Effects of Strategy Instruction on Tertiary Students' Attitudes towards Learning English Listening Skill: An Action Research Project in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Strategy instruction has been proved as an effective method to enhance the listening ability and metacognition of learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). However, little attention has been paid to how listening strategy instruction impacts the learners' attitudes towards their listening learning. This study investigated Vietnamese students' attitudes towards English listening learning after the two cycles of an action research project in which strategy instruction was employed as the intervention. A total of 30 English-majored freshmen students in a university in Vietnam expressed their attitudes through weekly diaries and focus-group interviews. The findings revealed that the students showed positive attitudes towards English listening learning in terms of all three aspects of attitudes, i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and effective. The results of the study suggest that teachers of English should implement strategy instruction in English listening classes to motivate their EFL learners. Moreover, collaboration with the teacher and among partners is advisable.

Introduction

Listening has been recognized as a very important skill in language acquisition in general and EFL learning in particular (Kurita, 2012; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012; Ha & Ngo, 2021). However, this skill seems to be underrated by Vietnamese educators (Nguyen, 2013; Ngo, 2015). This fact is reflected in the English testing system from primary to high schools in Vietnam, in which the listening tasks are not included in English examinations. As a result, teaching and learning this skill has received little attention from teachers and students (Nguyen, 2013; Nguyen, 2018; Ngo, 2019). Hence, the learners often encounter many difficulties in learning this skill when they enter universities to study English as their major (Ngo, 2017). It is common to hear from EFL learners that they perceive listening as the most challenging among the four macro skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking (Ngo, 2015; Ha & Ngo, 2021).

Literature shows that instructing language listening strategies can help improve learners' listening comprehension (Carrier, 2003; Graham et al., 2003; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010; Bidabadi

& Yamat, 2011; Moradi, 2013) and enhance aspects of learners' attitudes, such as their autonomy, self-regulation, confidence, motivation, satisfaction, eagerness, and so on (Ozeki, 2000; Al-Qahtani, 2013; Cohen, 2014). While many previous studies on the impacts of listening strategy instruction (LSI) on learners' listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness have been conducted, there has been little research on the impacts of LSI on the learners' attitudes towards learning English listening skills. Furthermore, learners' attitudes contribute as one vital factor in the EFL learners' success and should be paid sufficient attention as it deserves (Nguyen, 2018; López, 2017; Simasanggyaporn, 2016). Based on this gap, the present study was conducted to examine the impacts of the listening strategy instruction course on the tertiary English-majored students' attitudes towards English listening skill**s.**

Literature review

Listening strategy definition

Regarding listening strategies, hereby referred to as LSs, Vandergrift (1997), one of the pioneers in researching listening strategies, defined that LSs are conscious plans and actions that the learners take to control, understand, recall and memorize the incoming speech. Going in line with this definition, Siegel (2013, p.2) regards LSs are "conscious plans" that the learners use to control their speech, especially when they are aware that they need to compensate for incomplete input of partial understanding. After reviewing various definitions of learning strategies and listening strategies with referring to Oxford's (2017) analysis of 33 previous definitions in the field and the cognitive theory of Anderson (1985, 2009), the researcher of this study proposes a definition of LSs as follows: *listening strategies are the plans and actions first consciously taken by the learners, then automatically used by them through long-term practice to comprehend various listening activities and improve their listening proficiency.*

It can be observed from the definition that, like general learning strategies, LSs are both mental and physical guides that help learners improve their listening proficiency in the long term. Furthermore, LSs are teachable, observable, combinable, and transferable (Oxford, 2017).

Language attitudes

Together with the development of research in human languages, various definitions of language attitudes have occurred. Reviewing the features of language attitudes previously described by Eagly and Chaiken (1993), Ianos (2014) defined language attitudes as "psychological tendencies expressed by evaluating favorably or unfavorably a particular language" (p.130). Garrett (2010) defined that "an attitude is an evaluative orientation to a social object of some sort, whether it is a language, or a new government policy, etc." (p.20). Dating back, Moreno (1998) proposed a broader definition of language attitudes. Accordingly, it referred to "a manifestation of the social attitude of the individuals, distinguished by focus and specific reference to both language and its use in society; and when discussing language any type of linguistic variety is included" (p.179, cited in Ianos, 2014, p.128).

Taking language attitudes into consideration, Baker (1992, cited in Ianos, 2014) explained that the concept of language attitude was an "umbrella concept" that referred to attitude toward language, attitude to language variety and dialect, attitude toward speakers of a specific language or variety, attitude towards language learning, attitude towards learning contexts, and attitude towards

language associated with behaviors, such as language use, language maintenance or planning behaviors.

In previous studies, learners' language attitudes were shown to be "a contributing factor in achievement but only as mediated by other contributors" (Wesely, 2012, p.102). Other scholars agreed on this position in the field, such as Bernau and Garner (2008 cited in Wesely, 2012), Gardner (2005), Al-Qahtani (2013), and Asmali (2017). These studies all had a consensus that learners' attitudes, perceptions, motivation, and achievement had a supportive relationship with each other.

Learners' attitude components

Depending on the theoretical perspectives, there have been two ways of explaining the components of attitude (Walker et al., 2013).

From a multidimensional perspective, attitude consists of three domains: affect, behavior, and cognition. The affected domain refers to one's emotions toward the object, such as liked or disliked, pleased or displeased. The behavior domain means "the behavioral readiness associated with the attitude" (Walker et al., 2013, p.39). The cognition domain refers to one's belief about the object. Changes in cognition may entail changes in the attitude to the object; however, one's belief may also change independently of one's attitude.

From a unidimensional perspective, attitude is composed of four domains- affect, cognition, conation, and behavior. The affect component refers to one's feelings toward and evaluation of the attitudinal object. Cognition means one's knowledge, opinions, or beliefs about the attitudinal object. The Conation domain refers to behavioral intentions toward the object. The behavior component refers to observable actions (Walker et al., 2013).

