A study investigated the English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) listening comprehension strategies used by university students in Taiwan. The subjects, 51 freshmen at National Yunlin University of Science and Technology with a low-intermediate level of English language skills, were administered a test of listening comprehension (questions appended) and a questionnaire (appended) concerning their patterns of use of 52 listening comprehension strategies. Results indicate that among the six categories of listening strategies, those characterized by compensation techniques were most often used by the students. Among all 52 strategies, "paying attention" and "translating" were the individual strategies most commonly used. In addition, effective listeners used significantly more strategies than ineffective listeners did in five of the six categories. Suggestions for classroom instruction in listening are offered. (Contains 31 references.) (MSE)
A Study of EFL Listening Comprehension Strategies

Huei-Chun Teng
National Yunlin University of Science & Technology

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the EFL listening comprehension strategies used by college students in Taiwan. Subjects were 51 students from the freshmen at National Yunlin University of Science & Technology. They first received a listening test with 20 multiple-choice questions, and then completed the questionnaire of listening comprehension strategies. Results indicated that among the six strategy categories ‘compensation’ was most often employed by subjects, ‘cognitive’ was the next, and that ‘affective’ was least often used. Besides, among the whole 52 strategies, ‘paying attention’ and ‘translating’ were the individual strategies of the highest frequent use. Moreover, effective listeners used significantly more strategies than ineffective listeners did in five of the six categories. Finally, the study proposed several suggestions for the instruction of EFL listening.

INTRODUCTION

Listening has been regarded as the long-neglected language skill due to the oversimplified assumption that it is acquired automatically and learned once for all. Over the last two decades, however, there has been increasing emphasis on listening comprehension for second language (L2) pedagogy, reflected in several methodologies (e.g., Asher’s Total Physical Response, Gattegno’s Silent Way, Lozanov’s Suggestopedia), numerous listening textbooks, audiotapes, videotapes, and CD-ROMs.

The term ‘listening comprehension’ used in the field of language pedagogy is matched in communicative and psycholinguistic research by such expressions as ‘speech recognition’, ‘speech perception’, ‘speech understanding’ and ‘spoken language understanding’. Chastain (1971) defines listening comprehension as the ability to understand native speech at normal speed in unstructured situations. Morley (1972) defines it as including not only basic auditory discrimination and aural grammar, but also reauditorizing, extracting vital information, remembering it, and
relating it, everything that involves processing or mediating between sound and
construction of meaning. Neisser (1976) considers listening comprehension as a
temporally extended activity in which the listener continuously develops anticipation
for what will come next. According to Goss (1982) and Samuels (1984), listening
comprehension is a process in which the listener constructs a meaning out of the
information provided by the speaker.

Although these definitions are different to some extent, they basically consider
listening comprehension as an activity in which listeners employ a variety of mental
processes in an effort to comprehend information from oral texts. They focus on
selected aspects of aural input, construct meaning from passage, and relate what they
hear to existing knowledge. However, there is hardly a perfect match between input
and knowledge; comprehension gaps often occur and special efforts to educe meaning
are required, especially for second language learners. The mental processes that are
activated by listeners to understand, learn, or to retain new information from
utterances are referred to as listening comprehension strategies.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the EFL listening
comprehension strategies used by college freshmen in Taiwan. The major research
questions explored in the study are: (1) What are the variations in the perceived use
of the six categories of EFL listening comprehension strategies? (2) What are the
variations in the perceived use of individual EFL listening comprehension strategy? (3)
Are there differences in listening comprehension strategies between effective and
ineffective EFL listeners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since 1980, there have been a number of studies involving the investigation of
listening comprehension strategies used by FL/L2 learners. With regard to ESL
listening, Conrad (1985) found that as L2 listeners increased in proficiency they relied
more on contextual semantic cues than on syntactic or phnological cues. Murphy’s
study (1985) indicated that more proficient listeners tended to have an open and
flexible use of strategies, while less proficient listeners most frequently had a
dependence on the text and a consistent use of paraphrase. O’Malley et al. (1989)
found that effective listeners used more self-monitoring, elaboration, and inferencing.
As for the study of EFL listening comprehension strategies, Rost & Ross (1991) used EFL students at three different colleges in Japan. Results showed that beginning listeners had a persistent pattern of asking for repetition, rephrasing or simplification, whereas more advanced listeners asked questions using information already given in the story and used backchannel communication. Huang & Naerssen (1987) examined the learning strategies in oral communication used by EFL learners in China. They found that functional practice was the strategy that distinguished successful Chinese EFL learners from less successful ones, and successful learners more often employed a strategy of a willingness to take risks.

