

The Relationship between EFL College Students' Listening Strategies and Comprehension

Assistant professor Dr. Bushra Saadon Mohammed Al-Noori^{†††}

University of Baghdad, College of Education Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences, English Department ^{†††}

^{†††}Member in Iraqi Translation Organization, Iraqi Educational and Psychological Organisation, Staff member in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

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Abstract

Listening Comprehension involves the use of different strategies that interact freely with each other to help listeners construct a meaningful interpretations of what they hear. Iraqi learners face difficulties and lack the ability to comprehend spoken English. This study aims at identifying the difference between the first and fourth year college students, and identifying the level of each year in listening Comprehension, identifying the difference between first and fourth year, and identifying the relationship between the first and fourth year college students in listening strategies and listening comprehension. The procedures involves, choosing a sample of EFL College students, constructing a questionnaire to identify the Listening strategies use by EFL College students, and applying the test and the questionnaire to the first and fourth year college students Finally Suitable Statistical methods used and conclusion, suggestions and recommendations for further studies.

Keywords: *Listening Strategies, Listening comprehension, Teaching listening etc.*

1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem of the Study and its Significance

One of the four skills in language learning is listening that is very important since it's the first skill that we use in our life. . (Zhang, 2007: 71) listening comprehension is extremely important in our daily communication, so how to improve listening comprehension has always been the focus of language teaching (Jianmin, 2006: 62). Listeners who are able to use various listening strategies flexibly are more successful in comprehending spoken texts, whereas listeners without the ability to apply adequate listening strategies tend to concentrate only on text or word-for- word decoding. Therefore, the use of listening strategies seems to be an important indicator of whether a learner is a skillful listener or not. Then, the language teacher's main task is not only to give students an opportunity to listen, but to teach them how to listen well by using listening strategies. EFL teachers have to endeavor to diagnose listening strategies use when learners are engaging in different listening tasks (Thompson & Rubin, 1996: 331 and Vandergrift, 1999: 168).

After surveying several studies on listening comprehension and strategies in teaching EFL learners in Iraq which are limited in number, it appears that listening

comprehension is a testing rather than a teaching skill and it has been paid little attention.

AL-Fatlawi (1989:31) states that listening comprehension is given less than ten minutes during each lesson out of fifty minutes spent on teaching other language skills at the university. This does not give ample opportunity to practice listening comprehension systematically. AL-Douri(1994:21) says that Iraqi students who spent eight years of learning in English at school lack the ability to comprehend spoken English. In this regard, Karim (1997: 7) indicates that Iraqi learners still face difficulties in listening comprehension and lack the ability to comprehend the English lesson due to many reasons, one of which is certainly listening instruction. Since listening comprehension is extremely important in our daily communication, so how to improve listening comprehension has always been the focus of language teaching (Jianmin,2006: 62). Karim (1997: 7) indicates that Iraqi learners still face difficulties in listening comprehension and lack the ability to comprehend the English lesson due to many reasons, one of which is certainly listening instruction. Researchers in listening comprehension like Vandergrift (2004:3) and Field (2003:325) have found that listening comprehension involves the use of various listening strategies that interact freely with each other to help listeners construct

a meaningful interpretation of what they hear. Accordingly, the significance of the problem lies in the fact that teaching listeners how to use these strategies in efficient and effective ways needs an approach in which listening strategies are taught in an integrated way. Thus, the present study investigates the employment of listening strategies as an important factor in the success of EFL students.

The study aims at (1) Identifying the differences between the 1st and 4th year college students in LS; (2) Identifying the level of the 1st and 4th year college students in LC; (3) Identifying the differences between the 1st and 4th year college students in LC, and (4) Identifying the relationship between the 1st and 4th year college students in LS and LC.

It is hypothesized that (1) The level of 1st and 4th year college students in LS is below average; (2) There are no statistically significant differences between 1st and 4th year college students in LS level; (3) The level of 1st and 4th year college students in LC is below average; (4) There are no statistically significant differences between 1st and 4th year college student's level in LC level, and (5) There is no statistically significant relationship between LS and LC of 1st and 4th year college students.

