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Investigating the relationship between secondary school students' use of some listening strategies and their listening comprehension

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Dr. Hanan A. Abdel-Hafez Mahmoud

Lecturer of Curricula and Methods of Teaching English-
Faculty of Education - Assiut University.

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Abstract

The present research aimed to investigate if there is a correlation between (cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective) listening strategies and secondary school students'' achievement in listening comprehension. The research group was composed of (120) first year secondary school students at Assuit City. The research instruments were: (a) a Listening Strategies Questionnaire, and (b) a Listening Comprehension Test. A statistically significant positive correlation at 0.01 level was found between the three dimensions of the listening strategies questionnaire and listening comprehension The results also showed statistically significant differences between means of scores of high and low listening achievers on the listening strategies questionnaire at 0.01 level favouring high achievers. The results revealed also that the cognitive strategies category were the best for predicting secondary school students' listening comprehension. This was determined by using the multi regression analysis. Thus, the present research revealed that cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective listening strategies have positive effect on secondary school students' listening comprehension.

Introduction and Research Problem

Introduction:

Listening is central to the lives of students throughout all levels of educational development (Coakley & Wolvin, 1997; Feyten, 1991). It is an essential aspect of communicative competence and the most frequently used language skill (Richards, 2008; Ferris, 1998; Murphy, 1991). Listening is used as a primary medium of learning at all stages of education. A large number of second/ foreign language research findings indicate that listening is the most important skill for learning a foreign language because it is the most widely used skill in the classroom and it develops faster than other language skills (Rost, 2001; Morley, 2001). Both instructors (Ferris & Tagg, 1996) and students (Ferris, 1998) acknowledge the importance of listening comprehension for success in academic settings.

Listening comprehension is a set of highly integrated skills, all of which play an important role in the development of related language skills. Thus, it can be considered a facilitator for the appearance of other language skills (Oxford, 1990). Until 1970s, the listening skill had been neglected in the literature of second language till recently, as researchers believed that listening ability could be developed without any aid (Moyer, 2006; Mendelsohn, 1998). It was the least understood procedure in language acquisition and learning, even though it plays a crucial role in language development and communication skills (Mendelsohn, 2001). Then, more attention has been paid to listening comprehension and as a result, the status of

listening has changed from being incidental and peripheral to a status of ultimate importance. Thus the importance of listening in classroom instruction had been less emphasized than reading and writing though it is evident that listening plays a significant role in the lives of people. In addition, numerous studies indicated that efficient listening skills were more important than reading skills as a factor contributing to academic success (Coakley & Wolvin, 1997; Rost, 2002; Vandergrift, 2007).

Many researchers have directed attention to the importance of listening in language learning stressing that focusing on listening comprehension creates four different types of advantages; cognitive, efficiency, utility, and affective. The cognitive advantage of primary exposure to listening gives learners a more natural way to learn the language. Listening should be stressed before speaking because concentrating on speaking in initial stages leaves little room for listening and thus little room for comprehension. The second advantage is efficiency. Language learning is more efficient when learners are not required to speak at once and are only required to listen to the language. Such early emphasis on listening is efficient because learners are exposed only to good models of the language. The third advantage is utility. According to research in the fields of communication, adults spend 40-50% of communication time listening, 25-30% speaking, 9% writing and about 11-16% reading. The fourth and last advantage of focusing on listening comprehension from the very beginning is the affective advantage. If learners are forced to make early oral production, they often feel

embarrassed but if this pressure does not occur, they can relax and focus more on developing the listening skill which in turn helps on emersion of the other language skills (Freeman, 2004; Goh, 2000; 2006).

Several foreign language teaching methods have focused on the importance of listening since 1960. Those methods were based on the assumption that second language learning and first language acquisition were parallel and that there should be a silent period preceding the production stage in learning a second language. Among the first teaching methods that supported the primacy of listening in learning a second /foreign language were the Delayed Oral Method and the Total Physical Response. Various foreign language literatures support the importance of listening and sustain how comprehensible input facilitates the learning of a foreign language. Richards (2008) argues that developing proficiency in listening is the key to achieve speaking proficiency.

Literature has provided different definitions for listening comprehension. Listening is defined as a mental process in which listeners attempt to construct a meaning out of the information received from the speakers. It is a complex mental process that entails or necessitates receiving, interpreting, and reacting to sounds being received from a sender, and then retaining what was gathered and relating it to the immediate as well as the broader socio-cultural context of utterance (Rost, 2002).

