International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
Vol. 13, No.2, pp. 116-129, September 2015

Effects of Reflective Learning on the Listening Behaviors of EFL College Students

Yi-Chun Pan
Department of International Trade
National Pingtung University
Pingtung 900, Taiwan

Abstract. Even though listening can be quite a challenge for EFL learners, they are rarely taught how to listen effectively. This study explored the degree to which reflective learning, one method of teaching students how to listen, affected the listening behaviors of EFL college students on the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), a high-stakes test in Asia. A total of 31 Taiwanese first-year college students participated in this study. Reflection sheets and interviews show that the participating students activated the use of effective listening behaviors (bottom-up and top-down alike) from reflective learning. However, counterproductive behaviors were identified during this process, suggesting that students should receive additional support when this occurs. Pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research were discussed at the end of this paper.

Keywords: Reflective learning; listening behaviors; lexical intervention; Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)

1. Introduction

Listening comprehension is an important language skill to develop. In regard to the acquisition of a second or a foreign language (L2), listening allows the learner to internalize language rules and brings about the development of other language skills (Feyten, 1991; Mendelsohn, 1995; Rost, 2002). Beyond the crucial role that listening skills play in facilitating language learning, they are also a vital vehicle for gaining access to the globalized world, where the lingua franca is English (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). Language learners, as an example, have a desire to comprehend L2 speakers so that they will be able to learn more about their various cultures. They also wish to have the ability to engage with the tremendous wealth of audio and visual L2 texts now available online, including podcasts, YouTube, and blogs.

Furthermore, even setting aside the critical contributions listening comprehension makes to the learning of L2 and the access it grants learners to the world, it has also become an indispensable skill that students must foster for

testing purposes. Many Asian nations have always implemented tests while attempting to enhance language learning (Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005; Chu, 2009). Taiwan, one of the countries of Asia, also has an exam-oriented tradition in its culture and education (Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005; Chu, 2009). To improve its students' English proficiency in its institutions of tertiary education, Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MOE) went so far as to mandate an English proficiency benchmark policy for college undergraduates in its 2003-2008 Administration Guidelines (Chu, 2009). The guidelines require each university and college to establish its own English benchmark for graduation that uses standardized tests such as the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) and the GEPT (General English Proficiency Test). These standardized tests each have a section that assesses the test takers' comprehension of aural text, once again calling attention to the importance of developing listening comprehension.

One test frequently taken by Taiwanese college students to meet this English benchmark graduation policy is the TOEIC. Many college students choose this test because, in addition to taking it as an exit exam, an increasing number of companies use it as a criterion for screening potential employees and for promoting workers. The TOEIC is a reality for not only students in Taiwan but also in many other non-English speaking countries in Asia, Europe, and South America (Gilfert, 1996; Lai, 2008; Miller, 2007; Phillips, 2006), and this reality is growing in intensity and dimension. According to a TOEIC newsletter (2011), the number of people around the world who have taken the TOEIC has boomed from 3.5 million in the year 2004 to around 6 million in 2010. This sharp increase is also reflected in Taiwan, where the number of TOEIC test takers has grown significantly, from 40,000 in 2004 to around 200,000 in 2010. The implication of the popularity and widespread use of the TOEIC, therefore, is that EFL teachers should feel obligated to respond to their students' need to improve their TOEIC scores.

Clearly, the development of L2 listening competence is important, yet in spite of this, teachers rarely teach L2 learners how to listen effectively (Berne, 2004; LeLoup & Ponterio, 2007). This study is an attempt to address this concern through an exploration of the effects of listening support on EFL students' aural performance. Because L2 learners generally consider listening to be a difficult task, providing them with some form of support before or during the listening process may be of great benefit to their comprehension of aural input (Chang & Read, 2007; Vandergrift, 1999).