The present study adopted the three-component model of attitudes by Ianos (2014) from a multidimensional perspective to examine the attitudes of the participants. Accordingly, the learners' attitudes are viewed as having a bidirectional relationship with its three constructs- affective, cognitive, and behavioral. In other words, the "emotions, beliefs, and behaviors can create and guide attitudes, as well as be influenced by attitudes" (Ianos, 2014, p.105). This bidirectional relationship is demonstrated in Figure 1, which serves as the framework of learners' attitudes in the present study.
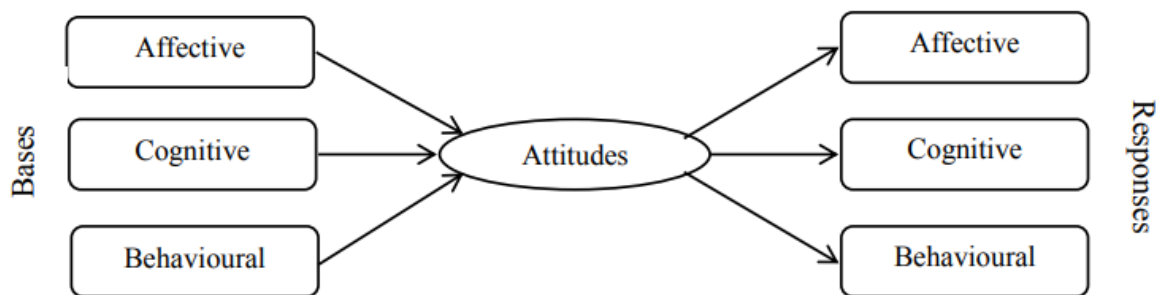

Figure 1. The relationship between attitudes and affective, cognitive, and behavioral components (Ianos, 2014, p.105)

Related studies on the effects of LSI on learners' attitudes

In 2004, the International Project on Language Learner Strategies (IPOLLS) was conducted at Oxford University with the presence of 23 scholars in the field. In the project, the researchers agreed on several aspects of learning strategies (LS), in which they concluded that language learning strategies make the use and learning of a foreign language become easier, faster, and more enjoyable (Cohen, 2014). In this international conference, a number of scholars agreed that language learning instruction (LSI) might lead to a positive attitude of the language learners when they were taught how to listen to spoken English (Cohen, 2014). Also, Kurita (2012) asserted that a metacognitive approach to teaching was effective in reducing anxiety encountered by language learners. However, there have been only a few studies on this aspect of LSI (Cohen, 2014).

Among the pioneers investigating the effects of the LSI on language learners' attitudes, Ozeki (2000) applied an LSI for female EFL students in Japan to examine listening strategies that the students frequently used and the students' perceptions of the LSI. During the study, unfamiliar strategies were introduced to the students, then the effectiveness of these strategies was evaluated from various perspectives. The study followed two steps in which the survey and interview were first employed to investigate the strategies used by the participants. Then, the listening pretest was delivered to group students into control and experiment groups. In the second step, the LSI was implemented and functioned as the intervention. Data collected from posttest, questionnaires, guided journals, and self-evaluation sheets revealed that the participants' listening comprehension, strategy use, the transfer and durability of the strategies, and the student's attitudes toward the instruction significantly improved. After the LSI, the participants showed that their motivation to listening learning and self-confidence in their listening ability increased.

Next, Graham and Macaro (2008) conducted a two-phase investigation on the effects of LSI on both learners' listening performance and self-efficacy. The participants of this study were 68 lower-intermediate French learners. Two phases were included in the study. At first, difficulties encountered by the participants were identified with the assistance of think-aloud procedures. Data in this phase showed that the students rarely used their prior knowledge and strategies to listen to the tasks. After that, these two researchers decided to apply LSI as the intervention for high-assisting group and the low-assisting group in the next phase. The listening proficiency tests were sent to the participants in each phase. Each listening test consisted of different audio recordings on the same topic. Also, a questionnaire was used to investigate the students' self-efficacy. Findings in the study show that the learners in the experiment group dramatically surpassed those in the control group in terms of listening proficiency and their confidence in listening ability. Moreover, the findings also reveal that the learners' listening comprehension has a close relationship with the changes in their self-efficacy.

In order to investigate the effects of the learning strategy instruction course on the learners' development of all four language skills, their growth in autonomy, and the teachers' roles as well as their professionalism, Tarhuni (2013) conducted action research on 61 students from three levels of proficiency (elementary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate). Results of the study showed that the program raised both the students' and teachers' awareness of learning strategies. The intervention helped the learners improve their skills and performance; their frequency of uses of strategies. Moreover, the program was useful for the learners to develop their learning autonomy and motivation. In addition, the intervention was also beneficial to the teachers in their professional

growth due to their exposure to the strategy instruction and collaboration with each other during the action research.

Then, to investigate the listening strategies used by ESL undergraduate learners, their motivations for studying English, their perceptions of the learning environment, learners' attitudes towards English speakers, and relationships among these variables, Al-Qahtani (2013) conducted a cross-sectional descriptive study, using the Attitudinal Measure of Learners of English as a Second Language (AMLESL) questionnaire. The study covered all three types of learning strategies (metacognitive, cognitive, social/affective strategies). The results showed that the students employed all learning strategies, which were the most frequently used cognitive strategies. The participants perceived their learning environment as positive. They felt pleased and satisfied with their instructor and the courses. They possessed a positive attitude towards English speakers. Moreover, there were significant relationships between their achievement, learning strategies, and their attitudes.

Later, Siegel (2015) conducted a three-phase action research project during a 15-week semester, using LSI as the intervention. First, top-down and bottom-up processing (Buck, 2001; Helgesen & Brown, 2007 cited in Siegel, 2015) and Anderson's (2005, cited in Siegel, 2015) sequential steps in listening were reviewed to function as the framework in his study. The classification of listening strategies proposed by O'Malley & Chamot (1990), including metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies, was employed as the conceptual framework. The study mainly focused on metacognitive and cognitive strategies. The participants of the study were upper-intermediate English level students and ESL teachers. A mixed-methods approach was conducted with a questionnaire and interview as the primary data collection instruments; and listening tests, diaries, and observation as secondary instruments. Results from the questionnaire, observation, and interviews reveal that the participants assessed the LSI positively. They possessed positive attitudes towards LS, teacher's scaffolding, materials, and listening activities. They also eagerly participated in the LSI course and employed all listening strategies taught in the course. Triangulation of questionnaires, interviews for students, listening tests, and interviews for teachers was used to examine the students' improvement in listening ability. The results in the students' listening tests and the teachers' acknowledgment showed that the students' listening comprehension significantly improved. Additionally, the research instruments also asserted that the participants of the study showed positive behaviors in listening lessons. The study suggested that the LS should be instructed in a scaffolding way that is helpful to the students.

In Vietnam, to date, Nguyen (2018) conducted research on the effects of the LSI intervention on the learners' learning habit, their perceptions, and attitudes. Under an action research design study, Nguyen (2018) integrated explicit LSI and sub-skill instructions into listening lessons to teach 20 first-year students of Business English in a university in Vietnam for eight continuous weeks. The study aimed to investigate the changes in the students' listening habits as well as their engagement and perceptions of LSI through using interviews, observations, and narrative frames. The results showed that there were positive changes in the students' learning habits and perceptions after the LSI. Firstly, the students reported not having much difficulty in listening because they actively applied suitable strategies to overcome encountered obstacles. For example, they used inferencing strategies to overcome problems related to vocabulary and comprehension and repetition for pronunciation problems. Secondly, the students increased a wide range of strategies; employed metacognitive strategies more frequently than others because they were reported as more

manageable. In terms of cognitive strategies, the learners also used inferencing and elaboration more often than summarization and note-taking strategies. Furthermore, they can combine some listening strategies. Thirdly, after the LSI, positive changes in students' learning habits were also reflected in their real-life listening. For instance, LSI could make the students become autonomous. Fourthly, the LSI and the integrated syllabus improved the participants' self-confidence in their capacity to comprehend English and their satisfaction with the listening course. The study suggested that the LSI should be extended to two consecutive sessions for the students to get familiar with the use of listening strategies. Moreover, it is advisable that the teachers of any LSI program should provide students with more listening resources to practice using listening strategies by including both academic and real-life materials. Additionally, during the LSI, the teachers were advised to present easier tasks first and then come to more complicated ones not to demotivate the learners. Next, the explicit LSI was recommended to integrate into the listening lessons, especially for less proficient listeners.

