THE PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG ADULT ESL[1] LEARNERS IN A COLLEGE[2]

By:

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Abstract

This research is conducted to examine the strategies used in the process of learning English pronunciation among adult learners in a college. A sample of 50 respondents was selected randomly from among the diploma students at Sultan Ismail Petra International Islamic College (KIAS), Nilam Puri, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. All data are collected through a Likert scale questionnaire as the research instrument. It is then analyzed using SPSS version 7.0 software for statistical analysis. Data analysis shows that gender has influenced the selection of learning strategies and attitudes towards English subject. However, the use of all learning strategies that are recommended in the study is comprehensive in which all students are being involved in all learning processes as proposed through Kolb's Learning Cycle. Moreover, the attitude of an adult student who studies English pronunciation is not affected by the level of skills in listening, speaking, writing and reading. Finally, data analysis shows no significant correlation between English language pronunciation learning strategies with learners' attitudes towards learning English pronunciation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a developing country. It is known for its multi races and cultures. According to Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, in the year

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[1] ESL: English-as-a-second-language

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2010, there are about 53.3% of Malays, 26.0% of Chinese, 11.8% of the Aborigines, 7.7% of Indians and 1.2% of other ethnics; live in Malaysia (Nur Anis Hayati, 2010[4]). This shows the varieties of languages spoken by Malaysians like Bahasa Melayu, English, Mandarin, Indian, Arabic and native languages. Among all races, Malays are the largest ethnic in Malaysia who can speak more than one language including foreign languages like English, Arabic, Spanish or Germany. Bahasa Melayu is considered as the mother tongue and is spoken widely in the East and West Malaysia. It is also established as the national language in Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Indonesia. Furthermore, this language is also being spoken by people in the South Thailand, South Philippines, and some areas in Kampuchea, Sri Lanka and Cocos Island in Australia (Prof. Emeritus Abdullah, 2007[5]).

English, on the other hand, is the second language that must be learned in schools, all over Malaysia. Consequently, all Malaysians have been exposed to the language. But unfortunately, many of them are still weak in mastering it. The English level skills among Malaysian learners are varied according to several reasons; such as weak linguistic environment in school, teachers' prior educational background and also learners' abilities in using the language (Paramjit, Arba, & Hoon, 2010[6]). Schools in Malaysia are instructed to provide suitable linguistic environment that can create a more comfortable environment for the learners to speak other languages like English or Arabic. But the failure in providing such environment has led to low proficiency among the learners.

Teachers are also playing the main role in providing the language environment. English language teachers need to create the English speaking environment in a school. Even though the teachers' prior educational background is not major in English, but as long as they are teaching English, they have to try their hardest in generating

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[4] Nur Anis Hayati, M. D. (2010). *Populasi Penduduk Malaysia.* Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Matematik.

[5] Prof. Emeritus Abdullah, H. (2007, August 24). *Profil penduduk dan bahasa.* Retrieved January 19, 2011, from BML 4103 Sosiolinguistik dan Pengajaran Bahasa Melayu: http://sosiolinguistik.blogspot.com/2007/08/profil-penduduk-dan-bahasa.html.

6 Paramjit, S., Arba, A. R., & Hoon, T. S. (2010). Languages and Mathematics Achievements Among Rural and Urban Primary Four Pupils: A Malaysian Experience. *Journal of Science and Mathematics Education in Southeast Asia, 33*(1), 65-85.

an English speaking atmosphere for their learners. Good English skill among the teachers can influence the learners to be good English learners. The learners are observed to be better in English by imitating their teachers' ways of speaking. In other words, teachers are often taken as role models in language classes. Therefore, English teachers need to prepare themselves with high English skills in order to produce higher numbers of proficient English learners in Malaysia.

English has four main areas that need to be learned. They are reading, writing, speaking and listening. A learner may have different levels of different skills in English. For example, a good English writer may be weak in speaking. This means that the ability to master the four skills is not linear. Learners' ability in English is still low in Malaysia, especially in rural areas. There are many factors that lead to this matter like poor teaching environment, limited English language environment, lack of teacher resources, teaching methods and many other factors that have resulted in lack of motivation in learning English among the rural areas learners. Therefore, in order to overcome these problems, the least that can be done is finding ways to encourage learners' interest in learning English. Learners need to be provided with suitable environment to use English practically.

Due to the awareness of the importance of adult learning in English, educators are beginning to focus on the influence of pronunciation learning strategies on second language (L2⁷) ability. Although there are not many discussions or studies made in investigating this scope of knowledge, but recently, language teachers have started to pay more attention in exploring it. Their findings have helped many English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners and teachers to deal with pronunciation problems. The link between the L2 adult learners' ability and pronunciation learning strategies (PLS⁸) are being studied in order to find better ways in improving their English achievement. Learning strategies (LS) in which used in learning English subject, either in class or at home, are believed to be different from strategies used in learning pronunciation. This is due to the fact that learning English can be done theoretically by books such as grammar and vocabulary but pronunciation needs to be practically applied and used by the learners.

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7 L2: Second language learned by students. In this study, the second language that is being studied is English.

⁸ PLS: Pronunciation Learning Strategies. It is a list of learning strategies that are used by the learners in learning English pronunciation.

L2 learning strategies are important because they improve language performance, encourage learner's autonomy, are teachable and can expand the role of teachers in significant ways (Oxford, 1990[9]). The ESL learners who apply suitable learning strategies will be able to improve their language performance faster than those who do nothing in improving their level of English performance. Such learning strategies that can be done include the strategy of organizing, managing, monitoring and evaluating their own learning. The learners, themselves, will become more independent in searching for the ways and steps in completing the given tasks because all the strategies are easy to understand and apply by them. Meanwhile, teachers will be there for the learners, not to teach them but as their guides and facilitators in assisting them throughout the lessons. The class will be much more active with the learners' participation in all activities that are being held in the class.