The study is limited to (1) The 1st and 4th year EFL students at the college of Education – IbnRushd, University of Baghdad; (2) The academic year (2013-2014), and (3) Oxford's (1990) LS classification will be adopted in this study. The procedures involve (1) Choosing a sample of EFL college students at the 1st & 4th stages; (2) Constructing a questionnaire to identify the LS use by EFL college students and finding out its validity and reliability; (3) Applying a standardized test, i.e. TOEFL, and (4) Applying a questionnaire to the students at the 1st & 4th stages.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Listening Comprehension

It is considered one of the most significant linguistic skills since it represents a means of EFL communication. Underwood (1989:1) regards LC as a mental process which requires paying attention to something and trying to get meaning. It involves construction of a message from phonic material. The completion of this process needs great facility for listening to conversation as well as an adequate memory span with concentration on the content of what is heard.

Listening is often neglected at all levels of study; it is considered a passive skill among other language skills. Pahuja (1995: 146) argues that listening is not totally passive but it is also an active skill since it involves decoding the message and understanding it. Listening is an internal process that cannot directly be observed. Nobody can say with certainty what happens when listening to and understanding another person. The impulses coming from the ear are accepted as sound

sequences of constantly changing quality and characteristic in length, pitch and loudness (O'Connor, 1977: 12).

Generally speaking, listening is an active complex mental process which demands more concentration. To understand a message, the listener should match what he hears in the following levels:

- 1) The phonological level. Here, the listener hears a sound or a combination of sounds, his stored knowledge tells him that this is not permitted in the language. He rejects the data and looks around for something similar, as in the (Sty) sequence which is not found in English, so it is either rejected by the hearer or called for repetition.
- 2) The grammatical level. If the listener hears (the boy are ___), he / she recognizes that this is not a permitted form ; and he therefore reconstructs it as (the boy is...).
- 3) The lexical level. If the listener hears (he swallowed it hook, line and tinker), he rejects it because of his knowledge of what words are likely to go with what.
- 4) The contextual level. The utterance must be matched against the situation in which it is functioning.
- 5) The cultural level. The utterance must be matched against the general cultural background. For example, My wives just told me ..., occurs in a generally monogamous culture, it will be rejected because of failure to match cultural expectations.

2.2.1 Stages of Listening

Some linguists like Rivers and Temperly(1978: 75-80) classify listening into three stages:

-Perceiving a Systematic Message

In this stage, the listeners are going to recognize some characteristics of the delivered message such as sound sequences, and rising and falling of the voice. Those segmentations go into the "echoic memory" in which they are organized into meaningful units.

- Imposing a Structure

The listeners process the new information by their short-term memory. They impose some kinds of structures on the material heard. Then, they match between what is heard and the prior knowledge. This process depends on the listeners' knowledge of the grammatical system of the language.

In this regard, Underwood (1989: 2) uncovers that if a second chunk of information arrives in the short-term memory before the previous one has been processed, the confusion may be held and the listeners may be unable to process the incoming information fast enough and they will fail to extract meaning from it.

- Selecting and Recording

In this stage, the listeners select their important information and transfer it to their long-term memory where they record the message and store it. The process of recalling the stored information might be proved through remembering the gist of what has been heard.

Accordingly, listening is the way to increase the conscious linguistic knowledge of the target language necessary for enabling the learners to understand and act according to the emotional state of the speaker.

2.2.2 Use Technological Devices in Improving Listening Comprehension

The use of technology in teaching creates a motivating, interesting atmosphere in classroom. Moreover, AL-Alqamawi (2005: 34–36) stresses the following:

- Audio books

The advantages expected from using audio books in teaching EFL students are that they allow students to hear language by providing models of pronunciation, sentence structure and vocabulary building. They also help students to differentiate between written and spoken language providing a link between text and speech. Students may comprehend more easily by learning with their ears, not their eyes. Thus, they form a source of comfort and a better way to confidence and knowledge.

- Video – Tapes

The significance of video-tapes in learning experience is that they allow students to see language in use, i.e. Video aids comprehension greatly. Students can observe how interaction can match all facial expressions. So, all paralinguistic features reinforce the meaning clues and help learners to see beyond what they are listening to.

