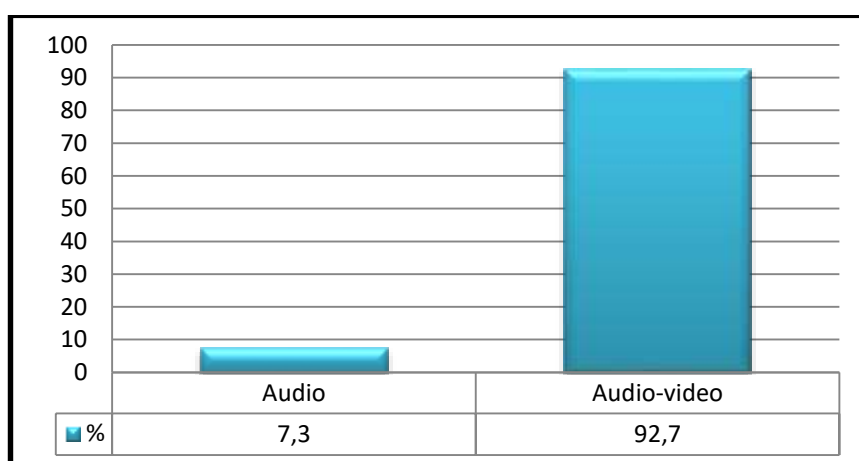


Diagram (03): The Tools that Students Prefer to Use to Store Vocabulary during a Listening Session

The statistics of diagram (05) indicates that most respondents (92.7%) prefer audio-visual tool when leaning listening. Indeed, they argue *“that vision and aural help to infer meaning of words. It is important to study a foreign language with audio-video because you can be in touch with real situation* .However; (7.3%) of the respondents prefer to study with audio. They argue that when they want to improve their pronunciation they do prefer to study with an audio tool, but when they do want to learn more about the foreign language culture and expression vocabulary, they prefer to learn listening accompanied with audio-videos.

Q5: It is preferable to learn vocabulary through listening:

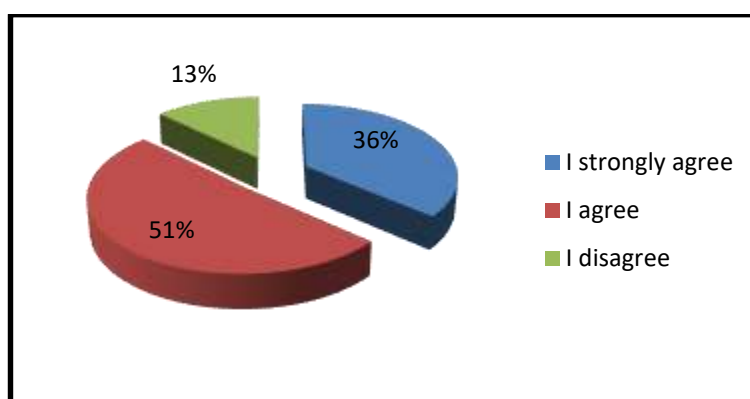


Diagram (04): Students' Opinion about Enjoying Learning Vocabulary through Listening

The data gathered from this question shows that the majority of the participants 51% agree that learning vocabulary through listening is enjoyable, and 36% of them answered by “*strongly agree*”, however; only 13% disagreed on that.

Q6: What is your purpose when learning listening?

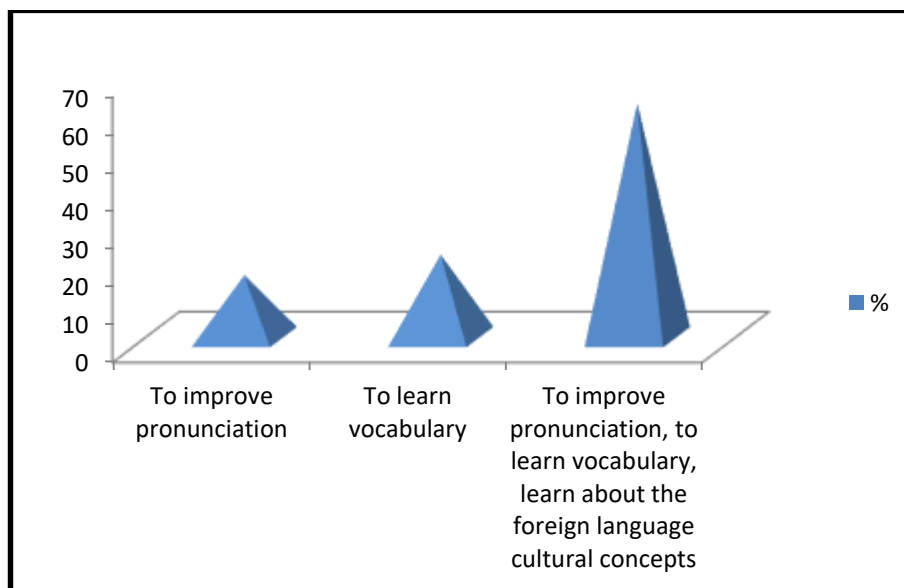


Diagram (05): Students' Purpose when Learning Listening

As presented in diagram (06) above, the majority of the students (61. 82%) claim that their purpose when studying listening is to improve their pronunciation, to learn vocabulary

and to learn about the foreign language cultural concepts. However, (21. 82%) answered that their purpose is to learn vocabulary, and (16.36%) say to improve pronunciation.

Q7: How often do you practice listening (either through Audio or Audio-video) outside the classroom?

