LISTENING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES USED BY EFL POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian EFL postgraduate students are facing difficulties in listening to lectures in English. Listening comprehension strategies (cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective) play a crucial role in academic listening. The current study which employs questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews aims to investigate the use of listening comprehension strategies of first-year EFL master's degree students of the higher and lower proficiency groups, in order to shed some light on effective acquisition in L2 listening. A total number of 98 EFL postgraduate students responded to a demographic information questionnaire and a listening comprehension questionnaire with a likert-scale. Based on their TOEFL/IELTS listening scores, they are classified into beginning, intermediate and advanced groups. For the purpose of study, only beginning and advanced groups with 68 respondents are selected. Meanwhile, follow-up interviews based on the survey data are conducted individually with 10 selected subjects including five (5) higher proficiency and five (5) lower proficiency students. The survey results show that the higher proficiency group uses the three listening comprehension strategies more frequently than the lower proficiency group. The higher proficiency group uses different varieties of metacognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies more frequently than the lower proficiency group. The interview data are transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis. The study reveals that fast speed and accent varieties are the most common difficulties for both groups; however, the lower proficiency group added another factor, i.e. vocabulary.

Key words: Second language acquisition, listening comprehension strategy, academic listening

ABSTRAK

Pelajar pascasiswazah Malaysia yang menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) menghadapi kesukaran untuk memahami kuliah dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Strategi pemahaman pendengaran (kognitif, metakognitif dan sosio-afektif) memainkan peranan penting pendengaran akademik. Kajian semasa yang menggunakan soal selidik dan temu bual susulan bertujuan untuk menyiasat strategi pendegaran akademik pelajar sarjana tahun pertama bagi memahami pemerolehan teknik pendengaran bahasa kedua (L2) yang berkesan. Seramai 98 calon pascasiswazah EFL diberi soal selidik berkenaan maklumat demografi dan soal selidik berkenaan kefahaman pendengaran berskala likert. Berdasarkan skor TOEFL/IELTS mereka dalam seksyen mendengar, responden kajian dikelaskan dalam kumpulan tahap permulaan, pertengahan dan maju. Bagi tujuan kajian ini, hanya kumpulan permulaan dan kumpulan maju dipilih. Sementara itu, temu bual susulan berdasarkan data kajian yang dijalankan secara individu dengan sepuluh (10) mata pelajaran terpilih termasuk lima (5) pelajar daripada kumpulan maju dan lima (5) pelajar daripada kumpulan permulaan. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kumpulan yang maju menggunakan tiga strategi yang lebih kerap daripada kumpulan permulaan. Di samping itu, kumpulan maju menggunakan pelbagai jenis strategi metakognitif dan strategi sosio-afektif lebih kerap daripada kumpulan permulaan. Data temubual telah ditranskripsi dan dianalisis melalui analisis tematik. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kelajuan pertuturan dan variasi loghat adalah masalah yang paling kerap dihadapi oleh kedua-dua kumpulan. Bagi kumpulan permulaan, satu lagi masalah yang dihadapi oleh mereka adalah limitasi perbendaharaan kata.

Kata kunci: Pemerolehan bahasa kedua, mendengar strategi pemahaman, mendengar akademik

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In the early 1990's, Skehan (1991) emphasizes on the prominent existence of individual difference (ID) in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Dornyei (2006) further points out that ID plays a considerable influential role because it directly or indirectly explains the variation of language learners in their language production outcomes. Ellis (1985) categorizes the ID in SLA into two types: general factors (i.e. aptitude, age, intelligence, motivation, cognitive style and personality) and personal factors (i.e. attitudes to the teacher and learning materials, group dynamics and learning strategies).

The present study is pertaining to language learning strategies, the special moves or actions taken by language learners to cope with their study process (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Learning strategy has been one of the most favoured topics among second language acquisition researches over the past few decades; such studies can enable language learners to become more aware of the efficient use of learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). O'Malley, Chamot, Kupper and Sabol (1987) also demonstrate that effective language learners employ a variety of learning strategies to facilitate them in acquiring target languages. However, not many learners are effective as they may come across various difficulties in the process of learning new language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing)

As a matter of fact, receptive skills, such as reading and listening, are the ones that contribute the most to the productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing (Saricoban, 1999).

Nevertheless, a considerable number of studies pay much attention to reading rather than listening. The present study hopes to contribute some knowledge to the skill of listening by finding out how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners apply their learning strategies, particularly from listening comprehension strategies to listening to lectures in English.

Various studies have been conducted on listening comprehension strategies. As Berne (2004) summarizes in her review, there are mainly six types of approaches to listening comprehension strategies: 1) listeners' use of different types of cues; 2) listening sequence; 3) comparison and contrast between higher proficiency and lower proficiency listeners; 4) instructions on listening strategies; 5) strategies compared with tactics; and 6) listeners' potential listening problems. In the present study, higher proficiency and lower proficiency listeners are compared and contrasted in how they apply listening comprehension strategies. It then looks at the factors that cause the listeners to use different strategies.

