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Developing Teaching Listening Strategies in EFL Post-Beginner Classes: Case of some Secondary Schools in Bénin Context



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Abstract

Listening comprehension is one of the important skills in learning a foreign language. Among the four basic skills in language acquisition, listening skill plays a major role in learning a language. Therefore, strategies for listening comprehension and the ability to employ them efficiently are necessary in language acquisition. This paper is an attempt to investigate and improve teaching listening strategies in advanced EFL classes in the Benin context. A total of 150 students of two secondary schools CEG Nokoué and CEG Godomey participated in this study to answer a widely used language learning strategy questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions including metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social and affective strategies. 20 EFL Teachers responded to a questionnaire designed for them. The findings indicated that most students applied different listening strategies and needed guidance from their instructors to improve their listening abilities. Moreover, the study indicates the relationships between these listening strategies and other language-learning skills. Finally, the results provide implications for improving the quality of teaching and learning listening skills in the Benin Republic.

Keywords: Listening comprehension; Strategies; EFL teachers; Classes; Benin.

Résumé

La compréhension de l'écoute est l'une des quatre importantes compétences dans l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère. Aussi, parmi ces quatre compétences, la capacité de l'écoute joue un rôle majeur. Par conséquent, la capacité de l'apprenant à utiliser efficacement les techniques d'écoute sont nécessaires pour maîtriser une langue. Ce travail de recherche vise à améliorer l'enseignement des stratégies de l'écoute pendant les cours d'Anglais au second cycle. Au total, 150 élèves de deux établissements secondaires, le CEG Godomey et le CEG Nokoué, ont participé à cette enquête et ont répondu à un questionnaire de 30 questions sur l'utilisation des stratégies d'écoute au cours d'Anglais. Ce questionnaire comprend comprenant des questions relatives aux stratégies métacognitives, cognitives, sociales et affectives. 20 enseignants de la langue anglaise ont aussi répondu à un questionnaire. Les résultats ont indiqué que la plupart des apprenants recourent différemment aux stratégies d'écoute et qu'ils avaient besoin de conseils de la part de leurs enseignants pour développer une écoute efficace. De plus, l'étude présente également les relations entre ces stratégies d'écoute. Enfin, les résultats de cette étude fournissent des suggestions et implications pour l'amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage de l'écoute en république du Béninois.

Mots clé : compréhension de l'écoute, stratégies, enseignant d'Anglais, cours, Bénin

1. Introduction

English is a language of business, science, aviation, international seminars, entertainment, and more. It is not possible to do without English nowadays. This is the republic of adopts English as a Foreign Language after French which was inherited from the colonization. Today, English is taught and learned in all stages of our educational systems where EFL teachers and learners are confronted with several difficulties preventing them from communicating effectively in English. However, developing communicative skills in this language is a current demand for those who are not native English speakers (Ministerio. De Education, 2016a).

Like any language, learning English requires some skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Qutob and Madini, 2020). Without neglecting the importance of other skills, listening plays a major role in language

acquisition; it is not only the skill of understanding spoken language but also an essential skill used in most activities we carry out throughout our lives. We listen to a variety of things, for example, a teacher; a play on the radio; the weather forecast on the radio; and a taped dialogue in class. It has taken many years to give the listening skill the importance it deserves in second and foreign language learning in the teaching profession.

Unfortunately, listening was one of the most neglected skills in second and foreign language classrooms, especially until late 1960; both researchers and language teachers paid more attention to reading, grammar, and teaching listening was neglected. (Fied, 2022) declared that *“in the early days of English Language Teaching (ELT), listening served as a means of introducing new grammar through model dialogues”*.

Recently, the language teaching profession has brought into focus on listening comprehension as a means for effective learning in EFL classes. The teaching of listening comprehension provides students with opportunities to pay closer attention to the perspectives they hear rather than focusing on the language structure, such as grammar and its characteristics (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012 as cited in (Diora and Rosa, 2020). Listening skills have been studied by a lot of researchers for it has an important role both in daily life and in academic contexts as it is crucial for people to sustain effective communication. Listening plays an important role in communication in people's daily lives (Gilakjani et al., 2011). Guo and Wills (2023), stated *“It is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideas, sense of values.*

Thus, listening is so important that, we often come across students no matter their level, they are unable to listen for the various purposes of listening and even get the surface meaning of a very small message they are delivered. A critical analysis is then necessary to examine the reasons why students fail in better acquisition of listening skills. The necessity to research and make a diagnosis of the issue has led to the topic as follows:

" Developing Listening Teaching Strategies in Advanced EFL Learners Class in Benin Context ".

1.1. Purpose of the Study

This study aims at acquiring an appropriate level of EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching listening strategies in English classes. It also attempts to investigate basic knowledge and skills likely to enable EFL learners to actually listen and communicate effectively during conversations..

Research Questions:

The present study tries to answer the following questions

- 1- To what extent are EFL teachers aware of the importance of teaching listening strategies in English classes?
- 2- How can the secondary schools EFL students' listening comprehension abilities be developed according to their teachers?

2. Literature Review

In this section, the researcher deals with, (1) conceptual clarification, (2) Factors affecting EFL learner's English listening comprehension and (4) strategies for developing effective listening comprehension skills.

