

Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) Used by ESL learners in Improving their English Pronunciation: A case study

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Abstract: - Pronunciation is an essential aspect of language to be studied and taught, yet little emphasis was given on this aspect in the classroom. This qualitative study aims to investigate the pronunciation learning strategies used by learners in completing their pronunciation tasks. The qualitative data were collected from two participants who were studying in a higher learning institution in Malaysia. The findings indicated that five strategies emerged as the most preferred strategies used in pronunciation learning, and they were: Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social, Memory and Compensation.

Introduction

English has spread worldwide and become one of the world's most influential languages. As it spreads, the number of non-native speakers who possess varying degrees of proficiency in the language is also growing. Some of them would even carry their accents and pronunciations into the target language. Thus, a distinctive English pronunciation among the non-natives has developed as their cultures and background influence them. The differences in pronunciations are said to hamper communication. Eckstein (2010) stated that the productions of pronunciation by the learners that do not match the target speech production is considered a mispronunciation. Hence, it is crucial to have intelligible pronunciation since it creates successful communication with English speakers. Goodwin (2001) also mentioned that the proficiency of second language learners is probably judged through their pronunciation. As a result, it is crucial that as second language learners, we have to try our best to learn the correct pronunciation to help us achieve effective communication.

Even though the pronunciation skill is undeniably one of the crucial aspects of language that should be learned and taught in the classroom, this aspect has been neglected in the classroom. One factor contributing to the neglect is teachers' lack of skills and confidence in teaching the skill. (Derwig &

Rossitier, 2002). Teachers are not confident to teach pronunciation skills in the classroom. Besides, they seem to face difficulties in being role models in teaching pronunciation, and most non-native English teachers would be reluctant to speak in the classroom with native-like pronunciation. As a solution, they believe that the students can learn pronunciation outside the class as they have much access to different resources. Also, in support of the teachers, some studies mentioned that teachers and classroom do not affect the way students speak English (Purcell & Sutter, 1980) and "Pronunciation instruction cannot shape students' speech to become English-like; it can only provide students with the tools to do so if they want to" (Wong, 1996, p.19). Munro and Derwig (1997) further assert that language instructors have minimal impact on their students' accuracy. These claims suggest that other factors play a role in improving the students' pronunciation. Thus, this study aims to explore students' pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) so that they will be able to have intelligible and understandable communication.

Literature Review

For second language learners (L2) or foreign language learners (FL), learning English implies hard work and practice. To help them learn and practice the language, they need to know what strategies they can quickly learn. How important is

learning strategies to a learner? Several researchers have investigated and tried to discover the learning strategies that would effectively enable learners to produce intelligible pronunciation. Oxford (1990, p. 18), who was among the prominent figures in the field of learning strategy, defined learning strategies as “specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing Second language (L2) skills”. It is believed that employing learning strategies in the language learning process will facilitate the retention, storage, retrieval, and use of the new language’s vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, etc. The ability to use these strategies help the learners to master the language since the strategies are the best tools for self-directed involvement in improving communicative ability. Self-directed involvement means that the learners take appropriate steps or strategies to overcome their learning difficulties, especially acquiring a second language or target language.

Besides, one also needs to know that learning styles are different from learning strategies. Learning strategies are defined by Oxford (1990) as “natural, habitual and preferred ways of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills”. In contrast, learning styles are defined as “characteristics of individuals for intake of understanding of new information” (Reid, 1995, p.5). In explaining the concept of language learning strategies (LLS), Reid (1995) mentions numerous essential characteristics described LLS in the literature. For instance, LLS are learners generated (which learners use to help them in learning a language), and they help to enhance language learning and to develop language competence, especially in the second or foreign language learning skills such as reading, writing, listening & speaking, vocabulary and grammar.

They can also be seen as behaviours, steps, or techniques or unseen thoughts and mental processes. These activities involved information and memory process. For instance, in learning a language, the learners need to process information and memorise the grammar, vocabulary, etc. In short, learning

strategies actually can facilitate the learning process and acquisition of a second or foreign language. Furthermore, Oxford (1990, p.9) elaborated that language learning strategies “allow learners to become more self-directed”, “Expand the role of the teachers”, “are problem-oriented” and “involve many aspects, not just the cognitive”. Oxford’s view clearly explained that learning strategies certainly help learners be self-directed in solving their second language problems. However, to effectively employ LLS, teachers need to help learners make them aware of the strategies that suit their needs. As Cohen (1990) mentioned, learning strategies are limited to conscious strategy only, and the learners are free to choose what fit them best. Thus, they will be aware of the strategy that they have chosen to use to help them in their learning process. Nonetheless, they need help in the process of learning what pronunciation strategies fit them best.

