# The Effect of Using Listening Strategy Instruction on English Major Students' EFL Listening Comprehension Performance

**Mr. Muhammad Fawzy Mesallam**
English Instructor
**Prof. Dr Bahaa El-Din El-Naggar**
Professor of TEFL (Department of Curriculum& Instruction), Faculty of Education, Zagazig University
**Dr. Amr Fathy Abdelwahab**
Associate Professor of TEFL (Department of Curriculum& Instruction), Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University

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## Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the effect of listening strategy instruction on Faculty of Specific education English major students' EFL listening comprehension performance. The participants were 60 EFL students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University. The study employed a quasi-experimental design in which two groups were assigned, i.e. an experimental group (n=30) and a control one (n=30). A listening comprehension performance test was designed as the main instrument of the study. Results indicated that experimental group students scored significantly higher than those in the control group on the listening comprehension performance test. Based on these results, EFL instructors need to incorporate the strategy instruction into their teaching of EFL listening comprehension performance. More emphasis should be given to develop students' listening comprehension performance.

**Keywords:** English majors, strategy instruction, listening comprehension performance

## تأثير استخدام تعليم استراتيجية الاستماع على أداء الفهم الاستماعي لدى طلاب تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

**مستخلص البحث:**

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر تدريس إستراتيجية الاستماع على أداء استيعاب الاستماع لدى طلاب كلية التربية النوعية قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. بلغ عدد المشاركين ٦٠ طالبًا من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية النوعية جامعة الزقازيق. استخدمت الدراسة التصميم شبه التجريبي الذي تم فيه تعيين مجموعتين، أي مجموعة تجريبية (ن=٣٠) ومجموعة ضابطة (ن=٣٠). تم تصميم اختبار أداء الفهم السمعي كأداة رئيسية للدراسة. أشارت النتائج إلى أن طلاب المجموعة التجريبية حصلوا على درجات أعلى بكثير من طلاب المجموعة الضابطة في

اختبار أداء الفهم الاستماعي. بناءً على هذه النتائج، يحتاج معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إلى دمج تعليمات الإستراتيجية في تدريسهم لأداء فهم الاستماع للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ينبغي التركيز بشكل أكبر على تطوير أداء الفهم السمعي لدى الطلاب.

# I. Introduction

Listening comprehension is regarded as a complex, interactive process in which listeners are involved in a dynamic construction of meaning. Listeners understand the oral input from sound discrimination, prior knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, as well as from linguistic, paralinguistic, or even non-linguistic clues in contextual utterances (Rost, 2002).

Listening, according to Rost (2002), refers to a complex process that allows learners to understand spoken language (p.7). However, Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002) argue that listening should not be viewed as a single process, but rather as "a bundle of related processes" (p. 193). Rost (2002) further explains that listening is viewed as a process involving a continuum of active processes, which are under the control of the listener, and passive processes, which are not (p.7). Hence, the complexity of listening is partly due to the fact that it involves a number of active and passive processes, rather than one single process.

One view of comprehension that has influenced the understanding of learners' listening comprehension is Anderson's three phase comprehension model (Goh, 2002). Under this view, comprehension involves three stages: perceptual processing, parsing and utilization. The three stages, Anderson (2000) clarifies, are partially ordered in time, however they also partly overlap (p. 389). The first stage, i.e. perceptual processing, witnesses the encoding of the acoustic message. In the second stage, words in the message are transformed into a mental representation of the combined meaning of the words. In the last stage, which is utilization, listeners actually use the mental representation of the sentence's meaning (p. 389).

Hamouda (2013) reported that listening is important in acquiring understandable input. Learning does not occur if there is not any input. Pourhosein and Ahmadi (2011) added that listening has an important role in the communication process. According to Rost (2009), listening helps EFL learners understand the world, and it is one of the necessary elements in creating successful communication. Jafari and Hashim (2015) emphasized that listening is a channel for comprehensible input, and more than 50 percent of the time learners spend in learning a foreign language is devoted to listening.

Wolvin and Coakley (2000) showed that listening consumes more of daily communication time than other forms of verbal communication,

both in and out of the classroom. Vandergrift (1999) also showed that in daily life, people spend 40-50% of their communication in listening. Therefore, it is necessary for students who learn English as a second or foreign language to improve their learning abilities of listening. Over these last decades, listening has attracted growing interest in foreign or second language learning, leading educators to look for new and most importantly practical methods to maximize the efficiency of their listening instruction in both EFL and ESL settings.

