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The Impacts of Listening Strategy Instruction on Strategy Use and Listening Performance of EFL Learners

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Abstract
This study explored the impacts of listening strategy instruction on strategy use and listening performance of EFL learners. Two classes of Taiwanese college students participated in this study. One class received listening strategy instruction integrated into their EFL listening class for 16 weeks, whereas the other served as a comparison group attending the same listening class without any strategy instruction. The quantitative instruments were conducted to examine the differences in strategy use and listening performances from the pre-test to the post-teat between the experimental and control groups. In addition, the qualitative instruments of reflective journals were employed in the experimental group to explore learners' strategy changes over time. The results showed that there were significantly positive changes in using listening strategies, in self-directed learning and in listening performance for the experimental group. This study implies thatlistening strategy instruction should be integrated in the EFL listening classroom to help learners become more effective listeners.

Keywords: Listening Strategies, Listening Comprehension, Listening Strategy Training.

INTRODUCTION

Learner strategies for L2/FL listening, in particular, are more complicated than those in other areas, since listening comprehension involves an active and complex process, which focuses on selecting input, constructing meaning and relating existing knowledge to perform the tasks (O'Malley et al., 1989; Rost, 2002). These strategic mental processes, in which learners are actively involved in order to understand the oral texts, are referred to as listening strategies (Vandergrift, 1999). In fact, learners are not passively receiving input while listening, rather, they need to actively choose, employ and evaluate their listening strategy use to achieve successful comprehension (Rubin, 1995).

Over the past decade, many studies have investigated L2/FL learners' listening strategies in a range of settings (e.g., Goh, 1998, 2002; Graham, 2003; O'Malley et al., 1989; Vandergrift, 1997, 2003a), and the data produced have provided L2/FL teachers with a better understanding of what listening strategies have been used during the listening tasks, and the differences in strategy use between effective and ineffective learners. However, these descriptive studies have failed to address the issue that how to bridge the gap between successful and unsuccessful listeners, in relation to listening strategy instruction.

In addition, due to the complicated nature of the listening process, relatively few strategy training studies have been conducted in L2/FL listening.Even among these limited studies on listening strategy training, most of them have merely examined listeners' improvement in language production (e.g., gains on listening proficiency tests), while little research has explored the listeners' learning process over the course of strategy training (e.g., how learners adapt their strategy use to facilitate listening). Furthermore, since most learner strategies involve mental processes, the controversial issues related to data collection methods have been raised (Berne, 2004; Chamot, 2005), (and thus using multiple measurements to triangulate the data may help to validate the results Vandergrift, 2007).

This suggests that additional specific studies on listening strategy training need to be carried out to explore the effects of strategy training. Hence, this study adds to the growing research on strategy training in improving learners' listening performances, but expands the limited research that examines the multi-faceted effects of strategy training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The effectiveness of strategy training on improving learners' language performance has been recognized across a body of research (Cohen, 1998; Macaro, 2001; O'Malley&Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Leaver, 1996). While these extensive studies have been conducted in a worldwide context in general language learning, as well as in reading and writing skills, relatively few studies have been carried out on listening (Graham &Macaro,2007). Among these,classroom-based empirical studies on listening strategy training are even fewer. However, these few studies have provided a research base for future studies in this field.

Carrier (2003) conducted listening strategy instruction with a small group of ESL high school students. There was no control group. The strategies taught focused on cognitive strategies including both bottom-up and top-down approaches to listening, and strategies of note-taking and selective attention. The results of listening pre-test and post-test showed that students had significantly improved their listening performance.However, in this study, only the product of listening has been assessed while the learner's process in developing listening comprehension has been ignored. It is also the case that measuring general changes in language proficiency is relatively more difficult with the instruments available. In addition, relatively few studies have addressed the quality of learner change in strategy use.

More recently, another line of studies has been proposed.They put more focuses on enhancing learners' strategic awareness and strategy use in dealing with their listening processes, and aim to find ways to assist learners to become better listeners.

