

The Impact of Explicit/Integrated Instruction of Listening Comprehension Strategies on EFL Learners' L2 Listening Comprehension and their Overall Strategy Use

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the impact of explicit/integrated instruction of listening comprehension strategies on lower-intermediate EFL learners' L2 listening comprehension and their overall strategy use. Fourteen lower-intermediate EFL students were selected as the participants of the study. A repeated measures design was implemented to compare the participants' comprehension and overall strategy use at pre-control, pre-intervention, and post-intervention points. The data were gathered through IELTS listening comprehension tests and a Likert-scale listening strategy questionnaire. To analyze the data, a series of parametric (paired samples T-tests) and non-parametric tests (Friedman Test and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests) were run. After the experimental phase, the participants improved significantly in terms of their listening comprehension ability. They also revealed a significant improvement in their overall listening strategy use after the intervention. However, their strategy use after the control phase was also found to be statistically significant. In comparison, their performance during the experimental phase outperformed that of the control phase. The findings have some implications for EFL teachers who are expected to rely upon the explicit/integrated approach and utilize strategy instruction in order to improve the EFL learners' listening skill.

Keywords: explicit/integrated instruction, listening comprehension, strategy use, EFL

INTRODUCTION

The first studies on learning strategies were based upon Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, where "second language learning occurred through implicit,

unconscious processes activated by appropriate input" (Chamot 1995, p. 15; cited in Aponte-de-Hanna, 2012). During that period, Mendelsohn (1995) explains that "teachers of listening [were] merely Krashen's (1985) providers of comprehensible input," only requiring their students to answer a set of questions after listening to a prescribed passage (cited in Aponte-de-Hanna, 2012). Krashen's input theory, Aponte-de-Hanna (2012) argued, was soon questioned and refuted; consequently, SLA studies shifted to look at language learning from the perspective of cognitive learning theory. From the perspective of cognitive theory, the learners are taught to actively seek ways to learn how to differentiate between sounds, identify words and sentence structures, interpret stress and intention, preserve and interpret this within the immediate together with the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance (Wipf, 1984; cited in Vandergrift, 2011).

A thorough investigation of the history of language learning shows dearth of attention to listening skill. This was mainly due to the fact that L2 listening researchers considered listening as an ability that could be learned and developed without help (Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Morley, 1984; Moyer, 2006; Mendelsohn, 1998; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994). In recent years, also, of the many studies in this area much work has been specifically conducted on strategy-based instruction (SBI) of listening comprehension and its effectiveness.

Vandergrift (2007) claims that whilst more is known about the cognitive nature of listening and the role of listening in communication, L2 listening skill remains to be the least investigated of all four language skills. He asserted that this issue might be due to implicit and fleeting nature of the acoustic input and the difficulty in accessing the processes.

Mendelsohn (2006) also argued that much of what has traditionally been wrongly named teaching listening should in fact be called testing listening. He contends that the distinction that is being made is that when you teach, by definition, you teach the learner of anything how to do something. On the other hand, he believes, when you test a learner, you do not show them how to do it but rather, simply have them do it, and you evaluate how well they did it. Being ignored for many years after SBI emergence, listening strategies and techniques have been used for equipping L2 listeners to understand the different aspects of listening skill too (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Listening strategies refer to conscious plans that the listener employs to manage incoming speech, particularly when he knows that he must compensate for incomplete input or understanding (Rost, 2002). Robin and Gou (2006) also defined listening strategies as techniques or activities that cause directly the listening input to be comprehended and recalled encompassing metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies to facilitate comprehension and to make learning more effective. Learning listening, therefore, requires the interactive "orchestration" between metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies to facilitate comprehension and to make learning more effective (Vandergrift, 2011).

The growing interest in learning strategies reflects a public awareness that language learners can and need to develop tools to become more effective and autonomous (Vandergrift, 1997). Hedge (2000) also contends that the implication of research in language learning strategies on classroom teachers is to know whether it is possible to help learners acquire and develop strategies which will enhance their ability to learn inside and outside the classroom.

