

An Analysis of The Strategies Applied By Beginner and Advanced Students in English during TOEFL-Like Test in Listening Section

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to find out the strategies the beginner students and advanced students employed when they were having listening tests in TOEFL-like test. The current research applied descriptive method. The subjects of the research were 10 students with 5 beginners and 5 advanced students who took the TOEFL-like test in UPT Bahasa, the University of Lampung. Interview was used to collect the data. The result of the research showed that the beginners slightly differed in using strategies from the advanced students in terms of determining the topic, and drawing conclusions of the aspects related to Wh-questions. This suggests that listening strategies do not necessarily contribute to learners' listening achievement.

KEYWORDS: listening TOEFL-like test, listening strategies

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I. INTRODUCTION

In learning process, listening is the ability to understand native speech in the normal speed. It can be said that listening is the main step to understand people in communication. Language testing is one of the aspects of learning process, to check the language proficiency of the students in order to evaluate the achievement of the students (Mahmud, 2014). One of the types of language testing is TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). This is one of the test to check English proficiency of non- native speakers (Phillips, 2001). On listening section of TOEFL test consists of fifty questions. Phillips classifies aspects of listening section on TOEFL into synonyms, conclusion of who, what, and where, negative expression, expression of agreement, expression of uncertainty and suggestion, emphatic expression of surprise, contrary meaning, and idiomatic language in short dialogues (Phillips, 2001). Then, long conversations and talks consist of aspects determine the topic and draw conclusion about who, what, where, and when. This section take an important role to check the listening proficiency of students in listening to conversations and monologue in English. A research shows that without listening, it is hard for someone to communicate and generate the ideas in English. Therefore, listening section of TOEFL test assured not easy (Novia et al, 2018). Other researcher find the students are unable to understand the listening section of TOEFL due to the native speaker's pronunciation, then the constraints came from unfamiliar topics, stress and intonation patterns, poor quality of equipment, listening strategies and training, linguistic features, speed rate of listening, lack of concentration, and other physical settings (Rahmi et al, 2020). Furthermore, previous research collected some data for investigating the medical students' responses to listening constraints in taking the listening section of the TOEFL test and their efforts made to overcome the constraints (Rahmi and friends, 2020). It was found that watching English TV programs or movies (65.10%) and listening to English songs (60%) as the highest rank of students' efforts made to overcome listening constraints of the TOEFL test. Section two of the questionnaire consisted of listening constraints. It was found that most respondents were difficult to understand the native speaker's pronunciation (64%). In short, much research about the constraints and factors of listening during TOEFL-like test has been explored. Differ from previous research, compare the constraints between beginner and advance groups facing listening TOEFL-like test need to be investigate. Furthermore, it is supported by researcher when conducting pre observation at UPT Bahasa, the University of Lampung. Pre observation conducted to undergraduate students of the University of Lampung who took TOEFL-like Test, the students' expression when the audio played, seemed they hard to understand the listening section. Besides, there was other fact has been found. Many students faced constraints in TOEFL-like test at listening section because the audio of speaker is not clear. The audio of speaker only distribute by speaker tool put in front of the students, so only students sat on first line that could

listen the sound clearly. However the students faced many difficulties during the test, they still can finish the test on time. The pre observation above attract the writer to do deep analysis about the strategies used by students to answer listening section in TOEFL-like test, but the writer try to divide the students into two groups to see the differences strategies applied by beginner and advance groups during listening TOEFL-like test.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

TOEFL-like is adopted from official TOEFL test. This TOEFL test score is only recognized by the organizing institution, although there are other institutions that use it as a predictive score (Destiyanti, et al, 2021). TOEFL-like test comprises of three sub test as Listening section, Grammar and Written Expression Section, and Reading Comprehension section. On listening section of TOEFL-like test consists of fifty questions. Phillips classifies aspects of listening section on TOEFL (Phillips, 2001):

1. Short dialogues, two-line dialogues between two speakers, each followed by multiple-choice question.
2. Long conversations, 60-90 second conversations on casual topics between students, one will listen to each long conversation and each of questions that accompany it on the recording and then choose the best answer to each question from the four choices in the test paper.
3. Talks, 60-90 seconds talks about school life or on academic subjects, each followed by a number of multiple-choice questions.

According to Phillips, in the content of the book, there are eight strategies that can be used to help test takers answer TOEFL listening questions correctly (Phillips, 2001). For general strategies, there are three common strategies which are very important to notice, as follows:

- 1) Focus on the last line. Part A is conversation between two people. There are only two lines of conversation. Speaker A is saying one sentence, and is followed by a reply by speaker B. The last line or second line is spoken by speaker B. Phillips states that the answer to part A is most often (but not always) found in the last line of the conversation.
- 2) Choose answers with synonyms. When a test taker focuses on the second or the last line, he/she should find the restatement or synonyms of the key words in the last line.
- 3) Avoid similar sounds. Similar sounds are put in the options as distractors. Test takers with untrained ears may think that this is likely to be the best answers. Phillips reminds test takers to avoid words which sound similar to words spoken in the conversation. Instead, she/he should think of synonyms or restatement for the best answers.
- 4) Before listening
 - a. Anticipate the topic. Students should be able to anticipate what the topic will be by learning the options.
 - b. Anticipate the questions. Students should be able to anticipate what the questions will be by learning the options.
- 5). While listening
 - a. Determine the topic.
 - b. Draw conclusions about who, what, when, or where.
 - c. Listen for the answers in order.