1.1 Background

To begin with, it is essential to introduce the contextualization of the current study for Malaysia is a multicultural and multilingual country where students have various language backgrounds. Thus, knowing the background of Malaysian public universities from which the data of the current study comes from is a necessity.

The University of Malaya (UM) is the most established and also the top university in Malaysia. It was initially formed by the amalgamation of the King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College in Singapore on 8th October 1949. With rapiddevelopment, the Kuala Lumpur Division was then set up in 1959. However,

in subsequent years, the governments of Malaysia and Singapore decided to combine the two divisions as one national university. Thus, in 1962, the University of Malaya was officially established in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia (Source: University of Malaya website).

With its vision to be a renowned international institution that produces high quality researches, publications, innovation and teaching, English has been employed as the main instruction language in both science and social science faculties (except the Academy of Malay Studies) (Source: University of Malaya website). The reason for doing so is mainly because English is a global language and it has been widely applied to considerable fields in society, such as the media, diplomacy and education (Crystal, 2003). English retains its crucial status in Malaysia education system. Additionally, more and more international students choose to study in Malaysia. Statistics show that nearly 30% of the postgraduates in UM are international students hailing from 80 countries (Source: University of Malaya website).

The Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM) was founded in 1931 and was known as the Agricultural University of Malaysia. It was in 1997 that the name of the university was changed to Universiti Putra Malaysia. Located in central Peninsular Malaysia, it is also one of the top research universities providing undergraduate and postgraduate programs with its focus on agricultural science and technology development (Source: Universiti Putra Malaysia website).

With its vision to win international academic reputation, UPM provides over 400 study fields for postgraduate students. The teaching environment of English medium and invaluable experience have attracted international students from over 60 countries

who are nearly 30 percent of UPM's postgraduate students (Source: University of Malaya website).The reason why UPM has been chosen as a part of the study sample is that due to the fact that UM has a limit access to the number of participants who have fulfilled the criteria of the study subjects. Besides, the researcher has friends who were studying at UPM, which made the researcher easy to get questionnaire distributed in UPM other than other public universities in Peninsula Malaysia.

Next, issues related to English language proficiency and skills are presented, especially those pertaining to listening proficiency.

Since the English language has been deemed an irreplaceable status in the country, an inevitable problem occurs, that is whether the English proficiency of Malaysia's public university students at different degrees could meet the demands of academia and society.

The English language proficiency is strongly associated with four language skills. For university students, their proficiency in English applies through different occasions such as listening to lectures, discussing with peers and lecturers, making oral presentations, writing essays, as well as referring to articles and books. However, the L2 literature on the reading, writing and speaking proficiency of university students is dense. As for the proficiency in listening, most researchers believe that it can be cultivated automatically without academic support, which results in less attention on instruction for listening skills (Teng, 1998; Moyer, 2006) and slow development in research pertaining to the skill of listening (Lynch, 2011).

Given the fact that research on listening receives the least attention among the four language skills (Oxford, 1993; Brown, 2008; Lynch, 2011; Bozorgian, 2012), there are many debates on which language skill is the most important for L2 learning. Quite a

number of studies suggest that listening is the most essential skill for L2 learning since it is the 'central' and the 'heart' in every type of learning (Feyten, 1991; Brown, 2008). According to Vandergrift (2002), listening began to arouse the attention of researchersin terms of its functions in social communication and language learning in the early 70's.Tyagi (2013) emphasizes the important social role of good listening skills that can

enable a person to become more productive and efficient at work places by one's quick response to what the tasks expect one to do and what colleagues say. Also, listening can facilitate other language skills in L2 learning as lectures are still the main mode of instruction in universities nowadays (Oxford, 1990). Therefore, good listening skills are essential for university students when listening to their lectures. Rost (2001) also suggests that the success of second language acquisition relies largely on one's listening ability.

Thirdly, listening comprehension attracts the attention of those in L2 learning and teaching.

Initially, it was when Gary (1975) stresses on the advantages of listening comprehension brought to second language learning and teaching that the status of listening in language learning is gradually raised from being peripheral to prime. The four advantages of listening comprehension that Gary (1975) refers to are: cognitive, affective, efficiency and utility.

It is a natural process for language learners to acquire a language from the aural input. Once the learners have some cognitive knowledge about a particular language, they can decode the input information, which is the process of listening comprehension.

The affective advantage takes effect when language learners feel hard to verbalize the target language at the early stage of learning and they focus on enhancing the listening skill instead. Thus, such move can facilitate the development of other language skills and achieve final success in the end.

Furthermore, efficient language learning occurs when language learners are only required to listen to standard recordings or authentic materials but not to make oral production.

The utility advantage indicates that listening takes the most time in any type of communication, followed by speaking, reading and writing successively. In other words, listening is comparatively more useful than other language skills.

Since then, listening has gained much attention in second language learning as well as in teaching. Several methods of second language teaching are practiced to demonstrate the primary status of listening in second language learning. The most outstanding ones are TPR (Total Physical Response) and DOM (Delayed Oral Method).

