

Saudi Undergraduate EFL Learners' Listening Strategies

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Abstract

Listening comprehension is a critical skill for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, and it is particularly challenging for Saudi EFL learners due to the differences between Arabic and English phonology. This study investigated the listening strategies used by Saudi EFL learners, and the role that these strategies play in listening comprehension. The Listening Comprehension Strategy Inventory (LCSI) was administered to 73 Saudi Arabian learners of all levels in the English Department in a Saudi public university. The survey was divided into three sections: metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. The results showed that the most commonly used listening strategies in each category were: Metacognitive strategies: using prior knowledge and experience to help understand, predicting what will be said, and checking understanding. Cognitive strategies: focusing on key words, repeating words to become familiar with sounds, and using context clues; and Socio-affective strategies: developing a positive attitude towards listening, and believing that it is possible to understand what will be heard. Comparing the results of the three constructs show that participants had the highest mean scores for cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, and then socio-affective strategies. The results of this study suggest that Saudi EFL learners use a variety of listening strategies to improve comprehension. These strategies play an important role in the listening process, and they can be used to help learners improve their listening skills. This study contributes to the field of second language acquisition by providing new insights into the listening strategies used by Saudi EFL learners. The findings of this study can be used to develop more effective listening instruction for EFL learners.

Keywords: language learning strategies, listening strategies, listening comprehension, listening skill, Saudi EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

Listening is an essential component of effective communication. Effective listening strategies, in particular, have been shown to have a number of benefits in both social and professional settings (Bao & Guan, 2019). These benefits include improved learning and comprehension, better problem-solving skills, and stronger relationships with others. However, effective listening strategies can be difficult to master (Field, 2008). They require us to focus our full attention on the speaker, process their information without forming any preconceived notions, and provide feedback in the form of questions and comments. So, language learners need to identify and develop their listening strategies.

Learning strategies are specific actions or behaviors that learners use to improve their language learning. There are three main types of learning strategies: metacognitive, cognitive,

and social-affective strategies (Oxford, 2017). Learning strategies can help learners to overcome challenges, such as limited language proficiency, unfamiliar cultural norms, and anxiety. Learners can develop their own learning strategies by identifying their current strategies, setting goals, and monitoring their progress. Teachers can integrate learning strategies into their instruction by modeling, scaffolding, and providing feedback (Oxford, 2017).

English as a foreign language (EFL) learners can improve their listening skills by using a combination of cognitive, affective, and social-affective strategies. These strategies include: Metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring progress, and assessing outcomes. Cognitive strategies such as making guesses, using logical thinking, and creating mental images. Social-affective strategies such as working with classmates, asking questions, and managing stress. This study will investigate the use of these strategies by EFL Saudi learners in a Saudi public university setting. The goal of the study is to identify the most effective strategies for improving listening skills and to develop suggestions that can be used to help EFL learners improve their listening comprehension.

Listening Strategy in L2 Learning

Listening is an essential skill for language learners, but it is often undervalued and neglected in the classroom (Field, 2008). EFL learners who are not able to listen effectively will be at a disadvantage in many areas of their lives, including their academic studies, their careers, and their social interactions inside and outside the learning environment. It is therefore important for language teachers to prioritize listening instruction and to use a variety of approaches to help learners develop their listening skills (Newton & Nation, 2020). A review of the literature on listening comprehension reveals that many papers begin by acknowledging the importance of listening as a skill that underpins second language (L2) acquisition. However, these studies also note that there is relatively little research on listening compared to the other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing (Graham, 2017).

Fung and Macaro (2021) noted that there is no consensus on the terminology and definition of listening strategies in the research literature. For example, some researchers have used the terms "listening proficiency", "listening abilities", "listening effectiveness", or "skills in listening" to refer to what Fung and Macaro define as "proficiency in carrying out a listening task." This lack of consistency in terminology can make it difficult to compare the findings of different studies on listening strategies. Rost (2016) stated that listening is a complex process that involves four of overlapping types of processing: neurological processing, linguistic processing, semantic processing, and pragmatic processing. A comprehensive grasp of listening must encompass consideration of all four processing types. These processes are not mutually exclusive, and they often overlap and complement each other. Moreover, Field (2013) classified cognitive listening processes into two main categories: lower-level and higher-level processes. So, without a valid and reliable theoretical questionnaire, it may be difficult for researchers to identify the most common listening strategies used by EFL learners.