Throughout the past thirty years, one of the most important

topics in second and foreign language research has been the use and development of language learning strategies. Many researchers (O'Malley, et al., 1985a; Oxford, 1990; Goh, 2000; Deneme, 2008; Cohen & Macaro, 2007) have examined different issues related to learning strategies. According to Cohen (1990) "learning strategies are processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in actions taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language" (4).

Researches in second/foreign language have found that several internal and external factors can influence listening comprehension in a second/foreign language (Rubin, 1994). Among such factors are the listening strategies learners use (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Annevirta et al., 2007). Listening comprehension strategies refer to the mental process by which listeners seek to understand, learn or retain new information from the aural input. These strategies are classified into three main types: cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective strategies. Cognitive strategies refer to behaviors, techniques or actions learners use to facilitate acquisition of knowledge or skill. Such strategies are related directly to the performance of certain learning tasks such as elaboration, inference and translation. Meta-cognitive strategies are those that involve knowing about learning and controlling it through planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning activity. The social-affective strategies are a collection of strategies that involve the control of resources, time, effort and support (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Literature has also revealed that learners need to develop listening strategies that help them capitalize on the oral language input they are receiving. It has also clarified that the appearance and reliance on these strategies depend on learners' listening comprehension level. For instance, more skilled learners have been found to use more top down strategies than bottom up strategies, which are repeatedly used by less skilled learners (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998). In addition, more skilled learners have been found to use more meta-cognitive strategies as: planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation than less skilled learners. Some researchers advocated also that successful listeners use more repair strategies when there is comprehension breakdown, through directing their attention back to the task and continuing listening actively, while less successful listeners stop listening (Carissa, 1997; Goh, 2000; O'Mallley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrft, 2003).

Recent research in listening comprehension has clarified that what discriminates good and poor listeners is the degree to which they are aware of their own efficiencies as listeners and the effectiveness of their particular strategies for meaning construction (Goh, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002; Doff & Christopher, 2004; Liu, 2008).

It can be concluded that listening is ignored or poorly taught (Osada, 2001). How to listen effectively is rarely covered in academic settings and its significance is underexplored (Read, 2002; Vandergrift, 2007). Consequently, awareness and deployment of effective listening strategies can help learners make the most of the language input to which they are exposed. Thus, reviewing literature

created a need to clarify the relationship between learners' use of listening strategies and their listening comprehension level.

Background of the Research Problem:

Listening comprehension is a means of communication and an essential part of oral language competence. Even though, it is a source of frustration for foreign language learners (Graham, 2006). In second language acquisition, listening comprehension used to be considered a passive activity, and thus it didn't deserve researchers' attention (Jung, 2003). It was also assumed that the ability to comprehend spoken language would automatically improve. Moreover, though learning to listen in another language is challenging, as it is complex covert and meaning building process, yet it has received less attention than those processes that develop speaking, reading and writing skills.

The teaching of listening skills is still neglected in the English language teaching process. EFL learners have serious problems in English listening comprehension due to the fact that schools pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary. Listening skill is not an important part of many course books or curricula and teachers do not seem to pay attention to it while designing their lessons (Alderson & Banerjee, 2002; Mecartty, 2000; Vandergrift, 2007).

Despite recognizing the importance of listening strategies for the development of listening comprehension (Henner Stanchina,

1997; Goh, 2000, 2002b; Field, 2003; Rost, 2007) reviewing literature has revealed that very limited studies have been conducted concerning the listening strategies used by foreign language learners in relation to their listening comprehension level. In addition, little attention has been focused on systematic practice in second/foreign language listening strategies that help learners develop comprehension skills for real life listening (Dekeyser, 2007; Berne, 2004; Mendelsohn, 1994; Vandergrift, 2004). Moreover, in most studies conducted in this area the participants were native speakers of languages that are cognates of English such as French and Spanish. It has also been recognized that very limited studies, up to the researcher's knowledge, have been conducted in Egypt dealing with listening comprehension in relation to learners' use of listening strategies. Furthermore, previous research in the field of foreign language learning has clarified that very few studies conducted in this paradigm, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, have explored all of those strategies together (Goh, 2006; Vandergrift, 2005).

Thus, as a result of reviewing literature and supervising the teaching practice for years, it has become clear for the researcher that listening does not receive its due attention and that students ignore the listening strategies necessary for comprehending a spoken text. It has also been recognized that most teachers do not seem to pay attention to the listening strategies their students need to learn and use while designing and presenting their lessons. Therefore, the

present research tries to identify the listening strategies suitable for secondary school students and investigate if such a kind of relationship exists between students' use of such strategies and their achievement in listening comprehension.