Video is a useful tool for learners who want to see typical British life styles. It gives students a chance to see what kinds of food people eat and the type of clothes they wear. Also, video-making can provoke genuinely creative and communicative uses of the language with learners who find themselves doing new things in English. Hence, most learners show a high level of interest when they have the opportunity to see and hear language in use, when this is coupled with an interesting activity.

- Music

Music is a powerful stimulus for learners' engagement. It touches their emotions while allowing them to use their minds effectively. A piece of music may change the atmosphere in class and prepare learners for the next task as well as offering them entertainment. In class, we can play music and ask students to write stories based on the music they hear or discuss with each other what the piece of music describes.

2.2.3 Listening Strategies

Mastery of listening skill occurs when the learner's need to use those strategies decreases or when he unconsciously uses them (Richards, 2006: Int). Strategies can be thought of the ways in which a learner approaches and manages a task and listeners can be taught effective ways of approaching and managing their listening. These activities seek to involve listeners actively in the process of listening. The major LS can be divided into two groups: Psycholinguistic and behavioral strategies.

Psycholinguistic Strategies are those in which learners try to comprehend what they are listening to by contextualizing the listening material using their past knowledge or guessing. They involve the metacognitive theories of learning (Planning, monitoring and evaluation). In this regard, teachers should train learners to undertake certain strategies that can be used during a listening activity. Some of these strategies include: focusing on new words, using grammar to help facilitate understanding, using meaning strategies, i.e making use of the available information to try to fill the gaps, and finally predicting the missing information through titles or pictures. Another strategy used by learner is the native language strategy, which means that the learner translate a word into the native language. Lynch (1996) refers to these as internal strategies.

Behavioral Strategies, on the other hand, are visible actions "in the world". They include negotiation with the speaker making general requests "I don't understand", specific requests "What dose X mean?" and admitting that they don't know the word for instance. Lynch (1996) calls these interactive strategies, as they depend on collaboration with other person or people.

2.2.4 Classification of how Listeners Process the Input

According to (The National Capital Language Resource Center, 2004: Int), LS can be classified by how the listener processes the input. Such Strategies are "top-down" and "bottom-up" strategies. Sometimes the "bottom-up" skills are called "micro" skills. Whereas "top-down" skills are called "macro" skills (White, 2008: 7-8).

Top-down Strategies are listener-based ones. The listener taps in to background knowledge of the topic, situation or context, type of text and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Such top-down strategies include: (1) listening for the main idea, (2) predicting, (2) drawing inferences, and (3) summarizing.

Bottom-up Strategies, on the other hand, are text-based; the listener relies on the language in the message, i.e. The combination of sounds, words and grammar that creates meaning such strategies include: (1) listening for specific details, (2) recognizing cognates, and (3) recognizing word – order patterns.

According to O'Malley & Chamot (2001) as cited in (Jianmin, 2006: 66), language LS are divided into four

categories: management strategies, cognitive strategies, social strategies and affective strategies. Each category can be further divided into several smaller ones: functional planning, advanced organizers, selective attention, self-monitoring, self-evaluating, classification, inference, note-taking, elaboration, cooperation, questioning for clarification, self-talk and positive attitude development.

2.2.5 Qualities of Good Listeners

According to White (2008:29), good listeners must be able to show that they are interested in what the speaker is saying and they are not being distracted by other things happening around by keeping eye contact, nodding, making encouraging noises, and so on. They must also show that they are not afraid to ask the speaker to explain something they have not understood. They need to be aware when the speaker wants them to respond or to keep quiet. Thus, they need to encourage the speaker to carry on if they hesitate and show themselves as not discriminate listeners. That is, they need to listen equally carefully to men and women, children, and old people, relations and strangers, and people they like or do not like. Hence, they need to show that they have been listening attentively because they start off by referring to or saying more about what the previous speaker has said.