The listening support employed in this study was reflective learning, an idea derived from Wilson's (2003) concept of discovery listening. Does this form of listening support have different effects on TOEIC listening? Given the fact that extant research has only provided limited evidence in response to this question, it is critical that this present study be undertaken.

2. Literature Review

In this study, reflective learning, an idea derived from Wilson's (2003) concept of discovery listening, is expected to help students gain insights into their shortcomings and develop solutions to the problems they encounter. Following in the footsteps of Wilson's concept of discovery listening, reflective learning focuses on student discovery and the subsequent resolution of problems they have with listening. The rationale behind the discovery and resolution components of reflective learning is similar to that of metacognitive listening—the objective is to give learners a more comprehensive understanding of both themselves as L2 listeners and of the demands and process of L2 listening. Another one of metacognitive listening's goals is to assist learners with the management of their comprehension and learning (Goh, 2008; Vandergrift, 2002).

Empirical support for metacognitive instruction may also reinforce the use of reflective learning due to the fact that the two share many characteristics. For example, Pressley and Gaskins (2006) showed that metacognitive instruction in reading was beneficial, particularly for first language readers with lower proficiency levels. Goh and Yusnita (2006) observed that metacognitive listening enhanced the listening comprehension of lower-proficiency second language listeners as well. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) recently conducted an assessment of the listening comprehension of 106 tertiary-level learners of French as a second language after a 13-week course. Based upon scores from pre- and post-tests, learners who had been exposed to metacognitive listening experienced significant performance improvements. A small-scale study conducted by Cross (2011) also offers evidence of the ability of metacognitive listening to facilitate positive outcomes. Twenty adult Japanese EFL learners participated in metacognitive listening wherein they completed the steps of predicting, monitoring, problem identification, and evaluating. A comparison of pre- and post-test scores determined that 75 percent of listeners who possessed lower proficiency achieved significant improvements during the course of the five lessons.

Similarly, Nathan (2008) discovered a positive effect on young language learners' development of metacognitive knowledge about listening. Zhang and Goh (2006) explained why metacognitive knowledge helped aural understanding. First, learners who have appropriate metacognitive knowledge about listening may plan, monitor, and evaluate what they do, thus being more likely to lead to improvement in listening performance (Goh, 2008). Another reason metacognitive knowledge assisted aural comprehension was that learners who are conscious of their own listening problems may also be motivated to find ways to address them. The resolution of their problems will likely result in effective listening.

This study explored the listening behaviors the students exhibited and whether their behaviors changed in response to the TOEIC test items, a field for which very little research has been conducted. It is hoped that the present study will

shed light on the effectiveness of reflective learning and point out possible problems, constraints, and pedagogical implications for classroom application.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Thirty-one first-year college students in southern Taiwan were recruited to be participants in this research. The participants had studied English for at least six years, but they had been initially exposed to English learning much earlier. On average, they had 8.7 years of English learning experience. While they had almost nine years' experience learning English within an academic context, they had little exposure to English outside of class. In fact, 96.7% of the students were exposed to less than two hours of extracurricular English every week.

3.2 Procedure

Throughout the 18-week term in a required General English course, the 31 participating students did reflective learning and completed reflection sheets as homework. During the last week of the course, group interviews were conducted with fourteen students.

3.3 Reflective Learning and Reflection Sheets

Students turned in six sets of reflection sheets to record their reflective learning, three before and three after the midterm. To do reflective learning, the students would follow seven steps that had been adapted from (Hulstijn, 2003). They would: (1) study lexical items prior to listening, (2) listen to the recording several times, (3) determine reasons why they have difficulty comprehending aural text, (4) read the aural text and highlight the parts with which they have trouble, (5) read the text while listening, (6) read the aural text aloud, and (7) replay the recording as often as necessary to understand all of the oral text without written support.