Statement of the problem:

The present research endeavors to identify the listening strategies first year secondary school students' use and to investigate if a relationship exists between using such strategies and students' achievement in listening comprehension.

The Research Questions:

The present research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. **Is there a statistically significant correlation between means of scores of secondary stage students in listening comprehension test and their scores on the listening strategies questionnaire?**
2. **Are there statistically significant differences between means of scores of high listening achievers and low listening achievers on the listening strategies questionnaire?**
3. **Which one of the listening strategies contributes most in predicting secondary stage students' listening comprehension?**

Objectives of the Research:

The present research has aimed at:

1. **determining if there is a statistically significant correlation between means of scores of secondary stage students in listening comprehension test and their scores on the listening strategies questionnaire.**
2. **recognizing if there are significant differences between high and low listening achievers on the listening strategies questionnaire.**
3. **specifying the most effective listening strategy in predicting listening comprehension.**

Significance of the Research:

The significance of the present research is due to the following:

1. **Clarifying the role of listening strategies as an important variable in students' achievement in listening comprehension.**
2. **Designing some tools as: the listening comprehension test and the listening strategies questionnaire.**
3. **Clarifying that listening comprehension is a set of highly integrated skills that play an important role in the process of language acquisition and the development of related language skills.**
4. **Stressing that awareness and deployment of effective listening comprehension strategies can help learners make the most of the language input to which they are exposed.**

Limitations of the research:

The present research has been limited to the following:

a. **First year secondary stage students, Khadega Yousef secondary school for girls, Assuit city.**

b. **The first academic term (September 2012).**

The Research Terminology:

1. Listening comprehension:

Rost (2002) defines listening comprehension as a mental process in which listeners attempt to construct a meaning out of the information received from the speakers.

In this research, listening comprehension is defined as a complex process in which the listener should be able to skim for obtaining the gist of a spoken text, scan for specific details in a spoken text, take notes while listening, make inferences from a spoken text, distinguishing similar sounds, identifying focus in a spoken text, identify different text organization patterns, and identifying mistakes in a spoken text.

2. Listening strategies:

Listening strategies are defined as techniques for enhancing the process of listening comprehension (Goh, 2002; Vandergrift, 2003b, 2007).

In the present research, listening strategies refer to the

cognitive, meta-cognitive and social-affective operations learners employ and contribute directly to the comprehension of a speaking text.

Research Hypotheses:

1. **There is no statistically significant positive correlation between means of scores of secondary stage students' listening comprehension and their scores in the listening strategies questionnaire.**
2. **There are no statistically significant differences between means of scores of high listening achievers and those of low listening achievers on the listening strategies questionnaire.**
3. **One of the listening strategies contributes most in predicting secondary stage students' listening comprehension.**

Research Procedures:

To answer the research questions, the following procedures were adopted:

1. **Reviewing previous research and literature in the field of listening strategies and listening comprehension.**
2. **Introducing theoretical background dealing with listening comprehension and listening strategies (cognitive, meta-cognitive and social-affective).**
3. **Determining the most suitable listening comprehension sub-skills for secondary stage students, to make use of when**

designing the listening comprehension test, and administering them to a number of TEFL specialists for reviewing. The appropriate listening sub-skills deemed suitable for secondary school students were presented in:

a. **Skimming to obtain the gist of a spoken text.**
b. **Scanning for specific details in a spoken text.**
c. **Making inferences from a spoken text.**
d. **Note-taking while listening to a spoken text.**
e. **Drawing conclusions.**
f. **Distinguishing similar sounds in a spoken English text.**
g. **Identifying focus in a spoken text.**
h. **Identifying different text organization patterns.**
i. **Identifying mistakes.**

4. **Designing and validating the research instruments; The Listening Comprehension Test, and The Listening Strategies Questionnaire.**
5. **Selecting the research group consisting of first year secondary stage students, Assuit city.**
6. **Administering the tools of the research.**
7. **Analyzing and interpreting the results in the light of the research questions.**
8. **Providing recommendations.**

Theoretical Background and Review of Literature:

Listening comprehension:

Listening is the process of learning sounds, identifying and understanding them as words, translating those words to the first language, and responding back to the speaker in the second language (Hasan, 2000; Lund, 1991; Wilson, 2003). Listening comprehension is a crucial language skill for developing fluency and is also essential for foreign language learning and for the development of other language skills (Rost, 2002; Vandergrift, 2007). It is regarded theoretically as an active and cognitive process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge. It requires exposure, practice, and application of specific strategies. Listening comprehension also requires awareness and use of certain sub-skills as; skimming to obtain the gist of a spoken text, scanning for specific details in a spoken text, making inferences, note- taking while listening, drawing conclusions, distinguishing similar sounds, identifying focus in a spoken text, identifying different text organization patterns, and identifying mistakes. Developing students‘ listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks for any ESL/EFL teacher. This is because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice. The demands of the task are often frustrating for students because there are no precise rules, as in grammar teaching. However, teachers must develop students‘ sub-skills of listening comprehension.