1.1. DEFINITION OF PRONUNCIATION

Communication needs certain skills. One of them is pronunciation skill which basically means how words are pronounced, more technically it is defined as the production of significant sound in two. The significant sounds refer to its role as part of a code of a particular language or as the production and reception of sounds of speech, as well as, the meaning in contexts of the code combination with other factors to make communication possible. In short, these sounds make up speech through the rise and fall of the voice in expressing the meaning. Pronunciation uses man's organ of speech mainly the tongue. Native speakers usually have difficulties in pronouncing words of other than their native language(s) because their tongues are used to pronouncing words of their L1.

According to Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (2007[10]), the languages of the world draw on a remarkably finite inventory of sounds and share remarkable similar combinatory and hierarchical principles that explain how natural languages are spoken. It refers to the similarity of all languages in vowel sounds and consonant sounds

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[9] Oxford , R. (1990). *Styles, strategies, and aptitude: Connections of language learning.* Boston: Newbury House.
[10] The Role of the Native Language: Language Universals (2007). In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & J. M. Goodwin, *Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages* (p. 23). United States of America: Cambridge University Press.

even though the sounds sometimes contrast with each other in predictable ways. It proves that people from all backgrounds are in fact can pronounce any word from any languages correctly if they practice pronouncing the words.

1.2. ENGLISH MISPRONUNCIATION: THE FACTORS

There are many factors that lead to English mispronunciation. One of them is the difficulty level in pronunciation formation. Brians (2009[11]) described that errors in pronunciation are like errors in table manners. He pointed out the errors as tiny deviations from standard practice that few people will notice or care about. For example, instead of pronouncing 'connect' as /kənekt/[12], people pronounce /kɒnek/ which is more like trying to stab chunks of sweet-and-sour meat with the sharpened end of a chopstick – likely to raise eyebrows. The learners' mispronunciation could be directly influenced by L1. It is one's own decision whether, after learning the phonetics[13], to blend in the pronunciation such as American system or the regional variant the L2 or Australian English. Above all that, count is the Standard English pronunciation.

Another possible factor is learners' attitudes towards English pronunciation (Yongwei, 2009[14]). 97.7% of Yongwei's sample, the Chinese learners, implied that good English pronunciation was near native or they liked to follow a standard one, 16.3% mentioned that intelligibility was acceptable, 2.3% regarded intelligibility as the only standard of English pronunciation and 63% admitted that their "good or bad" English pronunciation affected their confidence. According to Subtelny, Whitehead and Orlando[15] (1980), intelligibility means the overall assessment of how well a speaker can make him/herself understood. This was accepted in Yongwei's (2009) research which indicated that communication could be remarkably successful when

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[11] Brians, P. (2009). *Common errors in English usage*. Oregon: William, James & Co.

[12] The symbols used are called the Phonetic Symbols.

[13] The symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as used in phonetic transcription are divided into vowels; ʌ, ɑː, æ, e, ə, ɜːʳ, ɪ, iː, ɒ, ɔː, o, uː, aɪ, aʊ, eɪ, oʊ, ɔɪ, eəʳ, ɪəʳ, ʊəʳ; and consonants; b, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ŋ, p, r, s, ʃ, t, tʃ, θ, ð, v, w, z, ʒ and dʒ .

[14] Yongwei, B. (2009, April). Chinese learners identity in their attitudes towards English pronunciation/accents. *CELEA Journal (Bimonthly)*, *32*(2), 6-74.

[15] Subtelny, J. D., Whitehead, R. L., & Orlando, N. S. (1980). Description and evaluation of an instrumental program to improve the speech and voice diagnosis of the hearing impaired. *The Volta Review*.

foreign accents were noticeable. Koster and Koet[16] (1993), as well as Mawhinney and Xu[17] (1997), agreed that language learners had always believed that non-native speakers of English were often driven by native speakers on their pronunciation errors, as sounding comical, incompetent or childish. Unconsciously, the language learners expressed that their insecurities and self-doubt had formed the desire of sounding native-like. However, the intelligibility seems to gain momentum because of the growing numbers of non-native English speakers, which in fact, have already outnumbered the native speakers (Yongwei, 2009).

English has more front vowels[18] categories in its speech system compared to Bahasa Melayu (Thai, Eng, & Adi Yasran, 2010[19]). Particularly, there are only three front vowels in Bahasa Melayu compared to English which has five front vowels. In addition, there is no tense and lax[20] in Bahasa Melayu as it is in English. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams[21] (2003) added that there is also no distinctive vowel length in Bahasa Melayu and the mid-front vowels like [e] and [ɛ] are allophonic variants of the phoneme /e/ in Bahasa Melayu (Nik Safiah, Farid, Hashim, & Abdul Hamid, 2008[22]). These show the differences between the two languages. Therefore, the introduction to English and Bahasa Melayu phonemes is very important in order to pronounce the words correctly.

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[16] Koster, C. J., & Koet, T. (1993). The evaluation of accent in the English of Dutchmen. *Language Learninig. 43*, 69-92.

[17] Mawhinney, H., & Xu, F. (1997). Restructuring the identity of foreign trained teachers in Ontario schools. *TESOL Quartetly, 31*(3), 632-639.

[18] The front vowels are any vowels sounds which are produced in the front of the mouth.

[19] Thai, Y. N., Eng, W. B., & Adi Yasran, A. A. (2010). Representation of English front vowels by Malay-English bilinguals. *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci.& Hum., 18*(2), 379-389.

[20] In phonology, tenseness is a particular vowel quality that is phonemically contrastive in many languages, including English. It has also occasionally been used to describe contrasts in consonants. Unlike most distinctive features, the feature [tense] can be interpreted only relatively, that is, in a language like English that contrasts [i] (e.g. *beat*) and [ɪ] (e.g. *bit*), the former can be described as a tense vowel while the latter is a lax vowel.