Noticeably, unlike the above-reviewed studies, the participants did not always possess positive attitudes after the LSI.

Simasanggyaporn (2016) conducted a quasi-experiment study under a mix-method approach to examine the improvements in the Thai learners' listening comprehension, their use of strategies, and self-efficacy. Total 161 EFL learners participated in the study, divided into two experimental groups and two control groups according to their proficiency level. The intervention only focused on metacognitive and cognitive strategies in the listening strategy classification proposed by Macaro (2007). The research instruments used in the study were listening tests, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) adapted from Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010), and student interviews. The findings showed that the participants' self-efficacy and motivation in all groups did not change despite the significant improvement in the learners' listening comprehension of the experiment groups. Regarding the strategy use, the experiment groups used much more listening strategies than the control groups. The study suggested that the listening strategies should be instructed to improve the language learners' listening comprehension and self-efficacy with some cautions in pedagogical methodology.

Additionally, Nogueroles (2017) conducted a study on the impacts of LSI on 38 students' strategic behaviors in Hongkong. These participants, studying Spanish as their foreign language, were assigned to one experimental group and one control group. The former one was explicitly instructed in listening strategies, while the latter one did not receive the instruction. The LSI was integrated into the regular course of the Spanish language and lasted for one 13-week semester. Planning, monitoring, and evaluation (metacognitive strategies), elaboration and inferencing (cognitive strategies), and questioning for clarification and cooperation (social/affective strategies) were selected for the LSI. The data relating to learners' strategic behaviors were collected before and after the LSI, using a self-report questionnaire. After the LSI, a number of students who received LSI reported being less satisfied with their comprehension, the outcome of the listening activity, and their capacity to fulfill the listening tasks. Also, they felt less confident about their listening ability.

Regarding their use of listening strategies, the students in both groups reported using less social/affective strategy of self-encouragement due to the reduction in their self-confidence and satisfaction. To conclude, Nogueroles (2017) suggested that the implementation of LSI should be extended in time, at least for one academic year, for the learners to have a "prolonged and

systematic attention, awareness, drills, self-assessment, and reflection" (p.12). This suggestion advocated the one given by Cross (2009), who confessed that a 10-week course in his LSI was not sufficient for his students to absorb, practice, and combine the clusters of listening strategies.

In summary, the review of previous studies shows that the LSI could support teachers in improving ESL/EFL learners' attitudes, motivation, self-confidence, and self-efficacy; however, this fact was not always true, as evident in some prior studies. Therefore, this aspect of LSI should call for more research. More importantly, the effects of LSI on the learners' attitudes have still been a debate. While several previous studies, such as Graham and Macaro (2008); Ozeki (2000); Tarhuni (2013), Qahtani (2013), Siegel (2015), and Nguyen (2018), showed that LSI helped create learners' positive attitudes; some other studies (e.g., Cross, 2009; Simasanggyaporn, 2016; Wang, 2016; Nogueroles López, 2017; Webb, 2017) released negative impacts of LSI on learners' attitudes. Therefore, whether LSI leads to positive or negative attitudes toward language learners still needs further investigation. The review of previous studies on learners' attitudes towards language learning also shows that most of the prior studies on learners' attitudes relied on quantitative research instruments such as Foreign Language Attitude Scale (FLAS, Bartley, 1970 cited in Wesely, 2012), the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB- Gardner, 1985), the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS- Horwitz et al., 1986 cited in Wesely, 2012), and the Beliefs and Attitudes Language Learning Inventory (BALLI- Horwitz, 1988 cited in Wesely, 2012) while fewer qualitative studies were conducted. The present study fills such a research gap in that it investigates attitudes "with the same components but different research methods" to get more insights (Wesely, 2012, p. 111).

Research question

This paper is part of an ongoing larger research project in which the participants' attitudes towards learning English listening skills are one of the dependent variables. Specifically, the study was aimed at seeking answers to the following research question:

> To what extent does the listening strategy-explicit instruction affect the students' attitudes towards learning English listening skills?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The study was carried out in the Department of Foreign Languages Studies at a university in northern Vietnam, hereby referred to as the university. The university offers various courses such as business, English, Chinese, informatics, technology, forestry, agriculture, and teacher training for preschools, primary, secondary, and high schools. The English-majored students need to study practical skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and integrated skills in the first three academic years and advanced courses including translation, interpretation, presentation, semantics, pragmatics, phonetics, British-American cultures, the second foreign language, etc. In the current study, this site was selected to conduct the study because to date there has been no research conducted on listening strategy instruction. Moreover, it was favorable for the researcher to get access to the university to conduct her intervention program because she has been working there for over 10 years and deeply understood the setting and the participants. Previous experience in this context allowed the researcher to interact with the site and participants for a more intensive period to collect useful data.

The participants of the current study were 30 students (23 females and 7 males) in their first year studying English as a foreign language at the Department of Foreign Languages. They were selected for convenience sampling purposes. Their English level was pre-intermediate. Nine of these students, hereby coded as ST, were majored in English Teacher Education and 25 in English Linguistics. All students voluntarily took part in the study after consulting the teacher-researcher about the program thoroughly. All students were at the age of 18-20. Their mother tongue of all the participants was Vietnamese. They had spent quite a long time on learning English at high schools. Specifically, 11 students (36.7%) had spent 6-8 years and 19 students (63.3%) had spent 10-13 years studying English. Besides listening lessons in high school, they did not have many opportunities to communicate with English speakers authentically. To ensure confidentiality, the identity of the students was coded, and each student was given a pseudonym, from ST1 to ST30, for this purpose.

The intervention of this action research project was the listening strategy instruction which lasted for 9 weeks. During this period, twelve listening strategies were integrated into the syllabus and extra materials, then presented to the students. The listening strategies were planning, selective attention, directed attention, evaluating, monitoring, imagery, elaboration, summarizing, note-taking, inferencing, asking for clarification, and lowering anxiety.

The strategies were explicitly instructed to the students, which meant the teacher obviously named strategies and explained how, when, and why to use each strategy by modeling how to use each strategy, providing guided exercises, then gradually withdrawing her role from listening activities.