Listening comprehension is a complicated mental process. It has been stressed by several researchers (Graham, 2006; Hasan, 2000; Vandergrift, 2007) that most English language learners consider listening comprehension as being the most difficult language skill to learn. Listeners generally have no opportunity to review the message, which is much different from written language, and therefore have to overcome the challenges of limited vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, complicated syntax, fast speech rate, and the opportunity to listen to the message just only once (Chang, 2007; Chang & Read, 2006; Shang, 2008; Lund, 1991).

Research into speech perception has shown that listening comprehension involves far more than mere decoding of the sounds. Rivers (1983) in her discussion of speech perception identifies three stages. First, the listener must recognize that the sounds are an actual message and not just noise. This recognition means to the listener that the sounds are elements of the language system. In the second stage the listener identifies sounds along with lexical and syntactic forms by segmenting and grouping them. The third stage involves recoding in order to retain the auditory message in long-term storage. These stages are necessarily rapid and overlapping (80-83).

Research in second language listening has generally revealed that second/foreign language learners encounter difficulties while listening to the foreign language (Goh, 2000; Graham, 2006; Lynch, 1997; Vandergrift, 2004, 2007). Goh (2000) advocated that the most common listening comprehension problems are that learners; (1)

quickly forget what is heard, (2) do not recognize words they know, (3) understand words but not their intended messages, (4) neglect the next part of the message when thinking about meaning, and (5) are unable to form a mental representation from the words heard" (60). In order to overcome such listening comprehension problems, learners need to develop techniques known as listening strategies that are found to be effective in helping learners understand the aural input despite their lack of knowledge (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). In accordance with this, it has been recognized that more skilled listeners use more complex and self-evaluative strategies, incorporate contextual cues with greater ease, and engage more naturally in meta-cognitive processes. Less skilled listeners have been found to use memory strategies and are more affected by social and affective factors (Field, 2003; Rost, 2007). Accordingly, much attention in second/ foreign language learning should be directed to specifying the cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective listening strategies and highlighting the effectiveness of each category in listening comprehension achievement.

Listening Strategies:

Although the teaching of listening comprehension has long been a neglected and poorly taught aspect of English in many EFL program (Mendelsohn, 1994: 9), listening is now regarded as much more important in both EFL classrooms and second language acquisition research. Listening involves an active process of deciphering and constructing meaning from both verbal and non-

verbal messages. Thus, the label of passive skill applied to listening is a misnomer. This misunderstanding may stem from the fact that learners seem to only sit in a language lab quietly, listen to pre-recorded dialogues, and write the answers to some questions related to the oral stimulus. It is evident, then, that listening is not as passive as it has been claimed to be as it demands a number of complicated processes on the part of the learners (Nunan, 1998).

Listening is an active skill that necessitates listeners to perform a variety of complicated tasks as; discriminating between sounds and interpreting stress and intonation. To give meaning for the information learners listen to, they use a variety of mental processes that are broadly described as listening comprehension strategies. According to Freeman and Lin (2006), listening comprehension strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified according to the way listeners process the input. Top-down strategies are listener based as the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic or the context, the type of the text, and the language. Such background knowledge activates a number of expectations that help the listener interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. They include predicting, inference, elaborating, and visualizing. Bottom-up strategies are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message such as combining sounds, words and grammar to create meaning. They include word for word translation, adjusting the rate of speech,

repeating the oral text and focusing on prosodic features of the text (Tsuiz & Fullilove, 1998).

Vandergrift (1999) stressed that strategy development is important for listening training because strategies are conscious means by which learners can guide and evaluate their own comprehension and responses. He studied the influence of listening strategy training on Japanese EFL learners‘ listening competence, and it showed that the effect of listening strategy training was more discernible on perception than on comprehension, especially for those students who received low scores on the G-TELP.

Listening strategies refer to decision making operations that a learner employs in processing a listening task. These strategies are determined by; specific task requirements, situational constraints, problem content, and by prior knowledge and experience which the listener possesses and brings to hear in each task (Sakai, 2009). O'Malley and Chamot (1989) categorized strategies into two groups; cognitive and meta-cognitive. However, a third category, socio-affective, was added to describe the learning that takes place when learners interact with classmates, ask their teacher for clarification or use specific techniques to lower anxiety.