Rost (2016) defines listening strategies as "techniques or plans that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input" (p. 330). Research has shown that EFL learners can benefit from strategy instruction. For example, a 10-week intervention study by Maftoon and Fakhri Alamdari (2020) found that their program of strategy instruction in using planning, monitoring, and evaluation significantly improved the listening performance and metacognitive awareness of a group of intermediate EFL learners. Similarly, a study by Yeldham (2016) found that Taiwanese lower-intermediate EFL learners who received strategy instruction performed better

than a comparison group in listening comprehension and strategic abilities, and also showed increased confidence and motivation. These findings suggest that strategy instruction can be an effective way to help lower proficiency learners improve their listening skills. Fung and Macaro (2021) asserted that raising learners' awareness of and competence in using listening strategies can potentially enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Also, Goh and Vandergrift (2022) demonstrated that listening strategy instruction improved comprehension and had salutary effects on listener motivation, attitude, and self-efficacy.

Bao and Guan (2019) clarify that L2 listening strategies are the ways in which listeners interact with spoken text in real time to achieve comprehension. Effective listening strategy use requires not only the ability to process information mentally, but also the ability to identify and respond to comprehension difficulties. For example, a listener may use a cognitive strategy such as identifying key words and phrases to help them understand the main idea of a listening passage. If the listener encounters a word or phrase that they do not understand, they may use a metacognitive strategy such as pausing the listening passage to ask themselves what they do understand and what they need to clarify. The listener may also use a socio-affective strategy such as asking a classmate for help if they are still unable to understand the passage.

Theoretical Framework

Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as the processes that learners use to improve their use of the target language. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classify these strategies into two groups: cognitive and metacognitive. Other researchers, such as Vandergrift (2007), have subsequently added a third category: socio-affective. Socio-affective strategies describe the learning that takes place when learners interact with others, such as classmates or teachers, or use specific techniques to manage their emotions and attitudes towards learning. Elaborating on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) strategy classifications, Vandergrift (2007) found explicit examples of learner use of both metacognitive strategies such as planning and monitoring, cognitive strategies such as linguistic inferencing and elaborating, and socio-affective strategies such as questioning for clarification and self-encouragement.

Metacognitive strategies: These strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own listening comprehension. For example, one learner said, "I read over what we have to do first" (planning). Another learner said, "I stopped and asked myself if I understood what I had just heard" (monitoring). Metacognitive strategies, or thinking about one's own thought processes while learning, refer to the capacity to comprehend one's own technique of learning and assimilation of information (Goh & Taib, 2006). These abilities are crucial because they control and monitor how students apply strategies, as well as organize, monitor, and assess their own mental processes and deal with listening issues. These manipulation functions assist students in defining task objectives and suggesting solutions. They focus students' attention on particular linguistic input features such as discourse markers, content phrases, and primary ideas (Bao & Guan, 2019).

Cognitive strategies: These strategies involve the mental processing of the listening passage. For example, one learner said, "I used other words in the sentence and guessed" (linguistic inferencing). Another learner said, "I tried to relate what I was hearing to something I already knew" (elaborating). According to Von Eckardt (1995), cognitive listening strategies include all knowledge-related mental faculties and processes, such as using language and sociocultural information to address issues. elaborating, grouping, inferring, interpreting, note-taking, predicting, recalling, resourcing, storing, summarizing, substituting, translating, and repeating are a few examples of cognitive performance. Because they enable students to keep track of and manage their mental processing, spot comprehension breakdowns, and make

connections between hearing information and knowledge of the outside world, cognitive techniques are crucial for improving listening comprehension (Bao & Guan, 2019).

Socio-affective strategies: These strategies involve managing one's emotions and attitudes towards listening, as well as interacting with others in a listening context. For example, one learner said, "I asked the teacher to repeat" (questioning for clarification). Another learner said, "I told myself everyone else is probably having the same problem" (self-encouragement). Since social and affective tactics are intertwined, they are frequently discussed simultaneously. This is due to the fact that social interactions and personal feelings are intertwined throughout the L2 learning process. Comparatively to studies on cognitive and metacognitive techniques, empirical investigations on these types are less common. According to socio-affective ability research, students are frequently discouraged from asking questions during the listening process in the classroom due to a lack of social empathy (Serri, Boroujeni, & Hesabi, 2012). Additionally, it demonstrates how socio-affective techniques can assist students in maintaining motivation and concentration as well as in managing their emotions, interacting with others, and soliciting assistance from them (Bao & Guan, 2019).