2.1. Conceptual Clarification

2.1.1. What is Listening?

Many studies have been conducted on the development of listening and understanding skills in terms of foreign language teaching and learning. According to Guo and Wills (2006), ESL and EFL learners find listening as one of the most challenging skills. The learners try to get meaning from the data they have heard or have been hearing. It is required to pass through some steps to do so. Yildiz and Albay (2015), have stated that language learners interact as they speak the entry provided by auditory listening, interpreting, and communicating. As it is seen, understanding the input requires a transformation of the information having been heard by making instant interpretations. Likewise, (Steinberg, 2007) has mentioned that it is a process of a person's recognition of the addresser's verbal output(s) by using audial organs. Gilakjani et al. (2016) have defined listening as *“a process of receiving what the speaker says, making and showing meaning, negotiating meaning with the speaker and answering, and creating meaning by participation, creativity, and empathy”* (p. 124). Here, the focal point is to get the message of the speaker or addresser correctly for a decent comprehension of the input uttered. Similarly, Rost (2002) considers or treats the listening skill as an issue of interpretation of the utterances; what students do is to try to transform the data they have heard into meaning by combining the new data with the previous one in their minds. It means that the pronunciation of the addresser is very important.

However, the level of pronunciation of the learner is another challenging issue, too; because if the student lacks the basic or the demanded level of pronunciation, it is going to be an exercise of just hearing, rather than listening; however, still it will contribute to the learner to some degree by exposing the learners to the target language, but this will not be the real desired behavior in terms of ESL and EFL language learning and teaching, since the aim of learning and teaching is to contribute to generate a successful communication.

2.1.2. Listening Comprehension

Literally, it means to understand what is being listened. Technically, there are many definitions for the comprehension of listening in the literature. According to Hamouda (2013), it is an interactive process between the speaker and the listener; but the emphasis is on the listener because she or he is the target audience, so she or he tries

to build the meaning from the oral input. However, this process requires many other prerequisites which will be discussed below in a detailed way. Buck (2001), handles listening comprehension in a systematic way. In his perspective, listening comprehension is the product of “a top-down process in the sense that the various types of knowledge involved in understanding language are not applied in any fixed order - they can be used in any order, or even simultaneously, and they are all capable of interacting and influencing each other” (p.3). As one might expect, the input obtained by the listener or audience does not follow a regular line, because the relationship between the speaker or language producer and the product, in other words, the things having been told, is arbitrary.

Listening is the process of constructing the meaning by using the current, available data in the mind or before the eyes, it depends on many other dependent sources to obtain the input provided. It can be conferred that the listener will be exposed to a salvo of arbitrary choices of words, vocabularies, grammar, intonations, stress, and similar. These choices will be in interaction with each other and will affect the comprehension of the target listener by being subject to many other factors like grammar level, vocabulary knowledge, etc.

2.1.3. Significance of Listening

Listening skill is one of the most important components of language learning. Learners have to comprehend native speakers and a lot of multimedia like DVDs and the Internet. Listening is an important skill that ought to be developed in foreign language learning Vandergrift (2007); Kurita (2012). According to Kurita (2012), a major

difference between more successful and less successful learners is related to their ability to use their skill of listening. A good listener can easily become a good learner.

Listening skill is very important in foreign language learning because the key to learn a language is to receive language input. According to Hamouda (2013) acquisition takes place when learners have sufficient comprehensible input. Listening is significant in language learning because it provides input for learners and it plays an important role in the development of learners' language. For Hamouda (2013), listening skill is an important element in obtaining understandable input. Learning cannot take place if there is no input. It provides the appropriate situations for the acquisition and expansion of other language skills. Rost (2002), stated that the development of listening is related to the attainment of proficiency in speaking. He added that listening is the most important skill in language learning because it is the most widely used language skill in our daily life.

According to Pourhosein *et al.* (2011), listening plays a significant role in the communication process too. Hamouda (2013), stated that listening is the most frequently used skill in the language classrooms.

Therefore, it is obvious that listening is very important for the lives of students since it is used as a means of learning at all. According to Oxford (1990), listening develops faster than the three other language skills – speaking, reading and writing and it makes easy the development of the other language skills. In this paper, important issue concerning enhancement of listening has been reviewed. The term listening has been defined; the importance of listening has been clearly stated, teachers' role in developing the skill of listening in students has been elaborated and various strategies, techniques and goals of listening have also been discussed.

Listening helps the language learner to acquire pronunciation, word stress, and vocabulary and understanding of any message is based on the factors like tone of voice, pitch and accent; and it is possible only when one listens. Without understanding input appropriately, there can be no response from the listener and hence the process of communication will come to a halt.

2.2. Factors Affecting EFL Learners' English Listening Comprehension

Listening actually plays an important role in learning a language especially EFL. However, if you can't listen well, you will find it hard to communicate. Thus, to help students be able to improve their listening skill, it is necessary to find out listening problems which cause difficulties to them. Problems in listening were accompanied with four following factors: the message, the speaker, the listener and the physical setting. For the message, students usually get problems with understanding content and linguistic features. Concerning the content, many learners find that it is difficult to listen to a taped message because there are many topics that they are strange to learners. Messages on the radio or recorded on tape can't be listened to at a slower speed. Even in conversation, it is impossible to ask the speaker to repeat something as many times as the interlocutor might like. In many cases, listeners can't predict what the speakers are going to say. For linguistic features, liaison and elision are considered as common phenomena that make it difficult for students to distinguish or recognize individual words in the stream of speech. They are used to seeing words written as discrete entities in their textbooks.