Asher (1969) explains TPR in a way that students are required to listen to their teacher's commands and then reflect them with immediate physical action. A group of undergraduate students were examined. They were divided into two groups: TPR and observe-write groups. The TPR groups were asked to listen to an authentic tape and then follow the examiner's moves to act out what they just heard. The commands began with one-word expressions and progressed to more complicated ones. For the observe-write groups, they were required to sit and observe the model and then write down the translations. The results show that the TPR groups exceed the observe-write groups in several tests.

Postovsky (1974) applied DOM to a group of American Russian language learners who were attending an intensive language program. The experimental group was asked to respond to everything in writing, instead of speaking at the initial phase. No oral practice was conducted during the period. In contrast, the control group focused on oral

practice. The results indicate that the experimental group outperformed the control group in both listening and speaking skills.

Interestingly, Thiele and Scheibner-Herzig (1983) employ both TPR and DOM. In their study, the control group was taught in traditional ways whereas the experimental group was treated with TPR instead of oral production, along with listening comprehension. It is noted that although the participants in the experimental group were less skilful compared to the control groups, the results showed a significant improvement among the experimental group in both listening and speaking skills. Meanwhile, their attitudes and anxiety towards learning English immediately improved after the treatment.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Second language acquisition researchers and practitioners have explored listening strategies by using a variety of approaches, including think-aloud procedures (Murphy, 1985; Chamot and Kupper, 1989; O'Malley, Chamot and Kupper, 1989); interviews (Vandergrift, 1996; Goh, 2002a); questionnaires (Goh, 2002b; Vandergrift, 2005); recall tasks (Schmidt-Rinehart, 1992); diaries (Goh, 1997), etc.

Previous researches have tackled the listening comprehension strategies (cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective) in different aspects using the above approaches, quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, some studies have only focused on the application of metacognitive strategies (Goh, 1997; Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal and Tafaghodtari, 2006; Vandergrift, 2005), some have managed to investigate how different variables (e.g. gender, language proficiency, motivation, etc.) would affect theuse of listening comprehension strategies (Bacon, 1992; Vandergrift, 1997), and while others

have conducted experiments to determine the pedagogical effects. So far, only few studies have done research on what types of strategies listeners prefer to use while listening to academic lectures in English and what factors might influence their preference. Besides that, the participants who were chosen for this area of study are mostly from one nationality, such as Iranian, French and Chinese (Vandergrift, 1997; Teng, 1998; Moradi, 2013); and their levels range from secondary school to university level (Rahimi & Katal, 2012; Ghoneim, 2013). All in all, the present study aims to fill the literature gap among EFL master's students in Malaysian public universities.

It has been stated in a number of studies that EFL/ESL students find it difficult in listening to lectures in English (Flowerdew & Miller, 1992; Smit, 2009; Selamat & Sidhu, 2011). Factors like the speed and accent of lecturers, learners' L1 and background knowledge have caused difficulties in comprehending lectures (Flowerdew, 1994). Selamat and Sidhu (2013) stress that it is more challenging for EFL students who just entered universities to listen to lectures in English. However, their study only target first-year undergraduate students in Malaysian public universities. The fact that many first-year master's students who study at Malaysian public universities are also facing hard times in listening to lectures in English receives less attention from researchers and school authorities. Nevertheless, a good command of listening comprehension strategies can facilitate students to achieve their academic success (Flowerdew, 1994; Khaldi, 2013). Until now, few studies have been conducted among master's students in Malaysian public universities to identify their different use of listening comprehension strategies. This research gap also emphasizes the problem that EFL master's students have in following and understanding academic lectures in English. Thus, the current

study intends to compare two different English listening proficiency levels of EFL master's students in order to find out the type of strategies that may work best for them.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In an attempt to fill the research gap mentioned above and also to shed some light on how EFL postgraduate students apply listening comprehension strategies in their academic listening, the purpose of the current study is to identify listening comprehension strategies used by higher proficiency and lower proficiency first-year EFL master's students in Malaysian public universities.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Inorder to fulfill the purpose of the study, two research objectives are formed:

1. To compare the preferred listening comprehension strategies of higher and lower proficiency first-year EFL master's students.

2. To find out the factors that could have influenced the choice of listening comprehension strategies employed by the higher and lower proficiency first-year master's students.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to cope with the above objectives, the following research questions are developed to guide the present study:

1. What are the preferred listening comprehension strategies employed by higher proficiency respondents?

2. What are the preferred listening comprehension strategies employed by lower proficiency respondents?

3. What factors or difficulties might influence their use of listening comprehension strategies?

The above three research questions are well agreed with the research objectives. By defining the preferred listening comprehension strategies used by higher and lower proficiency students respectively, similarities and differences are found between the two groups. Besides, as mentioned above, the individual difference is a vital factor to cause the variation of language production among language learners. Thus, in order to explain why and how they use the strategies, the researcher needs to determine the factors or predictors that may evoke individual preference and also the difficulties encountered by the students when they try to comprehend lectures in English.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Listening is 'central' and 'heart' to every type of learning (Feyten, 1991; Brown, 2008). Yet, as Brown (1980) indicates, the use of listening mode starts to decrease after elementary school which may result in problems among students in understanding university lectures which require higher level listening skills. In that case, knowing what type of listening strategies higher proficiency listeners employ may help the lower proficiency group to achieve a better effect of learning. Although listening to academic lectures involves multiple strategies including listening, effective listening comprehension strategies can facilitate their understanding substantially. The reason why there are still hardly any studies done on EFL listening comprehension is probablybecause this kind of topic is closely related to cognitive psychology, which adds more difficulties to L2 researches to some extent. Nevertheless, the researcher in the present

study hopes to raise the awareness of listening comprehension strategies among postgraduate students and lecturers in order to add some references for this field. Basically, the present study may make some contributions in the following aspects:

Firstly, findings on methods employed by the higher proficiency students could be made known to other students which could in turn help them in achieving better understanding of subjects taken. With higher proficiency listening strategies, they can apply them when attending English-medium lectures. Since most of them receive college education in their EFL environment which seldom uses English within and beyond the classroom, studying in the universities where English is the main language of instruction might be a new challenge for them. Therefore, a good command of listening comprehension strategies is essential for the students to obtain success in their academic career.

Secondly, having created such awareness of the important role that the skill of listening plays in the postgraduate program, the university authorities may hopefully be encouraged to take some action on improving the English for Academic Purpose courses, especially instruction pertaining to listening comprehension strategies.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The operational definitions of terms listed below are to ensure the understanding and the consistency of the present study.

SLA: SLA here stands for Second Language Acquisition. Different from second language learning, SLA stresses on the natural and subconscious process of acquiring target language which is the second not the first or native language of individuals. The process of language acquisition is similar to the way children develop their first or

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second language. It means that language acquirers pay little attention to the grammatical rules of the target language; instead, they rely largely on their 'feel' on the language to make self-correction (Krashen, 1981).

ESL: ESL here stands for English as a Second Language. Sometimes it is interchangeable with EFL, but there are distinctive differences between the two terms. In an ESL country, English is used as the medium of instruction in education and other important industries, but English is not their first or native language (Fernandez, 2012).

EFL: EFL here stands for English as a Foreign Language. In an EFL country, however, English is not the medium of operation but the main subject taught in school (Fernandez, 2012).

Postgraduate Students: Postgraduate students have already had a first degree and continue to pursue a higher qualification, such as a master's or PhD. In the present study, postgraduate students refer to master's degree students.

Listening comprehension: "Listening comprehension is anything but a passive activity. It is a complex, active process in which listeners must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance," (Vandergrift, 1999, p. 168).

Cognitive strategies: Cognitive strategies deal with the incoming information directly in a way that enhances learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). They manipulate the information using inferences and elaboration-related activities (Vandergrift, 1997).

Metacognitive strategies: Executive strategies that monitor and assess the learning process (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). They direct language learning using planning, monitoring and evaluation (Vandergrift, 1997)

Socio-affective strategies: Socio-affective strategies refer to interacting with people or self-conscious control (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Bottom-up: Bottom-up strategies are based on texts. Learners who use these strategies take advantage of linguistic features, such as phonology, phonetics, morphology, syntax and semantics to analyze information (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Top-down: Top-down strategies are based on the prior experience and knowledge of learners. Learners who use these strategies usually take advantage of their background knowledge and relate them to the topic (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

TOEFL: TOEFL stands for Test of English as a Foreign Language. It is one of the most renowned English-language tests around the world. The test is recognized by over 9,000 institutions in more than 130 countries, such as the U.K., U.S., Canada and Australia.

IELTS: IELTS stands for the International English Language Testing System. It carries a worldwide reputation. The test is accepted as an essential evidence of English language proficiency in over 9,000 institutions around the world. It provides a valid and trustworthy proof of language proficiency for purposes of education, immigration, etc.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Due to the nature of the present study, the results and findings are limited by the following factors:

1.Given the fact that the current study participants are all Master's students, therefore the grouping terms of "higher proficiency" and "lower proficiency" are not only based on their real English listening proficiency according to IELTS' assessment, but also compared and contrasted in the limited range of participants.

2.Small sample size: the subjects of the study are limited to two public universities in Malaysia, therefore, the findings may not be applicable to the other public universities in Malaysia;

3.Sampling: Due to the multiracial nature of Malaysia's university students, it is impossible for the researcher to randomly select EFL master's students. Also, considering some of EFL countries' learners may have been raised in English speaking countries. A purpose selection must be made in order to choose the most suitable participants for the current study. Besides, the purpose of the study is not to generalize the results, but to focus on a small group of students who are pursuing their master's degree in Malaysian public universities. Thus, it is claimed not necessary to make the subjects representative.

4.The listening comprehension strategies questionnaire: the questionnaires are distributed at times when the subjects are available. However, it would have been better to have the questionnaires completed right after they had listened to their lectures so that the recalling process may not influence the results.