Research Objectives and Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the listening strategies that are most commonly used by Saudi EFL learners in listening comprehension classes. Specifically, the study will investigate the following objectives: To identify the most commonly used listening strategies by Saudi EFL learners; To determine the effectiveness of these listening strategies in improving listening comprehension; To develop recommendations for teachers on how to incorporate listening strategies into their instruction. English education in Saudi Arabia plays a vital role in the lives of Saudis at all levels of education, from K-12 to university (Alhamami, 2020). Proficiency in English is a key determinant of student success in university programs (Alhamami, 2023).

This study is significant for a number of reasons. First, it provides valuable insights into the listening strategies that are most effective for Saudi EFL learners. This information can be used by teachers to develop more effective listening instruction. Second, the study identifies a gap in the research on listening strategies. Specifically, there is a lack of research on the listening strategies that are used by EFL learners. This study fills this gap by providing much-needed data on this topic. Finally, the study's findings can be used to develop recommendations for teachers on how to incorporate listening strategies into their instruction. The study will also adapt and validate a listening strategies questionnaire in a new context. The questionnaire has been used in other contexts, but it needs to be adapted to ensure that it is relevant and reliable for Saudi EFL learners.

The Listening Comprehension Strategy Inventory (LCSI) is a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners in the field of L2 listening. It has several key contributions. For example, LCSI provides a comprehensive and theoretically-informed framework for understanding listening strategies. LCSI is based on a well-established model of listening strategies, and it includes a wide range of strategies that are relevant to second language listening. This makes it a valuable tool for researchers who are interested in understanding how learners use listening strategies, and for practitioners who are interested in helping learners develop their listening skills. It is a reliable and valid measure of listening strategies. The LCSI has been shown to be reliable and valid in a number of studies in non-Saudi context (e.g., Ching, et al; 2013; Nguyen, 2020; Purnomowati, 2016; Si, 2022) . This means that it can be used to measure listening strategies in a consistent and meaningful way. Also, it is easy to use and administer. The LCSI is a self-report questionnaire, which means that it can be easily

administered to learners. This makes it a practical tool for researchers and practitioners who are interested in collecting data on listening strategies. Specifically, this study asks the following question: Which listening strategies are most commonly used in listening classes by EFL students in Saudi universities?

METHOD

Context

This study was conducted in an English Department at a Saudi Public University. The Department offers four years BA in English. In the first two years the students study several English language learning skills such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar and vocabulary. In the last two years of the program the students study courses in four major subjects: theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, literature, and translation. The medium of instruction is English throughout the four years.

The students are admitted to the program based on the high school GPA and their score in the national standardized tests. Unfortunately, the students are not required to take in English proficiency tests such as IELTS and TOEFL before they enroll in the program. There are two campuses: male and female. Female students are taught by females instructors and male students are taught by male instructors. The instructors both male and female comes from different backgrounds. Based on the college website, the instructors have finished their PhD and MA in different countries such as Australia, Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Yemen, India, and Pakistan.

Participants

A total of 73 female undergraduate students who were studying EFL participated in this study. The participants were aged between 19 and 23 years old, and they had all taken listening comprehension classes. The sample was limited to females only in order to facilitate data collection, as the first author (who is also female) found it difficult to communicate with male participants in other campus. Additionally, this was done to avoid inaccuracy and to take into account the differences between males and females that have been found in previous studies (Kök, 2023). All participants were native Arabic speakers. The questionnaire was administered to students who had previously taken listening comprehension classes, and it was designed to investigate the listening strategies that they used most frequently.

Instruments

The data collection method was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was used as the effective tool to gather information from participants. The questionnaire was sent multiple times to student groups who studied in the English department and had been taking listening classes using the Google form platform. The questionnaire was developed by Vandergrift et al. (2006) and has been used in a number of previous studies, including those by Purnomowati (2016) in Indonesia, Si (2022) in Myanmar, and Abdalhamid (2012) in the United States. LCSII was developed by Vandergrift et al. (2006) based on a previous major study of listening learning strategies. The LCSII incorporates elements adapted from Vandergrift's Listening Comprehension Strategy (1997), which itself adapted concepts from O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), and Vandergrift (1996).