Yükselci (2003), referring to Chamot (1995), stated that SBI for second language (L2) listening comprehension has benefits for the learner and that good listeners employ a wide variety of strategies. He further argued that there is a general consensus among some researchers such as Mendelsohn (1998), Chamot (1995), Rubin (1995), and Oxford (1990) as it is beneficial to listeners to be instructed in listening strategies and that listening strategies help listeners to grapple with difficult listening tasks in real life situations.

An important issue to be dealt with before starting strategy training is how to provide strategy instruction which is the methodological aspect of instruction. This involves two methodological issues. The first is the explicit (direct) versus embedded dichotomy and the second is the separate versus integrated dichotomy. The results of several studies have shown that students who are instructed using embedded approach are not able to transfer the skills and strategies to new activities and tasks (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

However, Abumelha (2008), citing Chamot (2005), mentioned that there is a dearth of agreement on in what context strategy instruction should take place. There is a controversy as to whether instruction should focus upon teaching strategies as part of the curriculum, or it might be better to provide a course of strategy instruction separately.

Some scholars hold that strategies learned within a language class are less likely to transfer to other tasks (Gu, 1996), and, from a practical perspective, it is easier to plan for one separate strategy course than to prepare all teachers to teach strategies (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). They believe that students can generalize the strategies to other contexts and they learn better, when they put all their effort on developing strategic skills rather than trying to learn the content at the same time (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

However, many researchers believe that integrated instruction provides students with opportunities to practice learning strategies with authentic language learning tasks. They believe that effective strategy instruction is not a separate content area. They argue that such instruction is supposed to support language learning in the form of meaningful language tasks, which are integrated into regular language classes over a long period of time (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Chamot et al., 1999; Cohen, 1998).

While many researchers recommend explicit instruction in learning strategies, the debate of integrated versus separate instruction remains unresolved (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Although research on this issue is scarce, yet Chamot (2004) stated that "On the curricular side, some researchers believe that language learning

strategies should be taught as a separate course or part of a course, while most recommend that strategies instruction should be integrated into the regular language course." (p. 23).

Few empirical studies have been carried out on the effectiveness of explicit/integrated listening strategy instruction. In the Iranian context, most of the related studies appear to have focused mostly on metacognitive listening strategy instruction (Rahimi & Katal, 2012; Taheryan & Ghabanchi, 2012). More research seems to be required based on instruction of all categories of listening strategies together including cognitive, metacognitive and socio/affective ones.

Given the fact that listening comprehension is often tested and not taught, particularly in Iranian EFL context, the present study sought to identify whether explicit/integrated approach is effective in listening comprehension and overall strategy use of lower-intermediate EFL learners.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Does explicit/integrated strategy-based instruction have a significant impact on EFL learners' listening comprehension?
2. Does explicit/integrated strategy-based instruction have a significant impact on EFL learners' overall listening strategy use?

METHODOLOGY

This study used a repeated measures design in two periods, control phase and treatment phase, to investigate the issue. In this study, type of instruction (explicit/integrated) was the independent variable. The participants' score on listening comprehension tests and their overall listening strategies questionnaire use were the dependent variables. Gender (female) and proficiency level (lower-intermediate) were the control variables of the study.

Participants

A group of 14 ($n = 14$) female students studying English in an EFL language institute were recruited to participate in this study. They had been taught English through the same teaching method, Communicative Language Teaching. They all attended 90-minute classes that were held for two times per week. They had already studied the *Interchange (Third Edition)* series textbooks by Jack C. Richards (2005) before the study and were studying the *American English File 4* by Oxenden and Latham-Koenig (2009) during the experiment. Based on the results of Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (UCLES Version 2, 2001), all the participants were at lower-intermediate level.