Pronunciation and language Acquisition Research

Language learning strategies (LLS) have significantly become part of second or foreign language acquisition to enhance learners' ability to master language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking, and others. Initially, LLS was divided into two parts: 1) learning strategies (O'Malley et al., 1985) and 2) communication strategies (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). The former is divided into a few categories: metacognitive, cognitive and affective strategies, while the latter is divided into avoidance and compensatory strategies. However, there is difficulty distinguishing both strategies when it comes to actual communication since both strategies overlap. As a result, Oxford (1990) proposed an alternative to determine these strategies in which the strategies were split into two categories: direct and indirect strategies that influence the learning process. She stated that direct strategies should be memory, cognitive and compensation strategies, whereas indirect strategies would be metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Oxford's (1990, p.17) taxonomy of language learning strategies is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Oxford (1990): Taxonomy of Language Learning

<p>DIRECT STRATEGIES</p> <p>I. Memory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Creating mental linkages B. Applying images and sounds C. Reviewing well D. Employing action <p>II. Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Practicing B. Receiving and sending messages strategies C. Analyzing and reasoning D. Creating structure for input and output <p>III. Compensation strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Guessing intelligently B. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing 	<p>INDIRECT STRATEGIES</p> <p>I. Metacognitive Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. centering your learning B. Arranging and planning your learning C. Evaluating your learning <p>II. Affective Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Lowering your anxiety B. Encouraging yourself C. Taking your emotional temperature <p>III. Social Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Asking questions B. Cooperating with others C. Empathizing with others
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Oxford (1990, p.8) defined pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning [pronunciation] easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations” and the “students use them to enhance their learning”(Scarcela & Oxford,1992, p.63). Recently pronunciation learning strategies have emerged as tools to help language learners empower their needs to achieve effective and understandable communication (Derwig & Rossitier, 2002; Eckstein, 2007). Regardless, the importance of communicating or speaking intelligibly, there is a lack of attention given to pronunciation learning. There are many reasons for the lack of emphasis in the pronunciation area. One of the reasons is that there are insufficient guidelines for assessing pronunciation because there are always issues whether pronunciation should be based on its comprehensibility, intelligibility, accuracy, or fluency. Many researchers stated that pronunciation is being disregarded in the second language learning environment as Elliott (1995) mentioned that “the acquisition of pronunciation has fallen to the wayside and has suffered from serious neglect in the communicative classroom” (p. 96), while Derwing and Rossiter (2002) also added that pronunciation strategies had been disregarded in language learning strategy. This happens as a result of a lack of

expertise and difficulty in teaching the skills. Most pronunciation learning studies emphasise having perfect pronunciation, and researchers have even put efforts into identifying factors that can help ESL learners to make their pronunciation more native-like. However, the suggestions made to improve pronunciation can be troublesome and confusing to the learners, especially when the teachers could not exemplify and model the correct pronunciation to help learners learn from them.

When it comes to pronunciation or second or foreign language acquisition, the learners have been fed with the notion that they need to sound like a native speaker. This notion is deemed impossible for the adults to acquire the native-like pronunciation. According to Morley (1991), the traditional goals of achieving near-native pronunciation should be dismissed. A more practical goal of achieving intelligibility and communicability in communication should be developed, primarily through speech monitoring and speech modification strategies so that learners can use it beyond the classroom. It is not practical to learn a language and have to sound like a native. Thus, pronunciation learning strategies focus more on being able to produce communication to be intelligible. It is believed that pronunciation learning strategy allows students to monitor and correct their speech. It is one

way that is believed to be effective in improving ESL learners' pronunciation ability.

Methodology

The methodology used in this qualitative study was designed to identify and explore the pronunciation learning strategies used by ESL learners. This research is a case study that involves observation based on a checklist and pre-and post-interview sessions.