Design of the study

The present study was under the design of action research which consisted of four phases, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study opted for the model of action research spiral proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2014), who are the major authors in this field. Although the project followed the two cycles in this model, only findings collected in cycle 1 are presented in this paper.
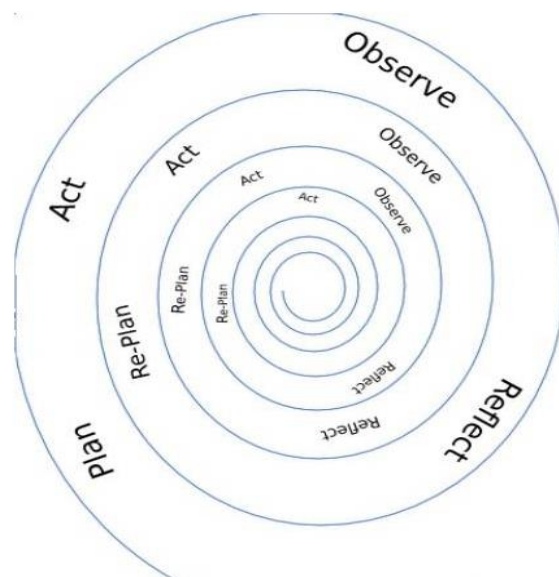

Figure 2. The action research spiral (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014, p.19)

Data collection & analysis

In order to examine the participants' attitudes towards English listening learning, diaries and focus group interviews were employed to collect data. In fact, the items in the diaries and questions in interviews also aimed at investigating other dependent variables in the whole study; however, in this article, only data related to the students' attitudes are presented. In detail, the items in the diaries of the students in this study were built on the basis of the framework of attitudes proposed by Ianos (2014). Accordingly, the diaries consisted of items to identify three aspects, namely cognitive, behavioral, and effective. To ensure the validity of the diary items, the diary was given to two lecturers of English chosen from the university's teaching staff. Their comments and advice were taken into consideration to revise the items in the diaries before delivering them to the participants.

The focus group interview included 10 open-ended questions in which there were 5 questions investigating the three aspects of attitudes, namely cognitive, behavioral, and effective. Before the actual interviews, the interview questions were delivered to five students in the piloting step to obtain feedback on the content, the question sequence, understandability, and the duration of the interview. The pilot also aided in enhancing the validity of the questions and their constructs (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009, cited in Nguyen, 2014) because the comments from interviewees gave the interviewer opportunities to revise and refine the questions before the actual interviews.

During the nine-week project, the students were asked to write their diaries right after each listening class finished. In the last week, the students were invited to participate in the focus group interviews. All 30 students participated in writing weekly diaries, while twenty of them agreed to take part in a focus group interview at the end of the course. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews could not be conducted face to face; but through Microsoft Teams instead. Each interview lasted 70-85 minutes with five participants in each group, as suggested by Dörnyei and Griffee (2010).

The data from focus group interviews and students' diaries were in Vietnamese, the mother tongue of the participants.

To analyze the data, thematic analysis was used with the help of Nvivo (version 12). To ensure the validity of the qualitative data, three techniques were employed to determine that all information collected was accurate and appropriate. The first technique was the triangulation method (Patton, 2002, cited in Li, 2017) which helped check the consistency of findings collected from focus group interviews and students' diaries. The second technique was member check (Patton, 2002, cited in Li, 2017). The third technique was peer debriefing (Tashakkori & Teddli, 1998, cited in Li, 2017). In detail, one experienced Vietnamese lecturer from the Department of Foreign Language Studies at the university was asked to review the analyses and interpretation of the data. The data collected from the group interviews and diaries were coded independently by the researcher and the lecturer. Then, the coding of the researchers and that lecturer were compared and contrasted. The similarities and differences in their coding were counted. The inter-agreement rate of the data coding for diaries and for interviews were 89% and 83 respectively. Disagreements in coding were discussed to come to a consensus.

Findings and discussion

There were 3 themes, 8 subthemes and 36 codes emerging from data collected through students' diaries and focus group interviews. The findings are briefly summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of themes, subthemes, and codes associated with students' attitudes toward learning English listening skills

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Cognitive aspects	Students' perception of listening skills	• Students thought that listening skill was essential for academic subjects • Students thought that listening skill was important for their future career • The students perceived listening skills as difficult to be acquired • Students thought that listening was an important skill because it had great impact on other skills • At the end of the cycle, students thought that listening was interesting and resolvable
	Students' beliefs in value of LS	• LS were reported as helpful in guiding students to listen • LS helped students identify information to complete the task • Self-monitoring helped students control their listening • LS helped students to obtain information and unknown knowledge • LS kept students focused and active in listening tasks • LS were perceived as useful for academic purposes • LS were reported as useful for broader use in entertaining activities and daily conversations • LS helped students react to information quickly • LS helped motivate the students
	Students encountered obstacles	Internal obstacles: • limited vocabulary • poor grammar • concentration loss • laziness • ineffective learning routines • inappropriate use of LS External obstacles: • rate of speed • length of talks • various accents of speakers • unfamiliar topics
Behavioral aspects	Students' concentration in listening classes	• Students reported more concentrated than before LSI • Students reported they needed to improve their concentration in longer listening tasks • Sometimes concentration was still lost

		• Reasons for concentration loss were difficulties in listening process • The number of students who reported keeping concentration slightly increased in finals weeks • The motive might be good mark achievement
	Students' autonomy and self-regulation	• Students were active in expanding learning environment • Students were active in finding listening resources • Learning space went beyond listening classes: library, home, online, real life • Students used a wide range of listening materials: library books, online resources, paper dictionary, electronic dictionaries • More learning tools were employed: smart phones, laptops, Google translation, Otter application, YouTube channels • 9 students absent from classes • A number of students submitted their homework before deadline through Google classroom • Students prepared lessons before going to class • Students set up learning goals • Students' goals were locally limited.
	Students' willingness to learn and employ LS	• Most students were eager to learn and employ LS • It was convenient and comfortable to practice listening using LS • Students already had plan to use LS • Students were determined to use LS outside classes
Affective aspects	Students' satisfaction with LSI	• Students did not satisfy with their listening comprehension level • Students were satisfied with LSI • Students were satisfied with the teacher's methodology • Students were satisfied with learning materials • Students were satisfied with classroom atmosphere
	Students' self-confidence	• Before the LSI, students felt nervous and anxious • Students felt confident after the LSI • Students felt optimistic about further improvement in their listening comprehension

Cognitive aspects

❖ *Students' perceptions of listening skill*

Firstly, data from qualitative instruments show that the students perceived listening skills as a very difficult but extremely important skill. For example, examining data collected from diaries of the students in week 3, the researcher noticed that there were 27/30 students who stated that listening was very difficult while only 3 students claimed that listening was not too challenging. The following excerpts can illustrate that:

"I think that listening skills is extremely difficult because it depends on my pronunciation, my concentration, my industriousness, and my vocabulary" (ST4).

> "In my opinion, listening is a hard skill; it is not easy to learn. However, it can be practiced to improve." (ST19).

Data from interviews also supports this view. Most students (25/30) reported that they found listening one of the most difficult skills to acquire. The examples are as follows:

> "Among all skills in English, listening is still the most difficult to me. For easy tasks, listening strategies could help but for more complicated tasks, I still find it difficult." (ST13).