Vandergrift (2003b) conducted a study for university students learning French which attempted to raise their awareness of listening processing. The listening strategies taught were integrated into the pre-, while-, and post-listening phases in each listening task. The data were collected via students' reflective reports upon completing the listening tasks and fortnightly reflective journals on their learning to listen. The results showed that students reported positive responses to their utilizations of these strategies in coping with the process as well as the product of listening. However, whether these strategies had any effect on improving students' listening proficiency is unknown. Overall, the researcher demonstrated the potential of strategy training in assisting learners to execute better control over their listening processes.

Following this line of intervention studies, Goh and Taib (2006) undertook a study examining the effects of listening strategy instruction for young learners. The lessons followed a three-stage sequence: listen and answer – reflect – report and discuss. The data were analyzed from students' self-reports and listening test scores. Students reported increased metacognitive knowledge, increased confidence, and better strategy use for dealing with task demands and comprehension difficulties. In addition, the results of test scores suggested that the less proficient students had benefited the most from the strategy training. This study provides us with a better understanding of the multiple effects of strategy training through both quantitative and qualitative data; however, it is possible that the lack of a control group may decrease its validity.

Each of the studies reviewed has its strengths and weaknesses, and has contributed to the research into listening strategy instruction to some extent. Some shifts of research focus among these studies can be generalized. First, there is a shift from quantitatively product-based studies that mainly examine the outcome of language use to qualitatively process-based studies that looked at multiple aspects of how learners manage to be more successful in their learning processes. In addition,strategy instruction has shifted from teaching certain limited strategies to helping learners orchestrate their strategy repertoires according to task demands.Finally, the data collection methods have evolved from pre- and post-test design, to consistent collection of data overtime during the course of strategy training.

Having taken these shifts from a body of research into account, the present study attempts to examine the effects of strategy training not only on learners' listening performance, but also on

their learning process in listening and in self-directed learning. In addition, by employing multiple measurements both quantitatively and qualitatively, it can provide more access to learners' insights into their listening and learning processes, and thus more valid and reliable data can be collected (Vandergrift, 2007). Specifically, four research questions were developed for investigation.

1. Do students alter their habitual listening strategy use over time during strategy training, if so, how?

2. Does strategy training expand students' use of listening strategies?

3. Does the use of learner strategies enhance students' self-directed learning as it relates to learning listening comprehension?

4. Does strategy training improve students' listening proficiency?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

85 second-year Taiwanese college students with homogenous EFL learning backgrounds participated in this study. They have learnt English in school settings for at least 7 years, and their English proficiency ranges from high-beginning to intermediate level. The students were randomly assigned as the experimental group and the control group. Both of the two groups were enrolled in the course – English Listening Practice, with two-hour classes each week. The experimental group, consisting of 43 students, received listening strategy training integrated into the regular listening instruction, while the control group of 42 students attended the same listening program without any strategy training.

The Strategy Training

Over the course of the 16-week intervention study, both the experimental and control classes were taught by the same instructor. In class, participants used the same listening materials, including the textbook on the market, other supplementary daily-life authentic audio and video clips and listening proficiency test practices. Out of class, all participants were assigned to perform listening activities altogether at least for 90 minutes every week. They could choose to watch English TV programs, movies, or listen to broadcasts. In general, both groups had the same instructor, the same materials, the same amount of out-of-class practice and the same listening assessments. The only difference between the two groups was the training approach.

In the control group, the listening instruction followed traditional teaching methods and activities. It mainly involved students listening and repeating or listening and responding. The major class activities were doing the listening exercises in the textbook or practicing the listening test questions. Group discussion mainly focused on the meaning of the content or role-playing the dialogues. Although the listening activities provided in the textbook to some degree have listening strategies embedded in them, strategy use was not discussed.

In the experimental group, the listening strategy inventory was distributed at the outset and it served as the "strategy menu" that individual learners could choose from to try out and evaluate the effectiveness of using these strategies. They then had a chance to orchestrate their own set of strategies to meet their individual needs and task demands. In addition, the general effective strategies which have been suggested from research studies to be appropriate for unidirectional listening tasks were modeled in the strategy training sessions.