[21] Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2003). *An Introduction to Language* (7th ed.). Boston: Heinlc.

[22] Nik Safiah, K., Farid, O., Hashim, H. M., & Abdul Hamid, M. (2008). *Tatabahasa Dewan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

1.3. Pronunciation Learning Strategies

Teaching pronunciation to Malay learners is not an easy task. Therefore, certain strategies are needed to be applied in pronunciation learning methods for making the lesson more efficient. English learning strategies have been accepted in L2 teaching when applied to the four major skills of SLA; reading, writing, listening and speaking. Unfortunately, the acquisition of pronunciation is suffering from severe neglect in the communicative classroom and many of learning strategy studies does not discussed pronunciation strategies (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002[23]); even though the learning strategies have acquired the language teachers' attention since the mid-1970s. Starting in year 2000, only four researchers like Peterson, Vitanova and Miller, as well as Derwing and Rossiter, have taken an interest in studying the pronunciation strategy (Eckstein, 2007[24]). Peterson[25] (2000) clarified that methods that were used in learning English pronunciation were reported limitedly in related studies. This part of English communication skill is supposed to be taken seriously regarding to the fact that non-native speakers are commonly made mistakes in pronouncing the English words. Furthermore, it is agreed by many researchers that learning English pronunciation is a basic component of second language acquisition (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Vitanova & Miller, 2002; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2007).

On the contrary, many studies that followed were different from Peterson's because the others focused on non-native English speakers learning English language in an ESL context. Therefore, her study is acknowledged as a genuinely hypothesis generating with clear and well-designed methods. Her findings which are based on Oxford's (1990) research, list out to twelve pronunciation learning strategies and 43 tactics or subsets of those strategies which she gleaned from the participants' diaries and interviews.

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[23] Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2002). ESL learners' perceptions of their pronunciation needs and strategies. *System, 30*(2), 155-166.

[24] Eckstein, G. T. (2007). *A correlation of pronunciation learning strategies with spontaneous English pronunciation of adult ESL learners.* Brigham Young University.

[25] Peterson, S. (2000). *Pronunciation learning strategies: A first look.* ERIC Document Reproduction Services. Retrieved November 15, 2011 , from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/000000

Table 1.1
Pronunciation Learning Strategies (based on Oxford, 1990) (Peterson, 2000)

Pronunciation Learning Strategies	Pronunciation Learning Tactics (Peterson's documented tactics are italized)
1. Representing sounds in memory.	• Making up songs or rhythms to remember how to pronounce words • *Using phonetic symbols or one's own codes to remember how to pronounce something.*
2. Practicing naturalistically	• Trying to recall how a teacher pronounced something. • Trying to recall and imitate a teacher's mouth movements. • Listening to tapes/ television/ movies/ music. • Concentrating intensely on pronunciation while speaking. • Speaking slowly to get the pronunciation right. • Noticing or trying out different TL dialects. • Mentally rehearsing how to say something before speaking. • Talking with others in the TL. • *Imitating a native speaker or teacher.* • *Talking aloud to oneself.* • *Talking silently to oneself.* • *Noticing mouth positions or watching lips.* • *Concentrating intensely on pronunciation while listening to the TL.* • *Trying to avoid producing inappropriate native language sounds.* • *Imitating the overall TL sound with native language words for fun.*
3. Formally practicing with sounds	• Pronouncing a difficult word over and over. • Practicing words using flash cards. • Practicing saying words slowly at first and then faster. • Memorizing and practicing TL phrases. • *Repeating aloud after a native speaker or teacher.* • *Repeating aloud after tapes.* • *Repeating aloud after television or a movie.* • *Repeating silently.* • *Reading aloud.* • *Doing exercises practicing to acquire TL sounds.* • *Practicing sounds first in isolation and then in context.*

4.	Analysing the sound system.	• Forming and using hypotheses about pronunciation rules.
		• Noticing contrasts between native and TL pronunciation.
		• *Listening to pronunciation errors made by TL speakers speaking one's native language.*
5.	Using proximal articulations	• *no specific examples of this strategy were documented in this study or literature review
6.	Finding out about TL pronunciation	• *Acquiring a general knowledge of phonetics.*
		• *Reading reference materials about TL rules.*
7.	Setting goals and objectives	• Deciding to focus one's learning on particular sounds.
		• Deciding to memorize the sounds (or the alphabet) right away.
		• *Deciding to focus one's listening on particular sounds.*
8.	Planning for a language task	• Preparing for an oral presentation by writing difficult-to-pronounce words very large in one's notes.
9.	Self-evaluating.	• Recording oneself to listen to one's pronunciation.
10.	Using humour to lower enxiety	• *Having a sense of humour about mispronunciation.*
11.	Asking for help	• *Asking someone else to correct one's pronunciation.*
		• *Asking someone else to pronounce something.*
12.	Cooperating with peers	• Studying with someone else.
		• Teaching or tutoring someone else.

The pronunciation strategies have set the aim of preparing learners with meaningful communication. That is why errors such as grammar are tolerated, as long as the learners learn the grammatical form through meaning and not the other way around. It is known as a learner-centered approach in language learning. Learners are no longer being spoon-fed and their imaginative and creative thinking is generated. They will realize the importance of their roles in the learning process because all activities are based on cooperative learning which need the learners to work with their peers in groups. Teachers, nowadays, have to play the role of facilitator where they need to develop a different view of learners' errors rather than being the correct speech models (Richards[26], 2006).

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[26] Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In planning for pronunciation learning strategies, teachers should bear in mind that not all learners are contented within classroom communities, as within society at large, some people are leaders and some prefer to be followers. Both are vital to the triumph of group activities. In group discussions, a few always seem to do most of the talking. Those who often remain silent in larger groups may take part more easily in pair work. Or they may favour to work on an individual project. It is said that he wider the variety of communicative, or meaning-based activities, the greater the chance for involving all learners (Savignon[27], 2002).