The questionnaire consists of 24 questions that are divided into three sections: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. The first section has 12 questions about metacognitive strategies, the second section has 8 questions about cognitive strategies, and the third section has 4 questions about socio-affective strategies. The

questionnaire was translated into Arabic . The questionnaire items were presented in both Arabic and English to avoid language barriers. The LCSi is a quantitative instrument, meaning that it measures the use of listening strategies in a numerical way. The questions on the questionnaire are answered on a Likert scale, with options ranging from "never" to "always." This allows the researcher to collect data on the frequency with which participants use each listening strategy. The final version of the LCSi consists of three categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using a Likert scale, which is a type of ordinal scale that is commonly used to measure attitudes or opinions. The Likert scale used in this study had five levels, ranging from "Very low use" to "Always." The mean Likert scale means were calculated by dividing the total score for each item by the number of participants. The mean Likert scale means were interpreted using the following categories:

- Very low use (0 to 1.00): Never
- Low use (1.10 to 2.00): Rarely
- Moderate use (2.10 to 3.00): Sometimes
- High use (3.10 to 4.00): Often
- Very high use (4.10 to 5.00): Always

In addition to the mean Likert scale means, the data analysis also included a detailed analysis of the frequency of each item in the questionnaire. This analysis provides insights into how often each item was selected by the participants. The data analysis provides valuable insights into the attitudes and opinions of the participants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was about investigating listening strategies that are used inside Saudi EFL listening classes. It consisted of 24 statements divided into three sections. Section one had 12 twelve statements dealing with Metacognitive concepts. Section two had 8 eight statements dealing with cognitive strategies. Section three had 4 four statements dealing with socio-affective strategies.

Table 1. Metacognitive Strategies Items Results

1- "Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen". M = 2.64				
Never (30.1%)	Rarely (12.3%)	Sometimes (31.5%)	Often (15.1%)	Always (11%)
22 × 1 = 22	9 × 2 = 18	23 × 3 = 69	11 × 4 = 44	8 × 5 = 40
2- "I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding". M. = 4.07				
Never (2.7%)	Rarely (5.5%)	Sometimes (19.2%)	Often (27.4%)	Always (45.2%)
2 × 1 = 2	4 × 2 = 8	14 × 3 = 42	20 × 4 = 80	33 × 5 = 165
3- "I translate in my head as I listen". M = 3.96				
Never (2.7%)	Rarely (6.8%)	Sometimes (20.5%)	Often (31.5%)	Always (38.4%)
2 × 1 = 2	5 × 2 = 10	15 × 3 = 45	23 × 4 = 92	28 × 5 = 140



4- "I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand." M = 4.07				
Never (1.4%)	Rarely (9.6%)	Sometimes (17.8%)	Often (23.3%)	Always (47.9%)
$1 \times 1 = 1$	$7 \times 2 = 14$	$13 \times 3 = 39$	$17 \times 4 = 68$	$35 \times 5 = 175$
5- "As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic." M = 3.93				
Never (2.7%)	Rarely (8.2%)	Sometimes (17.8%)	Often (35.6%)	Always (35.6%)
$2 \times 1 = 2$	$6 \times 2 = 12$	$13 \times 3 = 39$	$26 \times 4 = 104$	$26 \times 5 = 130$
6- "I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand." M = 4.22				
Never (0)	Rarely (5.5%)	Sometimes (16.4%)	Often (28.8%)	Always (49.3%)
$0 \times 1 = 0$	$4 \times 2 = 8$	$12 \times 3 = 36$	$21 \times 4 = 84$	$36 \times 5 = 180$
7- "After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time." M = 3.03				
Never (9.6%)	Rarely (27.4%)	Sometimes (26%)	Often (24.7%)	Always (12.3%)
$7 \times 1 = 7$	$20 \times 2 = 40$	$19 \times 3 = 57$	$18 \times 4 = 72$	$9 \times 5 = 45$
8- "When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I give up and stop listening." M = 2.64				
Never (23.3%)	Rarely (26%)	Sometimes (24.7%)	Often (15.1%)	Always (11%)
$17 \times 1 = 17$	$19 \times 2 = 38$	$18 \times 3 = 54$	$11 \times 4 = 44$	$8 \times 5 = 40$
9- "I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand." M = 3.97				
Never (2.7%)	Rarely (8.2%)	Sometimes (21.9%)	Often (23.3%)	Always (43.8%)
$2 \times 1 = 2$	$6 \times 2 = 12$	$16 \times 3 = 48$	$17 \times 4 = 68$	$32 \times 5 = 160$
10- "When I guess the meaning of word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense." M = 3.47				
Never (6.8%)	Rarely (11%)	Sometimes (30.1%)	Often (32.9%)	Always (19.2%)
$5 \times 1 = 5$	$8 \times 2 = 16$	$22 \times 3 = 66$	$24 \times 4 = 96$	$14 \times 5 = 70$
11- "As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension." M = 3.26				
Never (13.7%)	Rarely (13.7%)	Sometimes (27.4%)	Often (23.3%)	Always (21.9%)
$10 \times 1 = 10$	$10 \times 2 = 20$	$20 \times 3 = 60$	$17 \times 4 = 68$	$16 \times 5 = 80$
12- "I have a goal in mind as I listen." M = 3.23				
Never (12.3%)	Rarely (21.9%)	Sometimes (19.2%)	Often (23.3%)	Always (23.3%)
$9 \times 1 = 9$	$16 \times 2 = 32$	$14 \times 3 = 42$	$17 \times 4 = 68$	$17 \times 5 = 85$

