

Notes

A Progress Report – a Replication Study on Listening Strategy Use and Self-Efficacy in Relation to Listening Proficiency in EFL

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Abstract

This reports an on-going replication study investigating relationships between listening test scores and two questionnaire results, specifically, correlations between listening proficiency and listening strategy use, and between listening proficiency and self-efficacy for listening among the students the author has been teaching. The examination is being conducted with new participants based on the author's previous studies (Taguchi, 2017a; Taguchi, 2017b) concerning listening strategy instruction to Japanese learners of English. The preliminary results here show that the participants' listening test scores are significantly correlated with their strategy use at $r=.37$ [0.06-0.61] and with their self-efficacy, at $r=.36$ [0.05 – 0.6] (both $ps < .001$), which is consistent with preceding studies by the author and others. Among the factors in the listening strategy questionnaires, directed attention and person knowledge are found to correlate with their listening scores, probably because the factors share self-efficacy constructs.

Keywords: listening, strategy use, self-efficacy, proficiency, EFL

Previous Studies

Based on the preceding studies that showed teaching listening strategies would enhance learners' listening abilities and self-efficacy (e.g., Chen, 2009; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Thompson & Rubin, 1996; Yeldham & Gruba, 2014; Yeldham, 2015), the author conducted quasi-experimental listening strategy instruction lessons from September 2015 through December 2015 (Taguchi, 2017a) with the findings that not only the experimental group that received 10-hour listening lessons accompanied with explicit strategy instructions, but also the control group that only received listening lessons, improved their TOEIC listening scores.¹⁾ As for their self-efficacy, which is defined as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994), both groups showed statistical

1) For more information, see Taguchi, 2017a, and for assessment materials, see the assessment section in this paper.

improvement after the study period, while only the experimental group showed statistical improvement with the listening strategy use. In other words, the explicit strategy instructions seem to have made the participants use strategies more often, while the listening practice, irrespective of explicit strategy instruction, seem to have benefited the participants in terms of their listening proficiency and self-efficacy. The improvements in listening proficiency and self-efficacy among those who received no strategy instructions were probably due to the sheer amount of listening lesson time. Since many of the learners may not have had enough listening practice before, they might have made gains from the three-month class listening practice without the strategy instruction. The results show not the strategy instruction itself but the sheer practice time seemed to make the majority of the participants improve their listening scores. This may have been because many of the participants were not ready yet to take advantage of strategy lessons. In other words, there may be a threshold level of listening proficiency or listening practice experience to gain from a strategy instruction. Only experienced listeners could show a correlation between the listening strategy use and their listening proficiency. The more strategy instruction they received, the higher their proficiency was, while inexperienced learners could not gain enough from strategy instruction to increase their listening scores.

The author further pursued the above implications by analyzing data from more participants, from 27 to 66, to attempt to determine if proficient listeners' data would show a stronger correlation between the strategy use and the listening proficiency (Taguchi, 2017b). The study demonstrated listening strategy use and self-efficacy were more closely related among more proficient listeners than less proficient listeners.²⁾ This suggests that a longer instruction period would be preferable because an extended course could make the majority of the participants more accustomed to listening to English and better-prepared to acquire listening strategy skills through explicit strategy instructions.

With necessary adaptations made based on the above studies, specifically with a longer period and more participants, the author has been conducting a replication study since April 2017, investigating relationships between listening comprehension test scores and two questionnaire results. In particular, correlations between listening proficiency and listening strategy use, and between listening proficiency and self-efficacy for listening. The course employs listening quizzes and journals in addition to metacognitive listening strategy instructions, but since the course has not been completed yet, this paper makes a quantitative analysis of data taken after three months of lessons.

2) For more information, see Taguchi, 2017b, and for assessment materials, see the assessment section in this paper.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of economics majors at a private university in Tokyo enrolled in two 1st year required English courses ($n=66$). The students' English proficiency ranged from A2 to C1 on CEFR.³⁾ All of the participants' native language was Japanese. The data used in this study is only from those who submitted their Informed Consent Agreements, which allowed the author to obtain their TOEIC scores from the school.