In addition, listening materials are made up of everyday conversation so speakers usually colloquial words or expressions as well as slang. learners who mainly learn English through textbooks may not be familiar with these expressions. The listener is the next cause that make learners fail in understanding the content of the text. Foreign language learners are not familiar enough with clichés and collocation in English to predict a missing word or phrase. In addition, lack of social cultural, factual, contextual knowledge of target language can become an obstacle to comprehend because language is a tool to express its culture. The next cause is the speaker. Most learners tend to be familiar with their teachers' accent or to a standard variety of British or American English. So, it is hard for them to understand speakers with other accents. Physical setting such as noise including both background noises on the recording and environmental noises, the poor quality of the tapes or disks and the poor equipment is the other cause hindering students in listening comprehension. Furthermore, Luchini and Agruello (2009) also said that EFL learners usually got certain difficulties and uncertainties in trying to understand the content in communication (p.322). With uncertainties, Hedge (2005) categorized into internal and external problems. The lack of motivation, high level of anxiety or limited knowledge of the topic, under discussion and unknown vocabulary of what is heard can be

considered as internal problems. One of external problems is listeners' lack of understanding. As a result, the speakers fail to transmit successfully their message together with environmental noise. Besides these uncertainties, there are also other external factors such as the diversity of speakers' accent, the substitution, omission, and addition of certain sounds or differences in the use of intonation contours. Hedge (2005), showed that subjects also got problems with speakers' accents. The length of listening taped-texts, the low quality of the recordings may be also significant external obstacles. The lack of knowledge of some listening strategies may contribute to prevent EFL learners' listening ability. For instance, the habit of listening word by word is believed to cause difficulty in listening process.

For Underwood (1989), there were seven causes affecting efficient listening comprehension. First, the listeners cannot catch or control the speed of speech. He said *"the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension for many English language learners is they cannot control how quickly a speaker speaks"*. Second, it is difficult for students to have words repeated because in the classroom, teachers cannot usually identify whether the students have understood any particular section of what they have heard or not (Underwood, 1989). Third, that is the limitation of vocabulary power of listeners. While speaking or communicating, speakers may choose words the listeners do not know. At that time, the listeners tend to find out the meaning of the words rather than concentrate on the context and thus cause missing the next part of the speech. It is examined in Chu and Wai (2004) study and it is true. Fourth, it is hard for listeners to recognize the signals, which indicate that the speaker is moving from one point to another. Fifth, listeners lack contextual knowledge such as mutual knowledge and common content. If they have enough amount of contextual knowledge, communicative process will happen more smoothly and more successfully. Sixth, it is difficult for listeners to concentrate in a foreign language. For example, if listeners have a short break in attention or neglect a moment in the listening process, it can seriously impair comprehension. Seventh, certain learning habits such as understanding every word is also one of factors make learners fail in listening comprehension.

In brief, there are many factors which influence the listening comprehension such as the speaker, the information, the listener and the environment. These factors limit the comprehension or the listening process. Therefore, it requires the strategies to enhance the learning process. The next part will present the learning strategies.

2.3. Strategies for Listening Comprehension

Strategies can be seen as one of useful methods that help learners become active in controlling their own learning. Vandergrift (1999) cited by Barkiath (2022) said that: *"strategy development is important for listening training because strategies are conscious means by which learners can be guide and evaluate their own comprehension and response"*. In order to acquire success in the target language listening comprehension, learners need to use various strategies in their learning process. Therefore, it is necessary to classify listening strategies to help learners to choose appropriate strategies in their listening process. Recently, some classifications of listening strategies have been proposed in order to make clear what kinds of listening strategies are. According to Richard (2008) classification of language learning strategies, there are three types of strategies that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning. They are: learning strategies, communication strategies and social strategies. Learning strategies consist of two main types contributing directly to the development of learning. They are metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning. They involve various processes such as planning, prioritizing, setting goals and self-management. Cognitive strategies are steps used to help learners solve some problems that require direct analysis, transformation or synthesis of learning material. For communication strategies, they are less directly related to language learning since they focus on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what speakers intended. These strategies are used when they get difficulties because their communication ends outrun their communication means. The final strategies are social strategies. They are activities which learners engage to afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge.

According to Oxford (1990), there are two general types of strategies. They are direct strategies which directly involve the subject matter and indirect strategies which do not directly involve the subject matter itself. Each of main types is further divided into 3 listening strategy groups. Direct strategies focus on three main types of strategies: memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. For instance, memory strategies support learners keep and recall the listening information. When listening to a message, they will use this strategy to store information and retrieve it when it is needed. Memory strategies include the following sub-strategies: creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds and using memory strategies for retrieval. About cognitive strategies, they are defined as actions or behaviors that learners involve during language learning, language use or language testing. They include practicing, receiving and sending messages; analyzing, reasoning, and creating structure for input and output. Compensation strategies are known as strategies which need to overcome any gaps in knowledge of language. Guessing intelligently and using other clues are potential compensation strategies. After referring to direct strategies, indirect strategies are also explained. Indirect strategies are also classified into three main kinds. The first one is meta-cognitive strategies which are considered self-management. These strategies help learners exercise 'executive control' through planning, arranging, focusing and evaluating their own language. The second one is affective strategies which learners use to control factors such as emotions, attitude, motivation and values. The last one is social strategies which facilitate interaction with others, often in a discourse situation. Different from classification for listening strategies of Oxford (1990), O'malley *et al.*, (1989) cited by Richard (2008) categorized listening strategies into three main types: meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social-affective strategies and they are described as following:

2.3.1. Meta-Cognitive Strategies

Meta-cognitive strategies are a kind of the self-regulated learning. It includes the attempt to plan, check, monitor, select, revise and evaluate. Generally, it can be discussed through pre-listening planning strategies, while-listening monitoring strategies and post-listening evaluation strategies. With pre-listening planning strategies, listeners will set a purpose to help them have better preparation before listening. While-listening monitoring strategies are strategies that listeners need to be 'self-conscious' while listening to be able to monitor their comprehension. For post-listening evaluation strategies, they are strategies that listening process is completed, listeners evaluate their overall comprehension progress and access how well they have done.