Despite the importance of the listening skill, EFL learners are rarely taught how to listen effectively. As developing the listening skill can lead to developing other skills, it is necessary to conduct research in EFL listening to enlighten its pedagogy (Vandergrift, 2007). Rahimi and Abedi (2014) and Vandergrift (2004) maintained that the importance of listening comprehension in the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) is well recognized, yet, for many learners, it remains the most difficult of the four language skills to master.

To conclude, improving listening ability contributes in significant ways to learning a foreign language; learners have to make use of some strategies in order to succeed in the process of listening comprehension. However, little attention has been paid to the choice of these strategies by learners with different language proficiency levels; hence, a better understanding of these strategies and the way they are employed by learners are of high importance.

## Context of the problem

To make sure that the students encounter problems during listening comprehension, a pilot study was conducted among 60 EFL senior students at the Faculty of Specific Education. A pilot listening comprehension skills test was administered, and student's responses were corrected and analyzed. Results indicated that (78%) of the students obtained very low scores. In their investigation of the listening comprehension difficulties in EFL settings, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) pointed out that when listening to English language, EFL college students face various difficulties as universities pay more attention to reading, writing and vocabulary. Listening does not comprise an important part of course books, and teachers do not focus on this important skill in their classes. Similarly, Nadhira and Warni (2021) investigated EFL students' difficulties in listening and explored the factors for such difficulties. The participants included 100 EFL students at a senior high school. The study adopted the mixed methods using quantitative and qualitative data. Both questionnaires and interviews were used as the data collecting techniques. The quantitative analysis was used to show the numeric data of the questionnaire about students' listening difficulties and the qualitative

analysis was applied to explore the factors of students' listening difficulties. Findings showed that the difficulties in listening included unfamiliar words, rate of speech, unfamiliar accent, unclear pronunciation, and inadequate facility. The factors of those difficulties involved the students' background knowledge, lack of practice and environment noise.

## Statement of the problem

The problem of the study can be summarized in the low level of English majors' listening comprehension skills. This problem can be stated in the following main question: "What is the effect of using strategy instruction on enhancing English majors' listening comprehension performance?"

This main question can be sub-divided into the following:

1) What are the listening comprehension performances required to English majors?
2) How far is the listening comprehension successfully performed by these students?
3) How can a listening strategy instruction be designed to develop the listening comprehension performances?
4) What is the effect of using listening strategy instruction on enhancing English major students' listening comprehension performance?

## Hypotheses of the study

1) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control one on the listening comprehension post-test results in favor of the experimental group.
2) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and post- results of the listening comprehension test in favour of the post- results.

## Significance of the study

The results of this study are hopefully expected to be useful to:

1. The students: It may enable students to develop their listening comprehension skills.
2. The teachers: It may provide teachers with practical procedures in using strategy instructions to develop listening skills.

## Definitions of terms

## Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension refers to active and complicated mental processes (interactive and interpretive). It is the activity in which listeners need to concentrate on utterances spoken in a particular language, to recognize a certain amount of vocabulary and grammar structures, to

separate each utterance into small meaningful units, to translate it with the help of stress and intonation, and to keep all of the components in short-term memory before retrieving background knowledge or schema recorded in long-term memory to help understand the whole text in a particular context (Vandergrift et al., 2006).

**Strategy instruction**

Strategy instruction refers to the teaching of strategies to students in order to make their learning easier, enjoyable and transferable to new input. It also helps students not only better understand what they hear, but also deal with difficulties occurring in their listening tasks (Oxford, 2011).

**II. Review of Literature**

Recently, the development of listening comprehension performance has become an integral part of contemporary education for different purposes (Tran & Duong, 2020). Listening comprehension is a highly complex, interactive process (Buck, 2001). In order to be successful, learners need to skillfully select and decipher input, construct meaning, and relate their own prior knowledge to the task at hand (Rost, 2002). They also need to be able to navigate the challenges that arise from aspects such as speaker accent, rate of delivery, and variations in stress, rhythm, and intonation. In addition, they should be able to recognize and comprehend reduced forms of speech, colloquial language, redundancies, a wide range of vocabulary, and complex syntactic structures (Abdelwahab, 2021; Brown, 2007).