As shown in Table 1, the positive effects of listening strategies are obvious in all twelve statement categories. Overall perceptions of the students reveal that listening strategies positively facilitate the enhancement of an individual's cognitive proficiency to comprehend

spoken language. The highest-rated categories are Item (2), (4), (9), and (6). Item (6) " I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand" with a percentage of (49.3%) was the highest rate. Using previous knowledge and experience seems to benefit the most from the students. That means students use their knowledge to understand in listening classes. Students use their knowledge and experience, and this could be very beneficial for them to understand more the foreign language. Followed by Item (4): "I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand" with a percentage of (47.9%). Students may understand some words in English, so efforts are made to infer the meaning of unknown vocabulary to establish a connection with familiar vocabulary. The third highest-rated item is Item (2) "I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding" with a percentage of (45.2%). When students face difficulty in listening, they focus on the written text and use their skills in reading to understand in listening classes. The fourth highest item is Item (9): "I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand" with a percentage of (43.8%). Students here focus more on the general idea and try to understand what is being said. Low-rated categories are Item (1), (7), and (8). Item (1 & 8) are rated the lowest with a percentage of (11%).

Item (1) deals with planning before listening. As shown in the result most students rarely plan before they listen. while Item (8) deals with giving up when having trouble in listening. It seems that students keep listening even when they do not understand what is being said. This is a good thing actually they have to never give up because listening skills is a long-term process. Followed by Item (7): "After listening, I think back to how I listened, and what I might do differently next time" with a percentage of (12.3%). A lot of students do not plan to improve their way of listening after they listen to something or plan to do something differently. Item (3) deals with the translation "I translate in my head as I listen" with a percentage of (38.4%) most students translate what is being said into their mother tongue while they are listening. Students' perception of Item (4) is more positive than Item (3). Categories (5) and (11) are rated higher than Item (10). Item five deals with comparing between what I understand about the topic and what I know "As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic" with a percentage of (35.6%) and item 11 deals with if students having satisfaction with the level of comprehension with the percentage of (21.9%) students usually do not think if they are pleased with their understanding. while Item (10) deals with the guessing of meanings. The percentage (19.2%) "When I guess the meaning of a word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense" It seems that students rarely think back when they make an attempt to decipher the intended definition of certain terms.

Table 2. Cognitive Strategies Items Results

13- I guess the meaning of unknown words by linking them to known words. M = 3.75				
Never (9.6%)	Rarely (2.7%)	Sometimes (26%)	Often (26%)	Always (35.6%)
$7 \times 1 = 7$	$2 \times 2 = 4$	$19 \times 3 = 57$	$19 \times 4 = 76$	$26 \times 5 = 130$
14- I guess based on other clues, such as what is required in the task. M = 3.7				
Never (9.6%)	Rarely (9.6%)	Sometimes (16.4%)	Often (30.1%)	Always (34.2%)
$7 \times 1 = 7$	$7 \times 2 = 14$	$12 \times 3 = 36$	$22 \times 4 = 88$	$25 \times 5 = 125$
15- I use prior personal experience to comprehend the task. M = 4.01				