Participants

The participants in this study were one undergraduate and one postgraduate student. These students have more than eleven years of learning experience and have been exposed to the English language, and come from a rural area. Rural area in this study is being defined as an area in which English is rarely used as the communication language. Their background will help the researcher examine how the pronunciation strategies help them complete the pronunciation tasks, especially when they do not use much English in their daily language setting.

Instruments

The main instrument in this study was a set of checklists consisting of nine pronunciation learning strategies used during the observation. It was meant to elicit learners' actual pronunciation tasks. Secondly, the pre-and post-interview questions were conducted to draw out new pronunciation strategies that were not observed during the observation session.

Procedure

To conduct the study, the participants went through few stages. First, there were two sessions of the interviews. The first part was the pre-interview. Here, the participants were asked to answer questions on their view of pronunciation learning strategies. Next, the actual pronunciation activities or hands-on tasks were conducted to investigate the learners' actual pronunciation strategies. After that, a post-interview using a structured interview was conducted. This was done immediately after the pronunciation activities to recall the strategy they

used during the pronunciation tasks. The interview sessions were then audiotaped and transcribed.

Interview and audio-taping

The interview questions were designed to ensure that the learners would report on their strategies in general or concerning a specific activity (Ellis, 1994). A semi-structured interview was conducted in this study as it helps the researcher identifies and classifies the strategies used by the participants in completing their spontaneous pronunciation tasks. The interview is structured to be closed and open-ended questions to help the researcher identify the most strategies used by the learners. This will help create a framework to support the teachers to improvise their lesson plans in teaching pronunciation in the classrooms in the future.

Pre-Interview

It was conducted before the pronunciation tasks to gather general or perceived pronunciation learning strategies from the learners. The manner of the questions asked in this session was an open-ended question that requires the learners to give information on the strategies they used to pronounce correctly. The students were required to answer six questions on strategies they used to help them pronounce better. The questions were adapted from Eckstein (2007).

Observation and Recording

To observe students' pronunciation strategies, they were audiotaped while reading the passage aloud (Task A) and pronouncing the minimal-pairs (Task B). In task a (passage-reading), an extract containing two to six syllables was given to the students to be read. As for task B, a list of ten minimal-pairs adopted from Hazwani Hanafi (2012) was used. The students were observed individually.

Pronunciation Tasks

In task A, the students were asked to read the passage aloud. A short reading passage entitled "Change in Schools" by Brown was chosen to elicit learners' pronunciation strategies. They were given one minute to look through the short passage and read the passage aloud. Then, in task B, pronouncing

minimal-pairs activity was conducted. This was done immediately after the reading passage task was completed. In this task, the minimal pairs were chosen based on two categories: 1) vowels and 2) consonants. For instance, the words were chosen based on the short and long vowel, similar-sounding vowels and consonants *and others*. In doing this task, their speeches were recorded. As for the observation, the researcher used a set of checklists to observe their pronunciation learning strategies. They were observed for their pronunciation learning strategies used in trying to produce spontaneous understandable pronunciation.

Post- Interview

The post-interview questions require the students to explain the pronunciation learning strategy they have used in general or the tasks given to them. The interview demands the students to answer a *Yes/No-explain* questions with regards to the tasks conducted. The questions were designed in such a way so that the students can confirm the strategies that they use, and then the strategies were compared to the literature. In the meantime, the semi-structured interview helped the researcher identify and classify the participants' strategies in completing their spontaneous pronunciation tasks. The second part of the questions was designed to be more general to elicit all learners' pronunciation learning strategies used during the pronunciation activities and other times. This was done immediately after the tasks prevented the students from forgetting their pronunciation learning strategies used in completing

the tasks. The interviews were audiotaped and recorded.