Listening comprehension is the ability to recall and understand information which is presented orally. What makes a listening task difficult is its ongoing process that requires foreign/second language learners to comprehend and listen simultaneously which may even cause anxiety (Kao 2004). Listening consists of auditory discrimination, aural grammar, choosing necessary information, remembering it, and connecting it to the process between sound and form of meaning (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Rost (2009) added that listening is an active mental ability that helps learners understand the world. It is also one of the necessary components in making successful communication.

According to Simonds and Hairrell et al. (2011) there are five types of listening comprehension depending on listening:

**1. Informative listening:** In this type of listening, the main objective of the listener is to interpret the message as close as possible to the intended meaning of the speaker.

**2. Relation listening:** This type of listening is used to assist a person or to identify a relationship as when a psychologist listens to a troubled person.

**3. Appreciative listening:** The main purpose of this type of listening is to enjoy or entertain.

**4. Critical listening:** Critical listening means to check the authenticity and the validity of what we hear as when we listen to politicians.

**5. Discriminative listening:** This is the most important type of listening because it is the base of all the above-mentioned types. The listener here needs to be accurate and sensitive so that he can comprehend the slight differences in meaning according to the stress, intonation, and pitch of the speaker.

Ideally, the listening process is the continuing construction of interpretation to the spoken input. Listening requires the ability to adjust the interpretation in response to new information; this ability is especially crucial in second language/foreign language (L2/FL) listening (Chen, 2013). Language learners may process the listening input naturally without much conscious consideration to word-by-word input. In addition, most L2/FL listeners need to intentionally decode the subtle elements and construct the meaning of the listening input (Vandergrift, 2004).

Listening plays a crucial role in the communication of everyday life. Guo and Willis (2006) stated that " listening is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values"(p.3). In this regard, Luo (2008) argued that listening is the major skill of social interactions, and people receive new messages mainly via listening than reading. Through receiving input, learners can understand linguistic information in order to produce language. According to Brown (2000) students do more listening than speaking in classrooms.

Listening is important for some reasons for foreign language learners. First, listening is an important precondition for oral communication to happen. Second, it has an influence on developing reading and writing. Third, it is an important factor in academic success, since students comprehend teachers or lectures through listening (ELkoumy, 2002).

Besides, listening has a very effective role in the process of learning and language acquisition, "for it is the key to improve speaking, reading and writing; it is used at least three times as much as speaking, and four to five times as much as reading and writing" (Grognet & Duzer, 2002, p.1). Furthermore, listening skills are very important in foreign language learning because the key to acquiring a language is to receive language input. The same claim is supported by Rost (2002) and Hamouda (2013) who confirm that listening is very important in the language classroom as it provides input for learners.

Hasan (2000) believed that "listening comprehension delivers the right conditions for language achievement and development of other language skills" (p.138). Thus, listening is necessary not only as a receptive language skill but also as a requirement for the development of spoken language ability.

Jafari and Hashim (2015) emphasized that listening is a channel for comprehensible input, and more than 50 percent of the time learners spend in learning a foreign language is devoted to listening. EFL learners need to master four language skills: writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills. One of the important yet has not received priority in language teaching is listening (Richards, 2002).

Hamouda (2013) identified some problems which encounter learners while listening:

- Lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak, or the speed rate of speech is too fast to comprehend.
- The inability to get things repeated.
- The listeners limited vocabulary which hinders listeners to understand the message.
- Failure to recognize the 'signals' which show that the speaker is moving from one point to another e.g. (secondly, or then,).
- Problems of interpretation since learners who miss experience with different meanings of words and non-verbal cues, facial expression, nods, gestures, tone, etc. cannot understand the meaning well.
- Unclear pronunciation of some speakers, different accents and dialects, especially the difference between British English and American English.
- Failure to use and apply strategies while listening.

Listening is usually a neglected skill; it does not attract teachers' attention and the time devoted to teaching it in the classrooms is allocated to teaching other skills, especially writing and reading (Al-Harriree, 2004). Most of English language teachers concentrate on teaching writing and reading skills and pay less attention to listening and speaking. Teachers attribute this to the nature of the examination system which concentrates mainly on the reading and writing skills (AbdelKhalk,2011).