Table 1 *A Demographic Profile of the Students Participants in the Study*

Number of Students	TOEIC IP Listening Score Range ⁴⁾ (Mean, SD)
$n=66$ (47 males, 19 females)	190-420 (266.29, 47.75)

Assessment Materials⁵⁾

Assessment Material 1 Measure of Listening Proficiency. As an assessment for the participants' listening performance, the students' TOEIC Listening Section scores (with 100 multiple-choice questions, 45 minutes) were obtained as a listening proficiency assessment. The scores of students in the required English courses are from the test in April 2017.

Assessment Material 2 Questionnaire A - Measure of Listening Strategy Use. In the first and the last class of the 2017 spring semester English course (April and July 2017), the students completed two questionnaires; one was the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ, Vandergrift et al., 2006, Appendix A), and the other was about self-efficacy, which is to be explained below. The MALQ is a 6-point Likert scale questionnaire that assesses five distinct factors in listening: planning and evaluation ("the strategies that listeners use to prepare themselves for listening, and to evaluate the results of their listening efforts"); directed attention ("the strategies that listeners use to concentrate and to stay on task"); person knowledge ("listeners' perceptions concerning the difficulty presented by L2 listening and their L2 listening self-efficacy"); (no) mental translation ("the strategies that listeners must learn to avoid if they are to become skilled listeners"); problem-solving ("a group of strategies used by listeners to make inferences - such as strategic guessing - and to monitoring these

3) The participants' average TOEIC listening score is 266.29, which is CEFR A2 to B1, according to the Education Testing Service website.

4) Scores on TOEIC Listening Section range from 5-495.

5) This section is a reproduction of the author's study (Taguchi, 2017a and 2017b) with updated information about the number of participants and study dates.

inferences”). The internal reliabilities of these factors were reported to range from .68 (for the four items on the directed attention) to .78 (for the three items on the mental translation) (Vandergrift et al., 2006, p. 446).

Assessment Material 3 Questionnaire B - Measure of Self-Efficacy for Listening Activities. The other questionnaire used for this study was the one developed by Kassem (2015) with the purpose of measuring the level of the participants’ listening self-efficacy (Appendix B). It consists of 40 items, and uses a 6 point-Likert scale, although the original version had a 5-point scale. This measures (1) progress: how a respondent perceives his/her present performance compared with his/her past performance (2) observational comparison: how a respondent perceives his/her performance compared with his/her peers’ and (3) physiological states: how a respondent feels during listening, (4) strategic awareness: whether a respondent can handle a listening task and overcome difficulties, and (5) challenge: whether a respondent is willing to face such a task.

Instrument Reliability The following (Table 2) shows the level of internal consistency of the questionnaire used in this study. The reliabilities for TOEIC Listening Test, MALQ and Self-Efficacy here are from Liao at al., 2010, Vandergrift et al., 2006 and Kassem, 2015, respectively.

Table 2 *Instrument reliability for five factors in MALQ and Self-Efficacy Questionnaire*

	Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of Items
TOEIC Listening Test	.92-.93	100
Planning/Evaluation	.75	5
Directed Attention	.68	4
Person Knowledge	.74	3
(no) Mental Translation	.78	3
Problem-solving	.74	6
Self-efficacy	.92	40

Results

As Table 3 shows, a positive correlation is statistically significant in the whole group of the participants ($n=66$) in the relationships between the listening proficiency and the listening strategy use ($r=.37$, [0.06-0.61]), and the proficiency and the self-efficacy for listening ($r=.36$ [0.05 – 0.6]) at the 0.01 level. Overall, those who use strategies more frequently perform the listening task better, and those who have higher self-efficacy perform the task better, and vice versa.