Instruments

Placement Test

The first instrument used in this study was an OPT (UCLES Version 2, 2001). It was used to specify the level of participants before the study. The test consists of two main parts comprised of 60 questions including cloze test and multiple-choice items. The first part included questions 1 to 40. This part itself entailed 5 sections. The second part, questions 41 to 60, also was made up of three sections, two cloze tests and a section with multiple choice items, but comparatively more difficult than the previous part.

Listening Tests

Two identical IELTS listening tests, taken from listening section of Cambridge IELTS Practice Test 9 (2013), which comprised of four sections with 40 questions, were used in this study. The IELTS test, an international standardized test, is a highly effective instrument and a reliable means of grading students at all levels from lower-intermediate upwards, with a consistent record of predictive validity in the light of examination entry. Two distinct listening tests were selected to minimize the possible memory factor due to the nature of the data collection procedure of the study. The tests consist of 40 questions in four sections, each with 10 questions. The level of difficulty of the test increases through the sections. It includes both lecture format as well as formal and informal conversational style.

Listening Strategy Use Questionnaire

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is the one that most studies on listening strategies have relied upon. It is a standardized measure to examine the use of language learning strategies. Since the SILL also has versions for students of a variety of languages including EFL, this instrument has been used extensively to collect data on large numbers of language learners (Oxford, 1990; Clement, 2007). Clement (2007) employed a modified ESL/EFL version of the SILL to explore adult ESL learners' strategy use during the listening tasks. The questionnaire was adapted from a combination of questions gathered from two previous studies (Abdalhamid, 2012): Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010), and Taguchi (2002). The questionnaire was translated into Persian to ensure full comprehension of the strategy items and the accuracy of results.

The questionnaire consists of two parts: the participants' background information and 20 items about the strategies that participants applied in their listening comprehension tests. A four-point Likert-scale ranging from (*strongly disagree*) to (*strongly agree*) was used to reveal students' preferences.

Data Collection Procedure

To test and confirm the procedures used in the main study, a small-scale pilot study was conducted. The purpose of the pilot study was basically to make sure that the level of

the texts difficulty was not far beyond the comprehension level of the participants. Twelve learners with lower-intermediate level participated in the pilot study. Next, an Oxford placement test was administered to determine the students' level of proficiency in order to make sure about the homogeneity of the sample. The first listening test was also administered to test the participants' listening comprehension ability at the beginning of the study. Upon finishing the listening test, participants were administered the Likert-scale listening strategies use questionnaire to examine their perceived strategy use. Next, during the first phase of the study, the control phase, the learners proceeded with their current course without receiving any instruction on listening strategies explicitly. This phase was carried out in order to control any possible effect of students' current course on their listening ability, in lack of a control group, in comparison to the second phase of the study, namely, after the treatment. At the end of the control phase, then, the second listening test, along with the listening strategies use questionnaire, was administered to see any possible change in the students' listening comprehension and overall strategy use due to their coursework. In the following session, the second phase of the study, the treatment phase, began. In this period, the students received instruction on a group of listening comprehension strategies. The strategies entailed looking for signal words and discourse markers, elaboration, inferencing, predicting, listening for the gist, listening for main ideas, listening for detail, listening for the attitude, interpreting tone, and distinguishing fact from opinion. They were taught in an explicit/integrated manner with familiarizing them with reasons and rationale for using these strategies. The treatment phase took 8 sessions based on the strategies and the model aforementioned. The third listening test, the post-test, was given to examine the effectiveness of the training, based on the explicit/integrated procedure and strategy instruction the participants' listening ability. In addition, the strategy use questionnaire was administered to monitor the changes in the participants' use of strategies after receiving the treatment.