> "At the moment, I still find it hard to catch information. Maybe my vocabulary is so limited." (ST19).

Secondly, although listening is considered a difficult skill, data also shows that students perceived listening skill as extremely important because it has a great impact on other English skills and academic subjects. Twelve students cited the close relationship between listening and speaking in diaries in week 6. For example, student 12 described the importance of listening skills in her diary (week 6): "Listening is very important because it helps me better my pronunciation in speaking skills. Moreover, I also imitate many new words and structures to use in my speaking skill." Moreover, some other students asserted that listening skill assists them in learning reading and writing skills by enriching their vocabulary, functional grammar, and social knowledge.

Data in the interviews also show that the students perceived listening skills as essential for other academic subjects in their learning process at university and for their future careers as well.

> "I mean listening is very important because when I am good at listening in English, I can learn some more complicated subjects like Interpreting and Presentation." (ST30)

> "When I start working after graduation, listening ability, together with speaking, helps me communicate with people at the workplace and get promoted. Some of my friends who have worked in some companies shared with me that their salary depended so much on their communication capacity. I think listening skill is very important to build up a good communicative ability." (ST21)

In general, data from the students' diaries and interviews suggest that the students find listening skills really challenging but important because it sets a good foundation for their further academic development and their career opportunities as well. More importantly, the students also reported their listening skills improved thanks to the employment of listening strategies.

❖ *Students' beliefs in the value of listening strategies*

Regarding listening activities in classes, strategies were reported as very helpful in guiding the students on how to listen properly. In diaries, many of the students recognized the advantages brought by listening strategies. The following quotes help illustrate this point:

> "Strategies help me identify information to fill in and complete the task quickly. I think without them, listening would be awful to me." (ST2).

> "Self-monitoring helps me control my listening; for example, when I lose my concentration, I know how to get back the track, which I never thought about before." (ST4).

Moreover, data from group interviews also supports the findings in students' diaries. Most of the students repeatedly mentioned that they highly appreciated the value of listening strategies in the course.

> "After applying strategies, I understand more information. Some strategies also keep me focused and active in listening tasks." (ST5).

> "I recognize that strategies save my time and energy while I still can listen to information more effectively because I know I need to select information to listen for." (ST8).

Furthermore, the responses of the students demonstrate that they perceived listening strategies as useful not only for academic purposes in listening classes but also for broader uses such as in entertaining activities and daily conversations. This point can be illustrated in the students' diaries. For instance, in diaries in week 7, 17/30 students mentioned that they could react to information in their conversations with others better when they applied strategies in listening to people; 12/30 students shared that they felt more motivated to listen to English at home because they currently knew to practice, and 16/30 students shared that they could communicate better because they understood what their foreign friends or lecturers of English were speaking.

In addition, data from the interviews go in line with those from the diaries in showing that the students also recognized that strategies could be effectively applied for other circumstances in their life, such as listening to songs, news, and stories in English, watching movies and videos in English. The following excerpt is an example.

> "I feel interesting because after applying strategies you taught, I can understand several films and conversations in English. It is easier to me now." (ST4).

> "Before, I sometimes watched films or listened to songs in English, but I did not understand, so I lost my motivation. After using strategies, I practice listening to English every day and sing along with the songs in English or repeat the speakers. I usually listen to BBC, YouTube and apps that you introduced to practice listening. I find those websites understandable." (ST6).

In short, data from the students' diaries and focus group interviews indicate that the students perceived that listening strategies were valuable to their listening learning in particular and to their communication skills in general.

❖ *Students' encountered obstacles*

Data from the students' diaries and focus group interviews go in line with each other in showing that in cycle 1, even though the students benefited a lot from the use of listening strategies, they still faced a great number of obstacles.

Obstacles encountered by the students reported in diaries and group interviews are categorized into two types in the study, namely, internal obstacles and external obstacles. Internal obstacles include students' limited vocabulary, poor grammar, concentration loss, laziness, ineffective learning routines, and ineffective use of strategies. External obstacles consist of the rate of speed, length of talks, various accents of interlocutors, and unfamiliar topics.

Specifically, in both data collection instruments, many students reported that they did not improve their listening comprehension much because of their limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and concentration loss. For example, in week 5, eight students reported in their diaries that they knew why they could not understand much even when they found strategies useful. The reason was they

pronounced many words incorrectly; therefore, they were unable to recognize the known words in their spoken form, or there were so many new words for them. Six students complained that they often lost concentration when listening to long conversations or talks. This obstacle leads to their ineffective use of listening strategies. In other words, they forgot to employ strategies while listening and as a result, they were unable to comprehend the texts despite using strategies. Moreover, in group interviews, 7 students shared that they have not built up a system of abbreviations and signals to take notes. Three students complained that sometimes they found it hard to find out suitable strategies to each listening task. Especially, 6 students confessed that they found themselves lazy in practicing listening skills outside listening classes.

Besides internal obstacles, other challenges coming from the external environment also limited the students from utilizing listening strategies and comprehending listening texts. At least one-fifth of the students complained about the rate of speed and length of recordings. In his diary in week 6, ST 14 wrote that: "*I think the speakers talked so quickly and I could not catch up with the information stream. I also found that the last recording in task 4 was so long. That made me frustrated.*" In group interviews, 5 students reported that sometimes they found the listening topics too challenging for them because they did not have enough experience and knowledge about them. For example, ST30 said that: "*I think all the topics in the course are suitable; but some of them were quite challenging such as the lesson about Fears/ Phobia.*" Moreover, a small number of students (3 students) complained in their diaries that the various accents of interlocutors also caused trouble for them.

In summary, it was found that the participants encountered a variety of external and internal obstacles in their listening comprehension in cycle 1. These reported obstacles also serve as a basis for adjustments of the strategy instruction in cycle 2 of the project, in which the strategies trained in cycle 2 must help solve these problems encountered by the students.

Behavioral aspects

❖ *Students' concentration in listening classes*

The students reported in their diaries and interviews that they found themselves more concentrated than before, but they still needed to improve their concentration in longer listening tasks. For example, in the students' diaries in week 4, half of the students (50%) reported that they paid their attention to the listening tasks at an average and good level, while the other 15 students (50%) shared that they did not pay much attention to listening tasks. The number of students who perceived themselves as focusing on listening tasks slightly increased in some final weeks of the course. For example, in week 8, 18 students (60%) reported in their diaries that they paid average or much attention to listening activities and 12 students (40%) did not focus on their listening process. The reason might be there was a listening test in week 8; thus, they had to pay more attention to their listening process to get good marks.

When joining group interviews, most of the students also shared that sometimes they paid much attention, but sometimes they still lost their focus on the tasks. When asked about the reasons why, they explained that they still encountered difficulties in the listening process, such as long conversation, ineffective use of strategies, accents of speakers, and limited vocabulary. These obstacles, to some extent, prevented them from paying all attention to listen for comprehension.