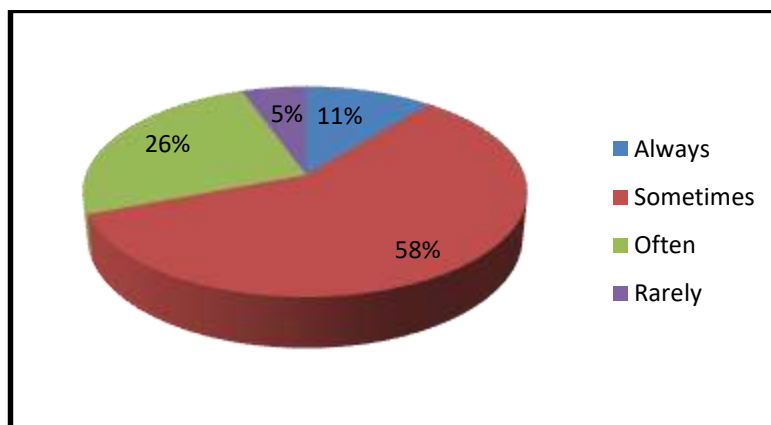


Diagram (06): The Students' Frequency of Practicing Listening Outside the Classroom

As indicated in diagram (06) more than half of the participants 58 % sometimes practice listening outside the classroom. Thus, 26% does it often while 11% always. And only 5 % practice it rarely.

1.3. Results of Section Three: The Frequency of Students' Use of Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies

1. Linguistic Inferencing Strategies

Q8: How often do you guess the meaning of unknown words in an utterance using the known words?

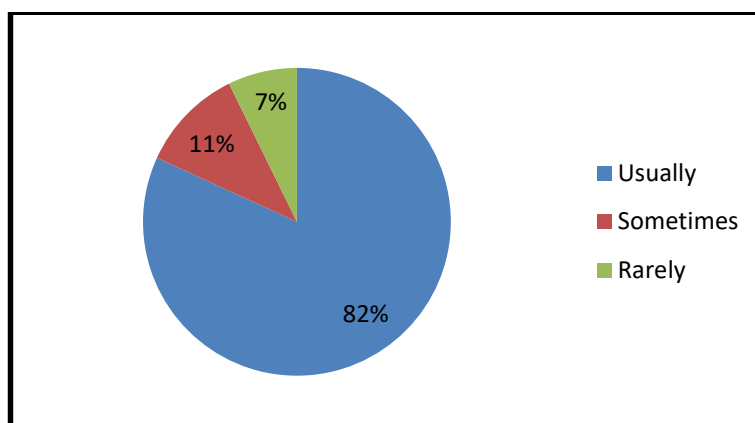


Diagram (07): The Frequency of Linguistic Inferencing Strategy among Students

The seventh diagram corresponds to the data gathered for the linguistic inferencing strategies. The analysis revealed that the students claim to usually use this strategy with 82%. While 11% use it sometimes, only 7% employ it rarely.

2. Voice inferencing strategies

Q9: How often do you deduce the meaning of some words, phrases or expressions from the speaker's tone of the voice?

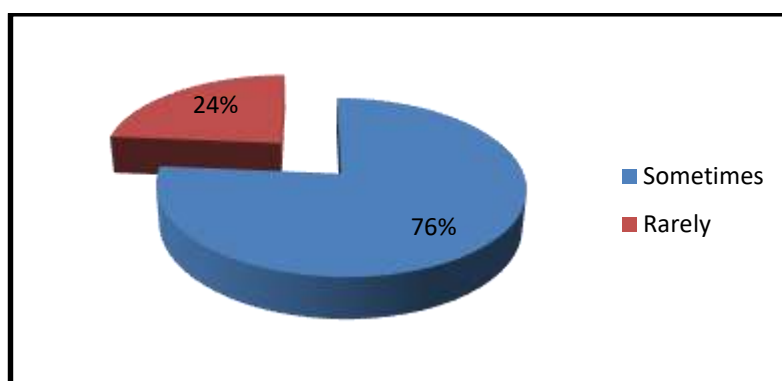


Diagram (08): The Frequency of Voice Inferencing among Student

Diagram (08) represents the voice inferencing strategy. The use of these strategies is not frequent between students since 76 % of the participants use sometimes voice inferencing

to deduce the meaning of some words, phrases, or expressions from the speaker's tone of the voice and only 24% use it rarely.

3. Paralinguistic Inferencing Strategies

Q10: How often do you understand the meaning of unknown words when the speaker uses body movements (facial expressions, gestures) in an audio-video tape?

Justify?

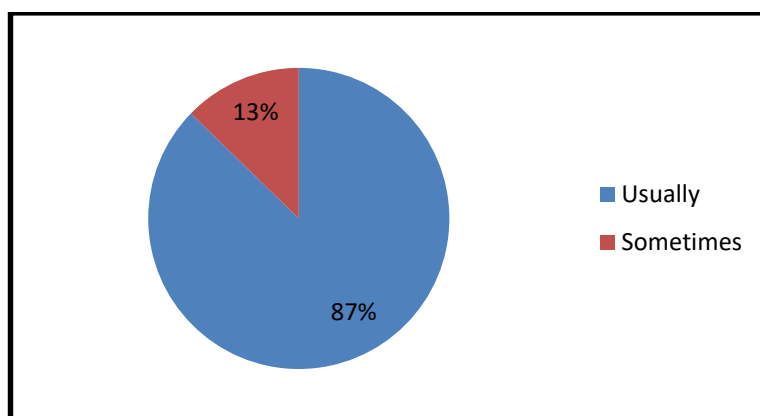


Diagram (09): The Frequency of Paralinguistic Inferencing among Students

Diagram (09) displays the frequency of the paralinguistic inferencing strategy. These strategies are the most used ones, with 87 % of answers for usually, and only 13% of students use it sometimes. They argue that paralinguistic features improve their listening comprehension.