1.4. ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTING LEARNING STRATEGIES APPROACH

Based on the research made by Al-Humaidi (2007), some critcisms have been pointed out as issues in implementing learning strategies in pronunciation teaching and learning activities. He believes that the learning strategies have only been focused on the use of the TL in everyday situations or for the functional aspects of the TL. But it has less focus on the formal structures. It is better to have a 'bridge' that connects both situations in order to create more effective language learning. Learning strategies are also said to rely comprehensively on the functional-notional syllabus which places heavy demands on the learners.

Furthermore, the various categories of language functions are overlapping and not analytically graded like the stuctures of the language. Al-Humaidi adds that major principle underlying these learning strategies is actually its stress on learners' needs and interests. This implies that every teacher should modify the syllabus to correspond with the needs of the learners. Then, the approach can give main concern to the meanings and rules of pronunciation use rather than to grammar and rules of the structure. Sooner or later, the pronunciation can be taught by means of functions and notions. Such concentration on language behaviour may result in negative consequences in the sense that important structures and rules will be left out. Finally, the availability of a classroom that can allow for

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[27] Savignon, S. J. (2002). Communicative language teaching lisguistic theory and classroom practice. In *Interpreting Communicative Language Teaching* (pp. 1-28). United States of America: Yale University Press.

group work activities and for teaching aids and materials will be difficult to require.

1.5. ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH

Adult ESL learners are found to adopt their own set of beliefs that form certain attitudes towards learning English language (Fewell, 2010[28]). Language learning is related to the attitudes (Starks & Paltridge, 1996[29]), in which positive attitudes will lead to positive orientation in English learning among the learners. Attitude is defined as "an inference which is made on the basis of a complex of beliefs about the attitude object" (Gardner, 1980, p.267[30]). This definition is being elaborated by Gardner (1980) as the overall total of a man's instinctions and any specified topic that regards to feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notion, fears, threats and conviction.

When learning languages, learners patent different attitudes towards the target language's speakers and culture, the second language learning social value, specific uses of the TL, and themselves as members of their own culture (Kanjira, 2008[31]). The attitudes will relate the the teachers and given learning tasks in the classroom. This is where the role of teachers is vital. Whenever the learners seem to either have less intrinsic interest in learning languages or are not volunteered in the given tasks, the teachers must start to stimulate and sustain motivation (Wilkins, 1978, p.52[32]). An argumentation regarding to this statement is brought up by Lightbown[33] (1993, p.39). He argues that internal motivation may be minimal and common attitudes towards learning may be negative if the speaker's only reason for learning L2 is external pressure. Besides, depending on the

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[28] Fewell, N. (2010, June). Language learning strategies and English language proficiency: an investigation of Japanese EFL university students. *TESOL Journal, 2*, pp. 159-174.
[29] Starks, D., & Paltridge, B. (1996). A note on using sociolinguistic methods to study non-native attitudes towards English. *World Englishes, 15*(2), 217-224.
[30] Gardner, R. C. (1980). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitude and motivation.* London: Edward Arnold.
[31] Kanjira, T. J. (2008). *Motivation and attitudes towards English as a second language (ESL) among learners in rural Kwazulu-Natal High Schools.* Michigan, USA: Faculty of Arts.
[32] Wilkins, D. A. (1978). *Second-language learning and teaching.* London: Edward and Arnold.
[33] Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (1993). *How Languages are learned.* Oxford: Oxford University.

learners' attitudes, L2 learning can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

People often show different attitudes such as attitude to the variation of language, attitude to minority and dominant language, attitude to foreign and L2, etc. (Mostafizar Rahman, 2008[34]). They are said to show such attitudes with the intention of being identified as a member of the anticipated community. The favour towards particular language is caused by the role of the TL as a tool in achieving high status, economic advantage, basic security and survival, as well as, matters related to self-orientation.

In his study on Malaysian undergraduates, Mostafizar Rahman (2008) has found that variation in English proficiency contribute in causing variation on attitudes towards English. Those who consider themselves as high proficient in English will show more positive attitudes towards English than those who consider themselves as mid proficient (Mostafizar Rahman, 2008). This is supported by Hakuta's[35] (1991) study that shows a relationship among the variables such proficiency, choice and attitude. Even though many of the learners with high proficiency in English show more preference for the language, in fact many of those who are mid proficient also show positive attitudes by desiring to increase their use of English.

2. STUDY OUTCOMES

2.1. THE RESULTS OUTCOME OF THE SPLS

A questionnaire or Strategic Pronunciation Learning Scale[36] (SPLS) has been given to them and the following table (Table 2.1) shows the results outcome of the SPLS.

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[34] Mostafizar Rahman, A. M. (2008). Attitudes towards English among Malaysian undergraduates. *Language in India: Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow*, 3.

[35] Hakuta, K. (1991). Distinguishing between proficiency, choice and attitudes in questions about language for bilinguals. *SCCR Working Paper Series, N0.32.* Stanford University: Stanford.