❖ *Students' autonomy and self-regulation*

In terms of autonomy, data from both research instruments show that the participants seemed to be active in expanding their learning environment and finding resources for their extensive learning.

The students appeared to thoroughly exploit their learning environment during the project. Their learning space seemed to have gone beyond listening classes and had reached further to home study, library, online or real communications. Concurrently, they also used a wide range of learning materials such as library books, online resources, paper dictionaries, and electronic dictionaries. Besides, more learning tools were employed to assist their learning, such as smartphones and laptops along with Google Translation and Otter application. The researcher also introduced a lot of YouTube channels in which they could practice listening in levels such as Yakka Dee, Hi 5, Koala Brother, Coilbook, English Funhouse, and Super Why. Most of the students went to these channels to practice listening and entertaining themselves. ST15 shared in her diary that "*I used a lot of resources to practice listening such as online websites and channels. Sometimes, I downloaded electronic books or songs or movies to my smartphones so that I could listen everywher*e."

Regarding students' self-regulation, during this cycle, the researcher saw that the number of students who were absent from listening classes was not much (9 students during the whole cycle). However, only 4 of them asked their friends and teacher about the content of the missed lessons.

Moreover, the learners' self-regulation was expressed by the way they submitted their homework before deadlines. For homework, the researcher created a Google classroom for this class and always assigned homework on a weekly basis. After each lesson, the researcher sent the students the link to the Google classroom in which all listening tasks had been assigned. The Google classroom assisted me not only in creating an out-of-class practice resource but also in checking the time when each student submitted their homework. A number of students usually submitted their homework on time. For example, in week 7, 21/30, students handed in their homework before the deadline.

Furthermore, the participants' self-regulation was evidenced through their preparation before each listening lesson. At the beginning of cycle 1, it was not difficult to find some students who came to the class without checking the vocabulary of the lesson, practicing the pronunciation of the words, or seeking information related to the lesson in advance. However, in the final weeks of the cycle, their self-regulation changed. For example, in week 6, 21/30, students reported that they prepared the lesson in advance.

Since self-regulation is directed to a voluntary goal-setting process (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011, cited in Oxford, 2017), which means by setting personal goals, the learners create self-oriented feedbacks through which they can control the effectiveness and adapt their functioning; goal setting is found as another evidence for the students' self-regulation.

❖ *Students' willingness to learn and employ listening strategies*

Data from students' diaries and focus group interviews showed that most of the participants were eager to continue learning and employing listening strategies whenever they needed to comprehend listening tasks. Twenty-five students (corresponding to 88.6%) expressed their desire to learn and use listening strategies in the future. For instance, ST22 expressed her willingness to learn more listening strategies in her diary "*I am looking forward to the next lessons because I know you will*

teach us more strategies." When interviewed in the group, she said that she would definitely employ listening strategies at home or when she got free time because she recognized that it is convenient and comfortable to practice listening as she could listen everywhere in various forms with the assistance of strategies.

Moreover, in interviews, some students shared that they already had a plan to use listening strategies. This was clear in their quotes: "*Strategies are beneficial, so I will use them to listen in English every day, at least 2 hour a day*" (ST21).

Furthermore, some other students determined to use listening strategies that were taught outside the listening classes, such as watching movies in English, listening to English songs, practicing English listening skills in groups, and joining some forums or groups to practice English skills. Here are some comments from them:

> "I am going to use clues like visuals, images, music, tones of people, and animated sounds in films when I cannot understand what people are speaking." (ST16).

> "I will definitely use listening strategies you taught when I need to listen to English speaking people when I communicate with them in the English speaking club that I have just joined." (ST13).

In short, data from students' diaries and group interviews revealed that all students were eager to learn new strategies and willing to use them in listening activities in classes and in external circumstances.

Affective aspects

❖ *Students' satisfaction with LSI course*

Data from diaries show that although most of the students did not feel satisfied with their listening comprehension level, they were satisfied with the listening strategy instruction. Some participants noted in their diaries, which can be presented below:

> "I have not improved my listening comprehension much. I just hear 30% of the text. Maybe at the moment, I have just known the listening strategies, I could not hear much correct information. But I like strategies and I think they are useful. My listening comprehension will improve." (ST13)

> "I feel satisfied with the strategies because before attending this class, once mentioning listening skill, I felt anxious and scared, but I like listening in English now." (ST10)

The students shared the same view in their group interviews. For example, one participant said: "I am most satisfied about the fact that I know a lot of methods to improve my listening comprehension although I do not feel satisfied with my performance in listening. I think I need more practice to use strategies automatically." (ST6).

Furthermore, data reveal that the students were satisfied with the teacher's methodology, learning materials, and classroom atmosphere. Across the LSI course, it is not hard to see such statements like the following one:

> "When I attended this course, I saw that the way you instructed strategies was extremely different from my previous listening experience. Your teaching methodology was useful to us. Before that, the teacher of English at high school did not go deeply into listening

methods; therefore, we could not understand anything. But things changed in this course, you taught us explicitly and guided us specifically. Strategies were awesome." (ST13).

In general, the students reported in their diaries and interviews that although they did not feel satisfied with their listening comprehension, they were absolutely satisfied with the strategy instruction, teacher's teaching methodology, learning materials, and classroom atmosphere.

❖ *Students' self-confidence*

Data show that the students perceived themselves as more confident listeners as a result of using listening strategies. After being instructed how to listen in English, although the students still encountered a variety of difficulties in listening comprehension, most of them recognized the benefits provided by utilizing strategies to their confidence. In fact, the students reported in their diaries that as they employed listening strategies, they knew what to do in each step of the listening process; they were going on the right path; therefore, they felt more confident about a possible improvement in their listening comprehension. For example, ST10 stated that she became less nervous and scared when she was taking listening tests or communicating with foreign visitors with the help of strategies. When interviewed about her perceived listening comprehension improvement, ST10 at once replied that she could "picked up most of the information." In spite of the gap between her perceived and actual listening comprehension, the responses given by ST10 indicate that she obtained a great level of self-confidence in listening to the English language.

More importantly, the students show strong confidence about their potential improvement in their listening ability in the future. In other words, they felt more confident about the possibility that they may become proficient in listening if they apply strategies. Some excerpts from the respondents are as follows:

> "I feel more confident about listening in English now that I have been using strategies to listen in English for some time. I think I can listen better in English, and I feel more confident about my ability." (ST12).

> "I know that currently my listening comprehension ability is not good; but I will apply strategies you taught, and I believe I will improve my listening skill in the future. The matter is time only." (ST16).

Discussion

Overall, the current study participants have positive attitudes toward strategy instruction and learning English listening skills. The discussion mainly focuses on students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects in the students attitudes.