Data Analysis

A series of parametric (paired samples t-tests) and non-parametric tests (Friedman test and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests) were run to answer the research questions. Before running the parametric test, namely, paired samples T-Test, the main assumption of parametric tests, i.e., normality assumption, was checked through running Skewness analyses and computing trimmed mean. Since the participants were measured on three occasions regarding their overall use of listening strategies which was measured based on an ordinal scale, the non-parametric tests (i. e., Friedman Test and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests) were run for the repeated measures. Friedman test was run to compare the performance of the participants at three time points: Pre-control, pre-intervention (post-control) and post-intervention points. To locate the possible differences among the three time points, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests were run for possible pairs (Time 1 vs. Time 2; Time 3 vs. Time 2 and Time 1 vs. Time 3).

RESULTS

Before running the main statistical analyses for the first research question, The assumption of Paired Samples T-test, namely, normality, that was assessed by computing Skewness and Kurtosis values and obtaining trimmed means. The results are presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Listening Comprehension Test Scores

		Statistic			Std. Error		
		First test	Second test	Third Test	First test	second test	third test
Mean		9.00	9.42	15.57	.9138	.9533	1.0980
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	7.02	7.36	13.19			
	Upper Bound	10.97	11.48	17.94			
5% Trimmed Mean		9.00	9.36	15.63			
Median		9.50	9.50	16.50			
Variance		11.69	12.72	16.87			
Std. Deviation		3.41	3.56	4.10			
Minimum		3.00	4.00	9.00			
Maximum		15.00	16.00	21.00			
Skewness		-.040	.135	-.441	.597	.597	.597
Kurtosis		-.772	-.930	-1.23	1.154	1.154	1.154

In Table 1, descriptive statistics including mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and other information concerning the variables were presented. To compute the 5% Trimmed Means, the top and bottom 5% of the cases were eliminated and a new mean value was calculated. The original means and the new trimmed means were compared for all the three tests and it was found that extreme scores were not having a strong impact on the means. In addition, Skewness and Kurtosis estimates were also provided as part of this output. Meanwhile, the Skewness and Kurtosis values reported in the table were all within the range of ± 2 , confirming that the distributions were normal.

The impact of explicit/integrated strategy-based instruction on EFL learners' Listening comprehension

During the control phase and before accomplishment of the specific treatment for the main sample, two listening comprehension assessments were done. Since the data was collected from the same participants on three different occasions and under three different conditions (before the control phase, after the control phase, and after the specific intervention), paired samples t-tests were run to the results of the listening comprehension tests. The results of these listening comprehension tests showed no significant increase in mean scores of the participants during the control phase. The results are presented in the following tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Paired Samples Statistics for the First and Second Administration of Listening Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	First administration	9.0000	14	3.41940	.91387
	Second administration	9.4286	14	3.56725	.95339

As it is displayed in Table 2, the mean scores of the sample increased from ($M = 9.00$) in first administration of the listening test to ($M = 9.42$) in the second administration. Moreover, the degrees of scatteredness of the scores for the first and second administration of the test were nearly the same ($SD \approx 3.5$).

Table 3. Paired Samples T-test for the First and Second Administration of Listening Test

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	first – second administration	-.428	1.15	.30	-1.09	.23	-1.38	13	.189

The sig. value is equal to (.189) indicating that this mean difference is not statistically significant in the control phase ($p \geq .05$).

After establishing that there was no significant difference between the performance of the participants in first and second administration of the listening test, the treatment was implemented and the third test was given after carrying out the specific intervention of listening strategies to the participants to inspect their possible gradual improvement within the group. The results of statistics are presented in the following tables:

Table 4. The Descriptive Statistics for the First, Second, and Third Administrations of Listening Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	First administration	9.0000	14	3.41940	.91387
	third administration	15.5714	14	4.10842	1.09802
Pair 2	Second administration	9.4286	14	3.56725	.95339
	third administration	15.5714	14	4.10842	1.09802

The descriptive table displayed the mean, sample size, standard deviation, and standard error for all three series of data obtained from the same sample. The second paired-samples t-test (repeated measures) was used to assess each person's performance once at Time 1 (pretest) and then again at Time 3 (posttest) and the next time at Time 2 and Time 3 after exposing the participants to some experimental manipulation and intervention with respect to listening strategies. The paired-samples T-Test investigated whether there were statistically significant differences in the mean scores for Time 1, and Time 3 as well as Time 2, and Time 3.