The strategy training procedures followed the general steps which have been suggested from several strategy instruction models (e.g., Chamot, et al., 1999; Mendelsohn, 1994; O'Malley &Chamot, 1990). These training phases are summarized as follows:

Strategic-awareness raising phase: the teacher raised students' strategic awareness by modeling and employing think-aloud procedures.

Demonstration phase: the teacher modeled the strategies appropriate for the task demands in this session.

Practice phase: students practiced the focused strategies with similar tasks, and discussed their strategy use, the problems they encountered and possible solutions.

Evaluation phase: students then self-evaluated on the effectiveness of the focused strategies

In addition to the above in-class strategy training, this study adds another phase of outside-class *self-directed practice*. Students were required to complete reflective journals through self-observations and reflections of their activities for learning to listen, so as to foster strategy transfer.

Instruments

This study adopted multiple measurements to collect various sets of data. The quantitative instruments of questionnaires and listening proficiency assessments were used as both pre-tests and post-tests for the experimental and control groups to compare the outcomes of the strategy training, whereas the qualitative instrument of reflective journals were only given to the experimental group to probe the process of strategy training. The rationale for and procedures used to conduct data collection using each instrument is explained as follows.

Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire (LCSQ)

LCSQ was designed to elicit strategies relevant to unidirectional listening tasks. It consisted of 36 strategies into three main categories of metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. The pre-test and post-test LCSQ were compared to examine whether the strategy training had an effect on students' listening strategy use.

Listening Learning Activity Questionnaire (LLAQ)

LLAQ was designed to investigate learners' self-regulated learning in their out-of-class listening learning activities. The LLAQ included two parts, the first part was to probe the range and frequency of listening learning activities engaged in by learners, and the second part was to elicit how learners plan, monitor and evaluate their learning processes while involving these activities. The pre- and post-test LLAQ were employed to examine the effect of strategy training on learners' self-directed learning in listening.

Listening Comprehension Test

The listening portion of General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) was conducted to measure learners' listening proficiency. GEPT has been developed by the Language Training and Testing Center in Taiwan as a criterion-referenced test with high reliability and validity. In the present study, the intermediate level and only the listening section of the GEPT was conducted. Two sets of listening comprehension tests from the GEPT were used for pre-test and post-test respectively.

Self-rated Listening Scale

The self-rated listening scale was adapted from the listening portion of the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR), the self-assessment version for general English proficiency (Wylie & Ingram, 1999). This listening scale consists of 10 smiley faces, each with their own allocated level of English listening proficiency, ranging from the lowest to the highest, creating a range of scores on this scale from 1 to 10. Participants were required to tick the face which understands English in the same way that they do.Both before and after the strategy training, the self-rating scale was administered prior to the GEPT listening test so as to avoid any effect the listening test might have on the self-ratings.

Reflective Journal

In this study, the reflective journals were employed as both the treatment and instrument; hence, only the experimental group students were required to keep reflective journals about their listening learning activities outside of the classroom fortnightly over the 14-week intervention period. Students were asked to reflect and evaluate how they had tried to comprehend the listening input and what they had understood right after completing their listening tasks.The guideline questions for the journal writing are provided. By structuring the data collected, students' journals can be more objectively compared.In addition, to examine the changes over longer and potentially more meaningful intervals (one-month), only the first, the middle and the last of each student's reflective journals were sampled and analyzed.

Paralleling to the completing reflective journals, the control group was assigned to complete similar listening activities out of class as did the experimental group, but the control group were simply required to attend to the meaning of the listening content and write down whatever they had heard on a blank worksheet without any guided questions. These worksheets were also collected as a basis for comparisons.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Effect of Strategy Training on Strategy Use

The first set of quantitative analyses using repeated measures ANOVA was to examine the changes to listening strategy use between the control and experimental groups from pre-test to post-test.