2.2.6 Teachability of Listening Strategies

Researchers of teaching LS such as have found that strategy training can improve learner's performance, help them become more autonomous motivated and confident in language learning. They also assert that instruction can improve the listener's performance, increase strategy awareness and help them develop a more structured approach to tasks. In this regard, Suyuan(2002:79) presents the following conclusions:

- 1) learner-based instruction in metacognitive, cognitive and social/ affective strategies can improve EFL beginner's performance in transactional listening.
- 2) learner-based instruction in metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies can enhance EFL beginner's awareness of strategy use to a large extent.
- 3) The effect of instruction on the ineffective listeners is greater than that of the effective listeners. This means that ineffective listeners need strategy training more than the effective listeners do.
- 4) Integrated, long-term training is more effective than separate one-time training.

2.2.7 Teacher's Role in Listening Classrooms

The role of teachers in listening classes is to guide their students. Also, their role is to identify listening problems made by students and put them right. They can also play the role of a designer who designs suitable texts and tasks

for students. Hence, they can be motivators who can get their students more involved in their listening classes and learn more listening skills.

It's worth noting that listening exercises used for training should be success-oriented so as to build up learners' confidence in their listening abilities. In this sense, the LC teacher should:

1. Use pre-listening activities to prepare learners for what they are going to hear or view. For example, the teacher can discuss the topic of the passage they are about to listen to, define the purpose or goal of the activity, show a relevant picture, and explain the meaning of new or difficult vocabulary.
2. Determine the level of difficulty of the listening activities such as the chronological order of events in a story, the way information is organized, and the learner's performance with the topic.

To make teaching LS easier for learners, certain steps need to be followed. Step one is choosing a topic. Step two is finding appropriate listening material. Step three is planning the introduction. Step four is developing the listening task. Step five is creating detailed listening tasks. Finally, step six is to follow-up practice (Field, 2002: 246; White, 2008: 38).

2.2.8 Oxford's Listening Strategies

According to Ellis (1994:529), there are three types of substrategies: production, communication and learning strategies. The first two substrategies are "strategies of language use" and "communication strategies". A production strategy can be learned effectively and easily under the use of linguistic system including "simplification", "rehearsal", and "discourse planning". Communication strategies are strategies used in handling problem of interaction and communication. Learning strategies focus on developing linguistic and sociolinguistic abilities about the target language such as "memorization", "initiation of conversation with native speakers" and "inferencing".

As to Wenden's (1991:18) classification of language learning strategies, there are two main kinds: cognitive strategies and self-management strategies which are clarified according to their functions in learning. Cognitive strategies are steps and operations used by learners to process both linguistic and sociolinguistic content. Another kind of strategies is self-management strategies which are responsible for overseeing and managing in learning.

Oxford has made an important contribution to the knowledge of learning strategies. According to Oxford's(1990:40-173) strategies are divided in to two main kinds: direct and indirect. Direct strategies refer to the "strategies that require mental processing of the language", whereas indirect strategies are "the strategies that provide indirect support for language learning

through focusing, planning, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation, etc."

Then, the direct language learning strategy are subdivided into three types: **memory strategies** that aid in inserting information into long-term memory and retrieving information when needed for communication, **cognitive strategies** that are used for forming and revising internal mental models and receiving and producing message in the target language, and **compensation strategies** that are needed to overcome any gaps in knowledge of the language.

As for the indirect strategies, they are also subdivided into three types: the **metacognitive strategies** which help learners exercise executive control through planning, arranging, focusing, and evaluating their own learning; the **affective strategies** that enable learners to control feelings, motivations and attitudes related to language learning; and finally, the **social strategies** that facilitate interaction with others, often in a discourse situation.

3. Procedures

An Introductory Note

This section reports the particular steps followed to achieve the aims of this study. So, it tackles the following:

- 1) Population and sample selection,
- 2) Research instruments and their applications, and
- 3) The statistical means used for analyzing the data and computing the results.

3.1 Population and Sample Selection

The sample that has been selected is the 1st and 4th year since 1st year students represent the beginner level and the 4th year college ones represent the advanced level. The number of population is (418). Of the whole population is distributed into two types: pilot and main.

3.2 Description of the Instruments

In order to achieve the aims of the study and to test its hypotheses, the instruments are:

- 1) a questionnaire: by adopting the Oxford's (1990) LS classification system.
- 2) The TOEFL to assess students' performance in LC (Phillips, 2003).

