

# PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES: GATEWAY TO SECOND LANGUAGE UNDERSTANDING

Isabelita C. Bodbod\*

University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines, Claveria, Misamis Oriental, 9004 Philippines

\*For correspondence: Tel. + (63) 955-0487-115, [isabelita.bodbod@ustp.edu.ph](mailto:isabelita.bodbod@ustp.edu.ph)

**ABSTRACT.** *Employing a listening comprehension strategy is a complex skill requiring attention and sensible development from all involved. Thus, this study examines the respondents' perception of the usefulness of the listening comprehension strategies in understanding the target language. It also explores the listening comprehension level of Forty-Three first-year college students in a university and assesses the significant differences between high-capable and low-capable listeners. The data on categorizing respondents' listening comprehension levels and strategies were analyzed using descriptive statistics. An independent sample t-test was utilized to check the difference between variables and to see which group used the listening comprehension strategy. The result showed that more than half (53.48%) of respondents were low-capable listeners. All three listening comprehension strategies, namely cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective, were moderately useful for the respondents as compelling strategies in listening. There were no significant differences between high and low-capable listeners according to the strategy used. With all these, instructors play a vital role in developing the learners' listening comprehension since listening skills do not develop independently. The instructor must create an optimal learning environment. Listeners in the classroom must see, hear, and feel the materials themselves and not simply sit passively waiting for the lecture to end. To this end, curriculum developers, listening material writers, trainers, and instructors must be more aware of incorporating various listening tasks, activities, and strategies into the listening materials or textbooks.*

**Keywords:** High-capable listener, immediately capable listener, low-capable listener, cognitive, metacognitive, socio-affective

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is necessary for developing other communication skills. It is one factor that plays an essential role in learning the target language because while listening, the listener gets information on its syntax, semantics, lexical, and phonology. [1] the total time spent listening takes up 40-50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing, about 9%, further expressed that it is the most important. Since it involves several skills, techniques, and strategies, it is required to facilitate this activity fully.

Developing a listening strategy is significant because comprehension takes place when a person understands what is heard or understands the text through hearing it. Nevertheless, [2] stated that in the preparation of language classes, teachers should treat listening as equally important to other language skills. Listening status has been an incidental standing of central importance. The classroom scenarios allow students to sit quietly and listen to dialogues or spoken texts; they are expected to improve their listening comprehension through this experience [3, 4]. Teachers expect students to decipher the meaning of the messages and eventually develop their listening skills without help. In this scenario, teachers leave the development of listening skills to the listeners. Thus, listening comprehension remains challenging for language learners because they must decipher spoken language in a limited time [5]. Although many studies have been conducted in line with listening, many authors have agreed that much work remains to be done [6].

Despite its critical role in language acquisition, listening has traditionally been an overlooked and undervalued skill in teaching [7, 2]. In this context, this study explores how students in a University perceived the usefulness of listening comprehension strategies when learning a language.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study of [13] commented that the learner adopts learning strategies to make learning more effective, enjoyable, self-directed, and transferable to new situations. The study of 80

female students indicated that respondents used several language learning strategies and chose distinct preferences for particular strategies. In addition, there was also a positive relationship between strategy use and motivation, proficiency, and language learning beliefs. [14] studied Thirty Arabic learners regarding their listening comprehension. Advanced and intermediate listeners utilized metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies through variations in the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies were the most potent predictor of listening comprehension, with no significant differences in metacognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies were the most minor predictor.

Nevertheless, [15] surveyed Iranian university students with different majors regarding their awareness of using metacognitive listening strategies in learning English. Generally, the result showed that more than 60% of the participants in the study were fully aware of their metacognitive listening strategies, particularly problem-solving, planning, and evaluation. Another study conducted by [16] on the use of metacognitive strategies in listening comprehension showed that out of 60 Iranian university students, 20 of them were considered low proficient listeners, and 40 of the participants were highly proficient listeners. Among the five Metacognitive strategies, the students' most frequently used strategy was "problem-solving" followed by "directed attention." The third was "mental translation," and the fourth was "planning evaluation," while the category of "person knowledge" was the least frequent. The result also revealed that highly proficient listeners used metacognitive strategies more frequently than less proficient listeners. Moreover, a significant difference in using "person-knowledge strategies" was found between the high and low-proficient listeners.