[36] The Strategic Pronunciation Learning Scale (SPLS) is adapted from Eckstein's (1986) that is based on Oxford's (1990) research which has a format that mimicked a strategic learning model created by Tseng, Dörnyei & Schmitt (2006). The frequency counts of pronunciation learning strategies was collected in five categories; input, practice, noticing/feedback, hypothesis forming, and hypothesis testing; that related to the Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory with an extra category,

Table 2.1

SPLS Questionnaires Outcomes

Items		Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Q1	Using English media in learning new English words.	13	32.5	21	52.5	5	12.5	1	2.5
Q2	Identifying sounds that are difficult to produce.	9	22.5	25	62.5	5	12.5	1	2.5
Q3	Able to notice any English speakers' mistakes.	2	5.0	17	42.5	15	37.5	6	15.0
Q4	Able to listen to new sounds.	8	20.0	28	70.0	3	7.5	1	2.5
Q5	Repeating words silently.	12	30.0	22	55.0	4	10.0	2	5.0
Q6	Practicing new English sounds.	7	17.5	26	65.0	7	17.5	0	0.0
Q7	Memorizing difficult English words.	5	12.5	29	72.5	5	12.5	1	2.5
Q8	Adjusting facial muscles for new sounds.	9	22.5	28	70.0	1	2.5	2	5.0
Q9	Thinking about the differences between the native language and English.	2	5.0	24	60.0	13	32.5	1	2.5
Q10	Trying to concentrate on word stress.	1	2.5	16	40.0	12	30.0	11	27.5
Q11	Using phonetics symbols.	3	7.5	16	40.0	10	25.0	11	27.5
Q12	Asking for feedback on English pronunciation.	4	10.0	28	70.0	6	15.0	2	5.0
Q13	Asking for help in pronouncing the	18	45.0	21	52.5	0	0.0	1	2.5

motivation, added by Eckstein, himself, in accounting for affective and motivational aspects of strategic pronunciation learning. The questions are given according to the categories. Approximately, there are four statements in each categories asking about learners' pronunciation strategies. It is being narrowed to four statements by Eckstein in the intention of creating a questionnaire that could be managed in the amount of time of approximately fifteen minutes. The participants are also asked to rate how often they used such strategies for pronunciation improvement since their involvement in the Pronunciation class. There is no pilot study done to the questionnaire for its realiability and validity has already being tested by Eckstein in his research.

	unknown English word.								
Q14	Trying to sound like an English speaker.	10	25.0	23	57.5	3	7.5	4	10.0
Q15	Comparing the unknown English word with similar any known words.	7	17.5	22	55.0	8	20.0	3	7.5
Q16	Willing to guess the pronunciation of the unknown English word.	8	20.0	30	75.0	2	5.0	0	0.0
Q17	Trying to sound the unknown English word.	9	22.5	30	75.0	1	2.5	0	0.0
Q18	Pronouncing new English words using native sound system.	6	15.0	24	60.0	9	22.5	1	2.5
Q19	Correcting mispronunciation when speaking to English speakers.	11	27.5	26	65.0	2	5.0	1	2.5
Q20	Finding ways to avoid the misunderstood sound.	6	15.0	26	65.0	7	17.5	1	2.5
Q21	Changing the speech volume if people misunderstand the English pronunciation.	3	7.5	33	82.5	3	7.5	1	2.5
Q22	Changing the speed of speech	7	17.5	23	57.5	10	25.0	0	0.0
Q23	Having special techniques in learning English pronunciation.	1	2.5	15	37.5	20	50.0	4	10.0
Q24	Know ways to cut the stress down.	7	17.5	23	57.5	9	22.5	1	2.5
Q25	Solving the stress problem immediately.	7	17.5	25	62.5	7	17.5	1	2.5
Q26	Fixing the bad English learning environment.	3	7.5	30	75.0	6	15.0	1	2.5
Q27	Looking for good English learning environment.	5	12.5	29	72.5	5	12.5	1	2.5
Q28	Working continuously in reaching the goals.	8	20.0	26	65.0	5	12.5	1	2.5

According to Table 2.1, 85% of the respondents agree with the first item in the questionnaire. They approve that new words could be learned via English media like internet, television or radio for they are exposed to the media in their daily lives. The same result is found on

the second item in which 85% of them agree and admit that they are capable in identifying sounds that are difficult to be produced by them. On the contrary, nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) agree to item number three (Table 2.1), which indicates their ability in detecting pronunciation mistakes made by other English speakers. It shows that their ability in difficult sounds identification do not make them able to detect pronunciation mistakes made by others. The ability in sounds identification is certainly caused by the respondents' environment. They might be common to some particular sounds of words which they hear every day from people around them or through people in the media like television and radio. But they are unable to notice direct pronunciation mistakes made by other speakers while they are speaking. Therefore, in order to improve their pronunciation skill, the respondents are willing to listen to new sounds and repeat them silently. This is shown in item number four (Table 2.1) with 90% agrees and item number five with 85% agrees. It concludes that most of them have the willingness to practice more new English words from other people and hope to apply them in the future. Their enthusiasm in practicing new English words is shown in item number six with 82.5% of them agrees (Table 2.1).

Pronunciation skill could never be mastered if adult ESL learners do not train themselves with pronunciation practices. Fortunately, many of the respondents admit that they have practiced some of the pronunciation learning strategies that are mentioned in the questionnaire as their pronunciation practices. As stated in item number seven (Table 2.1), 85% of the respondents memorize the sounds of new difficult English words. This is because they feel that by remembering difficult words, they could enrich their vocabularies. Excitingly, in item number eight (Table 2.1), 92.5% have tried to adjust their face muscles. It is highly believed that they do it in order to pronounce English words easily. In item number nine (Table 2.1), 65% of the respondents are using other method like comparing English to their native language, which in this case is Bahasa Melayu. This happens because they are used to read words according to the spellings. But, English does not apply the same method. Some of English words are pronounced differently from their spellings. Sometimes, this may cause confusion among the learners and lead to mispronunciations.

Based on item number 10 and 11 in Table 2.1, it shows that the learners are so anxious with the introduction to word stress and phonetics symbols. Even though the result shows that 42.5% of them

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try to concentrate on word stress and 47.5% is found to use the phonetics symbols, it seems like word stress and phonetics symbols are still odd to the learners even after some brief classes on the skills have been given. They have no idea of how to apply the skills, as well as how to make used of the skills in learning English. This probably happens because both skills are not taken as syllabus for English subject in either schools or higher learning institutions. The learners are quite shocked to find out that word stress and phonetics symbols could be found and used via the English-English Dictionary. The SPLS indicates that half of the respondents could not apply the skills yet due to the limited time of learning the skill in class.