Never (2.7%)	Rarely (5.5%)	Sometimes (20.5%)	Often (30.1%)	Always (41.1%)
$2 \times 1 = 2$	$4 \times 2 = 8$	$15 \times 3 = 45$	$22 \times 4 = 88$	$30 \times 5 = 150$
16- I question myself about what I do know, and what I do not know about a topic. M = 3.59				
Never (13.7%)	Rarely (5.5%)	Sometimes (26%)	Often (17.8%)	Always (37%)
$10 \times 1 = 10$	$4 \times 2 = 8$	$19 \times 3 = 57$	$13 \times 4 = 52$	$27 \times 5 = 135$
17- I use knowledge about my first language to facilitate listening to the second language. M = 3.62				
Never (8.2%)	Rarely (12.3%)	Sometimes (23.3%)	Often (21.9%)	Always (34.2%)
$6 \times 1 = 6$	$9 \times 2 = 18$	$17 \times 3 = 51$	$16 \times 4 = 64$	$25 \times 5 = 125$
18- I repeat words I listen to so that I become familiar with the sounds. M = 3.77				
Never (8.2%)	Rarely (11%)	Sometimes (17.8%)	Often (21.9%)	Always (41.1%)
$6 \times 1 = 6$	$8 \times 2 = 16$	$13 \times 3 = 39$	$16 \times 4 = 64$	$30 \times 5 = 150$
19- I use any resources to aid myself in my understanding (e.g., dictionaries, diagrams, notes, peers). M = 3.6				
Never (8.2%)	Rarely (13.7%)	Sometimes (19.2%)	Often (27.4%)	Always (31.5%)
$6 \times 1 = 6$	$10 \times 2 = 20$	$14 \times 3 = 42$	$20 \times 4 = 80$	$23 \times 5 = 115$
20- I write notes as I follow some spoken text. M = 2.68				
Never (26%)	Rarely (23.3%)	Sometimes (23.3%)	Often (11%)	Always (16.4%)
$19 \times 1 = 19$	$17 \times 2 = 34$	$17 \times 3 = 51$	$8 \times 4 = 32$	$12 \times 5 = 60$

Table 2 illustrates students' cognitive skills in eight categories. Overall answers of the students reveal that listening strategies play a positive role in listening comprehension. The three highest-rated categories are Item (18), (15), and (16). Categories (15 & 18): are the top-rated ones with a percentage of (41.1%). Item (15) "I use prior personal experience to comprehend the task". Most students used their previous experience to understand some tasks in the class. Item (18) "I repeat words I listen to so that I become familiar with the sounds". It seems that students prefer to repeat what they hear in order to become familiar with the word. Item (13) Significantly, (35.6%) of students always guess the meaning of unknown words by linking them to known words. When students face difficulty to understand a word, efforts are made to establish a correlation between the semantics of the term with words already known to them. Item (14) Around (34.2%) of students guess the meaning based on other clues. Like when a word comes at the beginning of the sentence that means it is a subject and usually it is a noun. After that, it comes item (16) with (37%) of students asking themselves what they know about the topic being told. Categories (17) and (19) are rated higher than Item (20). Item (17) "I use knowledge about my first language to facilitate listening to the second language" with a percentage of (34.2%) of students. They use their first language to help them understand in listening classes. Item (19) with a percentage of (31.5%) of students used other means to help them understand in listening classes "I use any resources to aid myself in my understanding (e.g., dictionaries, diagrams, notes, peers)". Most students used dictionaries notes and other means to help them improve their comprehension. The last item (20) in cognitive strategies is

"I write notes as I follow some spoken text" with a percentage of (16.4%) "This is considered to be the less-rated item in this section. I think because it is difficult to concentrate on two skills at one time which are listening and writing, especially for beginners.