Cognitive aspects

Firstly, most of the students perceived listening skills as a very difficult but extremely important skill. This perception goes in line with that of participants in previous studies conducted by Graham and Macaro (2008), Kurita (2012), Siegel (2013), Graham (2017), and Nogueroles (2017). The participants in those studies were at a lower-intermediate level, similar to the students in the current study. Although they were aware of the importance of listening skills, they found that listening was the most difficult skill to learn and improve. According to Hasan (2000), the perceptions of foreign language learners depend on their experiences in learning that language. Importantly, the learners

often perceive listening skills as challenging if they use ineffective listening strategies, lack of exposure to that skill, students' limited knowledge in that language, learners' attitudes, and other challenges from the speakers. Hence, the reason why the students found listening the most challenging skill can be the fact that at the beginning of the project, they did not know many strategies to listen, their time of learning listening skills was not sufficient, and they still encountered many difficulties in this skill.

Secondly, regarding the difficulties encountered in the project, the students reported that they faced a great number of difficulties such as limited vocabulary, poor grammar, concentration loss, laziness, ineffective learning routines, ineffective use of strategies (internal obstacles); rate of speech, length of tasks, various accents, unfamiliar topics (external obstacles). These difficulties were also found in Underwood's (1989, cited in Oxford, 2017) study in which learners' difficulties in listening comprehension were categorized into seven groups: (a) speed of the talk, (b) insufficient repetition, (c) limited vocabulary, (d) unknown signal words, (e) unable to interpret input, (f) concentration loss, and (g) poor habits. However, the obstacles reported by the participants in the current study are different from those found in Chen's study (2005, cited in Oxford, 2017). Chen investigated listening strategies used by Taiwanese college EFL learners to overcome barriers in a listening strategy instruction using Anderson's cognitive information-processing framework (1983). This researcher found several obstacles encountered by his students, which were (1) their dysfunctional beliefs and habits in listening comprehension, (2) their anxiety, frustration, and resistance which reduce their motivation in strategy learning; (3) complex and unorganized listening materials; (4) information-processing challenges such as distractions, insufficient short-term memory, misinterpreting; (5) performing inconsistency. These difficulties were not reported by the participants in the current study; though; it is reasonable to agree with Chen's suggestion that to deal with the problems in the students' listening comprehension, both the teacher and the students need to analyze the problems and their causes straightforwardly, focus on making use of appropriate strategies for specific listening tasks. In other words, certain general strategies such as problem-identification and monitoring should be used to analyze the obstacles along with specific strategies corresponding to each type of obstacle.

Thirdly, these findings recommend that teachers of listening skills should carefully select strategies corresponding to each type of obstacle to aid their students overcome those difficulties. This also was advocated by other researchers in the literature, such as Hasan (2000), Li (2017), and Nguyen (2018). Moreover, it is advisable to extend the project to include another cycle so that the students can have sufficient time to get familiar with listening strategies and use these strategies to solve their problems.

Behavioral aspects

Overall, the students in the project had positive behaviors in the LSI, reflected in their increasing concentration level, their autonomy and self-regulation, and their willingness to learn and employ listening strategies.

Regarding the students' concentration, the students reported that they kept more concentrated on the listening tasks in comparison with before the LSI; however, sometimes, they still lost their focus because of the difficulties they faced during the listening process. They thought that they needed more practice in longer listening tasks. A number of students reported their ability to keep

concentration slightly increased in the finishing weeks of the project because they desired to achieve good marks in listening tests.

This finding supports other studies done by Istiyani (2014), and Yeldham and Gruba (2016) in indicating that the listening strategy instruction could develop language learners' concentration, motivation, and ability to control their listening. Moreover, "the strategy was useful in increasing their attention and being focus on teacher's explanation" (Istiyani, 2014, p.105). This finding suggests that to overcome difficulties related to learners' concentration loss, teachers should instruct their learners on how to employ such strategies as monitoring and problem identification.

In terms of students' autonomy and self-regulation, the students seemed to be active in expanding their learning environment and finding resources for listening. Specifically, their learning space went beyond the listening classes to the university library, at their home, in online applications, and in real life. Also, they made use of a wide range of listening materials such as library books, websites, paper, and electronic dictionaries, social media, modern learning tools, etc. Noticeably, some students were successful in creating opportunities to communicate with English speakers. They also became more independent of the teacher because they were aware of their active role in their learning process.

Furthermore, the number of students who were absent from listening classes was also reduced over time. If absent from listening classes, those students demonstrated a sense of responsibility by asking for permission or reporting the reasons. Most of the students submitted their assignments before the deadline and carefully prepared the lessons before listening classes. This finding is the evidence showing that after the LSI, the students became more autonomous and self-regulated.

In literature, learners' autonomy and self-regulation are defined as the learners' ability to control and perform the language tasks independently and take charge of their own learning regardless of situations (Benson, 2011; Little, 2007). More specifically, Cohen (2014) explained that autonomous language learning refers to a learning style whose primary goal is to make self-motivated students who can control of when, how, and what to learn and learn successfully, independently of their teachers and possibly outside the classroom environment. The learners' autonomy of strategy choice is reflected through their active role in determining the learning goals. Selecting strategies to deal with learning tasks without the presence of the teacher is "crucial for lifelong language learning" (Cohen, 2014, p.33). For these characteristics of autonomy and self-regulation, it is obvious that the students in the current study expressed all these identities.

One of the most important aims of strategy training is not only to develop the students' listening performance but also to increase their degree of autonomy (Irgin & Erten, 2020). This is the key purpose of the LSI (Oxford, 2017). On the other hand, strategic behavior encourages language users to be more responsible in their own learning and lets them deploy higher-level strategic thinking skills (Irgin & Erten, 2020). This finding suggests that listening strategy instruction is a great way to make the learners become more autonomous and self-regulated.

On the one hand, this finding supports many researchers such as Oxford (1990, 2017), Little (2007); Griffiths (2013); Irgin and Erten (2020) in asserting that autonomy has a very strong relationship with learning strategies. In turn, Oxford (2003, 2017) noted many times that autonomy contributes to learners' use of strategies, and the use of strategies also strengthens autonomy. Furthermore, Oxford (2017, p.34) added, "self-regulation and related terms, such as self-direction, self-responsibility, autonomy (…) is a key purpose of L2 learning strategy use; however, this aspect

had not been much mentioned in the literature". This finding calls for further investigation into the effects of LSI on the learners' development of autonomy and self-regulation.

On the other hand, this finding contradicts Kubota' (2001) theory because he attributed autonomy to features of the students from individualist cultures in Western countries and viewed students from collectivist cultures such as Asian learners, as "passive, docile, and compliant" (Kubota, 2001 cited in Oxford, 2017, p.19). Obviously, the students in the project were very proactive, critical, and responsible for their learning. It is advisable that EFL learners from similar contexts as those in the current study should be encouraged to seek "cultural alternatives" to such views of autonomy, as suggested by Pennycook (1997, cited in Oxford, 2017).