Cognitive strategies are problem-solving techniques that learners use to handle the learning tasks and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or skill (Derry & Murphy, 1986). Trying to comprehend a spoken text without translation is an important cognitive strategy. This strategy is generally used when the listener

attempts to grasp the second language input without translation to the first language. Such strategy directs listener's attention to the meaning and structure of the target language as there are many words that do not have equivalents in one of the languages and thus makes the comprehension process more difficult.

Focusing on the main words to understand the new words is another cognitive strategy. This strategy is very useful for beginners who depend on their limited vocabulary to achieve comprehension. Another cognitive strategy includes relying on the main idea to understand the whole text. Using such strategy helps the learner to identify the main topic first then details later on. Among the techniques this strategy includes is skimming. Another cognitive strategy is guessing the meaning by relying on contextual or linguistic clues. Both native and non native speakers use this strategy when they do not know all the words, or when they do not understand the whole meaning of a sentence. (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005).

Meta-cognition refers to the knowledge and control that we have over our cognition processes. It includes awareness and control of planning, monitoring, repairing, revising, summarizing, and evaluating. In discriminating between meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies O'Malley et al. (1985b) pointed out that "meta-cognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning and learning, monitoring to comprehension or production while it is taking place, as self-evaluation of learning after the learning activity

is completed. In contrast, cognitive strategies are more directly related to individual learning tasks and entail direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials" (560).

One reason why meta-cognition is significant is that if learners are not aware of when comprehension is breaking down and what they can do about it, strategies introduced by the teacher will fail. As, according to O'Malley et al., "students without meta-cognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishments, and future directions (1985b:561). Moreover, meta-cognition helps students to be consciously aware of what they have learned, recognize situations in which it would be useful, and progress involved in using it. The conscious use of meta-cognitive strategies helps learners get back their focus when losing it. Learners do not use meta-cognitive strategies very frequently despite the importance of self- monitoring and self–evaluation (Oxford, 1990).

Thompson & Rubin (1996) examined the effects of using meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies on the listening comprehension performance of American university students learning Russian. They found that the subjects who received strategy instruction in listening to video-recorded texts improved significantly over those who had received no instruction.

The socio-affective strategies encompass attempts to create and promote positive emotional reactions and attitudes towards language learning (Chamot, 2005). The affective field refers to

emotions, attitudes, and motivations. Affective strategies include three sets: lowering one's anxiety, encouraging oneself, and taking one's emotional temperature. Social strategies include three main groups: asking questions, co-operating with others, and empathizing with others. Vandergrift (2003) defines socio-affective strategies as the techniques listeners employ to collaborate with others to verify understanding or to lower anxiety. It is essential for listeners to know how to reduce the anxiety, feel confident in doing listening tasks, and promote personal motivation in improving listening competence (Vandergrift, 1997).

Habte-Gabr (2006) stated that socio-affective strategies were those which were non academic in nature and involve stimulating learning through establishing a level of empathy between the instructor and student. They included considering factors such as emotions and attitudes (Oxford, 1990). Gardner and MacIntayre (1992) have claimed that the socio-affective strategies used to control the learning experiences are very important because the learning context and learners' social-psychological factors are directly related. The social –affective strategies have also been found to be the category that influenced the learning context immediately.

Second/foreign language researchers and language teachers have explored listening strategies using a variety of methods such as think aloud procedures (Chamot & Keatley: 2004), interviews (Vandergrift, 1996; Goh, 2002a), listening strategies inventories (Fujita, 1985), questionnaires, (Goh, 2002b, Vandergrift, 2002, 2005),

recall task (Moreira, 1996) and diaries (Goh, 1997). Murphy (1985) used the think aloud procedure to investigate the listening strategies at skilled and less skilled learners. He determined that skilled learners used a greater variety of strategies than less skilled learners.

Henner Stanchina (1997) brought attention to the important roles that meta -cognitive strategies play in listening comprehension. She explained that the way in which syntactic, semantic and schematic knowledge is utilized, is a matter of effective or ineffective strategy use. She concluded that proficient listeners can recognize failure in comprehension and activate appropriate knowledge to recover comprehension.

Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) investigated the effects of a meta-cognitive process-based approach to teaching second language listening over a semester. Results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the comprehension measure.

Several studies have investigated the differences between skilled and less-skilled listeners. For instance, Goh (2000, 2002c) found that two groups of effective and ineffective listeners shared similarities in terms of the difficulties experienced with listening comprehension. She added that skilled learners use effective combinations of meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies to achieve listening comprehension and are more likely to utilize more complex and self-evaluative strategies, incorporate contextual cues with

greater ease, and engage in meta-cognitive processes more naturally. Ineffective listeners have been found to pay more attention to lexical segmentation and word recognition, are more likely to utilize memory strategies and are more likely affected by social and affective factors (Field, 2003; Goh, 2002c; Osada, 2001).