While doing reflective learning, students were expected to identify their weaknesses by marking the options listed on the reflection sheet (for instance, 'hearing unfamiliar words while listening' or 'concentrating on the beginning of utterances and then failing to follow the latter part') or writing down their own shortcomings if they were not specifically listed on the sheet. In addition, they had to record how they solved the problems they faced (such as by reading the troubled part aloud, comparing how they said the sentence with the recording, or practicing lexical items more times), and they also received feedback from their teacher. Finally, they were required to jot down what they had learned from this reflective learning assignment, things such as linguistic knowledge (e.g., new words, syntax) and strategic knowledge (paying attention to interrogative terms and not translating every single word).

4. Results and Discussion

In this study, eleven effective and three counterproductive behaviors were identified (see Table 1). Effective behaviors referred to those that facilitated TOEIC comprehension, whereas counterproductive behaviors were a hindrance to understanding the TOEIC. The definitions and categorizations of these

identified behaviors were based upon those utilized in previous studies (Goh, 2002; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Toekshi, 2003; Vandergrift, 1999).

Table 1
Effective and Counter-productive Listening Behaviors

Effective Behaviors	Metacognitive	● Awareness of factors that interfere with listening
		● Monitoring attention and avoiding distractions
		● Noticing specific aspects of input
		● Checking understanding while listening
		● Checking understanding after listening
	Cognitive	● Making educated guesses
		● Finding related information on hearing key words
		● Using key words to recreate meaning
	Socio-Affective	● Reducing anxiety and increasing confidence
	Bottom-up	● Overcoming problems perceiving words and phrases
		● Decoding text more rapidly
Counter-productive Behaviors	Translating what was heard	
	Focusing on linguistic cues and ignoring main points	
	Focusing all attention on a small part of the message	

4.1 Effective Listening Behaviors

During the course of the current study, eleven effective listening behaviors were identified and categorized into metacognitive, cognitive, socio-affective, or bottom-up classifications based upon designations employed in previous research (Goh, 2002; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Toekshi, 2003; Vandergrift, 1999). Metacognitive behaviors demonstrate how listeners manage complex listening processes before, during, and after the processing of aural input, whereas cognitive behaviors illustrate how listeners complete the task. Socio-affective behaviors are associated with the affective and social aspects of listeners. Finally, bottom-up behaviors depict how listeners construct meaning from information drawn from the text.

4.1.1 Metacognitive Behaviors

Awareness of Factors That Interfere with Listening

During the first week of the course, the student participants were given a TOEIC listening test. After the test, the researcher asked the students how they felt about it. One of the students said it was a very difficult test for her. The researcher asked her what caused her difficulties, but she couldn't provide any specific reasons; she simply said that because of her low language levels she

possessed knowledge of only a few words and grammar rules. Several other students shared similar responses, saying that they felt the TOEIC listening test was difficult because of the simple fact that their English was terrible. Generally speaking, before this course, the students knew that their English was bad but could not clearly state why, so they could not determine any solutions for the obstacles they were facing.

However, things changed with the participants who were given reflective learning during the course of the study. The participants were more aware of their specific listening problems and they tried to ascertain solutions to those problems. For example, in her reflection sheet, Student (4) wrote that she knew that her main problem was vocabulary: "I don't know too many words. This makes it difficult for me to understand what I'm hearing. As soon as incomprehension occurs, I immediately get distracted and finally totally mess up."

Knowing the specific problem that prevented her from comprehension, this low-level student noted on her reflection sheet how she managed to solve the problem. "I have to preview related vocabulary items before listening, not only the meanings of the words should I know, but also their pronunciations. I feel that after reading the vocabulary items aloud several times, I can effectively deal with the speed of the speaker, and my comprehension improves a little bit."

Another student (1) was also able to clearly identify the major obstacle he faced while listening and the solution to this problem. He reported in his reflection sheet that "insufficient vocabulary knowledge made it difficult for me to understand the conversation. Although I know the printed forms of words, I have difficulty recognizing them in their aural forms when I hear them. This is a big problem for me. I have to read those words out loud and familiarize myself with their pronunciations. Practice, practice, practice will help me be a better listener."