3.2.1 Description of the Questionnaire

Questionnaires can be used to examine the general characteristics of a population, to compare attitudes of different groups, and to test theories. language learning strategies (LLS) are divided into two main classes: direct (memory, cognitive, and compensation) and indirect (metacognitive, affective, and social) which are

subdivided into a total of (19) strategy sets and the whole strategy system incorporates (62) strategies, In the light of the experts' opinions and recommendations only forty are suit the aims of the present study . The items in the final form of the questionnaire is:

Direct Strategies: Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, and Compensation Strategies

Indirect Strategies: Metacognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies, and Social Strategies.

The items of the questionnaire are designed to be measured on the basis of four-point rating scale (always, sometimes, seldom, never).

3.2.2 Description of the TOEFL Test

3.2.2.1 TOEFL Formats

The (TOEFL) is an examination administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in order to evaluate a non-native English speaker's proficiency in the English language. The official TOEFL is currently administered in three different formats: Paper – Based TOEFL (PBT), Computer – Based TOEFL (CBT) and Next Generation TOEFL (NGT).

In this study, the TOEFL is adopted from "Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test", Part A-short dialogue (Phillips, 2003), to provide LC questions of various – discourse contexts.

3.2.2.2 TOEFL Test

LC section is the first section of the TOEFL. This tests the ability to understand spoken American English. There are three parts in this section:

Part A contains (30) short conversations between two people, each followed by a question about what the people said in their conversation. To ensure that EFL learners have the basic linguistic knowledge of those four patterns, the researcher tries to give learners abundant instructions before doing the test:

Negative expressions: Typical types of negative expressions contain a negative word, prefix, or a word with almost negative.

Functional expressions: Types of functional expressions cover about expressions of agreement, expressions of uncertainty and suggestion, and expressions of surprise.

Contrary to fact statements: Typical types of contrary to – fact statements mainly contain "wish" and "hope".

Idiomatic language: Typical types of idiomatic language contain two - and three - part verbs and idioms.

Part B of the TOEFL consists of two long conversations, each followed by a number of questions.

Part C consists of three talks, each followed by a number of questions.

3.3 Face Validity

The first aspect to be checked when constructing any type of testing is Validity. Richards et al (1992: 392) define

validity as the degree to which any tool measures what it is supposed to measure, or can be used successfully for the purpose for which it is intended. The important kind of validity which concerns the present study is face validity which means that the test should look on the "face" of it, as if it is valid (Harmer, 2001: 322).

Face validity is proved by exposing the present instrument, i.e. the questionnaire items with their scoring scheme procedures to a jury of specialists.

3.4. The pilot Administration of the Instruments

(160) students are randomly selected to ensure clarity of instructions, to estimate the time allocation for answering the instruments, and to compute the reliability coefficient of instruments, for both the questionnaire and the test, . The following procedures have been followed for each instrument:

1. (160) students has been randomly selected.
2. The examples were explained to the students.
3. The average length of the time needed for answering is (60) minutes.
4. The same pilot of the questionnaire has been selected for the test after four days.
5. The students are asked to listen to the tape and answer the questions on paper.
6. The time needed for responding to the test is (30) minutes.
7. The application of the pilot study shows no serious ambiguity concerning the instructions of the instruments.

3.5 Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability is the actual level of agreement between the results of one test with itself (Davies et al, 1999: 168). Reliability is enhanced by making the questionnaire instructions absolutely clear, restricting the scope for variety in answers, and making sure that the questionnaire remains constant (Harmer, 2001).

Two methods are applied to compute the reliability of the instruments, they are as follows:

- 1) Split –half method, using Spearman – Brown formula, and
- 2) Alpha – Cronbach formula.

As a result of applying these two methods, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is computed by using split – half method where it is found out to be 0.67 before correction. But after correction, it is found out to be 0.80 and by using the Alpha – Cronbach formula where it is found out to be 0.76.