However, a study by [17] investigated 30 upper-intermediate students from two English language teaching Institutes in Isfahan. The relationship between listeners' metacognitive awareness, motivation, and perceived use of strategies were

variables in this study. The result showed that the perception of upper-intermediate Iranian learners of metacognitive awareness strategies was not high. According to the researchers, there should be an integration and cultivation of metacognitive awareness and strategy instruction into the teaching of listening. Teachers are encouraged to provide instruction and practice using metacognitive awareness strategies while listening.

Five fundamental factors regarding metacognitive awareness strategies while listening are discussed [18]. The first factor is problem-solving when listeners infer what they do not understand and monitor this inference. The second factor, planning and evaluation, means that listeners prepare themselves for listening and eventually evaluate the results of their listening efforts. The listeners' translation should avoid the third mental factor to become skilled listeners. The fourth factor, personal knowledge, represents listeners' understanding of the difficulty of the L2 listening task. Lastly, the fifth factor is directed attention, which tells the strategies listeners use to focus and stay on task.

Nevertheless, [19] investigated 40 Iranian university students and used four structured questionnaires and an IELTS listening test. To check the relationship among variables and to see which group used which listening strategy more, Multiple Regression analysis, Chi-Square test, and way ANOVA at 0.05 level were used. Omitted in the study was social/affective because it rendered a very low mean. The result shows that no individual groups used social/affective strategies in listening. Maybe there was insufficient rapport or communication between the learners and the teacher. Thus, the learners were shy or hesitant to ask questions, or the level of proficiency was said to be another reason for the result (ibid).

On the other hand, [20] studied Malaysian college students' listening comprehension. The study looked into the instruction of socio-affective strategies in the experimental group. Subjects under study received explicit instructions to employ socio-affective while in the control group, subjects were not instructed but still did the tasks. The result revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test.

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study used a survey design that collected information from respondents through their responses to a questionnaire. Total complete enumeration was used because all first-year students under the researcher were taken as samples. These 43 first-year college respondents were enrolled in a bachelor's program at the University. They were a heterogeneous group of respondents from different sectors of society with various characters.

The researcher used MP<sub>3</sub> audio files to play the listening texts required for each test, while the Listening Comprehension Strategies Questionnaire was given at the end of the listening activities. In the listening tests, the individually tabulated data provided valuable information on whether the respondent was a highly capable listener, immediate listener, or low-capable listener. The analyzed survey results used statistical tests to obtain information on respondents' listening comprehension

strategies, specifically cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective, with their sub-strategies.

Listening Comprehension Test: This described respondents' listening test scores. When listeners got a score within the range of 22.0-30.0, the description was high capable listeners, while 15.0-21.99 had the definition of intermediate capable listeners and 0-14.99 low capable listeners.

Listening Comprehension Strategies Questionnaire: Since the study determined respondents' perceptions of the usefulness of listening comprehension strategies, the assigned highest score of four (4) was given to strongly agree with a highly useful interpretation. A higher score of three (3) was assigned to respondents who would agree with a moderately useful interpretation. A score of two (2) was given for respondents who disagreed with a somewhat useful interpretation and one (1) for respondents who strongly disagreed with a not useful interpretation. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentages, and range were employed to examine the central tendencies and variability of the scores. Then, an independent sample t-test appreciated if there was any significant difference between the variables under study.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1: What is the listening comprehension level of the student-respondents?

The data in Table 1 show the respondents' frequency distribution in listening comprehension. The table discloses that more than half of the respondents (53.48%) obtained low scores in the test of 30 items from separate listening conversations. This result implies that respondents need relentless reinforcement in their listening comprehension. According to [21], listening skills do not develop independently; they must be fostered through exposure or training. This finding is supported by [22], who said that listening skills dominate language learning because messages are easily misunderstood if the ability to listen effectively is not fully developed.

Abbas [23] pointed out that constant practice is the most important thing to improve students' listening comprehension. This result means that the more listening activities are introduced, the better the opportunity for the learners to explore the possibility of getting good performance.

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' Listening Comprehension**

Scoring Range	Description	f	%
22.0 - 30.0	High capable listener	5	11.62
15.0 - 21.99	Intermediate capable listener	15	34.88
0 - 14.99	Low capable listener	23	53.48
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

Problem 2: What is the respondents' perception of using listening comprehension strategies in terms of cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective?