Flowerdew and Miller (1992) reported that the students' difficulties in listening comprehension include the fast speed of delivery, new terminology and concepts, lack of concentration, and problems related to the physical environment. Anderson's (2000) affirmed that the problems in listening are associated with perceptual (low-level) processing, such as word recognition and attention failure, while relatively few problems are linked to inefficient parsing and failure in utilization (high-level processing). Furthermore, Graham (2006) pointed

out that the speed delivery of text, failure in identifying and recognizing words in a stream of input, fast speech rate, and unfamiliar words create problems in understanding the listening text.

Ghenaat et al. (2023) examined the impact of Group Dynamic Assessment (G-DA) on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension. A total of 140 Iranian EFL female learners in four English Language Institutes of Ahvaz, Iran, were tested, and 80 of them were selected as the sample of the study using convenience sampling. The listening section of a sample TOEFL Junior Standard Test which primarily serves to determine the proficiency level of the test takers was used as the study instrument. Participants were taught through group dynamic assessment. The obtained results revealed that Group Dynamic Assessment (G-DA) had a positive impact on the participants' listening comprehension. This finding implies that EFL teachers may need to consider the positive impact of dynamic assessment on EFL learners' listening comprehension improvement and provide them with more opportunities to interact.

Tran and Duong (2020) investigated a study aimed to determine the English listening comprehension problems of Vietnamese high school students as perceived by students and their teachers. The research was conducted at a high school in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam with the participation of 368 eleventh graders who answered a questionnaire and 8 EFL teachers who took part in semi-structured interviews. The collected quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies/ percentages) and content analysis, respectively. Both the teachers and the students pointed out English listening comprehension problems relating to perception, parsing, and utilization. In particular, the students encountered phonological and lexical problems (i.e., high speech rates and challenging vocabulary), semantic and syntactic problems (i.e., long utterances), and discoursal problems (i.e., implied meanings, unfamiliar topics, and organization of ideas). The results are discussed in relation to the Vietnamese EFL context, and some pedagogical implications are presented.

Hence, the utilization of different listening comprehension approaches has recently attracted the interest of researchers in the field of English language teaching and learning (e.g., Lotfia et al., 2016; Rezai et al., 2023; Tran & Duong, 2020). Nevertheless, limited work - to the researcher's best knowledge – has been conducted to investigate the effect of strategy instruction on English majors' listening comprehension performance. It is therefore necessary for students who learn English as a second or foreign language to improve their listening skills. Educators and researchers need to look for new and most importantly practical

methods to maximize the efficiency of their listening instruction in both EFL and ESL settings.

Recently, studies have investigated strategy instruction to enhance students' performance in listening (e.g., Cross, 2009; Graham & Macaro, 2008; Lotfia et al., 2016). Strategy instruction is based on the ideas that: 1) strategies can be learned; 2) students are capable of becoming more independent learners; 3) learners are more effective when they take control of their own learning; and 4) effective strategy use may determine students' success (Chamot et al., 1999).

Chamot (2004) defined these learning strategies as ―the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal (p. 14). According to Cohen (2011), these learning strategies are part of individual differences that refer to personal coping styles which learners bring to the classrooms. These individual differences include some factors such as anxiety, age, personality, aptitude, gender, motivation, attitudes, beliefs, and learning strategies.

Vandergrift (1999) stated that learners have to make use of listening strategies in order to guide and monitor their listening comprehension. The language learner who is able to use a wide variety of language learning strategies can appropriately expand his language skills in a better way. Abdelwahab (2020) and Lessard-Clouston (1996) stated that language learning strategies can help students develop their communicative competence. They asserted that language teachers can train poor learners using these strategies.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) maintained that language entails active and dynamic mental processes and thus classified learning strategies into three major categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social/affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies help learners plan for the coming learning tasks, monitor the process, and then assess the output after the completion of the learning activity. Cognitive strategies are tools by which learners can solve the learning problems or complete the learning task during the process of manipulating the target language. Social/affective strategies are those strategies which are mainly concerned with cooperative learning. Language learners use these strategies in order to reach a common goal and ask questions for clarification and self-talk to redirect thoughts.