2.3.2. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies were used to enter new information into memory storage and for retrieving it to help learners be able to link one L2 item or concept with another. Memory strategies are categorized into 4 sets: creating mental linkage, applying images and sound, reviewing well and employing action. The two sets, creating mental linkage and applying images and sound are mentioned in the current study. Specifically, the creating mental linkage includes two specific strategies associating and grouping. For example, using associating, learners can link what they know with what they hear, and know how to connect sound and picture to remember words. Meanwhile, semantic mapping is used to help learners to remember the location of words when listening.

2.3.3. Cognitive Strategies

The cognitive strategies are related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval. Cognitive strategies are the special actions that contribute directly to the learning processing. They are investigated from the aspects of bottom-up strategies and top-down strategies. For bottom-up processing refers to the use of the incoming input as the basic for understanding the message. Comprehension begins with the received data that are analyzed as successive levels of organization-sounds, words as a process of decoding. On the other hand, top-down processing strategies go from meaning to language (Richard, 2008). Learners can try to predict what will utter by signal. The listener employs prior knowledge of the context and situation within which the listening or message occurs to understand what the speaker speaks. "*Context and situation involve such as knowledge of topic, the speakers and their correlation with the situation and previous events.*" (Gilakjani et al., 2011). The listening process can employ the top-down or bottom-up strategies. However, it depends on the levels of the learners or the purpose of listening such as listening to recognize sounds, words or understanding the meaning of the message that require bottom-up or top-down strategies or both. Chiu (2006) and Lu (2008) claimed that listening comprehension was neither top-down nor bottom-up processing. They should be combined to enhance listening comprehension.

2.3.4. Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies could help listeners make up for missing knowledge when they do not hear something clearly. Therefore, they could use clues to guess meaning of words or pieces of information. Hence, compensation strategies are considered as a tool for "guessing intelligently" (Oxford, 1990) because listeners guess "systematically" by using clues without listening to every word. The two specific strategies of compensation strategies are using linguistic clues and other clues. For instance, using linguistic clues including word order, word stress could help listeners understand the unfamiliar words. Unlike linguistic clues, listeners can get useful information from other clues such as situational contexts, background noise to guess what is going.

2.3.5. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies could help listeners handle their feelings, emotions, motivation or attitudes in learning listening skills. The three sets of affective strategies were lowering listeners' anxiety, encouraging themselves, and taking their emotion temperature. The first specific strategy of lowering listeners' anxiety in using progressive relaxation enables listeners to keep calm when listening. The second is encouraging themselves in making positive statement helps listeners increase their confidence in finishing listening task. The last set (taking their emotional temperature) consists of two specific listening strategies, listening to the body and discussing with someone helps listeners recognize their feelings and exchange their feelings with their friends.

2.3.6. Social Strategies

Social strategies could help listeners work together and understand the target language as well as the language. Social strategies include two sets: asking for question and cooperating with each other. Particularly, asking for question (asking for verification), for instance, or verification from their teacher or their friends could help listeners clarify what is not clear. While cooperating with each other, listeners share information, check comprehension and solve questions.

The classification of listening comprehension strategy system proposed by O'malley et al. (1989) is considered as a theoretical background of the investigation in the present study. Generally, applying strategies is very important for learners in listening competence. Little research has focused on which strategies employed when learners find that they cannot comprehend the information or message from contents of texts. This research also addresses the questions of what strategies the listeners employed to solve problems while listening.

Sheerin (2014), states that listening activities try to prevent failure so that they can support the learner's interpretation of the text. Listening activities are usually subcategorized as pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities.

2.3.7. Pre-listening Activities

Schema theory provides strong evidence for the effectiveness of pre-listening activities which includes the outline for listening to the text and teaching cultural key concepts. Listening teacher may select certain words, difficult grammatical structures and expressions to be explained through the discussion about the topic, and may also ask students to predict the content or what speakers are going to say, based on the information they have already got. Pre-listening activities usually have two primary goals: (a) to help to activate students' prior knowledge, build up their expectations for the coming information; and (b) to provide the necessary context for the specific listening task. The teacher could follow with a listening comprehension activity, such as two people having a conversation about their daily life. Students must answer true or false questions based on the previous listening activity. An example of a controlled practice activity could be a drill activity that models the same structure or vocabulary (Sheerin, 2014).