1.9 Summary

The Introduction Chapter has a brief introduction to the research field, background information, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, specific research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study and operational definitions of important terms. The organization of the study is as follows: Chapter Two

reviews related theories on listening comprehension and literature of main researchapproaches as well as influential findings to construct the theoretical framework andmethodology for the present study. Chapter Three introduces the methodology and theoretical framework for the study including the subjects, research design, instrumentation and methods of data analysis. Chapter Four provides answers to the research questions by presenting the data analysis and findings. Chapter Five provides a conclusion of the research findings, discusses about limitations and pedagogical implications, and makes recommendations to the future studies in this research area. Lastly, references and related appendices are attached.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is in an attempt to demonstrate the problems in the research field and establish the methodology and theoretical framework for the present study by reviewing past related important work and studies. The chapter comprises of five sections: 1) Listening comprehension and its related theories ; 2) L2 listening problems and factors that cause the difficulties in lecture comprehension; 3) L2 listening comprehension strategies; 4) L2 listening comprehension strategies employed by different levels of listeners; 5) The application of thematic analysis to qualitative interview data and 6) Summary of chapter.

2.1 Listening Comprehension and Its Related Theories

2.1.1 Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is regarded as one of the most difficult tasks in language learning (Kurita, 2012). However, definitions of 'listening' and 'listening comprehension' are varied and no agreement has been reached amongst researchers. For instance, Chastain (1971) views listening comprehension as an ability to interpret the speech of native speakers at their normal speed of speaking. Dirven and Taylor (1984) propose that the process of listening comprehension should be the one that is understood through both linguistic and non-linguistic cues. Vandergrift (1999) defines listening comprehension as a complex process in which listeners must remember what they tell from sounds, intonation, vocabulary and wording so as to interpret the meanings

immediately with social-cultural knowledge. In contrast, Thanajaro (2000) refers to listening as an interactional process in which listeners receive and interpret the messages in order to keep the communication going.

Although there are various definitions of listening comprehension, a basic consideration has been acknowledged— listening comprehension is a complex mental process that needs comprehensive abilities to decode the aural input, such as recognizing sounds, understanding vocabularies and structures of sentences, incorporating with background knowledge and so on. Yet, it is an unavoidable barrier for language learners to find a perfect match between input messages and their own knowledge. Hence, when comprehension breaks down, special actions need to be taken to prevent those breakdowns from continuing during a listening process. Generally, those special actions are what are called as listening comprehension strategies (Discussed in Chapter2).

Past studies suggest that there are three main types of learning strategies which can be applied to listening comprehension strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective (Discussed in Chapter 2). It is indicated that the language proficiency of learners can affect their usage of learning strategies. Moreover, based on their listening proficiency, they could be presumably divided into higher or lower proficiency categories. Therefore, a number of studies reveal that higher proficiency listeners use top-down strategies more frequently than bottom-up strategies (Kao, 2006; Abdalhamid, 2012). Past studies also demonstrate that higher proficiency listeners use more metacognitive strategies than listeners of lower proficiency (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997). As for the present study, it aims to add some knowledge to the

application of listening comprehension strategies between listeners of higher and lower proficiency upon listening to lectures in English.

2.1.2 The Modal Model

A theoretical perspective focusing on understanding human perception, thought, and memory can be established on the basis of cognitive psychology (Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning, 2004). Learners are portrayed as "active processors of information— a metaphor borrowed from the computer world" (p. 1). The increasing influence of the computer as a metaphor for human cognition has helped the creation of the models known collectively as information processing models (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968; Waugh & Norman, 1965) and their common feature as the modal model (Healy & McNamara, 1996).

Since the early 1970s, memory research has developed several distinct branches. One of these focused on memory performance during the act of learning. Most researchers refer to this as working memory. A second strand has focused on the contents and functioning of information in permanent storage, often referred to as long-term memory (Bruning et al., 2004). In the end, a general model of memory referred to as modal model (Healy & McNamara, 1996) is proposed: sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory.

Regarding the modal model, "sensory memory refers to initial perceptual processing that identifies incoming stimuli. Information that has been processed in sensory memory is then passed to short-term memory, where it receives additional meaning-based processing. Information that is relevant to one's goals is then stored indefinitely in long-term memory until it is needed again" (Bruning et al., 2004, p.15).

There is "a loop connecting long-term and short-term memory. This loop enables information in permanent memory to influence initial perceptual processing," (p. 16). Also, there is a function of "metacognition, which guides the flow of information through the three lower memory systems" (p. 16).

2.1.3 The Theory of Schemata

Another theory relevant to information processing is schemata—"mental frameworks that we use to organize knowledge" (Bruning et al., 2004, p. 48). Schemata theorists propose that knowledge is organized into complex representations called schemata that control the encoding, storage, and retrieval of information (Marshall, 1995; Rumelhart, 1984; Seifert, McKoon, Abelson, & Ratcliff, 1986). Schemata are presumed to serve as "scaffolding" (Anderson, Spiro, & Anderson, 1978; Ausubel, 1960; Rumelhart, 1981) for organizing experience. Schemata contain slots, which hold the contents of memory as a range of slot values. In other words, knowledge is perceived, encoded, stored, and retrieved according to the slots in which it is placed. Whenever a particular configuration of values is linked with the representation variables of a schema, the schema is said to be instantiated. Schemata are instantiated by concepts and events. Once schemata are instantiated, their traces serve as a basis of our recollections— they are part of our long-term memory (Rumelhart, 1981). "When schemata are not or cannot be activated during learning, new knowledge cannot be assimilated easily," (Bruning et al., 2004, p. 51). 'Recall' is seen as a reconstructive activity, with schemata providing frameworks that direct the recall process (Spiro, 1980). All in all, the Schema Theory emphasizes the application of what learners already know (Bruning et al., 2004).