Table 5. Paired Samples T-Test for the First, Second, and Third Administrations of Listening Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	First - third	6.57	1.45	.38	-7.41	-5.73	-16.92	13	.00
Pair 2	Second- third	6.14	1.70	.45	-7.12	-5.15	-13.49	13	.00

Since the probability (p) values or the Sig. (2-tailed) was less than (.05), it could be concluded that there was a significant difference in the listening comprehension test scores at Time 3 compared to Time 1 and Time 2.

Although there was no significant improvement in participants' scores from time 1 to time 2 during the control phase, their performance improved significantly after implementation of specific treatment during the experimental phase. Moreover, the highest mean score was related to the third administration of the listening test.

Effect size statistics supplied the magnitude of the differences between the two series of tests at Time 1 and Time 3 as well as Time 2 and 3. Eta squared value for T-test was calculated using the information provided in the output. The results showed the values as follows: Eta squared for Time 1 and 3= $286.28 / 286.28 + (14+14-2) = (.91)$ and Eta squared for Time 2 and 3= $181.98 / 181.98 + (14+14-2) = (.87)$.

The guidelines (proposed by Cohen 1988, pp. 284–7) for interpreting this value are 1 = small effect, .3 = medium effect, .5 = large effect. It was seen that the effect size of Time 1 and Time 3 (.91) and the effect size of Time 2 and Time 3 (.87) are both large effects. Expressed as a percentage (eta squared value multiplied by 100), 91% of the variance in listening comprehension posttest scores was explained by their scores in time 1. Additionally, their scores explained 87% of the variance in listening comprehension posttest scores in time 2.

In sum, paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on students' scores on the listening comprehension test. There was a statistically significant increase in listening scores from Time 1 ($M = 9.00$, $SD = 3.41$) to Time 3 ($M = 15.57$, $SD = 4.10$), $t(13) = 16.92$, $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed). The mean increase in listening scores was (6.57) with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -7.41 to -5.73. The eta-squared statistic (.91) indicated a large effect size. Thus, the first null hypothesis was rejected implying that the instruction had a statistically significant impact on lower-intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension after explicit/integrated strategy instruction.

The impact of explicit/integrated strategy-based instruction on EFL learners' overall strategy use

Students were asked to complete a listening strategy use inventory before the control phase (Time 1), after the control phase immediately before the intervention (Time 2) and finally after the intervention (Time 3). To see if the explicit/integrated strategy-based instruction had a significant impact on EFL learners' strategy use, Friedman test was run. This test is the non-parametric alternative to the one-way ANOVA with repeated measures. It can be used to test for differences when the dependent variable is ordinal. In this study, strategy use (the dependent variable) was measured using a Likert-scale of ordinal type and one group was measured on three different occasions.

Table 6 reveals whether or not there was an overall statistically significant difference among the mean ranks of the participants at three different time points.

Table 6. Friedman Test (Test Statistics a)

N	14
Chi-Square	24.038
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Friedman Test

The above table presents the test statistic (χ^2) value. We can see that there is a statistically significant difference among the mean ranks of the group under three different conditions. In other words, there was a statistically significant difference in overall strategy use at three time points, $\chi^2(2) = 24.038, p = .00$.

Table 6 (the Ranks table) provides some data on the comparison of participants' performance at three time points.

Table 7. Ranks of the Three Time points in Terms of Strategy Use

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Time 2 - Time 1	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	11 ^b	6.00	66.00
	Ties	3 ^c		
	Total	14		
Time 3 - Time 2	Negative Ranks	1 ^d	1.00	1.00
	Positive Ranks	12 ^e	7.50	90.00
	Ties	1 ^f		
	Total	14		
Time 3 - Time 1	Negative Ranks	0 ^g	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	14 ^h	7.50	105.00
	Ties	0 ⁱ		
	Total	14		

a. Time 2 < Time 1

b. Time 2 > Time 1

c. Time 2 = Time 1

d. Time 3 < Time 2

e. Time 3 > Time 2

- f. Time 3 = Time 2
- g. Time 3 < Time 1
- h. Time 3 > Time 1
- i. Time 3 = Time 1

The table's legend reveals that 11 participants had a better performance after the control phase (the first row of the table). At time 3, 12 participants had a better performance compared to Time 2 (the second row of the table).