2.3.8. While-Listening Activities

Listeners who participate actively in the listening experience are more likely to construct clear and accurate meaning as they interpret the speaker's verbal message and nonverbal cues. During the listening experience students verify and revise their predictions. They make interpretations and judgments based on what they heard. Listening teacher may ask students to note down key words to work out the main points of the text. Students answer comprehension questions while listening to the text and select specific information to complete the table provided with the text. While-listening activities usually have some of the following purposes: to focus students' comprehension of the speaker's language and ideas; to focus students' attention on such things as the speaker's organizational patterns; to encourage students' critical reactions and personal responses to the speaker's ideas and use of language. An open-ended activity could follow that allows students to have the freedom to practice listening comprehension in the class about their daily life and asking for further information. Listening comprehension should begin with what students already know so that they can build on their existing knowledge and skills with activities designed on the same principle. A variation on the filling in the missing word listening activity could be to use the same listening materials, but to set a pair work activity where student A and student B have the same worksheet where some information items are missing (Gilakjani *et al.*, 2016)

2.2.9. Post-Listening Activities

Post-listening activities are important because they extend students' listening skill. Post-listening activities are most effective when done immediately after the listening experience. Well-planned post-listening activities offer students opportunities to connect what they have heard to their own ideas and experiences, and encourage interpretive and critical listening and reflective thinking. As well, post-listening activities provide opportunities for teachers to assess and check students' comprehension, and clarify their understandings; to extend comprehension beyond the literal level to the interpretive and critical levels. Different comprehension questions can be assigned for students to discuss after listening, students then swap information to complete the whole class chart, correlating what each student has heard to arrive at the big picture. If there are any questions that remain unanswered during the first or second listening, and after the information swap activity, the whole class can listen to the tape again. The students will then try to find the answer to the questions that have not been previously understood, rather than the teacher providing the answers straight away (Gilakjani *et al.*, 2016).

3. Research Methodology

This section is concerned within the researcher will describe the research methods of the study including research questions and hypotheses the research design, participants, the research instruments and the procedures of the study and data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

The research was a qualitative and quantitative design. It was conducted on survey approach. According to Brown (1997), surveys are most often used in language education for research and for curriculum development. They can be used to answer the research questions that require description, explanation or explanation attitudes. In this descriptive study, students' listening strategies were examined. This study will be conducted to answer for the research questions and to test the hypothesis presented in the previous part..

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted from February to April of 2024. The participants in the research were 150 students from CEG Godomey and CEG Nokoué. They were taught four skills of English language such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Their ages were ranged from 16 to 18. Among 150 students, there were 50 males (33,33%) and 100 females (66,66%). A questionnaire was addressed to all of the participants. All of them have studied English at least for 6 years. They study the same English textbook and the same studying environment. Besides, they speak French as official language and English is considered as their foreign language. Besides, 20 Teachers of English in secondary schools were interviewed.

3.3. Research Instruments

3.3.1. Questionnaire

The first type of questionnaire was addressed to EFL students. This questionnaire was adapted from the original version of Jou (2010) including 30 questions aiming at a study of learners' difficulties concerning listening and the study of English listening strategies applied by advanced EFL learners. Besides that, there were some adjustments made according to the specific needs. The questionnaire was designed to find out the causes of the learners' failure in listening comprehension, evaluate the use of English listening strategies in listening comprehension process of learners. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part one is about participants' personal information. Part two consists of 30 items which were categorized into four clusters concerning metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective strategies. Each item was presented as a statement to which students had to respond using a five-point Likert response scale label *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. To obtain a score, the responses were allocated numerical values: strongly agree was score 1, agree 2, neutral 3, disagree 4, strongly disagree 5. The questionnaire was designed in English with a French version to avoid misunderstanding due to the participants' limited English proficiency.

The second type of questionnaire was designed and addressed to 20 EFL teachers. This questionnaire aims at measuring EFL teachers' awareness and effectiveness of listening comprehension skills teaching in English class.

3.3.2. Procedures

The study was conducted during 12 weeks from February to April of 2024. It consists of four stages. In the first stage, the information was collected from newspapers, articles, and internet. After consulting and collecting enough information for the study, two types of questionnaire were designed for both EFL teachers and students in the second stage. In the third stage, 150 EFL students and 20 teachers were selected to complete the questionnaire. At the fourth stage, the data were collected and analyzed. In order to answer the research questions, I calculated the mean and percentages to determine EFL learners' opinions about the listening strategies.

4. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

4.1. Presentation of Findings

4.1.1. Results Related to Questionnaires Addressed to EFL Teachers

Table-1. Teachers' Teaching Experience

Teachers' teaching years' experience.	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5-10 years	06	30
10-15 years	10	50
More than 15 years	04	20
Total	20	100

According to table 1, 50% of teachers have been teaching English for 10-15 years whereas 30% of them have 5 to 10 years' experience in EFL teaching.

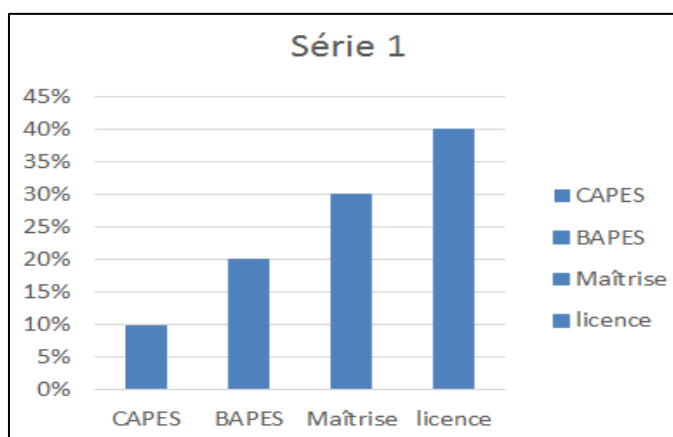


Figure-1. Teachers' Answers on their Highest Academic and Professional Qualifications before their Recruitment.