In order to overcome their weaknesses in word stress and phonetics symbols, more than 90% of the respondents admit in item number 12 (Table 2.1), that they prefer asking for help whenever they encountered with unknown words. It is because they would favour listening to others pronouncing the words rather than referring to the phonetics symbols in dictionary, in which requires knowledge to understand the symbols. Maybe this is also caused by item number 14 (Table 2.1) which states that 82.5% of them want to sound more like the English speakers when they speak. As a result, in item16, 17 and 18 (Table 2.1), respectively, 72.5% of the respondents compare, 95% of them guess and 97.5% choses to sound the unknown words with similar words that they have known before in their native language sound systems. By doing so, they would get used to the wrong pronunciation.

On the other hand, in item 19 (Table 2.1), 92.5% is found to have willingness in correcting their mispronunciation when speaking to other English speakers. 80% of them are also found in item 20 to be determined in finding ways to avoid any misunderstandings in the production of the sounds. Besides, item 21 and 22 (Table 2.1) shows that 90% of the respondents want to change their volume while 75% of them ought to change their speed of speech whenever they are encountering with people who seem to be misunderstood with their English pronunciation. It is mostly because they know that communication is a two-way-process. In which, pronunciation is used in transferring the information and the receiver should be able to understand the received information in order to give a response. Therefore, volume and speed must be adjusted according to the receiver's ability in understanding the language.

This study reveals that most of adult ESL learners in KIAS are having good self-motivation in learning English pronunciation. Despite the fact that 60% of them do not have any special techniques in mastering the pronunciation, 75% say that they know the ways to cut their stress down while 80% state that they could solve the stress immediately in the process of learning pronunciation. These are shown in item 23, 24 and 25 (Table 2.1). Moreover, in item 26 (Table 2.1), 82,5% is identified to have the ability in fixing any bad English learning environment, such as low moral support from people around them and item 27 (Table 2.1) indicates that 85% of them love to look for good English environment in improving their English pronunciation skill. Finally, in item 28, 85% of the respondents agrees to the fact that they need to work continuously in reaching their goals of using better English pronunciation. This is a very good indication for KIAS' English pronunciation learners to carry on with their classes and improve their skills. Overall, the SPLS outcomes indicate good responses from all respondents and have led to the fact that English pronunciation learning strategies are able to be practiced by the learners effectively.

2.2. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH BASED ON ENGLISH PROFICIENCIES

Another descriptive statistic that shows the means for English proficiencies level and SPLS scores are being compared across language attitudes and genders. We could conclude Table 2.2, that both genders have the same learning attitude towards English pronunciation (mean scores: males = 3.85, females = 3.80). While the English proficiencies; listening (mean scores: males = 2.80, females = 2.90), writing (mean scores: males = 2.20, females = 2.65), reading (mean scores: males = 2.50, females = 3.15) and speaking (mean scores: males = 2.05, females = 2.60); do not show much differences. Only that, females appeared to be more proficient in all the four skills. But among the four skills, males are found to be the most proficient in listening (mean = 2.80), whereas females are the most proficient in reading (mean = 3.15).

Table 2.2 *Language Attitudes and English Proficiencies by Learners'*
Genders

Genders	Learning attitude (mean scores)	English Proficiencies (Mean scores)			
		Listening	Writing	Reading	Speaking
Males	3.85	2.80	2.20	2.50	2.05
Females	3.80	2.90	2.65	3.15	2.60

Respondents' attitudes towards English learning are being summarised in Table 2.3 Attitude with the lowest mean score (*mean*: 2.32, *somewhat disagree*: 2.5%, *strongly disagree*: 45.0%) indicates that most learners agree to the fact that good pronunciation is as important as grammar and vocabulary. It shows that KIAS' adult ESL learners are aware about the importance of pronunciation skill in English language. In which has made them realized that the pronunciation skill is at the same level as grammar and vocabulary.

Table 2.3 *Percentages and Mean Scores for Attitudes towards English*
Learning

Attitude	Percentages of learners (%)					Mean scores
	1	2	3	4	5	
Learning good pronunciation is NOT as important as learning grammar and vocabulary.	45.0	2.5	30.0	20.0	2.5	2.32
I prefer to spend more time in Grammar and Vocabulary classes than the pronunciation class.	20.0	12.5	37.5	25.0	5.0	2.83
I will never be able to speak English with good accent.	22.5	17.5	27.5	20.0	12.5	2.83
Sounding like a native speaker is very important to me.	12.5	15.0	10.0	40.0	22.5	3.45
I try to imitate speakers of English as much as possible.	2.5	7.5	10.0	35.0	45.0	4.13
I would like to sound like the native English speaker when I speak English.	2.5	7.5	15.0	12.5	62.5	4.25
I believe I can improve my pronunciation skills in English	0.0	5.0	10.0	22.5	62.5	4.43
For me, communicating is much more important than sounding like a native English speaker.	0.0	0.0	20.0	17.5	62.5	4.43
Good pronunciation in English is important to me.	0.0	5.0	2.5	2.5	90.0	4.78
I believe my lecturer should teach pronunciation more.	0.0	2.5	0.0	10.0	87.5	4.83

Meanwhile, most of the learners (*mean*: 4.43, *somewhat agree*: 10.0%, *strongly agree*: 87.5%) agree that lecturers should focus more on pronunciation in the class. This is due to the fact that pronunciation has never been taught in their English classes before. Therefore, it is highly expected by the learners that their English lecturers in KIAS could expose them to the skill of pronunciation more.