The following four studies which all looked at Chinese students in Taiwan are directly related to the present study. First, Chang et al. (1995) found that more subjects used top-down approach than bottom-up approach in EFL listening comprehension. There is no striking difference in learner strategies between listening in a classroom situation and in a natural situation. Good listeners and poor listeners are similar in terms of listening strategies. Next, Katchen (1996) asked subjects to summarize their weakly self-selected listening activities and comment on their listening skills. Results indicated that students made exciting discoveries about their own listening strategies and more easily observed various listening comprehension factors. Then, Lee’s study (1997) showed that the four EFL listening comprehension strategies most often used by subjects included asking speakers for repetition or paraphrasing, trying to understand each word, self-questioning for comprehension, and checking comprehension. Finally, Chen (1997), by using think-aloud procedures, identified five effective strategic patterns employed by EFL listeners. They included text oriented, learner oriented, exploring and testifying, wait and see, and word hooking.

There are also a few studies examining the listening comprehension strategies on foreign languages other than English. For example, Laviosa (1991) looked at Italian, DeFillipis (1980) and Vandergrift (1992) studied French, and Bacon (1992) and Vogely (1995) investigated Spanish. These studies can also provide useful information for the present study.
METHOD

Subjects

Subjects in the present study were 51 students from the freshmen at National Yunlin University of Science and Technology in Taiwan. Having learned English as a foreign language for about six years in school, they have approximately a low-intermediate level of EFL.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect the data for the current study: (1) a test of listening comprehension; and (2) a questionnaire of listening comprehension strategies. The listening test consisted of an interview which was approximately three minutes long and 20 multiple choice questions (see Appendix 1). The test results were adopted to designate effective and ineffective listeners among the subjects; besides, it provided the warm-up for activating subjects to reflect on their listening comprehension strategies. The main instrument was the strategy questionnaire which included 52 Likert-scaled items of six categories (see Appendix 2). It was mainly adapted from the listening strategy model proposed by Oxford (1990). The questionnaire was translated into Chinese to facilitate the valid elicitation of answers from subjects.

Procedures

The current study was conducted in group testing during the class time of 'English Listening & Speaking Practice'. Before the experiment began, subjects were told in detail what they were required to do in the study. They first listened to the audiotape twice, and then answered the multiple-choice questions. Then, they finished the questionnaire of listening comprehension strategies.

Data Analysis

For the scoring of listening test, one point was given for answering each question correctly; so, the total scores were 20 points. Subjects scores were then sorted in a descending order. Those subjects whose scores ranked above 76% (N=18) and below 33% (N=17) were designated as effective and ineffective listeners respectively.
As for the strategy questionnaire, the scale range for each question was 1-5. Frequency counting, t-test and chi-square test were conducted to analyze the questionnaire scales. Chi-square tests were used to check individual questionnaire item for significant variation. This test, by comparing the actual frequencies given by subjects, was closer to the raw data than comparisons based on average responses for each item.