3.6 The Final Administration of the Questionnaire and the Test

At different days to the main sample of this study comprising 140 students, 70 students from 1st stage and 70 students from 4th stage, taken from the College of Education Ibn–Rushd, University of Baghdad have been administrated, The researcher has explained the aim behind the instruments for the testees. The allocated time for the questionnaire is 60 minutes, and 30 minutes for the test. Then, the testees' answers on the sheets are collected by the researcher then corrected and tabulated so as to find out the final results.

3.7 The Scoring Scheme

The questionnaire items are intended to be answered according to a four-point rating scale: (always, sometimes, seldom, never). The marks are assigned as follows always 3, sometimes 2, seldom 1, and never 0. The scoring scheme of the TOEFL test is as follows:

- 1) One mark for each correct answer, and,
- 2) Zero for the wrong or missed one.

So, the highest mark for the test is 40 and lowest mark is zero.

3.8 Statistical Methods

The following statistical methods are used: Pearson Correlation Coefficient, One Sample – test, Alpha – Cronbach formula, Split – Half Reliability, Two – independent Samples T – test.

4. Results, conclusions, recommendations, & suggestions

An Introductory Note

The present section is mainly devoted to the computation of results, and the conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies.

4.1 Presentation of Results

Results of the present study are presented according to the aforementioned aims as shown below:

4.1.1 Results Related to the First Aim and Verification of the First Null Hypothesis

The first aim which is the identification of the level of Iraqi EFL college students in LS, is computed by using one–sample t–test.

Table (13) T – test Value of the Listening Strategies

Strategy	N	Mean	S.D	d.f	t-value		Level of Significance	Theoretical Mean
					Computed	Tabulated		
1. Memory	140	9.1786	1.792	139	20.983	1.96	0.05	6
2. Cognitive		20.385	2.951		27.601			13.5
3. Compensation		9.400	1.951		20.610			6
4. Metacognitive		25.421	3.971		26.581			16.5
5. Affective		10.842	3.133		6.959			9
6. social		14.478	2.442		26.545			9
7. Total		89.800	11.260		31.313			60

Table (13) reveals the following

- 1) In the first LS which is Memory , we conclude that the level of the sample in this strategy is upper than the intermediate level.
- 2) The second LS is Cognitive we conclude that the level of the sample in this strategy is upper than the intermediate level.
- 3) The third LS is Compensation we conclude that the level of the sample in this strategy is upper than the intermediate level.
- 4) The Fourth LS is Metacognitive we conclude that the level of the sample in this strategy is upper than the intermediate level.
- 5) The fifth LS is Affective we conclude that the level of the sample in this strategy is upper than the intermediate level.
- 6) The sixth LS is Social we conclude that the level of the sample in this strategy is upper than the intermediate.
- 7) The total number of LS is six with a total number of techniques which is forty. We conclude that the level of the sample in the total LS included in the present study questionnaire is upper than the intermediate level, therefore; the first null hypothesis is rejected.

4.1.2 Results Related to the Second Aim and Verification of the Second Null Hypothesis

The t–test of two- independent samples is employed to find out whether there are statistically significant differences between 1st and 4th year college students in LS level as shown in table (14)

Table (14) Two – independent Sample t- test Values

No. of Strategy	class	mean	S.D	d.f	T–value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
1.	1st	9.328	1.500	138	0.990	1.96	0.05
	4th	9.028	2.042				
2-	1st	20.900	2.874		2.086		
	4th	19.871	2.958				
3-	1st	9.742	1.831		2.104		
	4th	9.057	2.020				
4-	1st	25.971	3.550		1.649		
	4th	24.871	4.306				
5-	1st	11.314	2.826		1.794		
	4th	10.371	3.367				
6-	1st	15.228	2.141		3.806		
	4th	13.728	2.507				
Total	1st	92.642	9.714	3.077			
	4th	86.957	12.027				

Table (15) The t – test Value of the Four Sections of the TOEFL

No. of Section	N	mean	S.D	d.f	T–value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
1.	140	1.542	1.739	139	23.512	1.96	0.05
2-		1.335	1.467		29.550		
3-		1.385	1.486		28.768		
4-		1.385	1.381		30.962		
Total		5.650	4.418		38.426		