Figure 1 reveals that only thirty percent (30%) of EFL secondary school teachers are professionally qualified to teach English language, and 70% of them teach with an academic degree, which means they are not professionally trained to play their role as teachers of communicative and listening skills teachers.

Table-2. Teachers' Awareness of Listening Comprehension Strategies.

Teachers' awareness of listening strategies	Number	Percentage (%)
I don't know	04	20
I have never heard about such strategies	08	40
The techniques and ways we use to help students listen	08	40
Total	20	100

Through table 2, 60% of teachers are not aware of listening strategies even they use them in their daily life. Only 40% of them know something about what listening strategies refer to. In such a situation, how can they plan, implement and evaluate listening comprehension classes with their students?

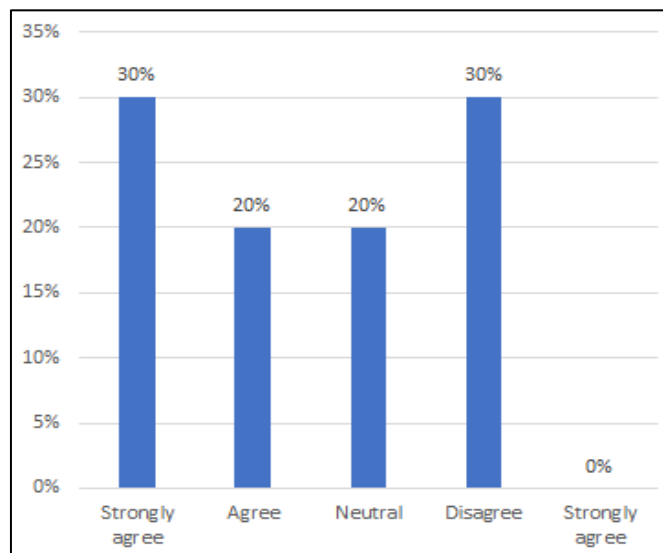


Figure-2. Teachers' Answers Related to the Effectiveness of Teaching Listening Comprehension Strategies to Learners.

In this figure, 50% of teachers are for the teaching of listening comprehension skills in EFL classes whereas 50% of them are neither neutral nor strongly opposed to the teaching of listening strategies to their learners. Their answers may be due to their lack of professional training or poor experience in the teaching job.

Table-3. Frequency of Listening Comprehension Teaching in EFL Classes.

The frequency teachers teach listening comprehension in their classes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Often	02	10
Sometimes	02	10
Rarely	06	30
Never	10	50
Total	20	100

Table 3 Shows that almost all the teachers don't teach listening comprehension to the learners. Only 20 percent of them declare to do it either often or sometimes.

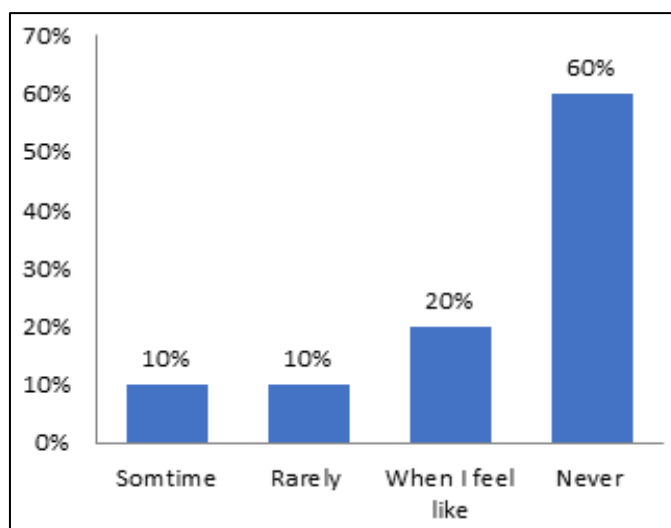


Figure-3. Teachers' Answers on How Often EFL Teachers Assess Listening In their Classes.

Figure 3 confirms that 60% of teachers never test their students' listening skills; twenty percent (20%) of them do it when they feel like, (20%) test their learners' listening performance sometimes or rarely.

Table-4. Teachers' Answers on Why They Don't Deal most often with Listening Strategies in their Classes.

The reason why teachers don't most often deal with listening strategies in their classes	Number	Percentage (%)
I don't really know how to deal with them	04	20
The learners are not so interested	04	20
There is no time for that due to the syllabus which is too full.	04	20
We lack adequate materials	08	40
Total	20	100

From Table 4, it is seen that many reasons make teachers neglect the teaching and assessment of listening strategies. 20% of them don't know exactly how to deal with them. 20% said that the learners are not so interested in listening, so there is no use to talk about listening strategies. 20% others find that it is time consuming due to the syllabus which is very full. The 40% remaining raised the problem of lack of adequate materials.

4.1.2. Results from Students' Questionnaire

Table-5. Reasons why EFL Learners Don't Enjoy Listening Comprehension.

Reasons why learners don't enjoy listening comprehension	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Because I don't understand anything	45	30
I don't know how to deal with it because nobody told us how to do it	75	50
I lack vocabulary and have also accent problem	30	20
Total	150	100

According to table 5, 50% of the students don't enjoy listening comprehension activities because they don't know how to listen and get through the message . 30% of them don't understand anything after listening. The remaining 20% said that they lack vocabulary and have accent and pronunciation challenges during listening comprehension activities or while listening to either a native speaker or to an English speaker.