The significance F-ratios for the interaction effects of time by group are reported in Table 4, with the mean strategy use of pre-test and post-test results for treatment and control groups provided. It was found that there were significantly greater changes in using strategies for the experimental group than for the control group in the strategy subgroups of Planning ($F(1,63) = 5.66$, $p < .05$), Directed Attention ($F(1,63) = 13.08$, $p < .01$), Selective Attention ($F(1,63) = 6.41$, $p < .05$), Monitoring ($F(1,63) = 32.16$, $p < .001$), Evaluation ($F(1,63) = 37.99$, $p < .001$), Elaboration ($F(1,63) = 5.63$, $p < .05$), Prediction ($F(1,63) = 5.18$, $p < .05$), Visualization ($F(1,63) = 6.92$, $p < .05$), Translation ($F(1,63) = 5.19$, $p < .05$), Fixation ($F(1,63) = 4.01$, $p < .05$), and Affective ($F(1,63) = 22.53$, $p < .001$) strategies.

Among these eleven of the seventeen subgroups that showed significantly greater changes favoring the experimental group, all five subgroups in the metacognitive category which were associated with the focused strategy training (e.g., Planning, Directed Attention, Selective Attention, Monitoring and Evaluation) were significant. This indicates that students in the experimental group might have raised their strategy awareness and learned to be able to deploy the whole range of metacognitive strategies more automatically and systematically.

Furthermore, in the strategy subgroups of Monitoring and Evaluation, the F-ratios were at a greater level of significance than those in other subgroups. This may be due to the fact that both Monitoring and Evaluation strategies were relatively unfamiliar to and seldom used by both treatment and control groups before strategy training; however, once the metacognitive strategies had been introduced and emphasized with the experimental group, the utilizations of Monitoring and Evaluation strategies were boosted creating relatively greater increases compared to those of the control group.

Table 4 Interaction Effects of Time x Group and Mean Strategy Use of Pre-test and Post-test Results for Control and Experimental groups

Interaction Effects of Time x Group			**Control (N=42)**		**Experimental (N=43)**		**Time x Group**
Categories	Strategy Subgroups		M	SD	M	SD	**F**
Meta- cognitive	Planning	Pre-test	3.19	0.60	3.18	0.56	
		Post-test	3.48	0.48	3.74	0.48	5.66*
	Directed Attention	Pre-test	3.33	0.56	3.34	0.47	
		Post-test	3.59	0.67	4.00	0.52	13.08**
	Selective Attention	Pre-test	3.16	0.67	3.13	0.52	
		Post-test	3.40	0.68	3.73	0.51	6.41*
	Monitoring	Pre-test	3.03	0.44	2.99	0.43	
		Post-test	3.42	0.50	3.86	0.41	32.16***
	Evaluation	Pre-test	2.77	0.42	2.74	0.57	
		Post-test	3.07	0.45	3.72	0.51	37.99***
Cognitive Top-Down	Listening for gist	Pre-test	3.00	0.82	3.23	0.72	
		Post-test	3.35	0.69	3.65	0.55	0.12
	Inferencing	Pre-test	3.47	0.67	3.63	0.58	
		Post-test	3.79	0.55	4.16	0.42	2.18
	Elaboration	Pre-test	2.81	0.56	2.94	0.63	
		Post-test	3.13	0.63	3.56	0.73	5.63*
	Prediction	Pre-test	2.79	0.77	2.68	0.60	
		Post-test	3.07	0.70	3.23	0.66	5.18*
	Visualization	Pre-test	3.03	0.54	2.94	0.54	
		Post-test	3.38	0.59	3.56	0.54	6.92*
Cognitive Bottom-up	*Understanding each word*	Pre-test	3.24	0.85	3.35	0.88	
		Post-test	3.21	0.64	2.94	0.81	3.83
	Translation	Pre-test	3.10	0.66	3.00	0.72	
		Post-test	2.97	0.58	2.58	0.80	5.19*
	Fixation	Pre-test	3.07	0.57	3.10	0.61	
		Post-test	2.87	0.48	2.60	0.51	4.01*
Cognitive	Summarization	Pre-test	2.94	0.69	2.97	0.75	
		Post-test	3.00	0.65	3.39	0.56	3.75
Cognitive	Note-taking	Pre-test	2.91	0.90	2.74	0.77	
		Post-test	3.21	0.84	3.32	0.83	2.17
Social/ Affective	Social	Pre-test	3.40	0.84	3.35	0.64	
		Post-test	3.63	0.67	3.77	0.58	1.56
	Affective	Pre-test	2.68	0.61	2.63	0.59	
		Post-test	3.09	0.68	3.71	0.80	22.53***
Note. df = (1,63)							
*p <.05 **p <.01 ***p <.001							