2.1.4 The Three-Phase Language Comprehension Model

Goh (2000) offers a cognitive perspective on the comprehension problems of second language listeners. Goh's (2000) research data were analyzed and presented within a cognitive framework of language comprehension proposed by Anderson. Anderson's (1983) three-phase model proposes that comprehension consists of perception, parsing and utilization, they are described as follows:

1. Perception: Analyzing the linguistic message and identifying its units (e. g., words).

2. Parsing: Applying syntactic and semantic rules to extract a representation of the meaning of the analyzed message. Parsing is a translation from a word representation to a meaning representation.

3. Utilization: Processing the meaning representation in accordance with one's goals. Utilization is the use to which the comprehending puts the meaning of the message (p. 400, p. 438).

2.2 L2 Listening Problems and Factors that Cause the Difficulties in Lecture Comprehension

Ur (1984) points out some factors that might influence listening to English as a foreign language: 1) hearing the sounds; 2) understanding intonation and stress; 3) coping with redundancy and noise; 4) predicting; 5) understanding colloquial vocabulary; 6) fatigue; 7) understanding different accents; and 8) using visual and aural environmental clues (p.11-21).

Before reviewing listening problems and reasons that may cause listeners difficulties in listening to lectures in second language, it is essential to highlight the

distinctive characteristics of lecture comprehension compared with conversational listening in general (Flowerdew, 1994). In a broad sense, lecture comprehension possesses its differences in terms of degree and type. Firstly, in the matter of 'degree', background knowledge of specialized fields is needed to comprehend lectures. This includes the ability to differentiate related and key information to the subject and some emphasis on conveying logical statements. Secondly, in the matter of 'type', it refers to the ability to understand long, continuous speech without facilitated interaction. This includes note-taking skill and integrating speech messages with information from other media such as handouts and power points.

In accordance with the above characteristics of lecture comprehension, Flowerdew and Miller (1992) managed to explore the problems of listeners in listening to lectures of a second language by conducting an ethnographic study among 30 Chinese freshmen who attended a TESL course for a B.A. degree. The results reveal three major problems encountered by the participants when listening to lectures in English. They are: 1) speed of delivery, 2) new vocabulary and concepts, and 3) difficulty in concentrating (p.10). Firstly, most listeners find it hard to keep up with the speed of lecturers because it involves effort and the need to process and translate oral input. Secondly, for university courses, a certain amount of terminologies and concepts would frequently be employed by lecturers. Hence, when listeners encounter those unfamiliar vocabularies and abstract concepts, a breakdown in comprehension would occur and this is followed by a de-motivated attitude toward listening. The reason reported by most participants was the lack of background knowledge in the complicated subject. Last but not least, the participants found themselves facing difficulty when concentrating on a continuousspeech, and they are also easily distracted. All in all, the longstanding lectures, one-way

listening without interaction, distraction by other classmates and physical condition may explain why it is difficult in concentrating on the L2 academic lectures.

Based on the above problems that listeners have in L2 lecture comprehension, Flowerdew (1994) reviewed past studies and singled out one more important problem affecting listening to L2 lectures, i.e. accent. It is believed that listeners have difficulties in listening to unfamiliar accents which simply refers to American or British accents. Therefore, local accents seem more comprehensible for listeners.

Yagang (1993) demonstrates that listening difficulties or problems mainly stem from four aspects: 1) the message, 2) the speaker, 3) the listener and 4) the physical setting (p.16). For the present study, what matters most are the speaker and the listener. The speaker's redundancy of speeches, such as 'you know', 'I mean', rate of speed and accent may cause listening difficulties. For foreign language listeners, it is hard for them to predict or foresee what the native speakers are going to say using the knowledge of collocation. Also, the lack of background knowledge and training for listening skills may lead to difficulties in concentrating in a long lecture. These are notable obstacles for L2 listeners.

In Rubin's (1994) review of L2 listening comprehension research, five key factors are discussed in terms of factors that affect L2 listening comprehension: 1)textcharacteristics,2) interlocutor characteristics,3) task characteristics, 4) listenercharacteristics and 5) process characteristics (p.35). As for the present study,characteristics of listener and process are closely related to the current topic. In the listener characteristics, the following are considered to be the major ones: language proficiency level (learners' cognitive knowledge of the language), memory (the effect ofshort term memory on listening comprehension), attention (the awareness of attention to

aural input), affect (self-confident listeners tend to be more successful; the higher apprehension one receives, the lower listening comprehension one gets), and background knowledge (prior knowledge or familiarity about the topic). On the other hand, in the process characteristics, the following are needed to be considered: top-down (usage of background knowledge to decode the meaning), bottom-up (usage of linguistic knowledge to analyze the form) and parallel processing (the former two interact with each other). They are closely related to the language proficiency level of the listeners. There is also the inclusion of listening strategies (cognitive and metacognitive strategies) of which, the type of strategy and listeners' language proficiency level affects note-taking and strategy training.