The ability to identify their listening problems is significant to these students, just as it is important for doctors to first determine the cause of a patient's illness and then prescribe a treatment. Not being able to provide the right medication for the disease would be pointless.

Monitoring Attention and Avoiding Distractions

Reflection sheets from the students showed that they learned self-management in order to make a better learning environment. For instance, Student (20) reported that there used to be light music on while she was studying, but after realizing that even low-volume music would affect her concentration on listening, she turned off the music, which she felt was helpful because the voice on CD was much clearer. Another student (26) reported how she managed to continue to listen in spite of a particularly bothersome situation: "My roommate always talked on the phone, which bothered me a lot, but even after I asked her to stop, she kept talking. Instead of stopping my practice, I tried an alternative method—I used the time when my roommate wasn't talking on the phone to do listening assignments." She said that the reduced noise made the listening tasks much easier compared to listening while having to contend with her roommate.

Although she still felt that she didn't understand the text as well as she expected to, her situation was improving.

Noticing Specific Aspects of Input

Prior to the administration of this course, many students were overwhelmed by the swift speed of the speakers and easily gave up after struggling for a short time. However, after their training in reflective listening, some students exhibited a metacognitive ability to redirect their attention to the listening task by noticing specific aspects of input, such as listening for familiar content words. As one student (3) explained, "The speed was very fast. The linking pronunciations in particular made me misunderstand. I told myself not to think about it. I tried my best to focus on content words that I knew. I caught 'Triumph Airlines' and then immediately directed my attention to the flight times after 'Triumph Airlines'. So I circled the correct answer. Before this, I only focused on words I didn't know, which made me miss the subsequent."

In the interview, Student (8) said that he felt that his comprehension had improved because he realized that effective listening didn't require paying attention to everything. Instead, selectively listening for necessary information could point him in the direction, unlike swimming in the open ocean with no idea which way to go.

Checking Understanding While Listening

Another metacognitive behavior, checking understanding while listening, was found in the reflection sheet of a student (22). She wrote that "this Question and Response is easy. I learned the multiword unit 'subscribe to the magazine' before listening. When I heard the answer item 'We will get the first issue next item', I was pretty sure that this was the correct option. 'Subscribe' and 'issue' are usually related."

One student (12) also agreed in the interview that studying vocabulary prior to listening helped him to check if comprehension had occurred. He claimed that he had previously relied heavily upon words that were perceptually salient (which he considered "key words" or "key phrases") even if they were not important for the meaning of the text. However, after engaging in practice on pronouncing lexical items before listening, he improved his ability to identify the "real" key words or ideas of the text, which allowed him to choose the correct answer.

Checking Interpretation After Listening

One common metacognitive behavior exhibited by the participants was that they checked the interpretation after listening. This behavior occurred more often when participants listened to a long text, such as Part III: Short Conversations or Part IV: Short Talks. One possible reason for this was that some students still failed to construct a mental model of the text after studying related vocabulary items prior to engaging in the listening task.

Although checking the interpretation of the text after completing a listening task through reading transcripts is impractical in a test situation, it is certainly beneficial to students in terms of augmenting their abilities and reducing the

anxiety they experience. One student (21) expressed this viewpoint in her reflection sheet: "I usually conduct word-by-word translation while listening to short conversations. This tends to result in me falling far behind the speaker and missing quite a bit of information as well. However, I find myself not doing word-by-word translation if I understand the contents of the conversation. Moreover, I found that it makes the listening process much easier and smoother."

4.1.2 Cognitive Behaviors
Making Educated Guesses
The analysis of reflection sheets demonstrated that the participants made educated guesses, a particularly effective cognitive behavior. One student (25) reported in her reflection sheet that "studying phrases like 'non-stop flight', 'leave for the airport' , and 'book an earlier flight' made it easy for me to predict the topic of conversation. With this in mind, I prepared myself for the airport scenario and focused on the specific information that the questions asked for. This conversation wasn't difficult for me at all. It is really important to study words before listening."