Ngo (2016) conducted a study to explore the changes in listening comprehension proficiency of 27 EFL students in Vietnam after receiving an explicit listening strategy instruction. A mixed method case study design was adopted; and data were collected from listening tests, questionnaires and focus group interviews. Results from one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant difference of pre- and

post-listening test scores. In addition, students' explanation provides insight into how listening strategy use, listening practice, and affective factors contributed to their listening comprehension improvement

Mekhoukh (2021) investigated the effect of a process approach based on metacognitive listening strategy intervention. Participants involved 28 upper-intermediate undergraduate third year students at the English Department, Faculty of Arts and Letters, Setif 2 University. Instruments included a listening pre/post-test and a reflection survey. Results showed that the participants' perceptions concerning the efficacy of the intervention in improving their listening performance are positive, and their scores in the listening post-test increased to some degree namely for poor listeners. The findings imply that the metacognitive listening strategy instruction can enhance listeners' awareness towards the processes involved in listening comprehension success.

To conclude, students need to employ different strategies and be able to use the appropriate strategy consciously. They need to be aware of using listening strategies when their listening comprehension breaks down, so that they can understand new material. Consequently, EFL students should receive strategy instruction to improve their listening comprehension. The current study is, therefore, an attempt to investigate the effect of strategy instruction on developing listening comprehension skills of EFL senior college students.

## III. Method of the study
### Participants

Sixty students enrolled in the English section, Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University were chosen as the study sample. The reason behind that choice is that major students are thought to have acquired the main listening comprehension performance necessary for university students and have become more familiar with strategy instruction. They were randomly assigned into two groups, i.e. an experimental group and a control one (30 students for each). The average age of the students ranged from 21 to 22 years old. They were all from the same Egyptian culture and had been learning English for 12 years.

### Design

The current study aimed at probing into the impact of the strategy instruction on listening comprehension performance. Accordingly, the quasi-experimental design was adopted by using two groups, i.e. the experimental group receiving instruction using the strategy instruction and the control one receiving regular instruction. Both groups were exposed to the listening comprehension performance test before receiving the instruction, to make sure that both groups were homogeneous in terms

of their listening comprehension performance. The same version of the test was post-administered to measure the students' level.

**Instrument**

To fulfil the purpose of the current study, a listening comprehension performance test was designed as the main instrument of the study (See Appendix B). The test was submitted to a panel of jury of specialists and experts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language to determine their validity. In addition, both the test and the scale were piloted on a sample of 30 students other than the study participants to determine the clarity and suitability of the questions and the scale items. For reliability, the test-retest method was used by calculating the internal consistency of the study instruments (alpha coefficient = 0.89).

**Study Material**

By reviewing the related literature and surveying some previous studies, five units based on the strategy instruction were designed in order to develop EFL students' listening comprehension performance (See Appendix C). The suggested units aimed at at developing some listening comprehension skills of EFL Faculty of Specific Education fourth students.

**Objectives**

By the end of the listening units, the students were expected to:
1. Identify the importance of EFL listening comprehension skills.
2. Develop their listening comprehension skills.
3. Identify the main ideas of the topic.
4. Determine the supporting details.
5. Recognize relationships between ideas.
6. Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.
7. Identify the mood of the speaker.
8. Identify the speaker's attitude.
9. Identify the speaker's tone.
10. Infer implicitly stated ideas.
11. Make predictions about incoming information.
12. Draw conclusions of the events.

## Activities and procedures of suggested units based on strategy instruction.

| Week | Unit | listening Stage | Tasks & Activities | Objectives |
|------|------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------| 
| **Week 1 & 2** | **Unit One** | **Pre** | • **Personalizing**<br>• **Predicting vocabulary.**<br>• **Predicting facts.**<br>• **Practicing tenses.**<br>• **Gap-fill exercises** | - **Identify the main idea of the topic.**<br>- **Identify the supporting details.** |
| | | **During** | • **Listening for gist**<br>• **Listening for detail**<br>• **Gap fill Exercises** | • **Recalling main ideas.**<br>• **Inferring ideas that are not explicitly stated in the text.**<br>• **Applying listening strategies appropriately during listening.** |
| | | **Post** | • **Checking and summarizing**<br>• **Note comparison.**<br>• **Group summary.** | • **Recalling main ideas.**<br>• **Inferring ideas that are not explicitly stated in the text.**<br>• **Applying listening strategies appropriately during listening.** |