Goh (1999) explores 20 factors that affect listeners' listening comprehension among a group of Chinese students studying in Singapore. The factors are based on five (5) categories: test, listener, speaker, task and environment (p.21). The results show five (5) most influencing factors including vocabulary, prior knowledge, speech rate, type of input and speaker's accent (p.23). Except for one factor, i.e. type of input, which seems less important to the current topic since lecturing is the only type of input in this study, the other four are very similar to the findings of Flowerdew (1993, 1994) and Yagang (1993).

Goh's (2000) research is based on Anderson's (1995) three-phase language comprehension model: perception, parsing and utilization. The results concluded five (5) common problems: 1) quickly forget what is heard; 2) do not recognize words they know; 3) understand words but not the intended message; 4) neglect the next part when thinking about meaning; 5) unable to form a mental representation from words heard (p.60). Goh (2000) also explains possible factors that may cause the above problems.

The ones which closely relates to the current topic are: 1) failure to use appropriate comprehension tactics; 2) a lack of appropriate schematic knowledge; 3) insufficient prior knowledge; 4) limited processing capacity in short-term memory (p.69). In a nutshell, those factors are highly related to learner's prior knowledge and language proficiency, listening comprehension strategy and short-term memory. In addition, another outstanding finding of L2 listening problems in Goh's (2000) study is that there are little differences between efficient and less efficient listeners, except that less efficient listeners have problems with low-level processing while efficient listeners did not show such problems.

Hasan (2000) conducted a research in an EFL classroom and made a further contribution to identifying listening comprehension problems. It is important to note that ineffective listeners focus on words instead of delivered messages. Thus, they are misled by the assumption that they should understand each word from aural input. One of the severe consequences would be the unawareness of key words. Similarly, Field (2003) also stated that ineffective L2 listeners or readers are facing the problems of understanding the meaning of input message when they relied mostly on bottom-up processing, i.e. using linguistic knowledge to analyze the form of each word.

One of the influential factors in foreign language learning is learning anxiety (Ellis, 1994). Therefore, Elkhafaifi (2005) conducted a research in Arabic courses at 10 American universities hoping to explore the relationship between language anxiety and listening anxiety and how listening anxiety affects listening comprehension. The results show a positive correlation between language anxiety and listening anxiety and a negative one between listening anxiety and students' performance of listeningcomprehension. Wang (2010) also found a negative correlation between foreign

language listening anxiety and listening comprehension achievement among Chinese English major students. Both the studies put forward some important pedagogical implications. Firstly, a certain understanding of students' listening anxiety is necessary for listening instructors. Secondly, knowing how to operate listening comprehension strategies with different levels of listeners seems quite important.

Lynch (2009) categorizes the obstacles of listening comprehension into two types, namely task knowledge and person knowledge. In the matter of the current study, the following obstacles are highly related: 1) unfamiliar vocabularies and limited academic terms; 2) accents; 3) speech rate; 4) interest in topic; 5) existing knowledge and experience; 6) physical factors; 7) emotional states; 8) length and structure of sentences; 9) inefficient memory (p.48).

Stepanoviene (2012) explores listening difficulties faced by two different levels of law and police activity undergraduate students. Their findings claim that the major barrier of academic listening for higher level of listeners is the rate of delivery, whereas vocabulary ranked number one barrier for lower level listeners. Still, for higher level listeners, they consider vocabulary to be an important barrier in understanding input speeches. Besides, phonological reduction ranked third place as an obstacle for listeners of both levels.

As it is shown, there is hardly a perfect match between the knowledge and aural input of listeners. A breakdown in comprehension appears and special actions should be taken to facilitate the comprehension processing (Faerch and Kasper, 1986). According to O'Malley et al. (1989), the special actions or 'mental processes that are activated in order to understand new information that is ambiguous or to learn or retain new

information are referred to as learning strategies (p. 422).' In the next section, listening comprehension strategies will be discussed in detail.

2.3 L2 Listening Comprehension Strategies

In this section, different approaches to study L2 listening comprehension strategies and theoretical framework are tackled and reviewed. These involve approaches such as think-aloud procedure, structured interview, diary and questionnaires. The strategy taxonomies are such as O'Malley and Chamot's (1990), Oxford's (1990) and Vandergrift's (1997).

Over the past three decades, studies on language learning strategies have received a large scale of attention among L2 researchers (Berne, 2004). However, the doubt on whether the learning strategy classification based on cognitive and metacognitive perspectives would be applied to second language acquisition has been examined and eliminated by O'Malley et al. (1985). Furthermore, they suggest that "strategic processing is a generic activity applied to all areas of learning (p.122)", which means that the language learning strategy taxonomy can be also applied to L2 listening studies. Initially, the language learning strategy taxonomy was based on Brown and Palincsar's (1982) metacognitive and cognitive strategies categorization. However, the third category, social mediation, was added to cope with situations where interactions with peers or teachers occurred.