Table 2 data reveal the central tendency of second language learners' use of cognitive listening strategy (mean: 3.186) in understanding the English language. Prominent indicators in which respondents strongly agree include "I try to picture the setting of the conversation to understand what the speakers are talking about" (mean: 3.326), "I use my knowledge and personal experience to help me understand the topic" (mean: 3.302) and "I focus on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text" (mean: 3.279). The result implies the utilization of both top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously. This background knowledge activates the listener's understanding to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. [11] listening comprehension occurs when listeners combine their pre-existing knowledge and experiences with the listening text. This result is further supported by [10] when he said that activating students' accumulated schemata to enhance comprehension to understand the listening text fully and eventually to create new schemata is necessary.

However, respondents seem to forget that focusing on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text signifies a dilemma in the linguistic schema. According to Bđlokcuođlu, a shortage in this schema leads to hard times in decoding and understanding a text; the more learners have stored linguistic schema, the quicker they know. This study also supports the findings of [13,14], who found cognitive strategy the most frequently used strategy in their research.

**Table 2. Comprehension Strategy Used by Second Language Learners: Cognitive**

Cognitive	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
Question 1.	3.279	0.504	Strongly agree	Highly useful
Question 2.	3.326	0.644	Strongly agree	Highly useful
Question 3.	3.233	0.751	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 4.	3.209	0.638	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 5.	3.302	0.558	Strongly agree	Highly useful
Question 6.	3.116	0.586	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 7.	2.907	0.75	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 8.	3.116	0.498	Agree	Moderately useful
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.186</b>	<b>0.309</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderately useful</b>

3.26-4.00, strongly agree; 2.51-3.25, agree; 1.76-2.50, disagree; 1.00-1.75, strongly disagree

Table 3 shows that respondents, on average, also agree to use metacognitive strategy (mean: 3.053) in listening comprehension, which is strongly characterized by indicators like, "After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time" (mean: 3.279). Another salient response is, "I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding" (mean: 3.186). Nearly with the same magnitude is their response: "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" (mean: 3.140). This finding suggests that respondents in the study were utilizing their metacognitive listening strategies, particularly planning, monitoring, and evaluating. In other words, once learners know this strategy, they become effective learners who can take responsibility for their learning.

Similarly, [16] maintained that this evaluation strategy allows learners to know and control their learning. According to [24], exercising control over their learning is a habit that will benefit learners in the long run. This finding corroborates the [25, 26] study that indicated a significant correlation between listening comprehension and metacognition. Hence, according to [3], teachers are encouraged to prompt learners to reflect on themselves and to increase the effectiveness of listening strategies. The above statement is further supported by [17] when they said teachers are reinvigorated to provide instruction and practice using metacognitive awareness strategies while listening. This means that there should be integration and cultivation of metacognitive awareness and strategy instruction into the teaching of listening.

**Table 3. Comprehension Strategy Used by Second Language Learners: Metacognitive**

Metacognitive	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
Question 1.	2.698	0.558	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 2.	3	0.577	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 3.	3.046	0.615	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 4.	3.023	0.597	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 5.	3.14	0.467	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 6.	3.279	0.548	Strongly agree	Highly useful
Question 7.	3.186	0.664	Agree	Moderately useful
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.053</b>	<b>0.309</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderately useful</b>

3.26-4.00, strongly agree; 2.51-3.25, agree; 1.76-2.50, disagree; 1.00-1.75, strongly disagree

The evidence in Table 4 shows that respondents, on average, also preferred the socio-affective strategies in listening comprehension with the same level of agreement as the first two. With this strategy, respondents tend to "I feel that listening in English is a challenge for me" (mean: 3.512). This finding indicates that listening in English is an enormous task for the respondents. It cannot be denied that the process of listening is highly complicated because knowledge and skills must be utilized simultaneously. [26] mentioned that many students considered listening to be the most demanding skill that needs considerable practice and training. What added to the challenge is that most of the respondents in the class only voluntarily speak the target language if required by the researcher.

With this, teachers must double their efforts to look into the different contemporary practices and materials used in the classroom so that learners will have the necessary exposure to natural and authentic speakers. Although the listeners can redirect their focus in dealing with listening anxieties, as

shown in the table, this outcome contrasts [13, 19] studies where no individual groups used social/affective strategy in listening. Teachers are motivated to attend by establishing enough rapport or communication to institute an empathetic and optimal learning environment.