2.3. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES (PLS)

2.3.1. Genders

Table 2.4

Levene's Test of Equality of Variances for the Strategies

| | Levene's Test of Equality of Variances | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval | | |
	F	Sig	t	df	Sign. Two-tail	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Upper	Lower
Equal Variance Assumed	.132	.718	1.568	38	.125	3.80000	2.42357	8.70626	-1.1.626
Unequal Variances Assumed			1.568	37.989	.125	3.80000	2.42357	8.70630	-1.10630

Based on Table 2.4, the alpha is set at 0.05. In determining the "Homogeneity of Variance" assumption, the alpha obtained is 0.718 which is more than (>) 0.05. Therefore, it concludes that the variances are equal. Meanwhile, the p-value is found to be 0.125. It means that there is a significant difference in pronunciation learning strategies between males and females adult ESL learners in KIAS. According to that result, it could be concluded that genders is one of the factors that could lead to the types of learning strategies used in English pronunciation. It indicates that the males and females are using different strategies in improving their pronunciation skill which means that they are significantly different in their techniques, methods and ways of learning.

2.3.2. The Use of Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS)

Table 2.5
Significant Differences Between and Within the Groups of Processes of Pronunciation Learning Strategies

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.600	1	25.600	.643	.428
Within Groups	1513.900	38	39.839		
Total	1539.500	39			

Table 2.5 seeks whether the processes influence adult ESL learners in KIAS. By analysis, the "Between groups" shows that the *df* = 1 and the mean square = 25.600. The "Within groups" shows that the *df* = 38 and the mean square = 39.839. These values lead to the F value of 0.643 that is significant at 0.428. It indicates that the F-value is greater than (>) α = 0.05. Therefore, there is no difference in the use of pronunciation learning strategies among adult ESL learners between the processes of input/practice, noticing/feedback, hypothesis forming and hypothesis testing. In other words, adult ESL learners in KIAS do not have any significant difference in their choices of learning the English pronunciation. All strategies are being used similarly among adult ESL learners.

2.3.3. Attitudes

Table 2.6
Levene's Test of Equality of Variances for the Attitude

	Levene's Test of Equality of Variances							95% Confidence Interval	
	F	Sig	t	df	Sign. Two-tail	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Upper	Lower
Equal Variance Assumed	.1.570	.218	.398	38	.693	.05000	.12576	.30459	-.20459
Unequal Variances Assumed			.398	36.658	.693	.05000	.12576	.30490	-.20490

Based on the statistical results (Table 2.6), by setting the alpha, $\alpha = 0.05$, the Levene's Test indicates that the variances are equal with the obtained alpha equales to 0.218. On the other hand, the p-value is 0.693 which is greater than (>) 0.05. The alternative hypothesis that is accepted pointing out that there is a significant difference in English pronunciation learning attitudes between the genders. It states that males' and females' attitudes are dissimilar in learning pronunciation. These dissimilarities in attitudes might be because of the dissimilarities od their perceptions, interests or views towards English subjects. Their demographic backgrounds could also lead to this result.

2.3.4. English Proficiencies

Table 2.7
Significant Differences between and within the Groups of English Proficiencies

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	118.258	15	7.884	.596	.850
Within Groups	317.517	24	13.230		
Total	435.775	39			

The significant value in Table 2.7 shows that it is greater than the set alpha value (0.850 > 0.05). It means that there is no significant difference in English learning attitudes between adult ESL learners' English proficiencies such as listening, speaking, writing and reading.

2.4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES (PLS) AND ENGLISH LEARNING ATTITUDES

Table 2.8   *Pearson Correlation between Pronunciation Learning Strategies and English Learning Attitudes*

		STRATEGIES	ATTITUDE
STRATEGIES	Pearson Correlation	1	-.055
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.368
	N	40	40
ATTITUDE	Pearson Correlation	-.055	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.368	
	N	40	40

The data is interpreted by looking at the correlation coefficient in Table 2.8. From the output, the relationship between English learning strategies and attitudes is not significant with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.055$ which p-value = 0.368 that is greater than (>) 0.05. Therefore, it indicates that the pronunciation learning strategies are not associated with any attitude towards learning pronunciation. It is noticed that the relationship is in negative-value. It means that both of the variables have a "Perfect Inverse Relationship" even though they do not associate with each other.

As a conclusion, the obtained results have clarified most of the questions that are asked earlier in this study. Most of the results are expected, as what have been done to previous studies. Fortunately, there are several new findings that could be expanded in future study. Even though pronunciation has never been part of the English syllabus in schools or higher learning institutions, but the skill must be learned by those who want to use English in the communication. Pronunciation does not stand alone. It comes together with other skills like words stress and phonetics. Therefore, people should be willing to learn them together in order to be more proficient in English communication.

3. CONCLUSION

This study covers all the pronunciation learning strategies suggested by Eckstein (2007) on adult ESL learners in KIAS. The findings proved the five null hypotheses that had been made earlier for this study. Gender was found to play a role in pronunciation learning strategies choice between males and females learners. They were identified to be having different preferences in mastering the language pronunciation due to their differences in cognitive ability and behaviourism. Meanwhile, the four processes of learning strategies used in pronunciation, i.e, input/practice, noticing/feedback, hypothesis forming and hypothesis testing were found to be equally used by the sample's pronunciation learners. They applied all stages of the Kolb (1984) Learning Cycle Construct[37] in the process of improving their

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[37] This study is based on the Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984); that describes four modes of learning that create a comprehensive cycle of learning. The cycle process is circulating through four modes. The first mode is 'concrete experience' that focuses on feeling, where learners are engaging in active mode of task-oriented behaviour. 'Reflective observation' or watching mode, is when learners are carefully noticing what has been done. Next, learners are theorizing about what

pronunciation skill. The application was observed in class where the learners were practically use some of the techniques like repeating the word silently, memorizing difficult word, guessing for the sound of the unknown word and also trying to understand and use the word stress and phonetics symbols.