One student (4) claimed in the interview that "making predictions is not difficult, but learning how to make sensible predictions is a big problem for me. I feel like if I have trouble recognizing words and decoding text that my predictions are just complete nonsense. Therefore, expanding my vocabulary bank is a high priority for me."
The experiences of these two participants clearly show that while making guesses can be a useful strategy to facilitate comprehension, L2 listeners must build up sufficient linguistic levels (e.g., sufficient vocabulary knowledge) before they will be able to use it effectively. If they do not do so, they quite often end up making wild guesses.

Finding Information on Hearing Key Words
One student (12) noted in his reflection sheet that "before taking the course, I used to just listen to the words I understood, that is, I based my interpretation simply upon any word that I could understand. As a matter of fact, I already knew about using key words and phrases to construct main ideas, but because of my limited vocabulary knowledge, I could only rely on words that I was able to understand instead of extracting meaning from the key semantic cues denoted by stressed words such as nouns and verbs. The result was that I constructed a picture that was different from the intended meaning of the speaker."

However, after practicing the vocabulary provided before doing listening tasks, he mentioned in the reflection sheet that "I was able to identify which key words to listen to, and I used them to consider the content. For example, knowing 'the Sonic Flights frequent flyer club' prompted me to correctly choose the flight time." This transition from the use of any random word to generate an understanding of the passage to the more systematic utilization of key words is a clear indication that an effective cognitive behavior occurred in this instance.

Using Key Words to Recreate Meaning

The utilization of key words and sometimes background knowledge to recreate meaning is known as "reconstruction" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). As was evident from the reflection sheet, Student (56) illustrated this behavior thus: "Initially, I didn't understand the concept of 'not impressed' when the woman said 'I'm not impressed with the receptionist.' I kept listening and heard 'make mistakes all the time' and 'having such a hard time', at which point I understood the meaning of being 'not impressed' to be when one does not have a favorable impression of someone or something—in this case, the receptionist." The behavior of reconstruction seldom occurred in this study; in fact, only one high-level student exhibited this complex behavior, probably due to the fact that it requires the involvement of both top-down and bottom-up processing (Omally & Chamot, 1990).

4.1.3 Socio-affective Behavior

Reducing Anxiety and Increasing Confidence

It was determined from the data collected from reflection sheets and interviews that reflective learning helped some students decrease their anxiety levels and increase their confidence. As far as lowering anxiety is concerned, one student (6) with lower listening proficiency mentioned in the interview that "the first time I took the TOEIC, I was really frustrated. I knew everything I was hearing was English, but beyond that I couldn't figure out any of the specific meanings. I really had no idea. Now, I am not so nervous. The teacher gives us word lists to study and also tells us the steps to follow when listening. I finally have directions to follow. It's much better now. I'm no longer as afraid as I was."

4.1.4 Bottom-up Behaviors

Overcoming Problems Perceiving Words and Phrases

Quite a few students experienced difficulty recognizing words aurally that they would immediately know in written form; they also had trouble identifying the start and end points of phrases. In order to solve these problems, students in this study were asked to use visualization strategies in which they anticipated what the words in question would sound like before they heard them. They also listened to the words while looking at their written form and then listened to the words again without the written aid, this time trying to visualize them.

Student (17) practiced each of these three steps while performing her assigned listening tasks and responded in her reflection sheet that "This question is quite easy. I have no problem understanding what is being said because I can clearly hear every word in the utterance and quickly figure out its meaning. In addition, the lexical items provided by the teacher really help me to be able to effectively break the speech down into manageable chunks. I feel that before doing listening assignments, I have to practice lexical items to the point that I can immediately say its meaning and pronunciation without any hesitation. In this way, I will reduce the chance that I will get stuck due to an inability to recognize words."