4. Extra-linguistic Inferencing Strategies

Q11: How often do you rely on the context to guess the meaning of unknown words?

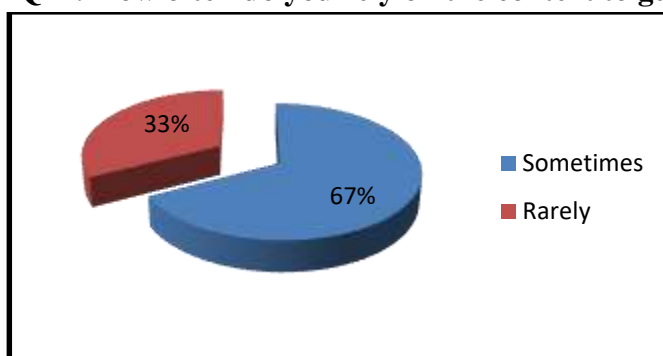


Diagram (10): The Frequency of Extra-Linguistic Inferencing Strategy among Students

Diagram 10 demonstrates the frequency of the extra-linguistic inferencing strategy. The majority of the students (67%) answered that they sometimes ask questions about the listening selection so to help them comprehend the words related to the topic. Only 33% of the students say that they do it rarely.

5. Inferencing Between -Parts Strategies

Q12: How often do you use words in the text that may not be related to the task to get more information about the task?

	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Participants	50	5	55
%	90.9	9.1	100

Table (02): The Frequency of Inferencing Between -Parts Strategies among Students

Table (02) represents inferencing between- parts strategies. The results demonstrate that 90.9% of the students use sometimes these strategies, and only few of them (9.1%) employ it rarely.

6. The Frequency of the Five Cognitive Inferencing Strategies

Q13: According to you which cognitive inferencing listening strategies that can help you to store vocabulary?

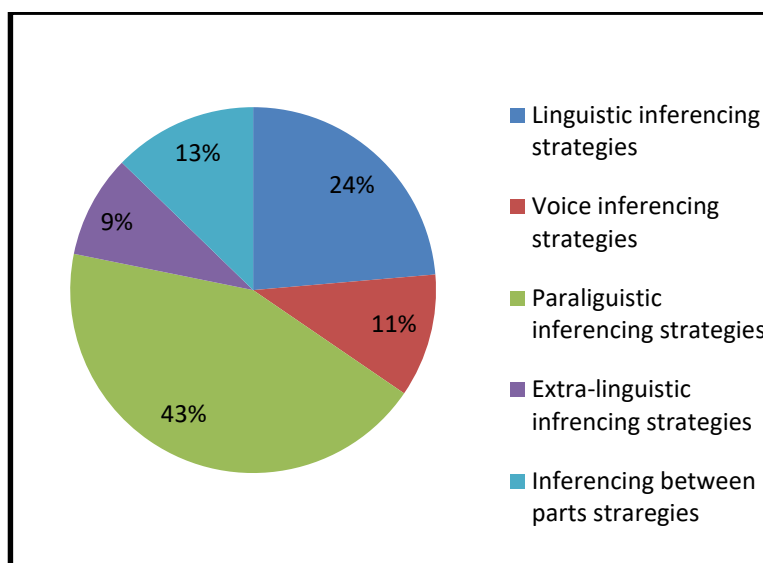


Diagram (11): The Frequency of the five Strategies among Students

Diagram (11) displays the frequency of the five strategies together to indicate the most used strategies by the students and the least ones. The results revealed that the most used strategy by the students is the paralinguistic strategy with the percentage of 43%, and then comes the linguistic strategy in the second position with 24%. In the third position, comes the between parts strategies with 13%, and 11% for the voice strategies in the fourth place. In the last position, comes the extra-linguistic strategy with 9%.

2. Presentation of the structured interview findings

The analysis of this section is based on data gathered from interviews conducted with three teachers of the listening module .The interviews are audiotapes which are analysed using Qualitative Content Analysis. The latter aims to find out teachers perception of the students use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies to learn vocabulary. It also intends to identify teachers' views on both the listening module and students' performance during the listening session.

2.1. Participants

The three participants selected for the interview are teachers in the Department of English at MMUTO. All of them teach the listening module. It is noticeable that the three participants share some criteria, and there is no big distinction between them at the level of their experience. The three teachers, in fact, are selected purposefully, especially two of them as they are the only teachers who are more experienced in the teaching of the listening module in the department of English at MMUTO.

Section1: Demographic Information

Q1: How long have you been teaching the listening module?

The aim behind asking such question is to check the experience that third year oral expression course teachers have at the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi Ouzou. We have a sample of three teachers, and they have taught the listening module differently. The first and the second teachers spent four years in teaching this skill. This proves that they have an experience in teaching, so their coming answers will be of great worth. The last teacher has an experience of two years.

Section2: Teachers' Views on the Listening Skill

Q2: Do you think that teaching the listening skill is important in foreign language learning?

If yes why?

All of the teachers agree that the listening skill is very important and very interesting in foreign language learning. They argue that this skill gives the opportunity to the learners to expose themselves to authentic material, and help them to learn and communicate. One of them affirms that the listening module enables them to understand, to receive, to decipher, to respond, that is to grasp ideas.

Q3: Do you think that the listening skill is one of the most prominent skills that learners need to improve their vocabulary storage? Explain

All of the teachers agree that the listening skill is the most prominent skill that learners need to improve their vocabulary storage. One of them argues “*we cannot speak, if we cannot know how to listen, how to recognize words*”.

Section3: Teachers’ Opinions about Students’ Performance and Competence during the Listening Session

Q4: Do you think that students are active learners when studying listening?