Table 3. Socio-affective Strategies Items Results

21- I find out more about the task by asking questions. M = 2.99				
Never (16.4%)	Rarely (20.5%)	Sometimes (30.1%)	Often (13.7%)	Always (19.2%)
$12 \times 1 = 12$	$15 \times 2 = 30$	$22 \times 3 = 66$	$10 \times 4 = 40$	$14 \times 5 = 70$
22- I cooperate with peers to understand the task. M = 3.12				
17.8%	20.5%	17.8%	19.2%	24.7%
$13 \times 1 = 13$	$15 \times 2 = 30$	$13 \times 3 = 39$	$14 \times 4 = 56$	$18 \times 5 = 90$
23- I try to relax before listening to the task. M = 3.04				
16.4%	13.7%	37%	15.1%	17.8%
$12 \times 1 = 12$	$10 \times 2 = 20$	$27 \times 3 = 81$	$11 \times 4 = 44$	$13 \times 5 = 65$
24- I develop a positive attitude toward the task and believe that it is possible for me to understand what I will hear. M = 3.68				
4.1%	15.1%	20.5%	28.8%	31.5%
$3 \times 1 = 3$	$11 \times 2 = 22$	$15 \times 3 = 45$	$21 \times 4 = 84$	$23 \times 5 = 115$

Table 3 depicts students' social-affective. Item (21) shows that students try to find out more about the task by asking questions. The percentage was rated (19.2%) of students who asked questions when they face difficulty understanding some tasks. In item (22) "I cooperate with peers to understand the task" only (24.7%) would like to work with their classmates in order to understand the tasks. Also, students do not prepare themselves before listening classes or when they listened to something. In item (23) "I try to relax before listening to the task" with a percentage of (17.8%) and it is considered to be the less-rated statement in this section. Overall, the responses submitted by the learners demonstrate that they cultivate a favorable disposition towards the assigned task and maintain a belief in their ability to comprehend the auditory information. With the percentage of (31.5%) is the most high-rated item in this section which is item (24).

Comparing the three constructs

The mean scores for the three constructs of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies were compared. The grand mean of the mean of 12 items that measure metacognitive concepts was 3.54. The grand mean of the mean of eight statements that measure cognitive strategies was 3.59. The grand mean of the mean of four items that measure socio-affective strategies was 3.21. The results of this comparison suggest that participants had the highest mean scores for cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, and then socio-affective strategies. This suggests that participants were more likely to agree with statements about metacognitive and cognitive strategies than with statements about socio-affective strategies.

There are a few possible explanations for this finding. First, metacognitive and cognitive strategies are more directly related to language learning than socio-affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's learning, while cognitive strategies involve processing and understanding language. Socio-affective strategies, on the other hand, are more related to motivation, attitude, and self-confidence.

Second, metacognitive and cognitive strategies are more frequently taught in language classes than socio-affective strategies. This is because metacognitive and cognitive strategies are seen as essential for language learning, while socio-affective strategies are often seen as less important. Finally, it is possible that participants in this study were more familiar with metacognitive and cognitive strategies than with socio-affective strategies. This is because metacognitive and cognitive strategies are more widely discussed in the literature on language learning, while socio-affective strategies are less well-known. Overall, the results of this comparison suggest that participants had the highest mean scores for cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, and then socio-affective strategies. This suggests that participants were more likely to agree with statements about metacognitive and cognitive strategies than with statements about socio-affective strategies. There are a few possible explanations for this finding, including the fact that metacognitive and cognitive strategies are more directly related to language learning, they are more frequently taught in language classes, and participants may be more familiar with them.

Discussion

There are a number of benefits to using metacognitive strategies in listening class. Metacognitive strategies can help learners to focus their attention on the most important information, to identify and overcome comprehension problems, and to retain information better. Metacognitive strategies can help learners to become more independent learners, by giving them the tools they need to assess their own learning and to take control of their own learning process. Metacognitive strategies can help learners to feel more confident in their listening abilities, and to see themselves as active participants in the learning process. Students and teachers can improve and active metacognitive strategies by previewing the listening material, using background knowledge, taking notes, asking questions, and reflecting on the listening

There are a number of benefits to using cognitive strategies in listening class. Cognitive strategies can help learners to focus their attention on the most important information, to identify and overcome comprehension problems, and to retain information better. Cognitive strategies can help learners to learn new vocabulary more effectively by encouraging them to actively manipulate the language. Cognitive strategies can help learners to become more critical thinkers by encouraging them to make connections between the listening passage and their own experiences or knowledge. Cognitive strategies can help learners to feel more confident in their listening abilities, and to see themselves as active participants in the learning process. Students and teachers can improve and active cognitive strategies by repetition, guessing, summarizing, and make connections.