Decoding Texts More Rapidly

During the bottom-up listening process, listeners decode texts primarily from the words themselves. Provided lexical practice prior to their listening tasks,

some participants reported that the speed at which they decoded texts was improving. For example, one student (15) noted in his reflection sheet that "In Conversation 59-61, I could understand the overall meaning because I memorized related words before doing the task. Pronunciation is important. I used Google to determine how to say those words and also asked my Applied English major roommate about their pronunciations. Sometimes if the way I pronounce a word isn't like the way it is pronounced on the CD, I get stuck." This reflection highlights the fact that lexical support facilitates the decoding of a message, and more importantly, lexical support refers to familiarity with not only the meanings but also the pronunciations of words.

4.2 Counterproductive Listening Behaviors

In addition to the effective behaviors observed among the participants, some counterproductive behaviors that hindered TOEIC comprehension were found in some learners as well. The following sections will discuss each of those counterproductive behaviors, which have been determined to be cognitively-oriented (Goh, 2002).

4.2.1 Translating What Was Heard

According to Goh (2002), the process of translation usually slows down processing time and often diverts listeners' attention away from clues that may have assisted their comprehension. In light of the ephemeral nature of listening, translation is therefore counterproductive. Unfortunately, this behavior was often identified in some of the participants.

In the reflection sheet of one participant (10), it was found that "I cannot understand this conversation because I am still translating the previous sentence. I should have concentrated on what I was hearing so I could clearly hear the subsequent utterances." Although realizing that translation would interfere with the interpretation of the new input, the student couldn't help but to do so.

Likewise, Student (7) pointed out in the interview that "When I hear some parts that I don't understand, I have a habit of stopping to find their equivalent in L1. This usually leads to horrible results. I totally mess up and want to give up immediately." This student participant was also aware that in TOEIC, where the rate of speech of the speakers is quite fast, there was no time for translation, which prevented her from processing new input.

4.2.2 Focusing on Linguistic Cues and Ignoring Main Points

Aside from the translation problem, some participants only listened for the lexical items given in the word list and test questions and ignored the construction of a general overview of the text. This is the so-called lexical overlap phenomenon—that is, when the words used in test items match the words spoken in the listening passages (Buck, 2001).

For instance, one student (10) disappointedly mentioned in the interview that "In fact, I try to familiarize myself with the words—both their meanings and pronunciations—that my teacher offers to us before we do our assignments. I do

hear words I previewed earlier in both word lists and test questions, but I still don't understand what is being said."
Chang (2008) contends that the use of lexical overlap is both an ineffective strategy and quite risky to employ in a listening test because it relies heavily on linguistic cues while at the same time distracting attention from continuous textual interpretation, so listeners will not get the gist of the discourse and their comprehension will suffer as a result.

4.2.3 Focusing All Attention on a Small Part of the Message
Similar to the issue of lexical overlap, some participants focused all of their attention on one small part of the message and therefore could not keep up with the speaker for the rest of the message. This behavior is termed as "fixation" by Goh (2002), and it is clearly illustrated in the reflection sheet of one student (11). The student noted that "I stopped listening to think about the meaning of the previous phrase in the hope that I could match it with something I already knew, but I failed and missed the next part."
In a comparable manner, another student reported that "I heard familiar sounds but was unable to relate those sounds to their meanings. I repeated the sounds of those words several times hoping that I could figure out their meanings, but spending too much time on this impeded my subsequent listening."