| Week | Unit | listening Stage | Tasks & Activities | Objectives |
|------|------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------| 
| **Week 3 & 4** | **Unit two** | **Pre** | • **Predicting facts.**<br>• **Practicing tenses.**<br>• **Gap-fill exercises** | • **Identifying relationships between ideas.**<br>• **Inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.** |
| | | **During** | • **Inferring**<br>• **Participating actively**<br>• **Gap fill Exercises** | • **Identifying relationships between ideas.**<br>• **Inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.** |
| | | **Post** | • **Discussion**<br>• **Creative responses**<br>• **Critical responses** | • **Identifying relationships between ideas.**<br>• **Inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.** |

| Week | Unit | listening Stage | Tasks & Activities | Objectives |
|------|------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Week 5 &6 | Unit three | pre | • **Predicting facts.**<br>• **Practicing tenses.**<br>• **Gap-fill exercises** | • **Identify the mood of the speaker.**<br>• **Identifying the speaker's attitude.** |
| | | During | • **Note-taking.**<br>• **Dictation** | • **Identify the mood of the speaker.**<br>• **Identifying the speaker's attitude.** |
| | | post | • **Information exchange**<br>• **Problem-solving** | • **Identify the mood of the speaker.**<br>• **Identifying the speaker's attitude.** |

| Week | Unit | listening Stage | Tasks & Activities | Objectives |
|------|------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Week 7 &8 | Unit four | Pre | • **Establishing reasons for listening**<br>• **Generating questions** | • **Inferring implicitly stated ideas**<br>• **Predicting outcomes**<br>• **Recognizing the differences between facts and opinions** |
| | | During | • **Grab the word.**<br>• **Just do it.**<br>• **Mime** | • **Inferring implicitly stated ideas**<br>• **Predicting outcomes**<br>• **Recognizing the differences between facts and opinions** |
| | | Post | • **Deconstructing the listening text**<br><br>• **Reconstructing the listening text** | • **Inferring implicitly stated ideas**<br>• **Predicting outcomes**<br>• **Recognizing the differences between facts and opinions** |

## IV. Results

The results of this study are presented in terms of the study hypotheses.

The first hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of their control peers in the post administration of the listening comprehension performance test favoring the experimental group students. Independent Sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores between the experimental group and the control one as shown in table 1.

**Table 1**
**t-test results of the experimental group and the control one in the listening comprehension performance post-test**

| Sub-skills | Measurement | N | Mean | S. D | t- Value | DF | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identifying the main idea | Control | 30 | 2.10 | .759 | 15.307 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | 5.13 | .776 | | | |
| Identifying the Supporting details | Control | 30 | 1.43 | .504 | 24.078 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | 4.57 | .504 | | | |
| Identifying the relationships between ideas | Control | 30 | 1.30 | .466 | 25.087 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | 4.27 | .450 | | | |
| Identifying Unfamiliar words from the context | Control | 30 | 1.87 | .730 | 16.348 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | 5.07 | .785 | | | |
| Identifying the mood of the speaker | Control | 30 | 1.97 | .765 | 15.190 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | 4.97 | .765 | | | |
| Identifying the purpose of the speaker | Control | 30 | ١.٣٩ | .894 | 1.070 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | ٤.٨٧ | .498 | | | |
| Identifying the attitude of the speaker | Control | 30 | ١.٠٩ | .937 | 0.872 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | ٤.٨٣ | .466 | | | |
| Total | Control | 30 | 12.5 | 79.14 | 43.588 | 58 | .000 |
| | Experimental | 30 | 33.7 | 15.22 | | | |

Table 1 indicates that the experimental group students outperformed those in the control one in overall listening comprehension performance and its sub-skills. The experimental group students obtained higher means in listening comprehension performance sub-skills (ranging from 4.27 to 5.13) and overall listening comprehension performance (33.7); whereas the control group students obtained lower means in listening comprehension performance skills (ranging from 1.30 to 2.10) and overall listening comprehension performance (12.5). The t-value for the overall listening comprehension performance (43.588) is statistically significant at (0.001) level. Hence, the first hypothesis is verified.

The second hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre-post administration of the reflective writing test favoring post administration results. Paired Sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the pre, and post results of the experimental group as shown in table 2.