Table-6. EFL Learners' Use of Memory Listening Strategies

Use of memory listening strategies	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	90	60%
Agree	30	20%
Neutral	15	10%
Disagree	15	10%
Strongly disagree	00	00%
Total	150	100%

The Table 6 shows that 80% of EFL learners use even unconsciously the Memory listening strategies while performing a listening activity whereas 10% of them don't know whether they use it or not, and the 10% other reject the fact of using it.

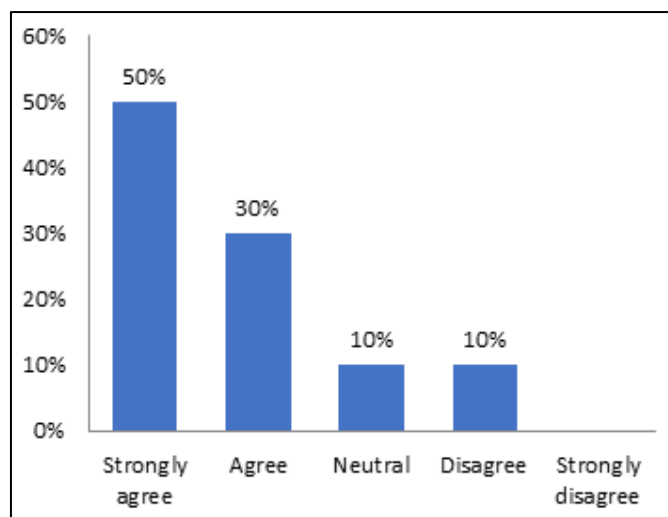


Figure-4. Cognitive Formal Practicing Strategies

The data of the [Figure 4](#) show that at least 80% of the EFL learners admitted the benefits that these strategies can bring to them. Actually, most of students think that practicing listening in daily life, through listening to English news, English songs on TV or radio, talking to foreigners will increase interest in learning English. The results from this figure also indicate that learners like applying the new vocabulary, phrases or grammar they have learned to understand the contents.

Table-7. Bottom-up Strategies

Use of the bottom-up strategies	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	90	60%
Agree	45	30%
Neutral	00	00%
Disagree	15	10%
Strongly disagree	00	00%
Total	150	100%

The bottom-up strategies aim at understanding the details such as words or phrases of content. The [table 8](#) shows that most students (90%) usually pay attention to words or sentence stresses to enhance their understanding and often repeat words or phrases softly and mentally Besides, to grasp the content of the text, students also try to understand each word.

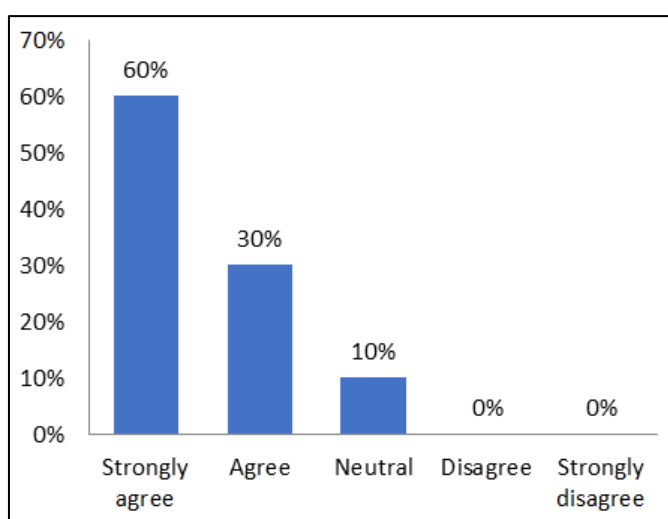


Figure-5. Top-down Strategies

Top-down skills are also important strategies in listening comprehension. The results from [Figure 5](#) shows that most of strategies were employed effectively by most of students in improving listening comprehension. For example, students agreed that they listened for main ideas first and then details (90%). In addition, they also guessed the meaning of words based on the content and while listening, they formed pictures mentally to help learners comprehend texts are equal. In contrast, most of students were not familiar with trying to think in English instead of French. To sum up, students can use successfully top-down strategies, but they still think in French while listening. As a result, it slows down listening processing. Therefore, they need more guidance from teacher to develop top-down skills.

Table-8. Learners' Answers about the Use of Social Strategies.

Use of Compensation listening strategies	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	90	60%
Agree	30	20%
Neutral	15	10%
Disagree	15	10%
Strongly disagree	00	00%
Total	150	100%

The table below indicates that 80% of the students are ready to use the social listening strategies during listening activities whereas 20% of the them are reluctant.

5. Discussion

In this section, researcher answers the research questions of the study through the data collected from both EFL teachers and students..