Vandergrift (2003) examined the strategies of skilled and less skilled listeners using a think aloud procedure. The results showed significant differences between skilled and less skilled listeners in the use of meta-cognitive strategies, as well as individual strategies for comprehension monitoring, questioning for elaboration, and translation. Skilled listeners reported using these skills twice as often as less skilled listeners.

Coskun (2010) investigated the effect of meta-cognitive listening strategy use on the listening performance of a group of beginner preparatory school students in Turkey. The results confirmed that systematic instruction in the use of meta-cognitive strategies did improve listening comprehension. Coskun stressed the importance of incorporating meta-cognitive strategy training into the regular teaching program to help students become more effective listeners.

It has also been reported that less skilled listeners relied more on memory strategies and self-reported a limited language knowledge and vocabulary, expressing difficulties when attempting to understand a message (Shang, 2008; Vandergrift, 2006). Murphy

(1986) reported that more skilled learners were able to find main ideas and supporting details, whereas less skilled learners were more attentive to the definition and pronunciation of unknown words.

This review of literature on listening strategies and listening comprehension revealed that studies conducted in this area thus far are very few. Thus it seems essential to further research the listening process and to develop a better understanding about which type of strategies students should use to facilitate the listening comprehension and raise learners' listening achievement level. Therefore, the present research might add to the body of research that has been conducted in this paradigm.

Material and Methods:

1. Group of the research:

a. The Pilot Group:

To evaluate the effectiveness of tools of the research, a group of (30) first year secondary school students, Assuit City, were randomly selected in the pilot study.

b. The main Group:

One hundred and twenty first year secondary school students at Assuit City, EL-Khayat secondary school, were selected randomly and participated in the study.

2. Tools of the Research:

a. Listening Strategies Questionnaire. (Prepared by the researcher)

b. Listening Comprehension Test. (Prepared by the researcher)

The Listening Strategies Questionnaire:

1. Designing the Questionnaire:

To build the Listening Strategies Questionnaire the researcher reviewed some questionnaires in literature as (Ho, 2006; Su, 2003; Wen, 1996) and studies that have dealt with listening strategies as (Vandergrift, 1997, 2003).

A five point Likert Scale ranging from (Never) to (Always) was used to indicate students' preferences. The items measure the perceived use of listening strategies and processes underlying three main factors; cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective strategies. The questionnaire has been presented to jury members including university teaching staff, inspectors, as well as senior teachers to judge the validity of the statements and their appropriateness for the research purpose. Suggested modifications have been made and the questionnaire has been introduced in its final form. The final version of the questionnaire included (26) statements divided into three dimensions; cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective strategies.

Table (1)

Distribution of the statements of the Listening Strategies Questionnaire according to each dimension

No.	Dimensions	Statements	Total
1.	Cognitive.	1-4-7-10-13-16-19-21-23-25	10
2.	Meta-cognitive.	2-5-8-11-14-17-20-22-24-26	10
3.	Social-effective.	3-6-9-12-15-18	6

The pilot experiment of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was administered to a group of first year secondary school students (n=30). To recognize the validity of the Questionnaire the researcher used the following:

Logical Validity:

That was based on following suggestions of a group of experts in the field and making required modifications in the light of their directions concerning:

- **Suitability of the statements for the purpose of the questionnaire.**
- **The elimination or modification of any ambiguous or inappropriate statements.**
- **The addition of certain statements.**

Grading of the Questionnaire items:

The Questionnaire responses were assigned the scores (1-2-3-4-5) to represent the items (Never- Rarely- Sometimes- Usually- Always).

The Listening Comprehension Test:

a. Objective of the test:

To assess first year secondary stage students' level in listening comprehension.

b. Construction of the test:

The test consisted of (43) items. These items represent the specified listening comprehension sub-skills. The test included a number of listening comprehension passages that were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

1. **Familiarity with the topics.**
2. **Suitability for testing the listening comprehension skills.**
3. **Linguistic difficulty and length.**

c. Procedures for designing the test:

1. **Determining the most important listening comprehension sub-skills.**
2. **Developing a table of specification for the listening comprehension skills test.**
3. **Suggesting the items of the test and submitting them to a jury of TEFL specialists to evaluate the validity of the test.**
4. **Modifying the test according to the jury members' suggestions which were:**
   - **Shortening the passages so that students understand them and answer the questions.**
   - **Replacing some difficult words with easy ones to suit**

students' level.