Findings & Discussion

During the process of identifying pronunciation learning strategies (PLS), a systematic strategy appeared. The researcher elicited these pronunciation strategies based on the literature on the Language Learning Strategies framework by Oxford (1990) and also Rokoszweska (2012) framework. Both frameworks had tremendously helped in identifying and categorizing the themes. Nevertheless, in determining the themes, the researcher had to examine the strategies used by the participants closely. The researcher looked for the pattern, similarities, and differences that might fit the literature's categories. Identifying the relationship of the pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) and themes that emerged in the study helped the researcher see whether the findings of this study confirm the previous literature's findings or new pronunciation learning strategies were spotted. As for the checklist and post-interview, the questions asked were not constricted or limited to any themes. The selection of close-ended and open-ended questions asked during the interview sessions and observed during the observation was according to the most frequent used pronunciation learning strategies used in the literature. The summary of the themes that appeared in the pre-Interview, checklist, and post-interview can be observed in tables 2, 3 and 4 below:

Table 2 Emerged Themes from the Pre-Interview

Pre-Interview		
Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) Category	Emerging Theme	Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) Used

Pre-Interview		
Cognitive	Practicing Pronunciation	1) Listen to a native speaker 2) Listen to music 3) Looking up and google up the pronunciation of the Word correctly. 4) I will search the words online, on the dictionary online 5) I practice the words 6) I watch some videos
Metacognitive	Evaluating One's Learning	1) I correct myself
Social	Asking Question a) Asking for help	1) I asked somebody who has more knowledge i.e lecturer 2) Asking the lecturer for a correct pronunciation 3) Ask people how to pronounce
	b) Asking for correction	1) Ask people to correct pronunciation
Compensation	Guessing Intelligently	1) Try and error (Attempt to pronounce the words) 2) Attempt to try to pronounce the word
Memory	Representing sounds in memory	1) Recall back what I already learn

Table 3 Emerged Themes from the Checklist

Checklist		
PLS Category	Themes	Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS)
Compensation	Guessing Intelligently	1) Willing to guess the pronunciation of new sounds
Metacognitive	Evaluating One's Learning	1) Immediate self-correction 2) Read aloud new words 3) Speak / read slower for unsure pronunciation 4) Say a word aloud for unsure pronunciation

Table 4 Emerged Themes from the Post-Interview

Post- Interview		
PLS Category	Themes	Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS)
Cognitive	Practicing Pronunciation	1) I just practice my pronunciation 2) Listen to the song 3) People help to fix the pronunciation 4) Learn pronunciation from other people Practice pronunciation via songs' lyrics by reporting the songs

Post- Interview		
		5) Watch movies, educational videos and BBC 6) Willing to make mistake
	Analysing and reasoning	1) Learn from mistake to help self-correct
	Sending and Receiving Messages on Pronunciation	1) Speak faster when you are not sure of the pronunciation of a word
Metacognitive	Evaluating One's Learning	1) I have to repeat myself when pronouncing misunderstood words 2) Repeat the misunderstood word slower 3) People give feedback on the pronunciation 4) I corrected myself 5) It sounds correct to me 6) Re-pronounced the words slowly
	Arranging & Planning One's Learning-Seeking Practice Opportunities	1) I speak to myself
Social	Asking Question a) Asking for help	1) I need help 2) Ask for help from the teacher in pronouncing difficult or new words
	b) Asking for correction	1) Ask for feedback on English pronunciation 2) People correct the pronunciation mistake 3) Ask for teacher to help fix the pronunciation mistake
Memory	Representing Sounds in Memory	1) Memorise the words to avoid making similar pronunciation mistakes 2) Memorising English words that are hard to be pronounced 3) Comparing new words to a similar word 4) Used previous knowledge on the words from online, movies, songs and TV 5) For new words found in the passage, I used sound shift 6) Using an associating sounds/spelling 7) Compare to similar words based on spelling, morpheme and sounds 8) I tend to remember the pronunciation of certain words
	Rote-Learning	1) Re-pronounce the word
	Overcoming Limitations in Pronunciation	1) Avoid saying words that is completely

Post- Interview		
Compensation	Guessing Intelligently	1) Pronounce unsure words 2) Willing to guess pronunciation

Discussions on the Themes

Based on the analysis of the number of pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) used by the learners, five PLS category emerged throughout this study. They were *Cognitive, Metacognitive, Memory, Compensation and Social.* (Erbay et. al, 2016; Akyol, 2013, Szyska, 2015, Rokoszweska, 2012; Vitanova & Miller, 2002; Akyol, 2013). Each category was then discussed according to the themes to explain better the strategies used by the participants.