In terms of the students' engagement in the LSI, the students reported that they were eager to learn new strategies to employ them in their listening comprehension in listening classes and other circumstances until they can use them unconsciously. This finding indicates that the learners of the project, to some extent, pose a great motivation in applying strategies and learning listening skills. This finding supports what was found in Istiyani (2014), Siegel (2015), Li (2017), and Nguyen (2018). After using a number of listening strategies, the participants in these studies highly appreciated the usefulness of such strategies to their listening ability, then many of them acknowledged that they would like to know more strategies to transfer to other listening situations. However, this finding is opposed to what Cohen (2014) stated in his study that some students showed their reluctance to apply new strategies because they preferred to rely on the strategies that they already employed, or they might not be convinced of the benefits of the strategy instruction. Some other learners had negative reactions to the strategy instruction because of their cultural or personal beliefs about the teacher's role in the classroom and "resisted the increased responsibility for learning which accompanies strategy instruction" (p.151). This result also suggests implementing the strategy-based instruction model employed in this study for further study application because it helps create EFL learners' awareness of the listening process and fosters their independence in controlling their own learning. In this way, the learners become motivated and engaged in the listening process, as suggested by Zobler (2010) and Vandergrift (2004).

Affective aspects

In terms of students' satisfaction, most of the students reported that they did not satisfy with their listening comprehension level; however, they felt satisfied with the LSI, the teacher's methodology, listening materials, and the listening class atmosphere.

On the one hand, this finding echoes with Al-Qahtani's (2013) study, in which the participants revealed that they felt quite satisfied with their teacher's teaching methodology and the courses. Specifically, they were satisfied with the teacher's support, encouragement, constructive feedback, and the interesting learning materials and environment. Similarly, participants in Li's (2017) study also reported that they built up their satisfaction and confidence when they discovered that they were able to understand how to listen and apply listening strategies in various listening situations. A similar finding was also reported in Nguyen's (2018) and Irgin and Erten's (2020) study. After receiving LSI integrated into the syllabus, the participants shared that they felt more confident in their ability to comprehend English and were satisfied with it the listening course.

On the other hand, some opposing findings were also found in previous studies, such as Webb (2017) and Nogueroles (2017). After the LSI in 4-8 weeks, most of the participants in those studies reported being less satisfied with their ability to complete the activities properly, the listening

activities, and the strategy instruction. The researchers of those studies also explained the participants' dissatisfaction by their lack of motivation for the listening strategy approach, the short duration of the program, and the way of selecting the samples. Webb (2017) called for further research on how low motivation for learning affects the effectiveness of strategies and students' perceptions.

Regarding the students' self-confidence after the LSI, most of the students felt greatly confident about their listening ability and optimistic about their potential improvement in comprehending spoken English. This finding corroborates the results of many other studies (Vandergrift, 2002, 2004; Graham & Macaro, 2008; Irgin & Erten, 2020; Li, 2017; Nguyen, 2018; Ozeki, 2000; Yeldham & Gruba, 2016). In spite of using different data collection instruments to examine the students' perceptions and attitudes towards the strategy instruction, those studies reached a consensus that the LSI brought about many benefits to the students, both to their listening performance and their psychological changes. In other words, LSI might offer long-term benefits for learners in terms of both their listening comprehension and beliefs about their listening ability. Differently, this finding is inconsistent with what was found in some previous studies (Siegel, 2013; Nogueroles López, 2017; Webb, 2017). In his study, Webb (2017) investigated that students felt more anxious and less confident after the metacognitive listening strategy instruction. Also, Siegel (2013) shared that most students reported through the questionnaire that their confidence in their ability to listen to English remained fragile after the strategy instruction course. Similarly, the learners in Nogueroles's (2017) study reported that they lacked confidence in their listening capacity, although they still believed that their listening abilities bettered as a result of the strategy instruction. The failure of the strategy instruction courses was explained by factors outside of their control, such as being tired or hungry (Webb, 2017); students' lack of motivation, the nature of slow rate of development in aural abilities, the students' misassumptions of a good listener (Siegel, 2013).

Moreover, the students in the project highly appreciated the teacher's role in increasing their confidence in their listening ability. They determined that the success of the LSI was, to some extent, due to the teacher's willingness to spend time and effort on selecting materials, instructing strategies, giving them constructive feedback, and evaluating their use of strategies. This finding evokes what was highly appreciated in Ozeki's (2000) and Hoang's (2021) studies. This finding implies that the teacher's teaching methodology is very important for the success of the LSI. According to Oxford (2017), besides "inner context" such as self-regulation, motivation, prior knowledge, autonomy, and confidence, the role of "sociocultural context," which refers to the relationships between the learners and their peers or teachers, also contribute to the success of the language learners. Besides the learner-teacher exchanges, the interactions among learners were always encouraged in the project via organizing pair/group work activities and instructing social/affective strategies. Hence, this finding recommends that "learning strategy use should be considered in light of the sociocultural setting in which these strategies are deployed and the whole web of personal and cultural relationships in that setting" (Oxford, 2017, p.74). The result also suggests that the implementation of the LSI needs to take the collaboration among partners and with the teachers into consideration.

In summary, the students in the study showed positive attitudes towards the LSI and their listening learning. Obviously, the LSI helped the learners feel more confident, satisfied, motivated, and eager to learn; in turn, when they possessed positive attitudes toward the LSI, their listening ability and

use of listening strategies also improved (Ozeki, 2000). Hence, though the strategy instruction project did not assist the students in gaining perfect achievements in their listening comprehension immediately, it helped make the students autonomous, self-regulated, and confident and equipped them with the necessary qualities to be successful listeners in the future.

Conclusion

The study was conducted to examine the impacts of the LSI on the learners' attitudes towards learning English listening skills through students' diaries and focus group interviews. The findings reveal that after the LSI, most of the students kept positive attitudes towards listening learning, which is illustrated through their cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects. Specifically, the students in the project perceived that listening is a difficult but essential skill. Although they encountered many difficulties in their listening process, they believed that listening strategies could help them overcome their listening problems. Moreover, the students also reported that listening strategies made them become autonomous and eager to study listening skills and feel more confident in their potential listening improvement. Also, they felt satisfied with the listening course in terms of strategy instruction, class atmosphere, teacher's methodology, and listening materials.

The findings of the study have some implications for EFL listening pedagogical methodology. Firstly, it is recommended that in listening lessons, the strategies should be presented to motivate the students and provide them with good equipment to overcome listening problems. Secondly, the collaboration between students-teacher and among students is encouraged in listening strategy instruction lessons through group work, pair work, sharing sessions, and project activities. Thirdly, to optimize the advantages of listening strategies, they should be instructed in the long term so that the students can have sufficient time to get familiar with the strategies and practice using them.

Despite the researcher's attempts, the study has some limitations. First, the population of the study was small and selected from only one university; therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to a larger population. This limitation suggests further research implementing LSI as the intervention with larger population size. What is more, this study was conducted in only one 9-week cycle; thus, the participants of the students did not have sufficient time to practice listening strategies thoroughly. Hence, the study calls for a longitudinal action research project which consists of at least two cycles for the purpose of expanding strategy practice opportunities for the listeners.

Acknowledgments

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Biodata

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