Strategies 1-3 are related to Part A of listening TOEFL, and strategies 4 and 5 are related to part B and C.

Based on the possible strategies above, the researcher would like to see the strategies are applied between beginner students and advanced students.

STATISTICAL METHODS

This research used descriptive as the design to answer the research question. Descriptiveresearch is used to provide an accurate portrayal or account of characteristics of a particular individual, situation, or group; these studies are a means of discovering new meaning, describing what exists, determining the frequency with which something occurs or categorizing information (Dulock, 1993). In this case, this research focused on find out the strategies do the beginner students and advanced students employ when they having listening tests. The data for this study were determined from students' online interviews. The population in this research was students at the University of Lampung. This research investigated undergraduate students at the University of Lampung who took TOEFL-like test on UPT Bahasa as the sample. In determining the sample, the researcher was using random sampling. It was applied based on the consideration that every student in the population has the same chance to be chosen. The sample consists of 10 students. The sample was divided into advanced and beginner proficiency based on the basis of their score on the TOEFL-like listening test. The method of classification between beginner and advanced proficiency group was adapted from Shang. Shang classifies the English proficiency of students with the mean of students score on TOEFL listening test (Shang, 2005). Here is the example case from Shang: The test results ranged from 6 to 13 out of 13, with the mean of 10.48 and with the median of 10. Those subjects who scores ranged from 11 to 13 were labeled "high", while those scores ranged from 6 to 9 were labeled "low". The subjects with scores of 10 were labeled "intermediate". The researcher adapted the theory and modified the classification with the research needs. The score on TOEFL-like

listening test of this research ranged from 24 to 68 points, with the mean of 48 and median of 48. The sample whose score ranged from 49 to 68 labeled as “advanced”, and sample with score 24 to 48 labeled as “beginner”. This interview is used to answer the research question. The interview used non-structure interview. Analysis the interview of listening strategy that is used by students adapted from Phillips (Phillips, 2001). The interview used online interview by WhatsApp. The interview focused on finding the possible listening strategy used by the beginner level and advanced level of students during TOEFL-like test. The data from online non-structure interview is calculated using Microsoft Excel. The collected data would be presented using frequencies or percentage and described descriptively. The results inform the listening strategies applied between learners with beginner and advanced level proficiency.

III. RESULT

In order to investigate strategies done by the beginner students and advanced students employ when they are having listening tests, the data from online interview of students’ strategy were analysed. The samples’ responses from the interviews were tabulated for each learning strategy. Each strategy from the samples’ interview was classified from Phillips. They are focusing on the last line, choosing answers with synonyms, avoiding similar sounds, anticipating the topic, anticipating the questions, determining the topic, drawing conclusions about who, what, when, or where, and listening for the answers in order.

Strategies	Respondent				
	M.I S1	P.J.H S2	R.M S3	M.R.P S4	G.A.A S5
Focus On The Last Line	1	0	0	1	0
Choose Answers With Synonyms	1	1	1	0	0
Avoid Similar Sounds	0	0	0	0	0
Anticipate The Topic	0	1	0	1	0
Anticipate The Questions	0	0	0	1	1
Determine The Topic, Draw Conclusions About Who, What, When, Or Where	0	0	0	0	0
Listen For The Answers In Order	0	0	1	1	0

1. Strategies Do The Beginner Students When They Are Having Listening Tests

From the table above, the frequency of using strategies for listening TOEFL-like test by samples of beginner level was presented. The total number from samples of beginner level using ‘focus on the last line’ was 2. Some samples said that when they found a problem during listening tests, they only focus on the last line to make them easier to answer the test.

S1: “Biasanya saya cuman dengerin kalimat akhir di dialog aja biar gampang jawab tes nya”

Then, the samples of beginner level that use strategy to ‘choose answer with synonyms’ was The samples sometimes only chose the option based on the synonyms.

S2: “pilih yang mirip-mirip aja dengan kalimat yang disebut tadi dengan opsi yang ada” S3: “ketika saya mengalami kesulitan saya mempunyai strategi mendengar kata kunci atau kata yang sering disebutkan dalam dialog”

The beginner level that use strategy ‘anticipate the topic’ was 2. The beginner level that use strategy ‘anticipate the questions’ was 2. From these strategies, some samples said that they use their feeling or predict the topic/question to answer the listening test.

S4: “karena biasa nya ada yang kelewat denger, kadang saya pake feeling aja dan mengira-ngira”

The beginner level that use strategy ‘listen for the answer in order’ was 2.

S3: “biasanya saya perhatiin jawaban yang ada dengan yang speaker lagi bicarain”

And there was no beginner students that use ‘determine the topic, draw conclusions about who, what, when, or where’ as the strategy and avoid similar sound.