RESULTS

Analysis of Subjects’ Perceived Use of EFL Listening Comprehension Strategies

The main intent of the present study is to systematically investigate the EFL listening comprehension employed strategies used by college students in Taiwan. Based on the frequency counting of each item, the results of the listening strategy questionnaire completed by subjects are described below. First, Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the six strategy categories used by subjects. Among the six strategy categories, ‘compensation’ has the highest average frequency. Then, following the order are ‘cognitive’, ‘metacognitive’, ‘memory’, and ‘social’, ‘Affective’ has the lowest average frequency.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Listening Comprehension Strategy Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, the following six tables show the results of chi-square test on individual item within six strategy categories. Table 2 indicates that among the 10 strategies in the ‘memory’ category, ‘semantic mapping’ is the strategy of frequent use (statistically significant at the scales of ‘usually’ / ‘always’); ‘grouping’ and ‘structured reviewing’ are of moderate use (significant at the scale of ‘sometimes’); ‘using physical response or sensation’ and ‘using mechanical techniques’ are of infrequent use (significant at the scales of ‘seldom’ / ‘never’).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory Strategy</th>
<th>I (%)</th>
<th>M (%)</th>
<th>F (%)</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grouping</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associating/Elaborating</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing new words into a context</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using imagery</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic mapping</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using keywords</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing sounds in memory</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured reviewing</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using physical response or sensation</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.88**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using mechanical techniques</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.29**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I: Infrequent (‘Never’(1)/‘Seldom’(2))
M: Moderate (‘Sometimes’(3))
F: Frequent (‘Usually’(4)/‘Always’(5))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Strategy</th>
<th>I (%)</th>
<th>M (%)</th>
<th>F (%)</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeating</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13.77**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>12.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing and using formulas and patterns</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing naturalistically</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting the idea quickly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using resources for receiving and sending messages</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning deductively</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing expressions</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing contrastively across languages</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>19.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>18.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.77**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlighting</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that among the 14 strategies in the ‘cognitive’ category, ‘repeating’, ‘formally practicing with sounds and writing systems’, ‘translating’ and ‘transferring’ are strategies of frequent use. ‘Recognizing’ and ‘getting the idea...
quickly’ are of moderate use. ‘Analyzing contrastively’ and ‘taking notes’ are of infrequent use.

Table 4 shows that the two strategies in the ‘compensation’ category are both of frequent use.

Table 4. Chi-square Test for Individual Compensation Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compensation Strategy</th>
<th>I (%)</th>
<th>M (%)</th>
<th>F (%)</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using linguistic clues</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using other clues</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14.59**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 indicates that among the 11 strategies in the ‘metacognitive’ category, ‘paying attention’, ‘delaying speech production to focus on listening’, and ‘finding out about language learning’ are strategies of frequent use. ‘Overviewing and linking with already known material’ and ‘identifying the purpose of a language task’ are of moderate use. ‘Organizing’ and ‘setting goals and objectives’ are of infrequent use.

Table 5. Chi-square Test for Individual Metacognitive Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metacognitive Strategy</th>
<th>I (%)</th>
<th>M (%)</th>
<th>F (%)</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overviewing and linking with already known material</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.53*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaying speech production to focus on listening</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding out about language learning</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>11.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting goals and objectives</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.88**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the purpose of a language task</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for a language task</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.82**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking practice opportunities</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluating</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that among the 10 strategies in the ‘affective’ category, ‘taking risks wisely’ is the strategy of infrequent use. Most other strategies are of infrequent use, including ‘using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation’,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective Strategy</th>
<th>I (%)</th>
<th>M (%)</th>
<th>F (%)</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.77*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using music</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56.57**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using laughter</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making positive statements</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking risks widely</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarding yourself</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35.77**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to your body</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.77**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a checklist</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42.82**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a language learning diary</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>79.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing your feeling with someone else</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 indicates that among the five strategies in the ‘social’ category, ‘asking for clarification and verification’ is the strategy of moderate use. ‘Cooperating with peers’, ‘cooperating with proficient users’, and ‘developing cultural understanding’ and of infrequent use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Strategy</th>
<th>I (%)</th>
<th>M (%)</th>
<th>F (%)</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asking for clarification and verification</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.71**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating with peers</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating with proficient users</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60.71**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing cultural understanding</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming aware of others’ thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, based on the percentage of frequent use (‘usually’(4)/ ‘always’(5)), 10 strategies are listed as the listening comprehension strategies most often used by EFL learners. Table 8 shows that ‘paying attention’ and ‘translating’ are the
strategies of the highest frequent use, and next are 'transferring', 'delaying speech production to focus on listening', and 'using other clues'.

Table 8. Ten Listening Strategies Most Often Used by Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Strategy</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>F(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaying speech production to focus on listening</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using other clues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking risks wisely</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using linguistic clues</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic mapping</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, according to the percentage of infrequent use ('seldom'(2)/ 'never'(1)), Table 9 lists the 10 listening comprehension strategies least often used by EFL learners. Results show that 'writing a language diary' is the strategy of the highest infrequent use, and next is 'cooperating with proficient users', followed by 'using music'.