**Table 2**
**t-test results of the experimental group in the pre- and post- listening performance test**

| Sub-skills | Measurement | N | Mean | S.D | t- Value | DF | Sig. | η2 | d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identifying the main idea | Pre | 30 | 1.60 | .091 | 28.400 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.965 | 5.185 |
| | Post | 30 | 5.13 | .142 | | | | | |
| Identifying the Supporting details | Pre | 30 | 1.60 | .091 | 22.619 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.946 | 4.129 |
| | Post | 30 | 4.57 | .092 | | | | | |
| Identifying The relationships between ideas | Pre | 30 | 1.27 | .143 | 22.122 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.944 | 4.039 |
| | Post | 30 | 4.27 | .082 | | | | | |
| Identifying Unfamiliar words from the context | Pre | 30 | 1.73 | .095 | 25.637 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.958 | 4.681 |
| | Post | 30 | 5.07 | .143 | | | | | |
| Identifying The mood of the speaker | Pre | 30 | 1.73 | .082 | 21.671 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.944 | 3.957 |
| | Post | 30 | 4.97 | .140 | | | | | |
| Identifying the purpose of the speaker | Pre | 30 | 1.60 | .091 | 22.795 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.947 | 4.192 |
| | Post | 30 | 4.87 | .150 | | | | | |
| Identifying the attitude of the speaker | Pre | 30 | 1.70 | .085 | 22.114 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.944 | 4.037 |
| | Post | 30 | 4.38 | .145 | | | | | |
| Total | pre | 30 | 11.23 | 1.715 | 59.160 | 29 | 0.001 | 0.991 | 19.899 |
| | Post | 30 | 33.70 | 2.215 | | | | | |

Table 2 shows that students in the experimental group obtained higher means in the post-results of the listening comprehension performance test compared to pre-test results. The post-mean scores of the experimental group students ranged from 4.27 to 5.13. The t-value for the overall listening comprehension performance is 59.160, which shows that the difference is significant at (0.001) level. The estimated d-value is very high (14), $d < 0.8$, which indicates that strategy instruction has a very large effect on developing students' listening performance skills. Hence, the second hypothesis is verified.

## V. Discussion of Results

The results of the present study provide support to the use of strategy instruction in improving EFL listening comprehension skills for university stage students. According to the post-test scores, the experimental group students outperformed those of the control one in listening comprehension performance. It could be said that the tasks and

activities performed by the students of the experimental group during the experimentation had a great effect on developing their EFL listening comprehension performance. These results could be discussed in the light of the research questions and study hypotheses.

The pre-listening stage helped students get prepared for the incoming information, and this supported them in getting involved in different listening tasks. The instructor provided students with pre-listening tasks in order to relate the listening text with their background information. This stage involved activating schemata in order to help students predict the content. Students were given eye-catching images, maps and diagrams to help them guess the theme of the listening text. They were asked to answer pre-listening comprehension questions, then listened to verify their answers. The instructor also helped the students brainstorm, visualize, personalize and predict vocabulary. In order to make the purpose of listening clear, the teacher set an activity to introduce key vocabulary items related to the topic of discussion and necessary for the understanding of the listening material. Hence, students were able to expect what they were going to listen. In addition, students participated in various tasks that helped them predict the upcoming events. They thought about the topic of the text, focused on the title, and began to use their prior knowledge to predict what they expected to listen to.

In while listening stage, students were exposed to the listening text. They listened for different purposes, such as listen and choose; listen and rank; listen fill in the blanks; listen and identify the main ideas and supporting details; and listen and identify the attitude, purpose and mood. The instructor allowed the students to listen to the listening material for general comprehension in order to assist them to get the main idea or the general theme. Then, replayed it several times for students to grasp more details. The pause button was used as needed to focus on sections which students had difficulty to understand. students were also asked to answer exercises while they were watching.

In addition, during listening, the students were engaged in different activities and techniques, such as note-taking, gap fill exercises, multiple choice answers, listen and describe. The instructor provided students with a sheet or document with blank spaces. They listened to the audio and filled in the missing words. In addition, the instructor stopped the audio and asked students to describe what they listened to. Furthermore, the instructor divided the audio into sections and students were asked to find out key vocabulary and expressions for each section. They were also asked to paraphrase them. In note-taking, they could listen to the audio then group words with similar meanings.