Since the Friedman test does not specify which time point in particular differed from other time points, to locate the differences, post hoc tests were run. To this end, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests on the different combinations of time points were run. A Bonferroni adjustment on the results obtained from the Wilcoxon tests was also done since multiple comparisons were made. To calculate the Bonferroni adjustment, we need to take the initial significance level (.05) and divide it by the number of tests (three comparisons). So, we have a new significance level of $.05/3 = .017$. This means that if the p value is larger than .017, we do not have a statistically significant difference. Table 11 presents the results of the tests:

Table 8. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests (Test Statistics a)

	Time 2 - Time 1	Time 3 - Time 2	Time 3 - Time 1
Z	-2.958 ^b	-3.117 ^b	-3.302 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.002	.001

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

Wilcoxon signed-rank tests showed that all three combinations were statistically significant. The comparison between Time 1 (pre-control) and Time 2 (post-control/pre-intervention) was statistically significant ($Z = -2.958$, $p = .003$). In addition, the difference between Time 2 (post-control/pre-intervention) and Time 3 (post-intervention) was also significant ($Z = -3.117$, $p = .002$). Finally, the difference between Time 1 (pre-control) and Time 3 (post-experiment) was also found to be statistically significant ($Z = -3.302$, $p = .001$).

DISCUSSION

The current study intended to investigate the possible impact of the explicit/integrated listening strategy instruction on lower-intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability and their overall strategy use. The study was, therefore, an attempt to find out whether previous findings could be confirmed in a different listening situation for EFL learners in an Iranian context.

Upon finishing the explicit/integrated listening strategy instruction following Oxford's model of strategy instruction, the learners in this study appeared to improve significantly in their listening comprehension ability. They also revealed a significant improvement in their overall listening strategy use after the intervention in comparison to the control phase of the study.

As the results revealed, the first null hypothesis was rejected suggesting that there is a statistically significant difference in lower-intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension after explicit/integrated strategy instruction. The results indicated that students' listening comprehension abilities had improved as a result of the explicit strategy instruction. These results were consistent with the findings in the literature. They were in line with the findings of Oxford (2002), Clement (2007), Graham and Macaro (2008), Yucheng Li and Yan Liu (2008), Zhang (2008), Siegel (2012), and Guan (2014). Siegel (2012) indicated that explicit training of the strategies was effective in development of students' listening ability. Siegel, in his study, integrated listening strategy instruction into a semester-long English class targeting intermediate college students in Japan. Both the quantitative and qualitative data showed improvement on their listening abilities as a result of the strategy instruction course. Graham and Macaro (2008) also studied the effects of strategy instruction on the listening performance and self-efficacy of 68 lower-intermediate learners of French in England. The results manifested that the program improved listening proficiency and learners' confidence about listening. O'Malley (1987), Thompson and Rubin (1996) further investigated the effect of listening strategy instruction and demonstrated a positive correlation between strategy instruction and listening comprehension.

In addition, the results of Friedman test also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference among the mean ranks of the group at three time points, $\chi^2(2) = 24.038$, $p = .00$. Wilcoxon signed-rank tests showed that the comparison between pre-control and post-control/pre-intervention was statistically significant ($Z = -2.958$, $p = .003$). Furthermore, the difference between post-control/pre-intervention and post-intervention was also significant ($Z = -3.117$, $p = .002$). Finally, the difference between pre-control and post-experiment was also found to be statistically significant ($Z = -3.302$, $p = .001$). Based on the these findings, the second null hypothesis can be rejected too; in other words, the explicit/integrated strategy-based instruction was found to have a statistically significant impact on EFL learners' overall strategy use. However, it should be noted that the difference between Time 1 and Time 2 was also found to be significant. It can be argued that we can not solely justify the exclusive use of explicit/integrated strategy-based instruction in EFL classes.