5. **Piloting the test to ensure the clarity of instructions, suitability of the linguistic level to the subjects, and to determine the validity, reliability, and time limit. The optimum time was determined by computing the mean time used by the first and last student to complete the test. It was three hours.**

d. Reliability of the test:

In order to establish its reliability, the test was administered to a group of thirty first year secondary school students. One month later, the test was re-administered to the same group. The reliability of the test was determined by using the test-retest method. The reliability coefficient of the test is (0.82).

Further, Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the test reliability. The test reliability was determined by using internal consistency coefficient. The test was found to be reliable, the correlation coefficient (0.93), at (0.01) level of significance.

e. Instructions of the test:

Test instructions were written in English. They are brief, simple to understand, and free from ambiguities. They contain information about the objective of the test, time allowed to complete the test and how to record answers.

f. Scoring of the test:

- **Question1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 :Two scores were allotted for each correct answer.**
- **Question 11: one score was allotted for each correct answer (total score=5).**
- **Questions 27, 28: two scores and half were allotted for each correct answer. Therefore, the total score of the test was (90).**

g. Time of the test:

During the pilot study, the researcher calculated the time taken by students for finishing the test. The average time of the test was three hours.

Findings and Discussion:

1. Answering the first research question:

The first research question was " Is there a statistically significant **correlation between means of scores of secondary stage students in listening comprehension test and their scores on the listening strategies questionnaire?"**

To answer this question a listening comprehension test and a listening strategies questionnaire were designed and administered to research group. Values of correlation coefficient were calculated between group of the research scores in the listening comprehension test and their scores in the listening strategies questionnaire. Table (2) shows values of correlation coefficient between study variables.

Table (2)

Values of correlation coefficient between students' scores in the listening comprehension test and their scores in the listening strategies questionnaire

Variables	Listening Comprehension
1. Cognitive Strategies.	**0.85****
2. Meta-cognitive Strategies.	**0.64****
3. Social-effective Strategies.	**0.77****

**Significant at 0.01 level

The above results indicate that all the values were significant at the level of (0.01). The previous table shows a statistically significant positive correlation between the three dimensions of the listening strategies questionnaire and listening comprehension..

This finding is congruent with other researchers who reported that there is a positive correlation between listening strategies and listening comprehension and that knowledge and use of listening strategies can enhance second language listening comprehension (Annevirta et al., 2007; Beasley & Chung, 2008; Chen, 2007; Derwing, et al., 2008; Field, 2008).These results imply that learners use some listening strategies to help them understand listening text as research in listening comprehension revealed (Berne, 2004; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Vandergrift, 2003). Therefore this significant correlation found between students' use of listening strategies and their listening comprehension brought attention to the

important roles that cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective strategies play in listening comprehension.

2. Answering the second research question:

The second research question was "Are there statistically significant differences between means of scores of high listening achievers and low listening achievers on the listening strategies questionnaire?"

To answer this question, students' scores on the listening strategies questionnaire were taken. High and low listening achievers in the listening comprehension test were determined. The high listening achievers group included (30) students with (25) percent, and the group of low listening achievers included (30) with (25) percent of the whole group of the study. "t" value, means and standard deviation were calculated for students scores on each strategy.

Table (3)

Differences between High and Low Achievers in Listening Strategies

No.	Strategies	High Achievers (n=30)		Low Achievers (n=30)		"t" Value
		M1	S1	M2	S2	
1.	Cognitive Strategies.	115.22	4.50	97.11	3.99	16.17
2.	Meta-cognitive Strategies.	85.55	3.16	80.12	4.95	4.94
3.	Social-affective Strategies.	95.13	4.12	83.95	5.22	6.39

* Significant at 0.01 level.

The results shown in the above table indicate that all the values were significant at the level of 0.01.

Table (3) indicates that there are statistically significant differences at (0.01) level between high and low listening achievers on listening strategies favoring high listening achievers. These results indicate that high listening achievers used more repair strategies when there was comprehension breakdown to redirect their attention back to the task and continue listening actively, while low listening achievers stop listening further (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Coskun, 2010; Vandergrift, 2003). This indicates that successful listeners have a higher degree of awareness of their listening process as they use more listening strategies and employ them more effectively than less successful listeners do (Goh, 2000).

This finding is consistent with those of many other authors who reported that students who use listening strategies demonstrate higher levels of achievement in listening comprehension (Vandergrift, 2003; Goh, 2000).