Strategies	Respondent				
	K.S S1	A.N.M S2	G.N S3	A.D.A S4	B.P.S S5
Focus On The Last Line	0	1	0	1	1
Choose Answers With Synonyms	1	1	0	1	1
Avoid Similar Sounds	0		0	0	0
Anticipate The Topic	1	0	1	0	0
Anticipate The Questions	1	0	0	0	1
Determine The Topic, Draw Conclusions About Who, What, When, Or Where	0	0	1	0	0
Listen For The Answers In Order	0	1	0	1	0

1. Strategies Do The Advanced Students When They Are Having Listening Tests From the table above, the frequency of using strategies for listening TOEFL-like test by samples of advanced level was presented. The total number from samples of advanced level using ‘focus on the last line’ was 3. There was a sample that said that he got the strategy tips from youtube.

S4: “saya focus ke dialog akhir sih, jadi memudahkan saya untuk menjawab tes listening bagian yg pendek-pendek. Dapet tips nya dari youtube”.

Then, the samples of advanced level that use strategy to ‘choose answer with synonyms’ was

S2: “biasanya cari pilihan yang mirip-mirip dengan yang udah disebutin waktu listening”

S3: “kadang pilih yang pelafalan nya mirip dengan yg speaker omongin sih”

The advanced level that use strategy ‘anticipate the topic’ was 2. The advanced level that use strategy ‘anticipate the questions’ was 2. The advanced level that use3 strategy ‘listen for the answer in order’ was 2. There was an advanced student that use ‘determine the topic, draw conclusions about who, what, when, or where’ as the strategy. And there was no one advanced students that use ‘avoid similar sound’.

S2: “saya focus dengerin jawabannya dan opsi yang ada”

S3: “mengira-ngira biasanya kalo suatu kata dimention berkali-kali, itu topik yang lagi mau ditanyain”

S5: “dengerin dialog dengan seksama dan ingetin poin-poin penting nya sih”

IV. DISCUSSION

After analysing the data, it was found that the strategies between beginner and advanced level in line with the aspect of strategies Phillips (Phillips, 2001). The finding of this research shows beginner level strategy when they are having listening test preferred:

S1: “Biasanya saya cuman dengerin kalimat akhir di dialog aja biar gampang jawab tes nya”

S2: “pilih yang mirip-mirip aja dengan kalimat yang disebut tadi dengan opsi yang ada”

S3: “ketika saya mengalami kesulitan saya mempunyai strategi mendengar kata kunci atau kata yang sering disebutkan dalam dialog”

S4: “karena biasa nya ada yang kelewat denger, kadang saya pake feeling aja dan mengira-ngira”

S3: “biasanya saya perhatikan jawaban yang ada dengan yang speaker lagi bicarain”

The listening strategy that was chosen by the sample of beginner students when they having listening test includes predict the similarities sound. This finding indicates that sample tend to using synonyms audio/sound to answer the listening test. This finding is in line with Lau that low level of English learner prefer to adopt a similar listen and answer approach regardless of the type of listening task.

Samples of advanced students when they are having listening test, they seem to have chosen the strategy:

S4: “saya focus ke dialog akhir sih, jadi memudahkan saya untuk menjawab tes listening bagian yg pendek-pendek. Dapet tips nya dari youtube”.

S2: “biasanya cari pilihan yang mirip-mirip dengan yang udah disebutin waktu listening”

S3: “kadang pilih yang pelafalan nya mirip dengan yg speaker omongin sih”

S2: “saya focus dengerin jawabannya dan opsi yang ada”

S3: “mengira-ngira biasanya kalo suatu kata dimention berkali-kali, itu topik yang lagi mau ditanyain”

S5: “dengerin dialog dengan seksama dan ingetin poin-poin penting nya sih”

Dealing with the listening strategy includes predict the similarities sound. This finding indicates that sample tend to using synonyms audio/sound to answer the listening test. This finding is contrary with Lau that high level of students aware ofthe requirements of different listening tasks and selected strategies and adjusted their listening approach accordingly.

In conclusion that can be inferred from the discussion are beginner students and advanced students have strategies during listening test, but each samples of advanced students applied more variation of strategies than beginner EFL students, so that advanced students more optimal in application the strategies. The listening strategies that were chosen by the sample of beginner students when they having listening test includes focus on the last line, choose answers with synonyms, anticipate the topic, anticipate the questions, and listen for the answers in order. And sample of advanced level students used focus on last line, choose answer with synonyms, anticipate the topic, anticipate the questions, determine the topic, draw conclusions about who, what, when, or where, and listen for the answers in order when they having listening test.

V. CONCLUSION

The listening strategies that were chosen by the sample of beginner students when they were having listening test includes focus on the last line, choose answers with synonyms, anticipate the topic, anticipate the questions, and listen for the answers in order. And sample of advanced level students used focus on last line, choose answer with synonyms, anticipate the topic, anticipate the questions, determine the topic, draw conclusions about who, what, when, or where, and listen for the answers in order when they were having listening test. Both beginner students and advanced students have strategies during listening test, but each samples of advanced students applied more variation of strategies than beginner students.

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