**Table 4. Comprehension Strategy Used by Second Language Learners: Socio-affective**

Socio-affective	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
Question 1.	3.512	0.592	Strongly agree	Highly useful
Question 2.	2.907	0.895	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 3.	3.186	0.852	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 4.	2.605	1.094	Agree	Moderately useful
Question 5.	2.907	0.895	Agree	Moderately useful
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.023</b>	<b>0.646</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderately useful</b>

3.26-4.00, strongly agree; 2.51-3.25, agree; 1.76-2.50, disagree; 1.00-1.75, strongly disagree

Problem 3: Are there significant differences between high and low-capable listeners' perceived use of cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies?

The data in Table 5 reveal insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis using an observed significance of 0.203 in the cognitive strategy used against the expected significance level of 0.05. This is true for metacognitive and socio-affective strategies. This result means that the listening comprehension of high and low-capable listeners do not vary with each other according to the degree of using cognitive, metacognitive, or socio-affective strategies. Both high and low-capable listeners moderately perceived the usefulness of using cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective as compelling strategies in listening.

In line with this, [13] pointed out that learners adopt learning strategies to make learning more effective, enjoyable, self-directed, and transferable to new situations. With this, teachers should provide learners with strategies with guided practice to use appropriate strategies fully in different contexts and forms.

**Table 5. T-test Statistics and Significance of Mean Difference Between High and Low Listeners in Terms of Strategies Used**

Strategy	Comprehension Level	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	Sig.	Interpretation
Cognitive	Low capable listener	3.045	0.301	-1.377	0.203	Not Significant
	High capable listener	3.304	0.45			
Meta cognitive	Low capable listener	3.089	0.252	-0.191	0.854	Not Significant
	High capable listener	3.125	0.462			
Socio-affective	Low capable listener	2.911	0.348	-1.382	0.198	Not Significant
	High capable listener	3.178	0.45			

### 5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the listening comprehension strategies used by the respondents. Specifically, this study arrived at the following: listening comprehension level, respondents' perception of the usefulness of listening strategies, and the differences between high and low-capable listeners' perception of the usefulness of strategies, particularly cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. This study made use of a survey design with forty-three respondents. The researcher used two instruments to gather the data: the listening comprehension test and a survey questionnaire. The data were analyzed using a t-test to determine the significance or non-significance of the studied variables. Listening comprehension is a complex skill requiring attention and conscious development from all involved. The listening improvement comes with constant practice and exposure and students' diligent participation and cooperation. Guiding students through various listening activities provides them with the knowledge that will help them succeed in completing a task. Students can obtain valuable skills to develop their listening competence by completing tasks. With all these, instructors play a vital role in developing the learners' listening comprehension. As several research studies show, improved listening skills can be learned; an effective classroom leader is a knowledgeable and skilled instructor and an excellent active listener to their students. Moreover, the instructor must create an optimal learning environment.

### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Instructors. The study's findings shed light on what directions instructors should do. They are encouraged to vary listening strategies, update approaches to meet students' dynamism, and utilize various resources in constructing effective listening instruction. This efficient pedagogy in listening will not only benefit students during listening examinations but also in dealing confidently and wisely in their day-to-day communication.
2. University administrators. The administrators should unceasingly support instructors by sending them to seminars or training programs to upgrade their teaching effectiveness concerning the listening development of the students. JEEP Start 1, 2, and JEEP Accelerate 3 and 4 must not be an optional program of the University. The JEEP programs can serve as a good source of practice and exposure from authentic speakers; the program aims to develop the student's English proficiency and caters the listening comprehension as students answer questions after listening to various native and non-native speakers.
3. Commission on Higher Education. The CHED shall intensify its call for broader participation of different HEIs or other interested entities to facilitate seminars or pieces of training that will focus solely on exposing college instructors to the techniques, strategies, or methodologies that will uplift their pedagogy and boost confidence in handling the new batches of performance-oriented students as products of the K to 12 curriculum.

The Commission is also commended for spearheading a call for the involvement of different individuals to develop listening resources that are easily and readily available in any book center outlets.

4. Future researchers. Research similar to this study can be conducted to chart other components of listening. With more participants, using qualitative data collection methods through student interviews can be considered to triangulate the research data. The adapted listening strategy questionnaire can be modified to include new findings to have a fuller list of listening strategies.

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