Table 9. Ten Listening Strategies Least Often Used by Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Strategy</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>I(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing a language learning diary</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating with proficient users</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using music</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a checklist</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using laughter</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarding yourself</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for a language task</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing cultural understanding</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to your body</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the purposes of the current study is to examine the differences between effective and ineffective listeners in the perceived use of EFL listening comprehension strategies. First, Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics for the six strategy categories employed by effective and ineffective subjects. Results indicate that effective listeners use ‘compensation’ strategies most often and use ‘affective’ strategies least often. On the other hand, ineffective listeners use ‘cognitive’ strategies most often and use ‘social’ strategies least often. Besides, the average frequencies of strategy categories used by effective listeners are significantly higher than those by ineffective listeners in five of the six categories, i.e., ‘memory’, ‘cognitive’, compensation’, ‘metacognitive’, and ‘social’.

### Table 10. T-test for Strategy Categories by Effective and Ineffective Listeners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Effective (N=18)</th>
<th>Ineffective (N=17)</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05  ** p<0.01

### Table 11. Chi-square Test for Difference in Individual Strategy between Effective and Ineffective Listeners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Strategy</th>
<th>Effective (N=18)</th>
<th>Ineffective (N=17)</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I (%)</td>
<td>M (%)</td>
<td>F (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlighting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking practice opportunities</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05  ** p<0.01
Moreover, Chi-square test was conducted to analyze the differences in individual strategy use between effective and ineffective listeners. Table 11 demonstrated the three individual listening comprehension strategies, i.e. summarizing, highlighting, seeking practice opportunities, with which effective listeners had significantly more frequent use than ineffective listeners did.

Finally, Table 12 listed the 12 listening comprehension strategies most often used by effective EFL listeners. Results showed that ‘translating’ and ‘delaying speech production to focus on listening’ were the strategies of the highest frequent use by effective listeners, and next were ‘formally practicing with sounds and writing systems’, ‘transferring’, ‘paying attention’, and ‘taking risks wisely’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Strategy</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>F (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaying speech production to focus on listening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking risks wisely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using keywords</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlighting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using linguistic clues</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using other clues</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding out about language learning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

In the current study, results indicate that ‘cognitive’ and ‘metacognitive’ have the second and third highest average frequency among the six listening strategy categories. The results support Vandergrift’s (1992) which revealed that FL learners mainly depended on cognitive and metacognitive strategies to comprehend oral message. On
the other hand, the findings are not consistent with Lee’s (1997) which suggested that
Taiwanese college students used the social/affective category most often, followed by
metacognitive, and the cognitive category least often. Such inconsistency may be accounted for by
two reasons. First, the subjects in Lee’s study (1997) are English majors, while those in the present study are not. Second, the questionnaires adopted in the two studies.

Besides, the present study proposes that subjects seldom use ‘affective’ strategies for
EFL listening comprehension. This finding is closely related to the study environment in Taiwan and students’ learning style. In Taiwan, English learning is commonly regarded as a difficult and painful task because of the heavy pressure of joint entrance exams. Therefore, Taiwanese college students are not used to employ affective strategies for making EFL listening an enjoyable learning activity. As a result, such affective strategies as ‘using music’, ‘using laughter’, ‘rewarding yourself’ are listed among the strategies least often used by subjects. Moreover, Taiwanese students’ learning style tends to be passive and unreflecting. Thus, the affective strategies ‘writing a language learning diary’, ‘using a checklist’ and the metacognitive strategy ‘planning for a language task’ also rank quite high for the infrequent use of strategies.

The current study suggests that subjects often use their native language, i.e. Chinese, to assist EFL listening comprehension. For example, the individual strategy ‘translating’ is most often used among the 52 strategies. Another strategy related to the use of Chinese, i.e. ‘using linguistic clues’, also has high frequent use. This finding seems to prove the existence of language transfer in the learning process of EFL listening comprehension. Subjects tend to apply their linguistic knowledge of Chinese for comprehending English message.

For the past decade, several listening studies (e.g. Markham & Latham, 1987; Long, 1990; Teng, 1993) have suggested that FL listeners would apply their prior or background knowledge to expect the incoming text during the listening comprehension process. The result of the present study is consistent with that of the previous research. In the study, the listening strategy related to schema theory, i.e. ‘transferring’, ranks 3rd among the 52 strategies. Thus, the current study suggests that
Taiwanese college students employ their pre-existing knowledge on text content for EFL listening comprehension.