5. Pedagogical Implications

5.1 Supplying reinforced lexical support and allocating ample preparation time

This study clearly illustrates that lexical intervention had a facilitating effect on students' TOEIC performance. In addition, a considerable percentage of the students endorsed the idea that lexical intervention was helpful to their comprehension. Hence, language teachers may offer lexical items that appear in the text to aid their understanding. These lexical items should include multiword units in addition to single words to help students to process the aural text more efficiently. Beyond that, students must receive multiple exposures (such as sentence or mini-conversation verbal practice) to and sufficient time with these lexical items to help them internalize them and prepare them for utilization. Reinforced lexical support in conjunction with sufficient preparation time may help lessen the problem of students' limited vocabulary, which usually results in the breakdown of their comprehension. As Chujo and Oghigian (2009) claim, in order to understand TOEIC, a learner requires a minimum vocabulary size of 4000 words or 3000 word families. However, very few Taiwanese college students possess a vocabulary of that size (Huang, 2004). Therefore, providing reinforced lexical support and sufficient preparation time might reduce the vocabulary deficit of most Taiwanese EFL college students, and this in turn will improve their TOEIC comprehension.

5.2 Having students perform reflective learning to improve deficiencies and develop listening abilities

This study demonstrated that reflective learning helped the students to understand more of their listening problems and thus find ways to resolve them. As claimed by Goh (2008), listener anxiety may increase if they do not know

where to start other than to 'listen harder' when they face challenges. In contrast, if listeners are given guidance in regard to the process of listening and then reflect upon that process to fortify the components that they do not know, it is much more likely that they will listen better and will have higher levels of motivation (Vandergrift, 2004).

TOEIC is a difficult exam, so students must know what problems they have at each stage in order for better performance to occur. For example, a lack of vocabulary knowledge might be a problem at the first stage; students then should reinforce their word repertoire. Moving on to the next stage, how to effectively construct a mental model of text is one challenge to overcome. At this stage, they might incorporate their knowledge of the world with their vocabulary knowledge in order to achieve comprehension. In other words, knowing the cause of the problem and being able to resolve it can sustain students on the long and difficult journey toward performing well on the TOEIC.

6. Suggestions for Further Research

This study focused on the comprehension phase of listening, investigating the success reflective learning had in enhancing TOEIC comprehension. Further research should be conducted to address the acquisition phase of listening, which along with the comprehension phase are the goals of a listening course (Richards, 2005). Can the acquisition phase of listening contribute to its comprehension phase, as Richards (2005) claimed? This is an issue that certainly deserves further investigation. In the present study, it was determined that a lack of linguistic knowledge (vocabulary in particular) was a primary cause of listening incomprehension of long and difficult text. In such a situation, students relied on the scripts to understand the text and then went back to listening. According to student perceptions, the after-listening exercise (e.g. reading the scripts and reading aloud) did in fact made it easier for them to follow fast speakers when they listened to the text they had engaged in earlier again. However, can they apply the knowledge they learned from this instance of listening to another new instance? To put it another way, do they learn or consolidate knowledge from the acquisition phase of listening strong enough to facilitate their future listening? If they can, to what extent does the acquisition phase of listening contribute to the comprehension phase of listening? Answers to these questions are valuable in EFL classrooms where listening instruction focuses largely on the product of listening: the correct answer (Vandergrift, 2007).

Acknowledgements

Y.C. Pan acknowledges the financial support from the Ministry of Science and Technology of Taiwan under Contract No. MOST104-2410-H-153-006.

References

Berne, J. E. (2004). Listening comprehension strategies: A review of the literature. *Foreign Language Annals*, *37*, 521-533.

Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Chang, C. S., & Read, J. (2007). Support for foreign language listeners: Its effectiveness and limitations. *RELC*, *38*, 375-395.

Chen, J., Warden, C., & Chang. (2005). Motivators that do not motivate: The case of Chinese imperativeness as a culturally specific motivating force. *TESOL Quarterly, 39*, 609-634.

Chu, H-Y. (2009). *Stakes, needs and washback: An investigation of the English benchmark policy for graduation and EFL education at two technological universities in Taiwan*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan.

Chujo, K., & Oghigian, K. (2009). How many words do you need to know to understand TOEIC, TOEFL & EIKEN? An examination of text coverage and high frequency vocabulary. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, *6*, 121-148.