Table 3 Correlations between TOEIC Listening Scores and Listening Strategy Use and between TOEIC Listening Scores and Self-Efficacy for Listening (Pearson's *r*)

Levels	Listening Strategy Use	Self-Efficacy for Listening
All	0.37**	0.36**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

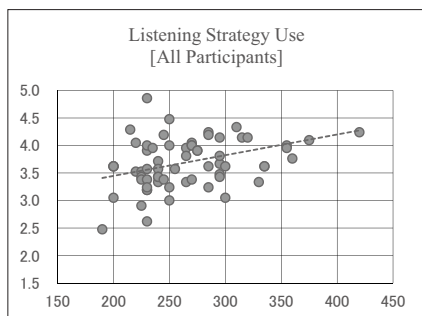


Figure 1. Relationship between TOEIC listening scores and listening strategy use of all the study participants.

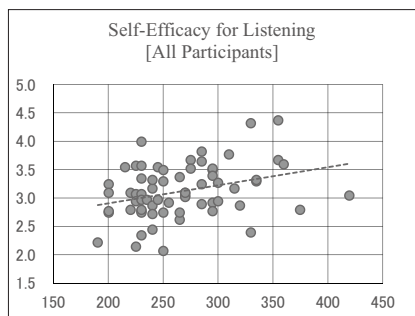


Figure 2. Relationship between TOEIC listening scores and self-efficacy scores for listening of all the study participants.

High Scorers versus Low Scorers

Overall Results In order to investigate how different low-skilled listeners are from high-skilled listeners, I further analyzed the participants' data by dividing the participants into three groups based on their listening scores. The mid scorers are those whose scores were between 0.5 SD (23.86) below the mean (266.29) and 0.5 SD above the mean, the low scorers are those whose scores were 0.5 SD below the mean, and the high scorers are those whose scores were 0.5 SD above the mean. The details are in Table 4.

Table 4 Mean and SDs of TOEIC Listening Test Scores of All the 66 participants and Three Levels

	TOEIC Listening Scores
Mean	266.29
SD (0.5 SD)	47.75 (23.86)
Low scorers (n=27)	from 190 (the lowest) to 240
Mid scorers (n=20)	Higher than 240 to 285
High scorers (n=19)	from 295 to 420 (the highest)

Confirming the results of the statistical tests above, results of One-Way ANOVA also detected the statistical difference between the group of low scorers and that of high scorers both in the strategy use and self-efficacy (Table 5), while such difference was not found with mid-scorers against low- and high scorer groups.

Table 5 *Level Comparisons for Listening Strategy Use and Self-Efficacy (One-Way ANOVA)*

	Listening Score Levels	M (and SD)	df	F	Sig.
Listening Strategy Use	Low	3.51 (.49)	2, 63	3.89	.03
	High	3.88 (.48)			
Self-Efficacy	Low	2.98 (.43)	2, 63	3.14	.05
	High	3.32 (.50)			

Factors in MALQ Of the two questionnaires used for the above data, MALQ, which is for the listening strategy use, clearly labels five distinct factors in the original version, while the self-efficacy questionnaire does not. Therefore, the author further analyzed the results of listening strategy use to specifically understand which strategies are more frequently used by high scorers than low-scorers. Among the five factors, the use of directed attention and person knowledge strategies were found to be the ones high-scorers use more often than low-scorers (Table 6).

Table 6 *Level Comparisons for Directed Attention and Person Knowledge (One-Way ANOVA)*

	Listening Score Levels	M (and SD)	df	F	Sig.
Directed Attention	Low	3.69 (.72)	2, 63	4.50	.02
	High	4.28 (.68)			
Person Knowledge	Low	2.54 (.63)	2, 63	7.90	.00
	High	3.39 (.77)			

Based on the results, let's look at what implications for teaching listening in the classroom in the next discussion section.

Discussion

This study has presented findings that are consistent with the previous results of the author and other researchers, which is that those who have higher listening proficiency tend to use strategies more frequently and to have higher self-efficacy and vice versa. The positive correlation between the self-efficacy and the listening proficiency was found in some studies such as Chen (2007), which had Taiwanese students as participants, and Rahimi and Abedini (2009) which had Iranian learners. Self-efficacy, as shown in the assessment section, concerns a wide range of mental processes from a learner's perception of self-progress, comparison with other learners, physiological states, strategic-awareness of their task, including if they can handle a task and overcome difficulties, and willingness to face such a task. Considering that range, it is reasonable to assume that those who have high self-efficacy in listening - those who have a high level of

A Progress Report – a Replication Study on Listening Strategy Use and Self-Efficacy in Relation to Listening Proficiency in EFL overall mental capacity in general - tend to perform better in listening.