There are a number of benefits to using socio-affective strategies in listening class. Socio-affective strategies can help learners to reduce anxiety, boost confidence, and focus better, all of which can lead to improved listening comprehension. Socio-affective strategies can help learners to enjoy the listening experience and to see themselves as active participants in the learning process. This can lead to increased motivation and a greater willingness to put in the effort to improve their listening skills. Socio-affective strategies can help learners to develop better communication and cooperation skills. This can be beneficial in both the classroom and in the wider world. Students and teachers can improve and active socio-affective strategies by relaxation techniques, cooperative learning, positive self-talk, empathy, and enjoyment.

Overall, the study you have provided provides valuable insights into the listening strategies used by Saudi EFL learners. The recommendations and future research agendas

outlined below could help to further our understanding of how listening strategies can be used to improve listening comprehension skills. The study was limited in its scope by the small sample size and the fact that it was conducted at a single educational institution in Saudi Arabia. The future study could be expanded to include a larger sample of students from different educational institutions in Saudi Arabia. This would help to ensure that the findings are generalizable to a wider population of Saudi EFL learners.

The study was cross-sectional in nature, meaning that it only captured the listening strategies used by students at a single point in time. The future study could also be longitudinal in nature, tracking the listening comprehension skills of students over time to see how their use of listening strategies changes as they progress in their language learning. The study did not investigate the impact of different types of listening instruction on students' listening comprehension skills. The future study could also explore the impact of different types of listening instruction on students' listening comprehension skills. For example, one could compare the effectiveness of instruction that focuses on explicit teaching of listening strategies to instruction that focuses on implicit learning of listening strategies through exposure to listening materials. Investigate the effectiveness of different listening strategy instruction methods. As mentioned above, future research could compare the effectiveness of explicit and implicit instruction of listening strategies. This could be done by randomly assigning students to different groups and then giving them different types of instruction. The researchers could then measure the students' listening comprehension skills at the end of the study to see which group showed the most improvement.

The study did not explore the relationship between listening strategies and other factors that influence listening comprehension, such as motivation, anxiety, and prior knowledge. Future research could explore the relationship between listening strategies and other factors that influence listening comprehension, such as motivation, anxiety, and prior knowledge. Future research could also develop and evaluate new listening strategy interventions that can be used to improve the listening comprehension skills of Saudi EFL learners. Develop and evaluate listening strategy interventions for specific populations of learners. For example, future research could develop and evaluate listening strategy interventions for learners with specific learning disabilities or for learners who are learning English as a second language. Future studies might explore the use of technology to support listening strategy instruction. There are a number of technology-based tools that could be used to support listening strategy instruction. For example, researchers could develop interactive listening activities or virtual reality simulations that allow learners to practice using listening strategies in a safe and supportive environment. Also, future research could also examine the use of listening strategies by other groups of learners, such as learners of other languages or learners from different cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the listening strategies used by Saudi EFL learners and the role that these strategies play in listening comprehension. The findings suggest that Saudi EFL learners use a variety of listening strategies to improve comprehension, including metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. The most commonly used metacognitive strategies were using prior knowledge and experience to help understand, predicting what will be said, and checking understanding. The most commonly used cognitive strategies were focusing on key words, repeating words to become familiar with sounds, and using context clues. The most commonly used socio-affective strategies were developing a positive attitude towards listening and believing that it is possible to understand what will be

heard. The results of this study suggest that listening strategies play an important role in the listening process and can be used to help learners improve their listening skills. This study contributes to the field of second language acquisition by providing new insights into the listening strategies used by Saudi EFL learners. The findings of this study can be used to develop more effective listening instruction for EFL learners.

The findings of this study suggest that teachers can help students develop their listening comprehension skills by teaching them a variety of listening strategies and providing opportunities to practice using these strategies in different listening contexts. For example, teachers can teach students about the different types of listening strategies and how to use them effectively. teachers can provide students with opportunities to practice using listening strategies in different listening contexts, such as listening to lectures, watching videos, and listening to conversations. teachers can encourage students to reflect on their listening strategies and to identify strategies that work best for them. teachers can create a supportive and encouraging learning environment where students feel comfortable asking for help and making mistakes. By teaching students about listening strategies and providing them with opportunities to practice using these strategies, teachers can help them to become more effective listeners.

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