When it comes to the teachers’ opinions about students’ performance when studying listening, answers got between relating them to teachers’ competence and students’ abilities. Two of them say that “*it depends on the task if they are motivated or not, so it is important for teachers to know how to select tasks to attract the students*”. The other says that “*there are some students who need efforts to progress in this skill to improve their abilities*”. From the last two citations it is noticed that students’ motivation depends on both teachers performance and students competence.

Q5: According to you are your learners able to learn the English language autonomously outside the classroom listening session?

The first teacher claims that after exposing learners to real life situations, they can perform this kind of task. That means the more they are exposed to spoken English the more they learn this language effectively. The second teacher declares that it is up to the teacher to develop students’ autonomy .The last one affirms that students at the university are obliged to develop their autonomy by themselves.

Q6: Do your learners use some listening strategies to learn lexical items when completing a given task?

Almost all the teachers admitted that the majority of the students use some listening strategies when completing a given task; because learners aim at learning new vocabulary items through completing tasks and activities for a given strategy.

Section4: Teachers' Views on Students Interest in Listening Classes

Q7: Are your learners interested in tasks that deal with foreign language vocabulary?

All the participants confirmed that learners are really interested in learning foreign language vocabulary; because they are curious to discover, and they want to become competent speakers of the target language. One of them says "*they are really interested in learning foreign vocabulary*".

Q8: What kind of tasks your learners are more interested in?

In this part of the interview, teachers are asked to tell us about the tasks that learners are interested in. The first teacher mentions information –gap activity only .The second teacher cites other activities such as filling the gap, write and find the missing words, and dialogues completion ,while the fourth adds naming things, word formation. Indeed, all the teachers asserted that students are interested in tasks related to comprehension, and which ask them to develop their opinions ,views to judge ,to criticize, as those mentioned above.

Q9: Do you think that learners pay attention when the listening session is done with an audio-video tool? If yes, why?

All the of the teachers agree that students are interested more in listening session when it is done with an audio-video tool because they are sure about their role in improving their listening. Also, audio-video tool help learners to listen better ,to get involved in the target language as it is spoken by the native speakers ,to concentrate on the ideas developed in the passage since there is an association between the audio and the image.

Section5: The Difficulties that Students Encounter in Listening

Q10: Do your students encounter some difficulties while undertaking a listening comprehension task? If yes, could you cite some of them?

The three teachers answer that the main difficulty all students complain from is the miscomprehension of the passages produced by the native speakers, and this is mainly due to the speed rate of speech, and the difficult vocabulary.

Q11: Do your learners ask you to explain the difficult words before starting a listening task?

Two of the teachers admit that their students ask for explaining the difficult words while the other one disagrees justifying his answer saying that in many situations students try by themselves to understand the difficult words.

Q12: According to you dealing with topics related to cultural concepts is difficult to be understood by your learners?

The first teacher affirms that dealing with topics related to cultural concepts are sometimes difficult to be understood by the learners because normally third year students used to deal with components ,aspects and items of the English language only. So, there will be no difficulties for them. However, the two other teachers declare that generally speaking topics which deal with culture are the most difficult for students.

Section6: Teachers' Opinions about Students' Use of Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies to Learn Vocabulary

Q13: Do your learners guess the meaning of the unknown words in an utterance using the known words or do they use other techniques?

The aim behind this question is to see whether learners use linguistic inferencing strategies to store vocabulary. Two of the teachers confirm that students utilize the key words

to guess the meaning. By contrast, the last teacher reports that their learners are sometimes obliged to use dictionary.

Q14: Do your learners rely on the speakers' facial expressions, gestures to infer the meaning of the spoken language? Why?

All the teachers have the same answer which is yes because their students rely on the speakers' facial expressions, gestures to infer the meaning and to meet the real and the correct performance of the language.

Q15: Do you think that your learners are able to guess the meaning of unknown words in an utterance relying on the speakers 'tone?

Teachers' answers are nearly the same because it is difficult for the students to guess the meaning of an unknown words relying on the rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation.

Q16: Do your students use the context in an utterance to infer the meaning of the unknown words?

All the teachers report that their students in the most of the time rely on the contextual information, concrete situational referents and their background knowledge to comprehend the unfamiliar words.

Q17: Do you think that your learners understand the recorded topic when they use words that are in the utterance but may not be related to the task to get more information about the task?

All the three teachers assert that using words that are mentioned in the utterance but not related to the task help their learners to comprehend the task and have an idea about what is being discussed as well as the general focus of the session and its importance.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the findings of both the students' feedback questionnaire and teachers' interview with regard to the frequency of strategy use concerning the role of cognitive inferencing listening strategies in the vocabulary learning during listening session, and students' views on the listening skill as one way to learn vocabulary. The results reached have shown that the students use partially the cognitive inferencing strategies and not all of them. This is observed in the frequency use of these strategies which reveal that students tend to use first paralinguistic / kinesic inferencing strategies ,second linguistic inferencing strategies, third between- parts inferencing strategies and finally, extra-linguistic strategies. Furthermore, the findings obtained from the two research tools indicate that both students and teachers recognize that the listening skill is of a great importance for learning EFL effectively. In the light of presenting details and clarifications, the following chapter is devoted to the interpretation and discussion of the result described in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

The chapter discusses the results of the study obtained in the previous chapter after applying SPSS for the students' questionnaires and Qualitative Content Analysis for the teachers' interview. The findings, in fact, will be discussed, analyzed and interpreted together due to the relation that exists between the outcomes collected from these two research tools. The results are then analysed and interpreted in relation to the review of literature presented in chapter one. The present chapter comprises one section which discusses the results achieved through students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview. The analysis is based on Vandergrift's taxonomy (1997) of Cognitive Listening Strategies, for the interpretation and explanation of the findings. This chapter is organized according to the order presented in the results chapter. It interprets the reasons behind the frequent use of specific strategies among students and according to the theories mentioned in the first chapter that is to say the review of the literature.