Pre-Interview & Post-Interview

There were a few exciting findings between the pre-interview and post-interview data. During the pre-interview and post-interview sessions, both participants provided strategies that they perceived and believed to be used during their pronunciation learning and acquisition process in general.

Cognitive Strategy

Oxford (2003, p.12) elaborated on cognitive strategies definition in which they are strategies that “enable the learner to manipulate the language material indirect ways, for example through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarising, synthesising, outlining, reorganising information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practising in naturalistic settings, and practising structures and sounds formal”. In the Pre-interview session, for the Cognitive strategy, the themes that emerged were *Practicing Pronunciation, Analysing and reasoning, Sending and Receiving Messages on Pronunciation.* The strategies they provided showed that they practice pronunciation. *The participants believed that in general, the strategies that help them learn or acquire pronunciation are listening to a native speaker, listening to music, looking up and googling up the pronunciation of the word correctly, searching the phrase on the online dictionary, practising the words and watching some videos.*

However, during the post-interview session, two more themes emerged. They were “*Analysing and reasoning*”, “*Sending and Receiving Messages on Pronunciation*”. As for *Analysing and reasoning* theme, the strategy that was preferred was *learn from the mistake to help self-correct (self-correction).* This theme indicates that the learners analyse their progress in learning pronunciation. They do know-how to analyse the way they sound in speech. One example, quoted during the post-interview, the participant, D_HS, in his transcription, stated that:

It's ok for me to get wrong at first because, it keeps getting better, I can fix myself to pronounce it the right way I think. (DU 8-Post-Interview)

As for *Sending and Receiving Messages on Pronunciation* theme, the strategy listed under it was *to speak faster when you are not sure of the pronunciation of a word.* In a transcription for M_HS, the participant indicated that she *starts speaking faster* to hide her pronunciation, especially encountering the words that she does not know how to pronounce it, as stated below:

I can hide it, what actually I pronounce it. (M_HS, post-interview: DU 28)

Metacognitive Strategy

Metacognitive is the second PLS category used throughout the study by the participants. This category is explained as "identifying one's learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organising materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success, and evaluating the success of any learning strategy" (Oxford, 2003, p.12). They are employed for managing the learning process overall. Purpura (1999) found that metacognitive strategies had "a significant, positive, direct effect on cognitive strategy use, providing clear evidence that metacognitive strategy use has an executive function

over cognitive strategy use in task completion" (p. 61). Under this category, a theme of *Evaluating One's Learning* emerged from the pre-interview session. Simultaneously, the post-interview yielded the second theme of *Arranging & Planning One's Learning-Seeking Practice Opportunities*. As for the theme of *evaluating one's learning*, it is clear that this theme is defining the participants' awareness of their pronunciation learning in which among the strategies listed in this theme were *I have to repeat myself when pronouncing misunderstood words, repeat the misunderstood word slower, people give feedback on the pronunciation, I corrected myself, it sounds correct to me, re-pronounced the terms slowly*. The participants were aware that they do analyse and evaluate their pronunciation learning. For instance, a participant D_HS in his transcription DU 31 (Post-interview) mentioned that,

Because when, I think. There is one time that I pronounce, I can't remember the word but I pronounce it and people like...Ha? They don't understand me so, I tried pronounce it again...

The second theme on *Arranging & Planning One's Learning-Seeking Practice Opportunities* listed a strategy that shows *I speak to myself*. This theme is important to plan ones' ability to practice in the target language and take a chance to use the target language, which is English. D_HS mentioned in his transcription DU 4 that:

I have this habit...when I, you know, when I am alone in a room or while walking, I tend to, you know, speak to myself...just speak ...just speak about any topic to myself and by that, I just practice my pronunciation...

Social-Related Strategy

A social-related strategy is defined as strategies that we used to ask questions to get verification, ask for clarification of a confusing point, ask for help in doing a language task, talk with a native-speaking conversation partner, and explore cultural and social norms. This strategy helps the learner work with others and understand the target culture and the language (Oxford, 2003, p. 12). The pre-interview and post-interview data yielded two themes: *asking a*

question for help and asking a question for correction. The strategies for the former were *I asked somebody who has more knowledge, i.e. lecturer, asking the lecturer for correct pronunciation, asking people how to pronounce, I need help, and asking for help from the teacher in pronouncing difficult or new words*. In contrast, the latter listed one strategy from the pre-interview: *Ask people to correct pronunciation mistakes*. Two more strategies from the post-interview asked were *for feedback on English pronunciation and asked the teacher to help fix the pronunciation mistakes*. Both participants stated that they both asked someone with the knowledge to help them with this. As stated by Pre-Interview, D_HS (DU 41),

Maybe I will try to pronounce it at first and I will try to pronounce it in front of the other people and maybe. He or she know how the word should be pronounced, she will correct me or I think...