As for the subgroups in the cognitive category, the experimental group showed significantly greater increases in three top-down strategies of Elaboration, Prediction, and Visualization (see Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3), but significantly greater decreases in the other two bottom-up

strategies of Translation and Fixation(see Figure 4 and Figure 5). The results show the tendency that the experimental group have learned to employ more top-down or sophisticated strategies and less bottom-up or weak strategies while performing the listening tasks. In addition, among the other cognitive subgroups, although the changes were not significant, the experimental group nevertheless had greater mean changes than those for the control group. These results may be due to the introduction of more appropriate higher-level strategies during the intervention and thus suggest that strategy training may guide students to use strategies in more appropriate ways to comprehend the input.

Finally, a relatively greater significant difference was found in the Affective subgroup,which originally was the least used category by all students prior to the strategy training. Nevertheless, after training, the experimental group students were able to use Affective strategies much more frequently than the control group (see Figure 6).

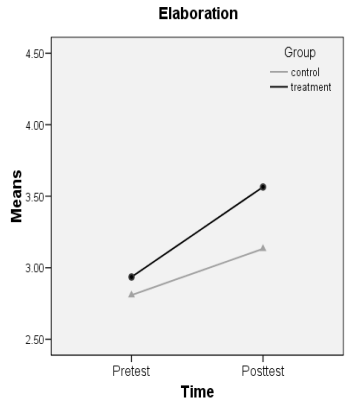

Fig. 1: Mean Changes of Elaboration

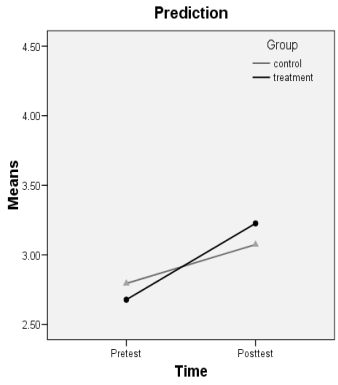

Fig. 2: Mean Changes of Prediction

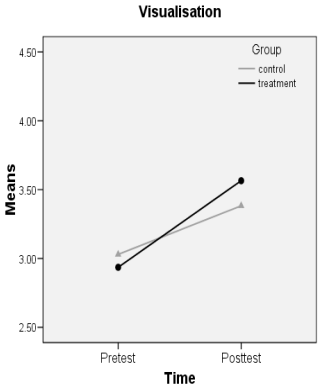

Fig. 3: Mean Changes of Visualization

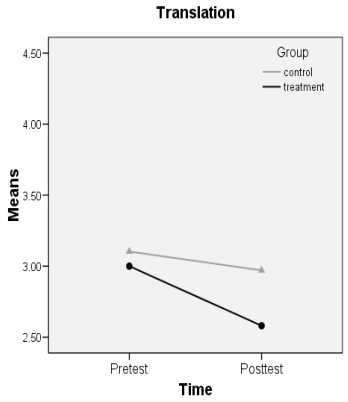

Fig. 4: Mean Changes of Translation

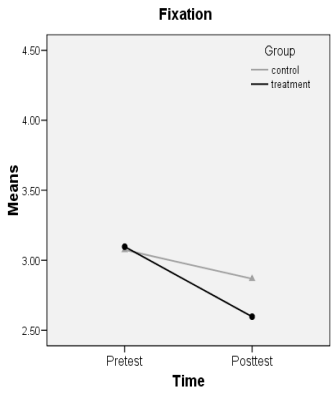

Fig. 5: Mean Changes of Fixation

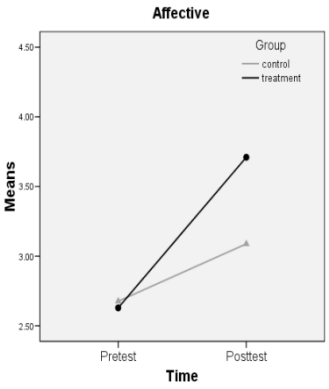

Fig. 6: Mean Changes of effective

The first research question examines in-depth insights into changing processes of how students adjust their habitual strategy use to listen in a more systematic and effective way. Some patterns were revealed from the analysis of qualitative data. Regarding changes in strategy use in three main categories,in the metacognitive category, the results show that students become more aware of their thought processes and gradually recognized the necessity of planning, monitoring and evaluating their listening tasks to execute better control over their listening processes. With increasing metacognitive awareness and strategy use, in cognitive category, students seemed to shift from passively using mechanical strategies to actively utilizing sophisticated strategies which involved a greater depth of processing. In addition, students employed more affctive strategies to build their confidence. Once they became more confident in their listening performance, they were more likely to optimize their learning to achieve greater success. Therefore, it was found that experimental group students, step by step, were adjusting their habitual strategy use

over time and were developing a better quality and higher level of strategy usage as a result of strategy training.

Effect of Strategy Training on Self-directed Learning