1. Students' View on the Listening Skill

The first research question deals with the views of the third year students of the department of English, option: Linguistics and ESP, on the listening skill. According to the answers obtained from the students' questionnaire, all of the third year students think that listening is an interesting skill to learn English as a foreign language. It helps them to enrich their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation as well as to gain speech fluency. Some of them find that listening is an essential skill because it helps them to memorize new words and master the foreign language easily. And these results go hand in hand with what has been claimed by Vandergrift (1997) "*listening comprehension ... is a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammar structures, interpret stress and intonation...*". This means that listening offers to students the

opportunity to learn and acquire all the components of the English language (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation) adequately.

Therefore, it is noticed that third year students are strategic learners since they are able to distinguish between sounds, comprehend and store the new lexical items along with the syntactical structure, and making interpretations relying on the speaker's voice. That is to say, they are conscious of the use of cognitive listening strategies since they use techniques to comprehend and store the incoming information. Also, they can develop strategies to recover the difficulties they experience while listening. Thus, students use some strategies, which are investigated from the top-down (TDP) and the bottom-up (BUP) processing, to grasp the meaning from an utterance to facilitate the process of listening comprehension and improve the storage of the new vocabulary when dealing with the listening selection. However, we can conclude that third year students tend to employ more top-down strategies than the bottom-up ones. This is due to the fact first inferencing strategies are part of top-down strategies, and second some of these strategies are used by the students frequently. The main reason of this view is that it is not possible for learners to capture the meaning of all the words while receiving the aural input; so they rely on their background knowledge in the text and listening for a gist to extract the meaning of what they listen to. This result is confirmed by the previous research which revealed that advanced learners utilize more top-down strategies than beginners (Clark, 1980; Conrad 1985; Tsui and Fullilove, 1998; O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper, 1989).

As far as students' view about the understanding of the meaning of words through listening to audio- tape is concerned, the overwhelming majority of the students (89 %) disagree on the fact that listening through audio-tape is easy. They justify their answer by saying that the lack of subtitles/captions/lyrics and the body movements which prevent them from having a complete understanding of the aural input and distract them from storing the

new vocabulary. As a result, most of the students prefer listening to the English language when the selection is associated with body movements. The latter provides them with gestures that help them to deduce the meaning of an utterance even though they missed the word and get involved in the task.

The data collected from the teachers' interview demonstrate that all the teachers stress the importance of the listening skill in the academic context. One of them argues that *"listening is an integral skill of the target language since it allows students to be familiar with the way to listen, the way to receive messages and the way to understand foreigners when speaking their native language as well as the way to recognize words"*. That is, the teaching of the listening comprehension skill should be stressed in the language classroom since it helps students to promote their language learning. Thus, the results obtained from the teachers' interview are similar with that of the students' questionnaire. Indeed, one can conclude that third year student's view listening as one of the most prominent skills and that learners need to improve their vocabulary learning. Therefore, this study reaches the same result with the L2 previous research which reveal the crucial role of listening in language acquisition (Asher, 1969; Winitz & Reeds, 1975; Nord, 1981. Postvosky, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Byres, 1984; Mendelsohn, 1994, 1995; Vandergrift, 1999; Rost, 1990, 2000: 2002).

2. Students' Preference when Dealing with Listening Comprehension

The results of the survey demonstrate that 92.7% of the students prefer to learn vocabulary through listening using audio-video tool while few of them (7.3%) prefer to use audio (diagram3). The inclusion of audio-video recordings offers to the learners the opportunity to expose them to authentic material and to learn the language as it is used by the native speakers. One of the teachers argues that *"audio-video helps students to get a better understanding of the new lexical items and to store them easily; it familiarizes learner with*

the foreign language vocabulary and learns more about the foreign culture, as well as gaining speech fluency". This means that video in L2 listening is very necessary since it provides learners with sufficient context to understand more the spoken language.

Another benefit of using video is that it facilitates memory, especially the storage of vocabulary because videos are contextualized. Rubin (1995:153) argues *"video gives learners a better framework for remembering as audio- tapes. Further, it puts less of a burden on processing because listeners do not have to attend to every word since the video can supply some of the missing piece"*. Indeed, videos are helpful since learners are able to capture meaning and to get extra-information by seeing the pictures. In addition, authentic videos lead students to increase their comprehension ability and to develop the receptive skill adequately thanks to the visual images which assist learners to create the meaning, and to concentrate more and even motivate them. By contrast, audio-tapes increase the way they remember things.

As regards the students' purpose when learning listening, the majority of them (61.82%) say that their purpose in studying listening is devoted to learning vocabulary, improving their pronunciation, and learning about the foreign cultural concepts. Others confess that it is to learn vocabulary (21.52%). The remaining ones say that their purpose is to improve their pronunciation (16.36%). Thus, the most important purpose of the students is to learn vocabulary, to improve pronunciation, to learn English grammar, and to learn about the foreign cultural concepts. In doing this, students are likely widen the range of their knowledge, enlarge their vocabulary and have a better understanding of the word, grammar rules and of the listening material. Consequently, the listening skill is crucial in learning EFL either in learning to comprehend the new lexical items or to learn any other aspect of the language; because all the students have a specific purpose from their exposure to listening, and they do not listen just for pleasure.