Cross, J. (2011). Metacognitive instruction for helping less-skilled listeners. *ELT Journal, 65*, 408-416.

Feyten, C. M. (1991). The power of listening ability: An overlooked dimension in language acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal, 75*(2), 173-180.

Gilfert, S. (1996). A review of TOEIC, The Internet TESL Journal, 2(8). Retrieved June 2014, from *http://iteslj.org/Articles/Gilfert-TOEIC.html*

Goh, C. (2000). A cognitive perspective on language learners' listening comprehension problems. *System*, *28*, 55-75.

Goh, C. (2002). Exploring listening comprehension tactics and their interaction patterns. *System, 30*, 185-206.

Goh, C. (2008). Metacognitive instruction for second language listening development: Theory, practice and research implications. *RELC*, *39*(2), 188-213.

Goh, C., & Yusnita, T. (2006). Metacognitive instruction in listening for young learners. *ELT Journal*, *50*, 222-232.

Hulstijn, J. H. (2003). Connectionist models of language processing and the training of listening skills with the aid of multimedia software. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *16*, 413-425.

Jenkins, J., Cogo, A., & Dewey, M. (2011) Review of developments in research into English as a lingua franca. *Language Teaching, 44*(3), 281-315.

Lai, Y. H. (2008). A study on effectiveness of college English-featured courses on TOEIC. *Kaohsiung Normal University Journal*, *25*, 72-90.

LeLoup, J. W. , & Ponterio, R. (2007). Listening: You've got to be carefully taught. *Language Learning & Technology, 11*(1), 4-15.

Mendelsohn, D. J. (1995). Applying learning strategies in the second/foreign language listening comprehension lesson. In D. J. Mendelsohn & J. Rubin (Eds.), *A guide for the teaching of second language listening* (pp. 132-150). San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.

Miller, K. (2007). The pitfalls of implementing TOEIC preparation courses. Retrieved December 2013, from *http://englisheveryday.weebly.com/toeic-pitfalls.html*

Nathan, P. (2008). Cooperative learning and metacognitive awareness in second language listening comprehension. MA thesis, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phillips, C. (2006). How can we help students improve their TOEIC scores without "teaching to the test"? *Humanities Review, 11*, 55-74.

Pressley, M., & Gaskins, I. W. (2006). Metacognitively competent reading comprehension is constructively responsive reading: How can such reading be developed in students? *Metacognition Learning*, *1*, 99-113.

Richards, J. C. (2005). Second thoughts on teaching listening. *RELC Journal, 36*(1), 85-92.

Rost, M. (2002). *Teaching and researching listening*. London: Longman.

TOEIC (2011). Newsletter 23. Retrieved October 2013, from *http://www.toeic.com.tw/file/11063019.pdf*

Toekshi, M. (2003). *Listening comprehension processes and strategies of Japanese junior high school students in interactive settings*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wollongong.

Vandergrift, L. (1999). Facilitating second language listening comprehension: Acquiring successful strategies. *English Language Teaching Journal*, *53*, 168-176.

Vandergrift, L. (2002). It was nice to see that our predictions were right: Developing metacognition in L2 listening comprehension. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *58*, 556-575.

Vandergrift, L. (2004). Learning to listen or listening to learn? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 24*, 3-25.

Vandergrift, L. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research. *Language Teaching*, *40*, 191-210.

Vandergrift, L., & Tafaghodtari, M. (2010). Teaching L2 learners how to listen does make a difference: An empirical study. *Language Learning, 60*(2), 470-497.

Wilson, M. (2003). Discovery listening—Improving perceptual processing. *ELT Journal*, *57*, 335-343.

Zhang, D., & Goh, C. (2006). Strategy knowledge and perceived strategy use: Singaporean students' awareness of listening and speaking strategies. *Language Awareness*, *15*, 199-219.