Regarding the results of LLAQs, it was found that there were significant differences in all categories (see Table 5), i.e. for Listening Learning Activities ($F(1,63) = 17.93$, $p < .001$), Setting goals–Planning ($F(1,63) = 5.96$, $p < .05$), Noticing problems–Monitoring ($F(1,63) = 10.16$, $p < .01$), and Solving problems–Evaluating and Revising ($F(1,63) = 22.75$, $p < .001$).

Table 5 Interaction Effects of Time x Group and Mean frequencies in LLAQ of Pre-test and Post-test Results for Control and Experimental groups

Interaction Effects of Time x Group		**Control (N=42)**			**Experimental (N=43)**		**Time x Group**
LLAQ Categories		M	SD		M	SD	F
Listening Learning Activities	Pre-test	2.08	0.34		1.97	0.43	17.93***
	Post-test	2.53	0.36		2.71	0.40	
Setting goals (Planning)	Pre-test	2.72	0.65		2.79	0.54	5.96*
	Post-test	2.91	0.58		3.21	0.55	
Noticing Problems (Monitoring)	Pre-test	2.86	0.55		3.00	0.62	10.16**
	Post-test	3.15	0.49		3.58	0.56	
Solving Problems (Evaluating and Revising)	Pre-test	2.87	0.53		2.81	0.55	22.75***
	Post-test	3.02	0.52		3.36	0.52	

Note. df = (1,63)*$p < .05$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

For the category of Listening Learning Activities, although both groups were required to be involved in out-of-class listening learning activities for minimum 90 minutes every week, the experimental group had significantly greater increases in mean frequency of these activities than did the control group. This suggests that the experimental group were more motivated to engage in more listening learning activities than they were required to. In addition, the experimental group reported doing significantly more Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating of their learning processes in listening during outside class practices. These changes may be associated with the treatment of keeping reflective journals, which encouraged students to reflect on and track their learning successes and problems, such as their learning goals, problems encountered and attempted solutions. As a result, the experimental group students were better able to self-regulate their learning processes and become more autonomous in their language learning. Therefore, these findings suggest that strategy training was effective for promoting learners' self-regulated learning outside class.

Effect of Strategy Training on Listening Proficiency

First, the results of GEPT scores (see Table 6) showed that there was no significant difference found for the interaction effect of time by group ($F(1,62) = 2.59$, $p = 0.112$). This meant that the experimental group showed no significant improvement in the mean GEPT scores from pre-test to post-test compared to those of the control group.

However, regarding the results of self-ratings,it was found that the interaction effect of time by group was statistically significant ($F(1,62) = 12.40$, $p = 0.01$). The result indicated that the gains in the means from pre- to post-test, as perceived by experimental group students were significantly greater than the gains perceived by control group students.