The results also reveal that there are not too many students (11%) (See diagram 6) who practice their listening outside their classroom. This percentage is not satisfactory. The main reason behind this result may be due to time pressure. In other words, students do not have enough time to practice listening individually. However, students should regard individual listening as being the most important reason for success in EFL learning; because when they listen a lot to English using natural material they can grasp a long strings develop their listening competence as well as the language skills. Oxford (1990) states that listening develops faster than the three other language skills and it can facilitate the improvement of the other skills.

3. Students' Use of Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies to Learn Vocabulary

Concerning the second research question, that is, the students' use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies to enhance the storage of the new vocabulary department of, the results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview confirm that third year students (option: linguistics and ESP) use certain cognitive inferencing listening strategies to store the meaning of the word. Most of the students rely on specific tactics while dealing with listening comprehension. This means that FL listeners develop certain strategies to overcome the difficulties they experience while listening. This deduction proves that proficient and successful learners are aware of the listening strategy use (Murphy, 1985; Chamot and kupper, 1989; Bacon, 1992). Indeed, the present study confirms that EFL learners rely more on inferencing strategies, which is one of the top-down strategies, to facilitate comprehension, and then the storage of the word meaning and word form (vocabulary knowledge). The fact that students use some of these strategies when they face difficulties in their learning process, may make the results go in line with Rost's (1990)

view about listening which states that listening is inference-based processing, which is also combined with the top-down processing (Oxford,1990).

In addition, the findings when investigating students' use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies reflect similar results with the researches mentioned in the literature review mainly the research conducted by Vandergrift (1997), Chamot (1993), and Oxford (1990) who stress the importance of the inference in helping students to improve their thinking abilities to grasp the hidden and the implied meaning. This means that inference assist students to extend their thinking to predict the intended meaning of the speaker and do not rely only on the literal meaning. Accordingly, the listeners' inference contributes to listening comprehension and assists them to draw on expectations to fill the gap that is between the speaker's intention and the listener's interpretation.

4. Frequency of Students' Use of Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies to Learn English Language Vocabulary

As concerns the third research question that deals with the frequency of the cognitive inferencing listening strategies used by the third year students at the English department to store vocabulary, the findings reveal a high use of paralinguistic (43 %), linguistic (24%) and inferencing between-part strategies (13%) with a significant use of voice(11%) and extra-linguistic inferencing strategies (9%). Elsewhere, some studies (Murphy, 1985; Vandergrift, 1997a) state that students with high L2 proficiency employ a variety of strategies. This is because skilled learners comprehend mostly the literal meaning so they are conscious about the strategy use. Consequently, the findings of our research can be coined with that of this study since all the third year students, who are the highest level students, use partially the cognitive inferencing listening strategies included in the research. This is shown in their ability to predict the meaning from context and associate what they hear to their background knowledge and personal experience. On the other hand, one study conducted by Tokeshi

(2003) reached different results. She claims that listening comprehension differs because of students' language proficiency and not their level. That is to say, the interpretation of the utterance varies from one listener to another according to their linguistic knowledge, past experience, familiarity with a native speaker, the speakers listening cues, context, text type, current feelings, status difference, and intelligence.

4.1. Linguistic Inferencing Strategies

The results gathered from the data analysis shows that 82% of the students claim to employ linguistic strategies usually, and 11 % claim to sometimes use them. This strategy records a high percentage after the paralinguistic strategy. As Mendelsohn (1994) claims, linguistic signals might include descriptions such as “syntax, lexis, morphology, phonology”, and also it consists of the type of register used in the speech. These strategies allow guessing the meaning of unknown words by combining them with known words. Thus, this study reached the same result with that of Tokeshi (2003).

In her in-depth overall description of the listening comprehension of six (6) individual participants in the sample group Tokeshi (2003) concludes that difference in listening comprehension is due to language proficiency. That is, low level students use more linguistic inferencing strategies because they do not have enough knowledge since they interpret word by word and make a few connections between new information and their personal experience. In addition, it has been noticed that students with the highest proficiency do not rely on this strategy because they usually understand the literal meaning of language input. Interestingly, the occasional use of the linguistic inferencing strategies by the participants leads to wrong interpretations of the unknown word.

4.2. Voice Inferencing Strategies

The results of the present work indicate that 76 % admit to use voice inferencing sometimes while 24% admit to use them rarely(diagram8).Voice inferencing are ranked in

the fourth position after the inferencing between-part. This can be explained by the fact that it is difficult for students to infer the meaning of an utterance relying on the speaker's voice. Voice inferencing strategies means guessing by means of voice (Vandergrift, 1997); That is , it is the students' ability to take benefit from the speakers' tone , stress, rhythm, and intonation to predict the unfamiliar preceding utterances. However, the results obtained from the students' questionnaire indicate that students do not count a lot on these strategies to overcome their limitations since they do not use them always in comparison to the other aforementioned strategies. These findings are confirmed through the teachers' interview. From teachers' responses, it is noticed that students avoid these techniques even if they are extremely important due to native speakers' rapid speech and the lack of vocabulary knowledge and the difficulties they find at the level of pronunciation since it is hard to recognize the phonological features. These data do not go hand in hand with the results reached in other studies such as Tokeshi (2003) who affirms that even low level students adopt voice inferencing strategies by utilizing the stressed words to infer what had not been seen.

4.3. Paralinguistic Inferencing Strategies

The highest frequency of strategy use is recorded with paralinguistic inferencing strategies. 87 % of students use paralinguistic strategies always, only 13% reported that they sometimes use them (diagram09). Paralinguistic inferencing strategies, which means predicting the meaning of the unfamiliar words by referring to paralinguistic signals such as body language, gestures, facial expressions, tone and pitch of the voice, are extremely important to comprehend and store the language input.