Table (14) reveals the following

- 1) **The Memory Strategy:** There is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students in the memory strategy.
- 2) **The Cognitive Strategy :** that there is a statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students in the cognitive strategy in favour of the 1st year
- 3) **The Compensation Strategy:** there is a statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students in the compensation strategy in favour of the 1st year.
- 4) **The Metacognitive Strategy:** there is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year students in the metacognitive strategy.
- 5) **The Affective Strategy:** that there is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students in the Affective strategy.
- 6) **The Social Strategy :** there is a statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students in the social strategy in favour of 1st year students.
- 7) **The Total:** there is a statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year students in the total score of the questionnaire in favour of the 1st year students. Therefore the second null hypothesis is rejected.

4.1.3 Results Related to the Third Aim and Verification of the Third Null Hypothesis

The third aim which is the identification of the students' level on the TOEFL is computed by using the one – sample t–test. Table (15) shows the t–test values of the four sections of the TOEFL employed in the present study.

Table (15) reveals the following

- 1) The first section of the TOEFL: we conclude that the level of the sample is very low and poor.
- 2) The second section of the TOEFL: we conclude that the level of the sample is very low and poor.
- 3) The third section of the TOEFL: we conclude that the level of the sample is also very low and poor.
- 4) The fourth section: we conclude that the level of the sample is very low and poor.
- 5) The total score of the TOEFL: we conclude that the level of the students on the four sections of the TOEFL is very poor and low. Therefore, the third null hypothesis is accepted.

4.1.4 Results Related to the Fourth Aim and Verification of the Fourth Null Hypothesis

Two – independent samples' t – test is employed to find out whether there are statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students' level on the TOEFL test (see table 16).

Table (16) Two – independent Sample t- test Value of the TOEFL

No. of Section	class	mean	S.D	d.f	T-value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
1.	1st	1.457	1.741	138	0.582	1.96	0.05
	4th	1.628	1.745				
2-	1st	1.171	1.403		1.329		
	4th	1.500	1.520				
3-	1st	1.257	1.519		1.024		
	4th	1.514	1.452				
4-	1st	1.214	1.317		1.475		
	4th	1.557	1.430				
Total	1st	5.100	4.347		1.479		
	4th	6.200	4.451				

Table (16) shows the following

- 1) In section one of the TOEFL: we conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year students.
- 2) In section two of the TOEFL: we conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students.
- 3) In section three of the TOEFL: we conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students.
- 4) In section four of the TOEFL: we conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students.

- 5) In the total score of the TOEFL: we conclude that in the total score of the TOEFL, there is no statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year college students. Accordingly, the fourth null hypothesis is accepted.

4.1.5 Results Related to the Fifth Aim and Verification of the Fifth Null Hypothesis

Correlation formula is employed to find out whether there is a relationship between the level of EFL college students in LS and level of LC on the TOEFL. So there is a weak, statistically significant, and negative relationship between students' level in LS and level of LC on the TOEFL since the correlation coefficient is – 0.174. The correlation

also is statistically significant because when it is compared with the critical value of the Pearson correlation coefficient which is 0.161, it is considered high. Finally, the correlation is negative which means when the level of the students in the LS is high, their level on the LC TOEFL is low, and vice versa. Therefore, the fifth null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusions

The conclusions that drawn from the results of the study are the following:

- 1) Various categories of Oxford's (1990) LS included in the study questionnaire used by Iraqi EFL College students.
- 2) EFL college students are deficient in comprehending the spoken English, as revealed by their low marks in TOEFL of four linguistic patterns; namely: negative expressions, functional expressions, contrary-to-fact statements and idiomatic language that are below the pass level.
- 3) There is a negative relationship between EFL College students' LS use and level of LC of the TOEFL.
- 4) EFL learners do not use LS well to achieve their mastery of the FL.
- 5) The concept of LS and linguistic patterns is difficult and unknown for most EFL students who they lack the use of LS during the TOEFL.
- 6) Teaching LS is not given adequate attention as the other EFL skills; therefore, the students are not well prepared to comprehend the spoken English adequately.

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