Table 6 Interaction Effects of Time x Group and Means for GEPT Listening Scores and Self-rated Listening Scale

Proficiency Instruments		Control (N=42)		Experimental (N=43)		Time x Group
		M	SD	M	SD	F
GEPT Scores (range 0~120)	Pre-test	74.94	17.60	76.61	15.64	2.59
	Post-test	78.29	15.52	82.71	14.20	
Self-ratings (range 1~10)	Pre-test	4.12	1.15	4.06	1.06	12.40**
	Post-test	4.35	0.92	4.84	0.74	
*Note.*df = (1,62)*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001						

As the group means indicate, generally speaking, in the case of GEPT results, the increase in the mean scores over time in the experimental group was greater than those in the control group. This is indicative of the predicted trend in a positive direction for the experimental group, although it was not statistically significant. However, on the other hand, the significantly greater increases of self-ratings of listening proficiency among the experimental group could also be the result of students' positive changes of strategy use toward listening tasks and greater involvement in self-regulated learning outside class. Therefore, it is more likely that students performed their listening tasks more effectively and thus perceived that they had achieved higher listening proficiency across the intervention.

Nevertheless, taking both the results of the GEPT listening tests and self-ratings of listening together, the quantitative results of listening proficiency performance suggest that the strategy training may have had some positive effects on students' listening performance.

It is suggested that there needs to be a shift in assessing students' listening proficiency in a conventional EFL listening classroom, where the listening multiple-choice test has long been a predominant measurement in assessing students' listening outcomes. As EFL college students come to the class with different proficiency levels, it may not be sufficient to assess students simply through listening test scores. Lower achievers may still get low scores even if they put in a lot more effort in their learning than their higher-achieving counterparts, especially over a short period such as a semester. To measure this, it is essential to shift to a greater emphasis on the measurement of students' processes of improvement.

The findings of this study showed that the treatment strategy of keeping reflective journals could provide an alternative assessment of students' learning progress. Since reflective journals may more comprehensively capture individual students' learning processes and their efforts in improving listening (Chen, 2009), they provide the teacher with valuable insights into students' listening performance.

As Graham (2003) has pointed out, it is crucial to help students perceive a connection between their own effort, the learning process and outcome. Thus, to have students keeping reflective journals on a regular basis may be one way to achieve this goal. When students become better able to self-reflect on their learning processes and on their strategy use, they have better control over and feel more confident to deal with more difficult listening tasks. Gradually, they became capable of self-directing their own learning more effectively which in turn enhances their listening proficiency.

Strategy Development over Time

Parallel to completing reflective journals in the experimental group, control group students were required to hand in the notes with a focus on the content of listening tasks. To briefly summarize the data from this task, some students appeared to replicate a few sentences they

had heard from the listening passages, while some of the more diligent students wrote down every single word of the passage, after pausing and repeating the listening texts many times. Only a few students wrote a summary although they also stated that they repeated the listening several times. All the written notes they handed in were very similar across the 16 weeks. Few complaints and little resistance to doing this task occurred from students, since such practices were typical of the assignments they normally had.

As for the experimental group, the three sets of reflective journals were completed by students at weeks 2, 9 and 16 of the program respectively. While the first set served as a point of departure for how students would embark upon their course of strategy training, the second and the third serve as markers of how students' listening strategy use was changed as a result of strategy training. Reported changes in strategy use were further examined for each of the metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategy categories in the forms of specific examples using individuals' statements.

First of all, in the metacognitive category, students were better able to address a wider range of thought processes. For example, in strategy subgroup of Selective Attention, at the outset, students had very limited knowledge of metacognitive strategies, and most of them simply stated "pay attention to key words". However, as strategy training progressed, students seemed to become more aware of what they should specifically attend to, for example, one student (S16) stated in her second and final sets of reflective journal entries that,

I would pay attention to the transition words, such as 'however', 'but', 'therefore', and it helped me to connect the ideas of this announcement. (S16- Reflective Journal (RJ) 2)

This dialogue was about 'commute'. I would pay attention to the relative words or key facts about transportations, distance and time the speakers would travel. (S16- RJ3)

Among metacognitive strategy subgroups, the Monitoring subgroup was the least employed compared to the others. Since monitoring strategies involve more indirect and complex processing, most students might not be aware of or be able to actively manage monitoring while listening. Their reported utilizations of monitoring strategies were mostly limited to "keeping up with speed" or "getting used to speech rate", which suggested that students simply passively received the input, and even when they tried to be actively involved in using strategies, they tended to use them at a basic level. Nevertheless, a few higher proficiency listeners seemed to begin to employ the monitoring strategies at a more sophisticated level. Two students reported as follows,