Delving further into the data revealed that the two factors in the strategy survey - directed attention and person knowledge - were the items that correlated with listening proficiency among the participants. As for specific attributes of directed attention, we can refer to Vandergrift et.al (2006 p.451), which says that those who can keep higher directed attention can persist in spite of difficulties and maintain attention while regulating other metacognitive processes. When we look again at the constructs of the self-efficacy questionnaire, we find “willingness to face a difficult task,” among other things. Although directed attention has more focus on “keeping” attention, both questionnaire items concerning self-efficacy and directed attention appear to measure similar aspects of learning, which is perseverance in spite of difficulties thanks to the strong belief in their capabilities.

The other factor, person knowledge also seems closely related to self-efficacy. Vandergrift et.al (2006 p.451) specifically states that person knowledge “represents listeners’ perceptions concerning the difficulty presented by L2 listening and their self-efficacy in L2 listening.”

Considering the items that have been found to be closely related with listening proficiency among the participants leads us to realize how important self-efficacy is in EFL listening. Although the listening strategy questionnaire, MALQ, has three more factors, planning and evaluation, (no) mental translation, and problem-solving, the study has not found them to be in a close relationship with the listening proficiency among the learners. This may be because the data used for this study was taken after just one semester of teaching listening strategy intervention. In other words, it may be because the overall self-efficacy and the related factors – directed attention and person knowledge – are the ones that present themselves as improved constructs earlier than the others. The final data, which is to be collected at the end of 2017, should reveal how similar or different the participants’ results will be and is expected to give us further pedagogical implications.

Future Research

This replication study progress report has confirmed correlations between the listening proficiency and the strategy use, and between the listening proficiency and the self-efficacy among the participants. It is still, however, not clear how the students have been incorporating the strategy lessons the author has been giving over the two semesters.

The ultimate goal of the study is to offer specific information with pedagogical implications to teachers who want to help their students acquire better listening skills. That was not possible here because the lessons have not been completed yet. The future study, however, aims to achieve the goal by not only analyzing the

participants' data, but also reporting the strategy lessons and documenting the students' strategy journals. While quantitative analysis is necessary for a research to be objectively presented, qualitative information is equally important so that the research can let other teachers understand listening strategy lessons better and employ them for their real classroom use.⁶⁾

Appendix⁷⁾ A

Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) and List of Metacognitive Strategies Instructed to the Participants⁸⁾ (adapted from Vandergrift et al., 2006)

1. Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen. (PLAN)⁹⁾
2. I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding. (DIRECTED)
- 3.¹⁰⁾ I find that listening is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing in English. (PERSON)
4. I translate in my head as I listen. (MENTAL)
5. I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand. (PROBLEM)
6. When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away. (DIRECTED)
7. As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic. (PROBLEM)
8. I feel that listening comprehension in English is a challenge for me. (PERSON)
9. I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand. (PROBLEM)
10. Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to. (PLAN)
11. I translate key words as I listen. (MENTAL)
12. I try to get back on track when I lose concentration. (DIRECTED)
13. As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct. (PROBLEM)
14. After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time. (PLAN)
15. I don't feel nervous when I listen to English. (PERSON)
16. When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I give up and stop listening. (DIRECTED)
17. I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand. (PROBLEM)
18. I translate word by word, as I listen. (MENTAL)
19. When I guess the meaning of a word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense.

6) This paper was proofread by Matt Fuller, at ESS, English Support Service, but any errors that remain are my sole responsibility

7) Appendices A and B are originally written in English. The author/researcher of this study translated them into Japanese for the participants.