I am sometimes ask my friends who are more fluent than me

(M_HS, Pre-interview, DU 32)

Memory-related Strategy

Memory-related strategies help learners link "one L2 item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve deep understanding. Various memory-related strategies enable learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly string (e.g., acronyms). At the same time, other techniques create learning and retrieval via sounds (e.g., rhyming), images (e.g., a mental picture of the word itself or the meaning of the word), a combination of sounds and images (e.g., the keyword method), body movement (e.g., total physical response), mechanical means (e.g., flashcards), or location (e.g., on a page or blackboard)" (Oxford, 2003: 13). The pre-interview yielded one theme, *Representing Sounds in Memory*, whereas post-interview data generated two themes *Representing Sounds in Memory* and *Rote-Learning*.

As for the *Representing sounds in memory* theme is closely associated with strategies that help link the target language to the sounds system that the learners

already know or associate with the spelling or structures of the language to the previous knowledge that the learners know. For instance, *memorise the words to avoid making similar pronunciation mistakes, memorising English words that are hard to be pronounced, comparing new words to a similar word, used previous knowledge on the words from online, movies, songs and TV, for new words found in the passage, I used sound shift, using an associating sounds/spelling, compare to similar words based on spelling, morpheme and sounds, I tend to remember the pronunciation of certain words and recall back what I learn.*

While for the *Rote-Learning* theme, the only strategy was to *re-pronounce the word*. *Rote learning* is closely related to memorising, and most learners tend to memorise difficult words. For instance; *...well I use my previous knowledge (to re-pronounce the word)* (M_HS, Post-Interview, Du 18)

Compensation Strategy

It is a strategy that helps the learners to fill in the 'blank' such as guessing from the context in listening and reading; using synonyms and "talking around" the missing words to aid speaking and writing; and strictly for speaking, using gestures or pause words) help the learner make up for missing knowledge. (Oxford, 2003: 13). In this category, there were two themes gathered from the pre-and post-interview sessions: *Guessing Intelligently* and *Overcoming Limitations in Pronunciation*. The former listed the strategies of pronouncing *unsure words, willing to guess pronunciation, try and error (Attempt to pronounce the words and attempt to pronounce the word)*. These strategies were used to compensate for the participants' knowledge; they are likely to be used in a situation where there is no reference found to associate or relate the pronunciation. For instance, D_HS (Pre-interview, DU 8) mentioned that,

Yeah, I am willing to try because if I don't try, how am I supposed to know...how to pronounce the words...

While M_HS, Post-Interview, DU 28 stated that,

It is a new word, it makes me nervous, become nervous, because it is a new word i don't know so i just ... shshshshsh...

Observation & Checklist

About the observation and checklist data, since the strategies used had been filtered to suit the needs of the pronunciation tasks, only two categories emerged to be the most used group of strategies used, which were Metacognitive and Compensation strategies. The theme for Metacognitive was *Evaluating One's Learning* with the list of strategies of *immediate self-correction, read aloud new words, speak/read slower for unsure pronunciation and say a word aloud for uncertain pronunciation*. As for Compensation Strategies, the theme of *Guessing Intelligently* was expected to be their favourite strategy since it was employed by both participants, they were *willing to guess the pronunciation of the new words*. The data gathered from the observation that was based on a checklist indicated that the learners preferred metacognitive strategies to help them acquire and better their pronunciation in the on-site pronunciation tasks.

Comparison of PLS Used between undergraduate (D_HS) and postgraduate (M_HS)

In this part, the researcher compared the preferred pronunciation learning strategies used by the undergraduate participant presented by D_HS and postgraduate participant represented by M_HS. This helps the researcher identified preferred pronunciation learning strategies used among both participants to improve their communication and improve their pronunciation to be more comprehensible and intelligible regardless both participants are from a place where English is not used daily. It is found that, by employing PLS, the learners are becoming autonomous as they are more in charge of their pronunciation learning, in which they try to improve their pronunciation aspects.