In post listening stage, the students were encouraged to think beyond the text and relate the text to their own personal lives. They were engaged in various activities such as, checking and summarizing, discussions, information exchange, problem solving, and writing a short composition based on the information given in the listening passage. In addition, students' discussions helped them overcome their misunderstanding. The instructor's feedback and encouragement statements during all phases of the listening comprehension process helped the students in their listening comprehension performance. Moreover, the instructor asked students comprehension questions and testified that they had understood the gist of the video clips. Questions included a variety of question types – yes / no questions, simple wh-questions, and inferential questions.

The findings also showed that the experimental group obtained high scores in their listening comprehension post-test results. This development in the experimental group's level could be attributed to strategy instruction. The instructor guided experimental group students through a series of tasks, including identifying the main idea of a text, identifying supporting details, identifying the relationship between ideas, inferring unfamiliar words from the context, and determining the mood of the speaker. The students were taught to identify the main idea by listening to the passage, summarizing it in their own words, and recognizing words that negate or qualify the first sentence. They also learned how to identify supporting details, such as major and minor details, and demonstrated the validity of the main idea.

In addition, the experimental group students were also trained to identify the relationship between ideas, such as showing similarity and contrast; exemplify or illustrate and showing cause and effect. To infer unfamiliar words from the context, students were instructed to identify the part of speech, look at words and sentences around the unknown word, find its synonym or antonym, look at information given later in the sentence, and use their prior knowledge. Moreover, identifying the mood of a speaker involved paying attention to various cues, including verbal and nonverbal communication. Determining the speaker's mood included observing the tone of voice, word choice, and speed of speech. In summary, students were better equipped to navigate the vast amount of unknown vocabulary and interpret information.

Meanwhile, the control group students showed no significant improvement in terms of their listening comprehension performance and meta-cognitive awareness. They lacked the ability to infer implicitly stated ideas, as well as identify relationships between ideas. As the regular listening instruction involved a number of limitations and drawbacks, learners simply listen to a speaker or audio recording without

actively engaging with the material. This could lead to limited retention and understanding. The listening exercises involved scripted materials, which did not accurately reflect the variability and complexity of real-life spoken language. The listening material did not also provide sufficient context for learners to understand the meaning of the spoken content. Listening in real life often relies on contextual cues, and the absence of these cues in traditional exercises can hinder comprehension. In addition, the students were not exposed to a variety of accents, dialects, and speech rates. This could be a disadvantage, as learners found it difficult to engage in real-world situations where speakers may have different accents or speak at varying speeds. The students focused on decoding individual words or phrases rather than grasping the broader meaning and intention of the speaker. Furthermore, the students were not trained on how to use listening strategies, such as predicting, summarizing, and making inferences. Hence, they lacked the ability to actively engage in various listening tasks, such as responding to questions, clarifying information, or participating in a conversation.

**Recommendations**

In the light of the study findings, curriculum designers should design curriculums which help students promote their listening comprehension ability through utilizing a wide variety of listening strategies. College courses should incorporate developing students' listening practices and enhancing the knowledge of listening strategy instruction. In addition, strategy instruction should be utilized by teachers to develop students' EFL listening performance and solve problems. EFL teachers need to use using various materials which can contribute to the better teaching of listening. Furthermore, EFL students should be aware of the importance of listening comprehension in the process of foreign language since listening provides them with the language input. Students also need to be trained on how to use strategies intensively in order to help them overcome their problems about the topic in listening. Learners can take advantage of the findings of the study and try to improve their listening comprehension by building up their own strategies. They can find the most effective strategies that contribute most to their listening comprehension success and make a list of the best suited strategies to help them self-monitor, self-manage, and self-evaluate their own learning process.

### Suggestions for further research

**Based on the results of the present study, the following topics seem worth attempting:**

- Investigating the effect of strategy instruction on English language learning among university students and on other language skills such as writing, speaking, and reading among college students.
- Investigating the effect of using other strategies on developing students' listening comprehension skills.
- Further research is needed to investigate the effect of strategy instruction on students' academic writing skills and writing self-efficacy.
- Further qualitative research is needed to investigate how strategy instruction affects listening skills in other academic listening courses.
- A case study to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs about the use of strategy instruction in teaching writing is needed.

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