5.1. EFL Teachers' Awareness of the Effectiveness of Listening Skills Teaching in English Classes.

The first research question attempts to evaluate EFL Teachers' awareness and effectiveness of listening skills teaching in English classes. According to the data collected, almost all the teachers are aware of the importance of listening skills teaching as well their effectiveness in developing students listening and communicative skills. The data collected from the teachers helped us to discover that although the majority of the teachers (70%) has been teaching for more than ten years, few of them (40%) ignored the listening strategies. We found that none of the teachers mentioned (Vandergrift, 1997) three categories of listening strategies: the cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective. One can assume that the teachers should have mentioned these strategies, when interpreting what a listening strategy is, since they are referred to in Skolverket (2011b) support material. Moreover, if teachers use different definitions, they will both teach and assess their students differently. This could lead to differences in students' opportunities for enjoying fair assessment. These finding is in line with (Wilson, 2008) and Graham (2017) research on listening skills teaching strategies to beginner students. However, since listening strategies are a part of the knowledge requirements (Skolverket, 2011), and the students should be able to choose and apply these, one can assume that teaching listening strategies should be important. If teachers do not teach listening strategies, students cannot be expected to be able to choose and apply them.

5.2. Teaching Strategies for Developing EFL Students' Listening Comprehension Abilities

When asked what listening strategies they wished to use during listening activities, the majority of students would like to use meta-cognitive, cognitive and social-affective strategies. A great number of the learners also stated that they could develop listening capabilities if their teachers enhance their vocabulary and pronunciation skills. In fact, they are not consciously aware of what listening strategies mean. This was because they were not taught these strategies but they strongly express the need to be taught those strategies to help them improve their listening skills. Teachers have to take into consideration, students' insights and suggestions to help them become effective and active listeners in and out of their classes. This study is the validated (Jou, 2010) findings. In his study, participants tend to take notes of information, questions so as to enhance the content. Actually, to be able to apply bottom-up strategies effectively, learner should widen vocabulary largely enough and have good knowledge of sentence structure. Traditionally, exercises of cloze listening or the use of multiple-choice questions are applied to process the bottom-up strategies. Richard (2008, cited by Jou (2010) study, p110) said that *"the recognition of key words, transition in a discourse, grammatical relationships between elements in sentences and use stress, intonation to identify word and sentence functions where the essential elements in processing bottom-up strategy"*. Bottom-up strategies helps students enhance knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. (Faerch and Kasper, 1980)

6. Suggestions

For an effective teaching and learning of listening skills in EFL post-beginner classes, the present study makes some suggestions to both EFL teachers' and students.

6.1. Suggestions to EFL Teachers

Based on the theory and the findings discussed in the present study, teachers are to help their learners to improve their listening learning skill in the classroom as well as in daily communication.

For teachers to improve their students' listening ability, they need to master following teaching stages such as pre-listening, while listening and post-listening and design motivating activities that integrate these stages to raise learners' interests in listening. Besides, for every listening class, teachers also need to clearly define teaching objectives for students' listening skill development.

During these stages, teachers should set listening objectives, choose listening content and design listening activities. These activities are subcategories as pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities. In pre-listening stage, teachers should set a purpose or decide in advance of what to listen to, decide if linguistic or background knowledge is needed. Similarly, teachers should provide opportunities for group or collaborative work or class discussion activities. For while-listening activities, they relate directly to engagement with the text and have some of following activities: (1) decide what is and is not important to understand, (2) use prediction or content to encourage students to monitor their comprehension when they listen, (3) use question to focus students' attention on the crucial elements of the crucial text to comprehend of the whole, (4) organize activities to guide listeners through the text. Combine activities such as getting the main ideas, topic, etc. Finally, teachers should write questions beyond the text on the board and ask students to discuss them in post-listening activities. The teachers can tell students to compare their notes and discuss what they understood in pairs or small groups or encourage students to respond to what they heard to create debate. Debating is a good way to stimulate students in communication and improve listening skill effectively.

6.2. Suggestions to EFL Students

For students, they should be more active in their learning. For example, they should usually practice English listening through English news or English songs on TV or internet to be familiar with native speakers' accent, intonation. The fact is that these participants did not have good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Thus, they are often afraid of listening. They should practice listening more often not only in class but also at home. There is a variety of listening texts from TV, radio, songs, news.... They can choose to be familiar with different accents,

pronunciation. Besides, listening is an effective way to enhance their vocabulary, to revise grammatical structures. It is helpful for other skills such as speaking, reading and writing. Students should be encouraged to communicate with native speakers so that they can have two-way communication. It helps them be flexible and communicate better. Hence, they will not feel confused with different accents. Moreover, students should work in group or pairs to exchange information. That is a good way to increase confidence in understanding texts. Besides, they should apply studied strategies in texts frequently to improve their listening skill. For textbook of teaching, there is not any lesson for listening skill yet. So, teachers still use outside documents. For this reason, there should be a lesson plan that has enough four skills, especially listening skill to help students to be familiar with native speakers' different accents. Moreover, textbook should include many activities to support students to increase knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

7. Conclusion

Considering the role that English language plays in communication all over the world, no one should stay out of learning it. But, learning English as a foreign language (EFL) calls for complex tasks. Learning English as an EFL goes through four main skills, which are speaking, Reading, Writing, and Listening. Among these skills, Listening is likely neglected however, it plays a major role in language acquisition.

The purpose of this study is to look into listening comprehension strategies teaching in EFL classes and find some ways to improve it. The findings of the study lead to the facts that EFL learners fail in getting listening skills because they are not awarded of the useful strategies they could use. This happens because most of the teachers don't know, or do not find it necessary to teach their learners listening strategies. Learners need to be taught listening strategies so as to succeed in listening. This call for improving the teaching of listening strategies which are meta-cognitive, memory, cognitive, compensation, affective, and social strategies. Teachers need to be trained on listening strategies, and teach them to their learners so as to allow them to choose the one they prefer.

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