Pre-Interview

The findings indicated that D_HS preferred *Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social and Compensation* strategies while M_HS preferred *Cognitive, Memory, Social, Compensation*

strategies. In the *Cognitive* category. Both participants preferred practising their pronunciation using online sources, such as listening to songs or to native speakers' speech. It is also similar in Social and Compensation strategy, and they equally and similarly used the same strategies. However, the only difference that can be seen was that D_HS did not prefer the memory strategy while M_HS chose to use the *Memory strategy* to recall the sounds or words that she had learned previously. Yet, D_HS preferred the *Metacognitive* strategy in which he believed that he could evaluate his learning in which he said that he was able to correct himself if he knows the word.

I am not sure...I think ahhh...if that happens, I think, if that happens in the presentation, I just apologise and say I am sorry, I think I said something wrong and correct myself back. (D_HS, DU 35)

Furthermore, M_HS had also clearly indicated that she preferred to memorise words that are hard to pronounce in the transcript DU 42, *"The harder to pronounce the more I remember it"*.

Observation-Checklist

The comparison of strategies from the checklist for both participants indicated that they preferred to use similar categories of strategy, which were *Compensation and Metacognitive*. M_HS used more strategies under the category of *Metacognitive* in which *Read aloud the words* was an additional strategy she used, regardless that she knows or does not know or she was not sure of the pronunciation of the word. She did not avoid pronouncing the words or tried to slow down her voice to indicate avoidance strategy.

Post-Interview

The result indicated that M_HS did not use the theme of *Analysing and reasoning* from the *Cognitive* theme. A similar pattern was seen in the *Metacognitive* category in which M_HS did not practise the theme of *Arranging & Planning One's Learning-Seeking Practice Opportunities*. In another category of *Memory*, the theme of *rote-learning* in which trying to practice pronunciation was also not preferred. In *Compensation and Social* category,

both participants preferred the same strategies, such as *willing to guess the pronunciation* and *asking for help or feedback*. For instance,

Yeah, I am willing to try because if I don't try, how am I supposed to know...how to pronounce the words...I don't...it is ok to make...I mean it's ok for me to get wrong at first because, it keep getting better, I can fix myself to pronounce it the right way I think.

Based on these findings, it can be assumed that M_HS underused the strategies that she needs to confront the language, such as practice or using the target language. This can be associated with the lack of confidence that the participant showed throughout the pronunciation tasks. She seems to be a bit unsure and shy of her pronunciation. This can also be related to her background in which she comes from a state that lack of English is being used in daily conversation; thus, practising English is not a habit. It is believed that a poor environment to practice English influenced the way the participants used pronunciation learning strategies.

Conclusion

This study is a small-scale research that managed to indicate the importance of pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) to be used in daily life to help learners boost their pronunciation acquisition and learning. Apart from that, since these PLS can be easily adapted based on the learners' preference, learners need to be aware of their strategy use to better their pronunciation and acquisition. PLS is a crucial initiative that can help learners in rural area master English, especially pronunciation. Also, pronunciation teaching should be emphasised in the classrooms to enhance learners' pronunciation.

The teachers need to be thoroughly trained so that they can be a model for pronunciation exercise. Currently, it is no longer to achieve native-like speech, but it is more to be comprehensible in speech and communication. This is also crucial, and especially English is now an essential means to acquire knowledge and the world's most used and progressive language to help for self-development in the future. The government is also emphasising

being able to communicate well since employees are looking for graduands or employees who can communicate effectively and intelligibly in the working environment. There should be a larger scale of research in this area since the findings of this study are limited in the number of participants and cannot be generalised. The restricted use of pronunciation learning strategies on pronunciation tasks would also limit the learners' responses. Regardless of the PLS limitation, it was purposely done to outsource the pronunciation tasks to remember what they did throughout the task consciously. All in all, further research should be conducted, and a larger scale of learners should be involved regardless of urban or rural area to help learners become aware of their pronunciation learning strategies and at the same time to help them learn new strategies.

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