I became more aware of my comprehension while I was listening, and then what I understood at the first part would make me understand next part better. (S30- RJ2)

When I didn't really understand the coming message, I would also check if it matched the overall situation. Sometimes they didn't fit in, so I would quickly change my interpretations again. (S3- RJ2)

As the strategy training continued to the end, results from the final set of strategy profile revealed that most students seemed to be able to apply the whole range of metacognitive strategies and reported these procedures more comprehensively. For example, one student stated:

If I follow the sequences of using strategies to prepare before listening, monitor comprehension during listening and evaluate after listening, I could comprehend much better. These strategies were just like a set of 'happy meal', if I didn't use one of them, then I could not understand more. (S27- RJ3)

It appeared that students not only broadened the horizons of metacognitive strategy use but also advanced these utilizations in a more systematic way.

Next, in the cognitive category, the results from the first set of strategy profile indicated that, most students predominantly resorted to bottom-up strategies for detailed comprehension, and

only used inferencing strategies to wildly guess when comprehension broke down. Therefore, responses such as "understand word meanings carefully", "think hard about the unfamiliar words", "translate the words into Chinese" or "quickly guess the answer" prevailed in most students' initial reflective journals. Another highly-used strategy was 'Replay' – repeated listening. One student (S21- RJ1) said, "I would pause sentence by sentence to understand the meaning". Many students would replay the listening texts several times until they comprehended the meanings. They primarily persisted with decoding processes, that is, bottom-up, to decode the input word by word. When they couldn't understand or missed several sentences, they simply replayed and listened again.

As students received strategy training and consistently reflected on their strategy use and the problems encountered over time, it was found in the second and third sets of data that individual learners of different proficiency levels began to realize the weakness of simply using bottom-up strategies to comprehend the texts and became willing to try out more top-down strategies to listen in more appropriate ways. Students who addressed the importance of catching every word at the beginning seemed to realize the disadvantages of just decoding input. For example, as one student stated,

Trying to understand word by word while listening was really a 'mission impossible'. I found that I should just ignore the unfamiliar words and keep listening; otherwise I would get stuck and get panic again. (S19- RJ2)

I learned to listen for the key words and key points of the contexts and keep remind me about what I've understood. I found that my comprehension could go faster and understand better. (S19- RJ3)

Through reflecting his own strategy use in processing the input,he gradually discovered how to approach listening texts more effectively. Therefore, to incorporate more appropriate top-down strategies which involve higher level processing might help students to cope with the complex nature of the listening process.

Regarding the Social/Affective Category, since most students performed out-of-class listening activities alone and they mainly dealt with one-way listening tasks, fewer social strategies were employed. By contrast, the utilizations of affective strategies were reported to have increased more dramatically. They reported to use affective strategies such as building their confidence, lowering anxieties and keeping going when they were unable to comprehend. In addition, some students stated that they employed affective strategies to cope with their fear of the unknown in the listening input and with the obstacles which occurred while they were performing listening tasks.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the effects of strategy training using multiple measurements, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to triangulate the data. As a result, more in-depth insights into strategy training and more objective findings were generated. It is suggested that more research efforts are needed that use multiple measurements in strategy training across different educational contexts, especially those which put a greater emphasis on process-based development of strategy use over time. By doing so, not only can the effects of strategy training be examined more comprehensively, but also more reliable and valid results regarding learners' strategy use and their listening performance can be provided.

Furthermore, this study provided empirical evidence that strategy training can be integrated into a practical EFL listening classroom and can bring positive effects in developing EFL learners' strategy use, self-directed learning and listening performances. This suggests the strong need to conduct such practices to guide students to effectively activate their listening processes and self-directed learning, especially in a context where listening is predominately tested rather than taught. However, to achieve effective and efficient strategy instruction, collaboration among

students, teachers and policy or curriculum leaders is required. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the field of EFL listening strategy research through a call for changing conventional listening instruction to a strategy and process-based instruction in listening. Strategy training could also hold promise for helping students both to enhance their listening macroskill and to foster learner autonomy, factors which are necessary for students to achieve greater communicative competence.

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