The findings of this study are consistent with the general findings of recent studies (e.g. Carrier, 2003; Chen, 2009; Clement, 2007; Ozeki, 2000; Siegel, 2012) on listening strategy instruction which indicated that strategy training mostly provided positive impact on learners' understanding and use of listening strategies, as well as improvement on the listening comprehension performance.

Some previous findings have suggested that learners use listening strategies related to these three categories, namely, cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective ones (e.g., Abdalhamid, 2012; O'Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989).

The findings of this study also showed that students utilized some advanced strategies that were not taught in the intervention. For instance, the advanced organization and double-check monitoring were among these sophisticated strategies that students

discovered on their own. This finding is in accord with those of Ozeki's (2000) and Guan's (2014). The tendency of utilizing strategies beyond the strategy instruction confirmed the results in Ozeki's (2000) study that learning the strategies explicitly helped the students to activate their thinking processes and become conscious of other listening strategies which would improve their listening ability.

The effective application of listening strategies also helped increase students' self-confidence in listening comprehension. Before receiving the intervention, many students viewed listening as a big challenge. This finding agrees with the findings of Graham (2006), Field (2008), and Guan (2014). According to Field (2008), students generally felt more insecure about their listening abilities than any other major language skills. The data from the post-intervention interviews demonstrated that students developed a great amount of self-confidence in English listening. These results were consistent with other findings in the literature. For example, Graham (2006) suggested students' abilities to employ listening strategies effectively might boost their self-confidence in language learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As discussed earlier, more researchers recommend explicit instruction such as in learning strategies, whilst the issue of integrated versus separate instruction debate remains unresolved (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). An explicit/integrated methodology of instruction was used to see the effectiveness of this approach on students' listening comprehension ability and also their strategy use after this intervention. Since it evinced that explicit training of the strategies was effective in development of students' listening ability, therefore, the present study suggests that EFL teachers should be more active in applying strategies in the classroom and make students more aware of their listening comprehension skill. They should offer strategy instruction in an explicit manner, explain the rationale, value, and purpose of a particular strategy to the students, and then provide explicit instruction on how to apply the strategy. The students also should be aware of what the strategies are, why they are important, and when and where they can be employed. The teachers should also integrate the strategy instruction into regular classes since it would supply students with opportunities to practice strategies in an authentic language learning environment and to transfer the strategies to other language tasks. Another implication is that teachers should adopt systematic strategy instruction procedures. The results also showed that the instruction of the strategies created improvement in the participants' overall strategy use. Of course, as stated earlier, implicit instruction can be rejected as during the control phase, the participants' overall strategy use was also found to be significant. However, the improvement during the experimental phase outweighed that of the control phase of the study.

Taking into consideration the findings of this study and their accord with recent studies, therefore, EFL teachers should teach their students how to listen, and how to reflect on the process of listening. Teachers, therefore, should always emphasize knowledge of the context, and encourage students to actively participate in the listening text.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, the number of participants may have been insufficient in order to achieve better and more reliable results. For further studies, students from different proficiency levels seem to be required in order to obtain more reliable results regarding the effectiveness of the suggested program. In addition, the current study took place during a three-month course. The experiment was limited in time to eight class sessions spread over the second half of a language institute term. As Vandergrift (2002) pointed out, research that seeks to investigate the effects of listening strategy training needs to expose the participants to the instructional instruments and activities for a longer period of time. Lastly, it is suggested that different models of strategy instruction be compared and investigated regarding teaching listening to EFL learners and that the downsides and merits of each one be empirically scrutinized.

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