

**Measuring Listening Strategies through  
Diary and Questionnaire**

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**Abstract**

In order to determine the relationship between diary and questionnaire on measuring listening strategies, 25 students were selected. All the subjects who were the researchers' own students, study English as a second language. They wrote diaries about their use of listening. Strategies within 8 weeks. They also took the listening strategy questionnaire at the end of the term. The students' questionnaires and 8-week diaries revealed a weak relationship between questionnaires and diaries in the following order of importance: (a) cognitive strategy, (b) meta cognitive strategy, (c) task and person knowledge, (d) strategy and person knowledge, (e) meta cognitive strategy, (g) strategy knowledge, (h) person knowledge. A meta cognitive strategy revealed no relationship between diaries and questionnaires. In this study there was a weak relationship between diary and questionnaire on measuring listening strategies

( $r=0/28, p<0/1$ ).

**Key terms:** listening, strategies, diary, questionnaire

**Introduction**

Listening comprehension is an important factor in language acquisition. In the last two decades, it has become increasingly common to emphasize listening in early steps of S L A. Listening is an active and conscious process. Not only is listening comprehension at the beginning steps of S L A important but also it appears to be crucially important for advanced level learners ( Dunkel, 1991). The importance of listening cannot be underestimated, it is imperative that it not be treated trivially in second and foreign language curricula.

Prompted by the awareness that learners may succeed despite the teachers methods and techniques rather than because of them, researchers as well as teachers have begun to look

more closely at learners themselves in an attempt to discover how successful learners achieve their results (O, Malley. etal 1989).

Like all mental processes, learners awareness about listening can not be observed directly. Never the less, we can have access to this knowledge by asking learners to tell us about it. We can ask them to describe the way they listen and what they know about doing a S/ F L listeners. Here, we try to see which strategy is used by whom? Strategies are specific methods and techniques employed by the students for processing the input language information (Willing 1985).

In order to collect data bout listening strategies we may apply questionnaire, diary, and interview. The application of the diary, reveals that students can contemplate and write diaries about their listening strategies more consciously. These diaries encourage them to reflect on their cognitive process and inform the researcher about the types of the strategies they use (Christine Goh 1997).

The use of questionnaire is also recommended for collecting data about listening strategies by some researchers, the advantage of questionnaire in collecting data about listening strategy is in delimiting the response to information that is relevant and in simplifying data manipulation, since you can code and analyze the data.(O'malley and Chamot,1989).

### **This study**

The aim of this study is to identify the relationship between diary and questionnaire on measuring listening strategies.

## **Participants**

The participants for this study consisted of 25 students who study English as a second language at B. A level, in Islamic Azad university-Takestan Branch. All the students were the researcher's own students and participated the English laboratory course 4 hours a week during one term. They were in the second year of studying English as a F L and engaged in listening to the tapes and CDs of New Interchange books 2 and 3. (New Interchange series, Richard).

## **Instruments**

The data were collected using two separate Instruments: (a) the listening strategy questionnaire and (b) the students' diaries about their use of listening strategies during eight weeks.

## **Procedure**

The research was conducted in Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch, Iran. Eleven well-recognized listening strategies were introduced to the students during their English laboratory course. The students were asked to listen to the tapes and CDs of New Interchange. They were also asked to write diaries about their use of listening strategies when listening to the tapes and CDs. These diaries were presented to the researcher during eight weeks. In fact, the students were to mention the type of the strategies they used during the time they were listening to the tapes and CDs. Each diary has been coded and named to be compared and analyzed easily with its questionnaire.

At the end of the term, the students were asked to answer to the listening strategy questionnaire which contained the Eleven- well recognized listening strategies taught to them during their regular English laboratory course. In fact, they were asked to choose the

strategies they use when listening to English tapes and CDs. The students were also asked to write their names on their questionnaire and eight-week diaries.

### **Data analysis**

Transcriptions and listening diaries were read carefully to determine the use of the strategies by the students. These diaries were collected within 8 weeks and during their regular English laboratory course. Each diary was coded and analyzed separately during 8 weeks.

The listening strategy questionnaires were also checked for the strategy comparison. This questionnaire included eleven well-recognized listening strategies. The students were to select the strategies they used when listening to English language. All questionnaires were named and coded separately to be compared easily with their diaries.

### **Results**

The results of the questionnaire revealed that all listening strategies were selected by the students, with different ranges. In contrast, the students' transcriptions and diaries revealed that one strategy was not mentioned at all during 8 weeks by the students. ( see table 1 ).