When the students are asked about their use of paralinguistic features to get the meaning of the words from an audio-video tape, almost all of them admit that they rely on these cues. That is, students are conscious of the employment of some specific techniques

without receiving any instruction about their use. The result of this current study reveal to us the reason why Vandergrift (1997) considers paralinguistic features as one way to infer the meaning from what people say. And then classifies them as paralinguistic inferencing strategies. According to Tokeshi (2003), paralinguistic strategies are also used by the low level students since the speakers' gestures and paralinguistic cues or visual aids contribute greatly to their listening comprehension. This assertion is proved because low level students compensate the lack of linguistic knowledge by the use of the nonlinguistic cues to interpret the utterances. Therefore, low level students implement both bottom-up (vocabulary, phonology) and top-down processing (prior experience, knowledge) to draw logical conclusions from the listening input. That is to say, they claim that they are able to utilize a considerable amount of strategies. Thus, these results contradict the ones of Vandergrift (1997) who affirms that top-down strategies are the most used by L2 listeners and that only proficient listener attempt to activate a variety of listening strategies.

4.4. Extra-Linguistic Inferencing Strategies

The extra-linguistic inferencing strategies are the least used ones along with voice inferencing strategies. Only 67% of students claim to sometimes use them and 33% admit to rarely employ them (Diagram 10). They are ranked in the fifth position after the paralinguistic, linguistic, inferencing between-parts, and voice inferencing strategies. Vandergrift (1997) affirms that extra-linguistic inferencing strategies which refer to guessing based on other clues, such as what is needed in the task, help learners to infer what is not understood. This idea is confirmed by Tokeshi's (2003) study which concludes that foreign language students with their different levels adopt extra-linguistics inferencing strategies. Arguing that contextual cues and concrete situational referents increase students' comprehensibility.

4.5. Inferencing Between- Parts Strategies

The inferencing between- parts strategies come after paralinguistic and linguistic strategies. They are the third favored strategies with a significant proportion (13%). According to Vandergrift (1997) inferencing between-parts strategies refer to the application of certain words in the text that may not be related to the task to get more information about the task. That is to say, L2 listeners relate what they hear with what they already know (background knowledge) to achieve a better understanding of the lexical items (Brown & Yule, 1983). The current study signals that the participants draw connection between what they hear and the information that is part of their prior knowledge. Thus, this study reaches differing results from Tokeshi (2003) who concludes that approximately all the Japanese junior high school students whatever their level use inferencing between-part strategies since all the participants inferred what followed in relation to what had already said.

Conclusion

This chapter is concerned with the interpretation of the outcomes of this study. They reveal that EFL students use mostly paralinguistic inferencing, linguistic inferencing, and inferencing between- parts strategies, which are the most used strategies by students besides voice inferencing, and extra-linguistic inferencing strategies which are the least used ones. Also, the results of the qualitative affirm that students tend to employ cognitive inferencing strategies to increase comprehensibility as well as facilitate vocabulary learning. Therefore; the findings show that students do not use totally all the inferencing strategies. That is, EFL students implement cognitive inferencing listening strategies to promote their comprehension especially when they have a lack of understanding. Thus, the results confirm the first hypothesis and disconfirm the second while the third hypothesis is not totally valid since students use inferencing strategies partially.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This study investigated students' use of the cognitive inferencing listening strategies to learn vocabulary. The case of the third year students, option: Linguistics and ESP, at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri university of Tizi-Ouzou. It stressed the frequency of strategy use among students and rated the most employed strategies. The investigation is conducted on the basis of Vandergrift's taxonomy (1997) of cognitive inferencing listening strategies which has been reinforced by many authors. Thus, the results confirm the first hypothesis and some points of the previous findings in literature, and disconfirm the second while the third hypothesis is not totally valid since students use inferencing strategies partially.

In order to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses of the study, a mixed method approach, combining the quantitative and qualitative research methods, was used for data collection and data analysis. These data, indeed, are drawn from two distinctive research sources. Fifty five (55) of third year learners in Linguistics and ESP from MMUTO were randomly chosen to respond to a questionnaire. Likewise, three teachers from the same setting were selected to be interviewed. For quantitative data analysis, a computer program known as SPSS was used for the evaluation of statistical method. In addition, the qualitative content analysis (QCA) was used to interpret the interviews.

Relying on the data analysis, the discussion of the outcomes of the students' questionnaire and those of the teachers' interview has provided answers to the research questions advanced in the investigation. The findings revealed that third year students regard listening comprehension as one of the most important foreign language skills. It also shew that students are conscious of the importance of the use of listening comprehension strategies since they try to develop by themselves some techniques to recover their limitations. In addition, the study argued that regular use of paralinguistic inferencing strategies is explained

by the students' tendency to recover the difficulties by relying on the non-verbal cues to infer the reasonable meaning from the language input. As for the linguistic inferencing strategies, the students use them to construct the literal meaning of the unknown word. Concerning the inferencing between-parts strategies some students reported to use their background knowledge and to make an association between the utterances to reach the speakers' intended meaning. As far as the least used strategies are concerned, the voice inferencing strategies are the least often used by the students justifying this less frequent use by the limitations they have at the level of the phonological features and the native speakers' fast speech. Extra-linguistic inferencing strategies also represent the less used strategies and occupy the last position. Some students use extra-linguistic inferencing strategies to fit the lack of knowledge (vocabulary) relying on the contextual cues and concrete situational referents.