3. Answering the third research question:

The third research question was "Which one of the listening strategies contributes most in predicting secondary stage students' listening comprehension?"

Multi-regression analysis has been used to determine the best strategy in predicting listening comprehension. Percentage "f" has been calculated to determine the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The correlation of

determination has also been calculated to specify the variation degree that independent variables have on the dependent variable. Standard partial regression coefficient has also been calculated to determine the relative importance of each variable concerning its effect on the dependent variable. Table (4) shows multi regression analysis for independent variables (listening strategies) and the dependent variable (listening comprehension).

Table (4)

Multi Regression Analysis for independent variables (Listening strategies) and the dependent variable (Listening Comprehension)

No.	Variables	Multi correlation coefficient	Correlation of determination	Partial regression coefficient	Standard partial regression coefficient	"f" value
1	Cognitive Strategies.	0.557	0.541	0.483	0.465	55.64
2	Meta-cognitive Strategies.	0.248	0.242	0.787	0.188	
3	Social-affective Strategies.	0.372	0.344	0.198	0.187	

Results shown in the above table indicate that all the values were significant at (0.01) level. The previous table shows that the independent variables explain (55.64) of variance in listening comprehension. It also shows that the independent variables represented in (cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social-affective) listening strategies, have an effect on listening comprehension.

Values of standard partial regression coefficient were in turn as follows: (0.465, 0.188 , 0.187). The results show that listening strategies can predict listening comprehension level. Results indicate also that the most powerful predictor of students' listening comprehension was the category of cognitive strategies followed by the social-affective and finally the meta-cognitive strategies.

Those results concur with the findings of other studies that investigated the listening comprehension strategy use and suggested meta-cognitive strategy to be the primary factor that accounts for most of listening comprehension (Henner Stanchina, 1997; Goh & Taib, 2006).

Previous results imply that students used cognitive strategies to handle the learning tasks and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or skill manifested in behaviors such as guessing the whole meaning of the text using the main idea or elaborating on new information using one's personal knowledge and experience.

Previous findings demonstrated also that meta-cognitive listening strategies were the least predictors of listening comprehension. This implies that students have lower meta-cognitive awareness and thus need explicit instruction to develop their knowledge and use of the meta-cognitive strategies. Therefore EFL teachers should teach their students how to listen, to reflect on the process of listening and focus on using meta-cognitive strategies to improve students' listening comprehension (Coskun, 2010; Richards, 2008; Graham & Macaro, 2008). This finding is consistent with those

of other researchers who reported that cognitive strategies are good predictors of listening comprehension (Vandergrift, 1996, 2003; Taguchi, 2002).

Recommendations:

1. **Instructors should teach what listening strategies are as well as their role in learning, as this can help listeners get a comprehensive system of knowledge about listening tasks and listening strategies.**
2. **Teachers should emphasize listening in the foreign language instruction and should increase the amount of listening time in the EFL classroom since focusing on the listening process can help students acquire a useful tool to raise their English comprehension competence.**
3. **EFL teachers should carry out activities where listeners are given opportunities to practice using listening strategies since they proved to be effective in developing students' listening comprehension.**
4. **It is important for teachers to provide numerous opportunities for students to practice listening skills and to become actively engaged in the listening process.**

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استكشاف العلاقة بين استخدام استراتيجيات الاستماع والفهم السماعي لدي طلاب المرحلة الثانوية

د./ حنان أحمد عبد الحافظ محمود(*)

ملخص البحث

كان الهدف من البحث الحالي التعرف علي ما اذا كانت هناك علاقة ارتباطية بين استخدام استراتيجيات الاستماع والفهم السماعي وقد تكونت مجموعة البحث من (120) طالبة من طالبات الصف الاول الثانوي بمدينة اسيوط. وتمثلت ادوات البحث في: (أ) استبيان استراتيجيات الاستماع, (ب) اختبار الفهم السماعي و اسفرت نتائج البحث عن وجود علاقات ارتباطية ذات دلالة احصائية عند مستوى 0.01 بين ابعاد استبيان استراتيجيات الاستماع والفهم السماعي. كما توصلت نتائج البحث الي وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين مرتفعي ومنخفضي التحصيل في الفهم السماعي في استبيان استراتيجيات الاستماع عند مستوى 0.01 لصالح المرتفعين في التحصيل. أمكن أيضاً تحديد أكثر الاستراتيجيات تنبؤا بالفهم السماعي وهي استراتيجيات المعرفة. وقد خلص البحث إلى أن استراتيجيات الاستماع لها أثر إيجابي على الفهم السماعي.

(*) مدرس المناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية – قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس – كلية التربية– جامعة أسيوط.