Attitudes towards the language were also found to show significant difference between the genders. This meant that males and females displayed different attitudes in English class. The findings suggested that the differences were commonly influenced by the learners' perceptions and interest towards the language. It might be due to the reason that being non-native speakers the learners compelled themselves to master the second language. It was clearly that attitudes could affect a learner in the learning process. On the contrary, the attitudes had no effect on the learner's English proficiencies like listening, speaking, writing and reading. They could gain the ability in the four skills as long as they are willing to use the skills frequently. Therefore, the final hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between English learning strategies and attitudes towards the language could summarize the findings of the study. It shows that an adult ESL learner could choose any learning strategy that he/she liked despite their attitudes towards English.

In consequence, these findings are found to be very helpful in pedagogical and andragogical techniques that are usually applied by the teachers and lecturers. They must know how their learners learn in order to handle them well in class. Furthermore, pronunciation learning strategies must also made known to both teachers and learners. They should know and choose which learning strategies they may use in enhancing their pronunciation skill. This is the only way that can eradicate their perception that English communication is hard because its pronunciation is difficult to learn.

Based on the findings in this study, there are some elements in English pronunciation training that need to be improved in the future and needed to be considered by other researchers in this area. Firstly, teachers are seen as the closest individuals to learners in pronunciation learning process. Therefore, many individuals with a good expertise of

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has been observed in the 'abstract conceptualization' mode. Finally, after doing some thinking on the task, they involve in hands-on practice and trial-an-error learning process in the 'active experimentation' mode

English are seriously needed, particularly in Asia (Ma, 2006[38]). It is recommended that English teachers should be aware and prepared themselves with the following criteria:

1. Able to attract learners' attention in enhancing their pronunciation skill by providing positive and interesting approaches in the classroom (Ma, 2006). For example, in order to improve learners' English proficiency, teachers can provide their learners with various types of assignments or tasks and at the same time they can enhance awareness with good approaches by teaching phonetics. This must be done because teachers' enthusiasm is said to motivate the learners the most (Laidlaw, 2005[39]).

2. Qualified and willing to use proper teaching strategies. All teachers are known to have qualifications in their area. But in enhancing their capability of teaching strategies, they should try to discuss with the school administration to conduct or join any seminars or workshops for English language classes in order to keep abreast of methods that may improve the learners' attitude towards the subject (Fakeye, 2010[40]). This is recommended to every English teacher because by strengthening themselves with better skills in pronunciation, they can provide a more exciting lesson to their learners because the more positive attitudes are being shown by the learners towards the language, the better they perform in class (Braine, 2010[41]).

3. Consider the varying academic ability of the learners. This is one of the vital elements that should be considered by English teachers. They need to consider this because former researchers

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[39] Laidlaw, M. (2005). *From competence to performance: English teaching methodology for the new curriculum in China.* Ningxia: Guyuan Teachers College Press.

[40] Fakeye, D. O. (2010). Students' personal variables as correlates of academic achievement in English as a second language in Nigeria. *J. Soc Sci, 22*(3), 205-211.

[41] Braine, G. (2010). *Nonnative speaker English teachers: Research, pedagogy and profesional growth.* New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library.

(Ige, 1996[42]; Fakeye, 2006) have concluded that intellectual or academic ability may predict learners' achievement at language learning in general and ESL learning in particular. Therefore, teachers must plan their lesson according to the different ability groups in the class.

In short, it is suggested that all twenty-eight learning strategies that are being used in this study to be applied by ESL teachers on the basis of their learners' needs. In 'ESL learners: A guide for a classroom teachers' (Burton, et al., 1999[43]), teachers who have working experience with ESL learners recommend that teachers and learners should have dictionaries at hand specifically designed for learners of English which provide pronunciation keys, simple explanations and contextualized examples in the classroom. The dictionaries can provide more effective resource and instruction for ESL learners (p.30).

The above recommendation is made because of a new perception of pronunciation learning that has a great link to phonetic symbols. Learning phonetics is not difficult but ESL teachers should first learn how to use them effectively so as to correct learners' accented pronunciation and intonation (Varasarin, 2007[44]). Future research is suggested to be made for the growth of learners' English pronunciation and vocabulary in which can be supported by the knowledge of phonetic symbols and letter sound. It is believed that all levels of learners can use the stipulated phonetic symbols to unravel the pronunciation of unfamiliar English words (Lu, 2002[45]) and thus once they have this facility in reading words, they are no longer need instruction in this skill unless there is a special need (Anderson, Heibert, Scott, & William, 1985[46]).

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[42] Ige, T. A. (1996). *Concept-mapping and problem-solving strategies as determinants of achievement in senior secondary school.* Ibadan: University of Ibadan.

[43] Burton, M., Cooper, M., Early , M., Eddy, C., Hooper, H., Neish, R., . . . Yonemoto, Y. (1999). *ESL learners: A guide for classroom teachers.* Columbia: British Columbia, Ministry of Education.

[44] Varasarin, P. (2007). *An action research study of pronunciation training, language strategies and speaking confidence.* Bangkok: Victoria University.

[45] Lu, D. (2002). Phonetic symbols: A necessary stepping stone for ESL learners. *English Teaching Forum, 40*(4), 36-39.

[46] Anderson, R., Heibert, E., Scott, J., & William, I. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commision on reading.* Washington DC: National Institute of Reading.

Finally, all academicians have to play a foremost role in ensuring that the graduates are going to be efficient and effective in communication. Efforts should be taken seriously by school principals and teachers whereas they need to initiatively inaugurate and preserve a flow of proficient English speaking learners. It is hoped that the results of this minor investigation will serve as an outline for further research of L2 pronunciation learning strategies in Malaysia and may influence other educational institutions and schools to spread the activities of learning L2 pronunciation in all English classes.