The relationship between diaries and questionnaires on the students' listening strategies was examined through their responses to the questionnaires and their diaries. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to calculate the relationship between diaries and questionnaires. The correlation coefficient of strategy use between diaries and questionnaires was noticeably weak ( $r=0/28$ ,  $p < 0/1$  ). Upon closer observation of the students' questionnaires and diaries, the researcher saw a weak relationship between the listening strategies in the following order of importance: (a) searching for meaning, (B) checking their understanding, (c) knowing close and cursory listening; distinguishing message from the

speaker, (d) note-taking and attention to the task, (e) making connections, (f) constant checking of understanding of the message, (g) taking fewer notes,(h) considering the content

Table 1. Selected and reported use or listening strategies based on diary and questionnaire		
Listening Questionnaire	Diary	strategies
		I give complete attention to the task and demonstrate interest.
95%	Agree 75%	Agree
		I search for the meaning of the words.
65%	Agree 60%	Agree
		I constantly check my understanding of the message.
55%	Agree 05%	Agree
		I check my understanding by making connections with people, places, Situations and Ideas I know.
50%	Agree 15%	Agree
		I check my understanding by determining what will be said next.
35%	Agree 0%	Agree
		I check my understanding by determining speaker's intent, infer what the Speaker doesn't say, responding to what has not been said and passing judgment.
		Agree 55% Agree 40%
		I know whether close or cursory listening is required and adjust my behavior
20%	Agree 05%	Agree
		Accordingly.
		I am ready to take notes, outline, map, categorize, I sift and sort and my own Information.
80%	Agree 60%	Agree
		I take fewer and meaning full notes.
25%	Agree 85%	Agree
		I distinguish message from the speaker.
45%	Agree 60%	Agree
		I consider the content ant color of words.
100%	Agree 30%	Agree

and color of words.

## **Discussion**

In order to understand the implications of this study, observations of the results will first be presented in terms of cognitive and meta cognitive strategies. According to Rubin john (1994)cognitive strategies involve how to store and retrieve information. Meta cognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring and evaluating comprehension. More over, listeners use meta cognitive knowledge about themselves and how they listen best (person knowledge), about how much text to listen to, how difficult a text is e t c (i.e., task knowledge),and about strategies and their relation to text and tasks (i. e., strategy knowledge.)

The results showed that some students did not report and choose some strategies; however, they were aware of them. Based on the students' diaries, one strategy was not reported at all. It was "determining what will be said next" ( i.e., a meta cognitive strategy ). Strange to say that this strategy was selected by 35% of the students in their questionnaires. The result of this study reveals a weak relationship between diaries and questionnaires in the following order of importance:

a)cognitive strategy, b ) meta cognitive strategy, c) task and person knowledge,  
d) strategy and person knowledge, e) meta cognitive strategy and meta cognitive strategy,  
g)strategy knowledge, h) person knowledge.

As you can see, just one cognitive strategy occupied a strong relationship between diaries and questionnaires (see table 1).

Meta cognitive strategies and person knowledge revealed the second relationship.

The third relationship appeared to be occupied by strategy knowledge, followed by task knowledge which revealed the weakest relationship between diaries and questionnaires.

A meta cognitive strategy (i.e , determining what will be said next) shows no relationship between diaries and questionnaires. It might be among the most integrative ones. As Christine Goh ( 1997) pointed out listening diaries can encourage learners improve this skill. Diaries, in fact, allow learners to contemplate about their strategy use and inform the researchers about their cognitive and meta cognitive strategy, person, task and strategy knowledge. what does all of this suggest?

First, this study suggests that an integrative meta cognitive strategy was not reported in the learners' diaries; how ever, it was selected by 35% of the learners in the questionnaires.

Second, the fact that a meta cognitive strategy shows no relationship between diary and questionnaire does not reject the relationship between the two. There was a weak relationship between diary and questionnaire on measuring listening strategies

( $r=0/28$ ,  $p<0/1$ ).

## **Conclusion**

The findings in this study clearly show that every student possesses some listening strategies which can be elicited through both questionnaire and diary. Diary keeping encourages students to reflect on their cognitive and meta cognitive strategies; task, person and strategy knowledge more consciously. Therefore, it can inform the researchers about listening strategies more exactly.

On the other hand questionnaires can also inform the researchers about these strategies. The advantage of questionnaire in collecting data about listening strategies is in delimiting

the responses to information that is relevant and in simplifying data manipulation since you can code and analyze the data. The last but not the least, the researchers are suggested to apply both questionnaire and diary for electing data about listening strategies, particularly when, the number of the students are small and they are the researchers' own subjects.

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