8) The items here are also used as a list of strategies to teach metacognitive strategies, although the items were presented in groups according to the four types: Planning/Evaluation, Directed Attention, Person Knowledge, Mental Translation, and Problem Solving.

9) The abbreviations stand for Planning/Evaluation (PLAN), Directed Attention (DIRECTED), Person Knowledge (PERSON), Mental Translation (MENTAL), and Problem Solving (PROBLEM).

10) The item with an underlined number is reverse-scored.

(PROBLEM)

20. As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension. (PLAN)
21. I have a goal in mind as I listen. (PLAN)

Appendix B

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (adapted from Kassem, 2015)

- 1 Listening to English is a pleasant activity for me.
- 2 When I compare myself to other students in my class, I'm a good listener.
- 3 Before I listen to an English text, I don't feel that I'll understand it well.
- 4 I often end up translating word by word without understanding what I've listened to.
- 5 I can handle more challenging listening materials than I could before.
- 6 I believe that I'm a poor listener.
- 7 Listening material for EFL learners should be delivered at a slower rate than the rate of native speakers.
- 8 When listening to English, it's easy for me to make guesses about the parts I miss.
- 9 I feel stressed when I listen to English material.
- 10 I believe that my listening comprehension improves with time.
- 11 When I listen, I don't have to try as hard to understand as I used to do.
- 12 When I listen, I can answer more questions than other students.
- 13 I have the ability to improve my listening skill.
- 14 It bothers me if the teacher gives me listening assignments.
- 15 I understand what I listen to better than I could before.
- 16 I feel more relaxed and confident when I read than when I listen.
- 17 When listening to English material, I know how to guess difficult vocabulary items.
- 18 In the listening class, I like to volunteer to answer questions.
- 19 I often get so confused that I cannot remember what I've heard.
- 20 I can make a plan about the listening task before I begin to listen.
- 21 When I find listening difficult, I usually give up.
- 22 When I listen, I recognize more words than before.
- 23 I have no problem listening to someone who speaks English fast.
- 24 I have the ability to concentrate on the content to which I listen.
- 25 I don't feel confident in my English listening skills.
- 26 I know what strategies to use when I listen to English.
- 27 I feel uncomfortable listening without a chance to read the transcript of the speech.
- 28 I'm one of the best listeners in my class.
- 29 If listening gets difficult for me, I am successful at fixing it up.
- 30 I can concentrate more when I listen than I could before.
- 31 When I listen, I need less help than I used to.
- 32 I know what to do when I don't understand what I'm listening to.
- 33 When listening to English, I get nervous when I don't understand every word.

- 34 Listening is easier for me than it used to be.
- 35 My understanding of difficult listening material doesn't improve.
- 36 The more difficult the listening task is, the more challenging and enjoyable it is.
- 37 I feel good about my listening comprehension skill.
- 38 I am less confident in my listening skill than other students.
- 39 I can understand what I listen to even if I don't know several vocabulary items.
- 40 Lack of control over listening material isn't a problem for me.

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「再現研究 EFLにおけるリスニング方略使用・ 自己効力感とリスニング力の関連について 中間報告」

要旨

本稿は英語学習者におけるリスニング方略使用・自己効力感とリスニング力の関連についての著者による2017年研究の再現研究の中間報告である。現段階では被験者66名全体においてリスニング力と方略使用、リスニング力と自己効力感、それら2つにおいて統計上有意な正の相関関係が見られた。リスニング力の高い学習者とリスニング力が低い学習者を比較した結果、両グループ間には自己効力感全体に加え、方略の中でも「注意を向け続けること」と「リスニングについての個人的な思い」に関して統計上有意な差が見られた。この2つは、自己効力感テストが測っていることと密接に関連があると考えられるため、結局は自己効力感とリスニング能力との関連が深いのではないかと考察した。また方略指導が終了した際に、今回と同様の結果が出るのか、他の方略使用についても何らかの違いが生じるのかの調査が必要であることを提案した。

キーワード：リスニング、方略、自己効力感、言語使用能力、EFL