Furthermore, the study found that effective listeners got significantly higher average frequency in five of the six listening strategy categories than ineffective listeners did. This finding implies that the difference in listening proficiency between effective and ineffective listeners seems to be related to the quantities of listening strategies they employed. Each use of listening strategy is not necessarily successful or efficient, but it represents the listener’s ability of actively solving problems. Such learning attitudes of ‘learning by doing’ plus ‘trial and error’ are the necessary qualities that a successful FL learner should have. In their study of investigating Chinese EFL learners’ learning strategies of oral communication, Huang & Naerssen (1987) also found that distinguished successful learners were more willing to take risks for employing strategies than less successful learners were.

In the present study, effective listeners also had significantly higher frequent use on the strategy of ‘seeking practice opportunities’. This result corroborates Huang & Naerssen’s (1987) finding which shows that successful listeners used more strategies of functional practice, including activities which mainly focused on using language for communication, such as speaking with other students and native speakers, attending lectures, watching films and TV programs, and thinking or talking to oneself in English.

Finally, the current study reveals that effective listeners had significantly higher frequency of frequent use on the strategy of ‘summarizing’. This finding confirms Murphy’s (1985) which indicates that more proficient listeners drew conclusions more often than less proficient listeners. Besides, effective listeners had significantly more frequent use on the strategy of ‘highlighting’. The result suggests that effective listeners tend to pay more attention to important message in the text than ineffective listeners did.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the present study, several strategies on teaching EFL listening comprehension are proposed as follows. First, results indicate that ‘taking notes’ is the strategy least often used by subjects in the ‘cognitive’ category. However,
several studies have confirmed the facilitating effect of taking notes on EFL listening comprehension (e.g. Chaudron et al., 1988; Dunkel et al., 1989; Teng, 1994). Moreover, Taiwanese college students will often have chances of listening to lectures given in English. Thus, it seems necessary to include the instruction of note-taking skills in the curriculum of the freshman course ‘English Listening Practice’.

Next, EFL listening instruction can have students placed in the English-speaking environment as often as possible. Results show that EFL learners seldom employ the strategies of ‘cooperating with proficient users of the new language’ and ‘developing cultural understanding’ which rank 51st and 46th among 52 strategies respectively. To get the chances of contacting English cultures and talking English to native speakers is also quite difficult in the context of learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan. Therefore, the colleges can arrange study tours or exchange programs for students to learn English in colleges in English speaking countries. Such programs should be encouraged and promoted as long as students have enough financial support form their family and the foreign host schools can provide good learning environment.

Besides, in the present study, the strategy of ‘delaying speech production to focus on listening’ ranks first for frequent use by effective listeners, and 3rd by all subjects. Some previous research (e.g. Asler, 1969; Postovsky, 1974; Gary, 1975) also proved the advantage of postponed speaking practice for FL listening comprehension. Thus, EFL listening instruction, especially for beginners, may focus on listening practice first, and gradually incorporate speaking practice based on students’ learning progress.

Moreover, the study indicates that EFL learners have the lowest average frequency for the ‘affective’ category among the six listening categories. Therefore, EFL listening instruction should consist of teaching activities which increase students’ employment of affective strategies indicated below and thus facilitate their interests and pleasures on learning EFL listening. For example, Suggestopedia can make students ‘to use progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation’. Jazz Chant can get them to ‘use music’. Multimedia materials can have students ‘use laughter’ through visuals and ‘reward themselves’ by computerized positive feedback.

Furthermore, the study found that EFL learners seldom used the strategies of ‘writing a language diary’, ‘using a checklist’, and ‘planning for a language task’ which
ranked 52nd, 49th, and 46th for infrequent us respectively among the 52 strategies. So, EFL listening instruction should involve students with the employment of self-monitoring, self-reflecting, and self-evaluating. By requiring Taiwanese college subjects to keep listening journals for one semester, Katchen (1996) found the students had more awareness on EFL listening comprehension.

Finally, the most important thing is to incorporate strategy teaching in EFL listening instruction. The present study suggests that effective listeners employed significantly more listening comprehension strategies than ineffective listeners did. Several studies (e.g. O’Malley, 1987; Thompson, 1996) also found that systematic instruction in strategy use resulted in the improvement of FL listening comprehension. Consequently, the students should be not only exposed to EFL listening but also taught how to listen.