To sum up, the study revealed that both students and teachers value listening as a vital skill in foreign language learning. And it proved that students employ to some extent cognitive inferencing listening strategies to enhance the EFL learning process, more precisely, the listening competence. The latter offers the opportunity to comprehend, learn and store the lexical items and make a significant interpretation as well as drawing inferencing in daily life.

Pedagogical Implications for Teachers

The following are suggestions to improve vocabulary learning and promote listening comprehension:

1- The use of audio-visual tools and technology in listening to facilitate the process of learning EFL since learners are interested in enhancing their lexical ability.

2- Listening comprehension strategies instructions should be taken into consideration to facilitate the listening comprehension process.

3- The investigation of students' use of cognitive inferencing listening strategies will be enriched by using a triangulation method. It consists of the investigation of the same issue by using three research tools: a questionnaire, an interview, and a classroom observation.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Students' Questionnaire

Dear participants,

We are presently conducting a research to find out and describe the cognitive listening strategies that third year students use to store vocabulary, and this questionnaire is administered as part of our research.

We would be very grateful if you could answer these questions. Your responses will be used for research only and will remain confidential.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Section one: Students' view on the listening skill

1. Do you think that the listening skill is important in foreign language learning?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Justify your answer?

.....

.....

2. Understanding the meaning of words is easier when listening to an Audio-tape text:

a) I agree ☐

b) I disagree ☐

Justify your answer?

.....

.....

3. Which factor distracts you to store new vocabulary during an audio-tape listening session?

a) The lack of body movement (videos) ☐

b) The lack of subtitles/captions ☐

Section two: Students' preferences when dealing with listening comprehension

4. What tool do you prefer to study with in order to store new vocabulary when when dealing with listening?

Audio ☐

Audio-video ☐

Justify your answer?

.....
.....

5. It is preferable to learn vocabulary through listening:

a) I strongly agree ☐

b) I agree ☐

c) I strongly disagree ☐

d) I disagree ☐

6. What is your purpose when learning listening?

a) To learn vocabulary ☐

b) To improve your pronunciation ☐

c) To learn about the foreign language cultural concepts ☐

7. How often do you practice listening (either through Audio or Audio-video) outside the classroom?

Always ☐

Sometimes ☐

Often ☐

Rarely ☐

Section three: The frequency use of cognitive listening strategies to store vocabulary.

Linguistic Inferencing

8. How often do you guess the meaning of unknown words from context

Usually ☐

Sometimes ☐

Rarely ☐

Voice Inferencing:

9. How often do you deduce the meaning of some words, phrases or expressions from the

Speaker's tone of the voice

Usually ☐

Sometimes ☐

Rarely ☐

Paralinguistic Inferencing

10. How often do you understand the meaning of unknown words when the speaker uses body movements (facial expression, gestures) in an audio-video tape?

Usually ☐

Sometimes ☐

Rarely ☐

Why?.....

.....

Extra-Linguistic Inferencing:

11. How often do you rely on the context to guess the meaning of an unknown word?

Usually ☐

Sometimes ☐

Rarely ☐

Between-Part Inferencing

12. How often do you use words in the utterance that may not be related to the task to get information about the task?

Usually ☐

Sometimes ☐

Rarely ☐

The Frequency of the Five Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies

13. According to you which inferencing strategies that can help you to more to store vocabulary?

Linguistic Inferencing Strategies ☐

Voice Inferencing Strategies ☐

Paralinguistic Inferencing Strategies ☐

Extra-Linguistic Inferencing Strategies ☐

Inferencing Between -Parts Strategies ☐

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this questionnaire.

Appendix Two

Teachers' Interview

Dear Sir/Madame

We are presently conducting a research to describe the techniques (inferencing cognitive strategies) that are used by foreign language listening students. This research will serve us to find out the strategies that students use to help them to learn and become familiar with the foreign language vocabulary.

We would be very grateful if you could answer these questions. Your responses will be used for research only and will remain confidential.

Section One: Demographic Information

Q1: How long have you been teaching the listening module?

Section Two: Teachers' Views on the Listening Skill

Q2: Do you think that teaching the listening skill is important in foreign language learning?

Q3: Do you think that listening skill is one of the most prominent skills that learners need to improve their vocabulary storage? Why?

Section Three: Teachers' perceptions of Students' Performance and Competence during the Listening Session

Q4: Do you think that your students are active learners when studying listening?

Q5: According to you are your learners able to learn the English language autonomously outside the classroom listening sessions?

Q6: Do your learners use some listening strategies to learn lexical items when completing a given task?

Section Four: Teachers' Views about Students' Interest in Listening Classes

Q7: Are your learners interested in tasks that deal with foreign language vocabulary?

Q8: What kind of tasks your learners are more interested in?

Q9: Do you think that your learners pay more attention when the listening session is done with an audio-video tool? If yes, why?

Section Five: The Major Difficulties that Students Encounter in Listening Session

Q10: Do your students encounter some difficulties while undertaking a listening comprehension task? If yes, could you cite some of them?

Q11: Do your learners ask you to explain the difficult words before starting a listening task?

Q12: According to you dealing with topic related to cultural concepts is difficult to be understood by your learners?

Section Six: Teachers' Opinion about Students' Use of Cognitive Inferencing Listening Strategies to Learn Vocabulary

Q13: Do your learners guess the meaning of unknown words in an utterance using known words or do they use other techniques?

Q14: Do your learners rely on the speakers' facial expressions, gestures to infer the meaning of the spoken language?

Q15: Do you think that your learners are able to guess the meaning of unknown words in an utterance relying on the speaker's tone?

Q16: Do your students use the context in an utterance to infer the meaning of unknown words?

Q17: Do you think that your learners understand the recorded topic when they use words that are in the utterance but may not be related to the task to get more information about the task?

Thank you