REFERENCES


Appendix 1

Questions for Listening Test

1. This interview about James Dean was adapted from ______.
   (a) TV program   (b) radio program   (c) newspaper article

2. James Dean was born in ______.
   (a) 1931   (b) 1932   (c) 1933

3. He was born in ______.
   (a) California   (b) Indiana   (c) Iowa

4. His father was a ______.
   (a) teacher   (b) dentist   (c) dental technician

5. His family moved to Los Angeles when he was ______.
   (a) four   (b) five   (c) six

6. His ______ died soon after they moved to Los Angeles.
   (a) father   (b) mother   (c) sister

7. He graduated from high school in ______.
   (a) California   (b) Indiana   (c) Iowa

8. He began his acting career in ______.
   (a) California   (b) Indiana   (c) Iowa

9. He began acting in ______.
(a) commercial  (b) film  (c) theater

10. He went to New York City in ______.
   (a) 1951  (b) 1952  (c) 1953

11. He started to make big movies in ______.
   (a) 1952  (b) 1953  (c) 1954

12. His first big movie was ______.
   (a) East of Eden  (b) Giant  (c) Rebel Without a Cause

13. His best known movie was ______.
   (a) East of Eden  (b) Giant  (c) Rebel Without a Cause

14. He played ______ great movies.
   (a) three  (b) four  (c) five

15. The American young people in ______ could really identify with James Dean.
   (a) 1940s  (b) 1950s  (c) 1960s

16. James Dean was a symbol for American ______.
   (a) youth  (b) dream  (c) courage

17. He was popular mainly because ______.
   (a) he was brave  (b) he was handsome  (c) young people understood his feelings

18. He died in ______.
   (a) 1955  (b) 1956  (c) 1957

19. He died because of ______.
   (a) suicide  (b) car accident  (c) airplane accident

20. James Dean was a great ______.
   (a) singer  (b) dancer  (c) actor

Appendix 2
Questionnaire of Listening Comprehension Strategies

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes
4. Usually
5. Always

Part A
1. Grouping
2. Associating/Elaborating
3. Placing new words into a context
4. Using imagery
5. Semantic mapping
6. Using keywords
7. Representing sounds in memory
8. Structured reviewing
9. Using physical response or sensation
10. Using mechanical techniques
Part B
11. Repeating
12. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems
13. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns
14. Practicing naturalistically
15. Getting the idea quickly
16. Using resources for receiving and sending messages

17. Reasoning deductively
18. Analyzing expressions
19. Analyzing contrastively (across languages)
20. Translating
21. Transferring
22. Taking notes
23. Summarizing
24. Highlighting

Part C
25. Using linguistic clues

26. Using other clues

Part D
27. Overviewing and linking with already known material
28. Paying attention
29. Delaying speech production to focus on listening
30. Finding out about language learning Organizing

32. Setting goals and objectives
33. Identifying the purpose of a language task
34. Planning for a language task
35. Seeking practice opportunities
36. Self-monitoring
37. Self-evaluating

Part E
38. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
39. Using music
40. Using laughter
41. Making positive statements
42. Taking risks wisely

43. Rewarding yourself
44. Listening to your body
45. Using a checklist
46. Writing a language learning diary
47. Discussing your feelings with someone else

Part F
48. Asking for clarification and verification
49. Cooperating with peers

50. Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
51. Developing cultural understanding
52. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings
REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:
Title: A Study of EFL Listening Comprehension Strategies
Author(s): Huen-Chun Teng
Was this a TESOL presentation? Yes No If not, was it another conference presentation? Specify: 
Publication Date: March 20, 1998

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:
In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

Level 2A

Level 2B

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.
Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only.
Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only.

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature:  
Organization/Address: National Taiwan University of Science & Technology  
123 University Road, Section 3  
Taiwan, Taiwan, 640 Taiwan ROC  

Printed Name/Position/Title: Huen-Chun Teng  
Associate Professor, Department of Applied Foreign Languages  
Telephone 886-5-571-2036  
Fax 886-5-571-2036  
E-Mail Address: Tengh@nuee.yuntech.edu.tw

Date: 8/5/98

(over)
III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:

Address:

Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:

Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC Clearinghouse on
Languages & Linguistics
1115 22nd Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1100 West Street, 2nd Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-953-0260
E-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com

PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THIS FORM ARE OBSOLETE.