As the interest in listening grew, studies on listening comprehension strategies evolved. One of the important methods researchers employed to investigate L2 listening comprehension strategies are the qualitative think-aloud protocol. Murphy (1985) is the first to look into the mental process of listening using think-aloud protocol. The

participants were 12 ESL university students with half comparatively more proficient and half less proficient ones. Their mental reflections to the listening process were interviewed and recorded by the researcher. The data were analyzed based on 17 strategies classified into six (6) categories and differences of two groups of students were found in terms of frequencies and sequential use of the strategies. The study thus implies that the use of listening strategies is interwoven in the process of comprehension.

O'Malley et al. (1989) also employs a think-aloud method to investigate listening comprehension strategies used by 11 high school Spanish-speaking students who participated in ESL courses in the United States in three different phases of comprehension: perceptual processing, parsing and utilization (Anderson, 1985). The participants were trained on the procedure of thinking-aloud before they joined the main study. The thinking-aloud sessions took place where students were stopped and asked about their mental processing, while listening to different types of contents. They were allowed to use Spanish to report their thoughts. The results suggest that attention factors are crucial in the perceptual processing phase. It is difficult for foreign language listeners to maintain attention on listening tasks if the task is too long or fails to arouse the interests of listeners. During the parsing phase, grouping strategy in segmenting oral input based on meaning or linguistic features is essential. Moreover, inferencing, elaboration and self-monitoring strategies prove to be effective in listening comprehension whereas translation strategy is less helpful to comprehend the oral input. During the utilization phase, the prior knowledge of listeners may facilitate them in comprehension and recalling.

However, Bacon (1992) argues that a pure think-aloud procedure would interrupt the comprehension process of a listener, forcibly. Therefore, she selected two short listening passages and collected data via an immediate retrospective elicitation method right after her participants listened to the passages once, without interruption. As the purpose of the study was to find the use of listening comprehension strategies, the participants were first asked about what specific mental reactions they made in order to understand the passages and then they were asked to report their understanding of the topics based on their background knowledge and psychological factors. The results demonstrate that during the perceptual phase of listening, listeners are concerned more about the speed of listening passages rather than making use of the advance organizer and context. As for the parsing phase of listening, listeners focus more on words than grouped phrases, which result in difficulties in short-term memory storage. During the last phase, utilization, some of the listeners relate their prior knowledge with the listening tasks. But due to the short length of time, there are some doubts on the appropriateness of inferencing. Furthermore, based on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of learning strategies, the study found that listeners employ more cognitive strategies than metacognitive ones. Among cognitive strategies, bottom-up strategies are more favoured than top-down ones. Furthermore, among metacognitive strategies, the use of monitor strategy is the most prevalent.

O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of learning strategies are widely applied into L2 listening comprehension strategies. Thus, it is essential to review its definition and classification. Considering the type of processing, learning strategies are categorized into metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), metacognitive strategies are employed for referring to the cognitive message or evaluation of the message; cognitive strategies, however, take effect directly on the input information, which may result in difficulties as to some types of learning tasks; social/affective strategies are involved with interactions with peers, teachers or emotional control.

Similarly, Oxford (1990) classifies learning strategies into two categories: direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies include metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The difference between Oxford's (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) lay in that the former one encompassed memory and compensation strategies. However, most of the two types of categorization overlap.

Vandergrift (1997) adapts the think-aloud procedure from O'Malley and Chamot (1989) to reveal the relationship between what types of listening strategies students use, how often they use them and what difference in use when it comes across the individual preference of students. The results indicate that all students use metacognitive and cognitive strategies. However, the higher the proficiency of the listeners, the more strategies they use. Therefore, studies on the different level of the listeners' use of listening comprehension strategies are significant (discussed in the next section). In order to code the data accurately, he concludes that a more detailed taxonomy of strategies should be tailored for listening comprehension (See Appendix A). The taxonomy proposed consists of three categories: metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective strategies. As Vandergrift (1997) explains:

"...metacognitive strategies (mental activities for directing language learning),

cognitive strategies (mental activities for manipulating the language to complete a

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task), and social-affective strategies (activities involving interaction or affective control in language learning)" (p.391).

Another important qualitative method that is often applied to L2 researches is the structured interview. Vandergrift (1996) employs this method to study listening comprehension strategies that high school students of different level of courses used in various kinds of listening tasks. Through interviews, the students were able to depict their conscious use of listening comprehension strategies. Thus, the study found that metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective strategies are all employed by the students. Moreover, the relationship between the number of the strategies used and the course level is positive.

A diary approach is employed by Goh (1997) in analyzing 40 Chinese English learners' knowledge and beliefs about second language listening. Among the findings, the students present a prevalent awareness of using learning strategies while listening. Top-down and bottom-up strategies are both used by the students. However, the former one has requirements for students' prior knowledge whereas the latter requires students to analyze sentence structures.

Different from the above qualitative methods, Teng (1998) employs a likert-scale listening comprehension questionnaire as a main research instrument to investigate 51 Taiwan college freshman's use of listening comprehension strategies. The questionnaire was mainly adapted from Oxford's (1990) classification of learning strategies. The results demonstrate the frequency use of the strategies. Compensation strategies ranked number one among the students and this is followed by cognitive strategies. Affective ones are used the least often among the six categories of learning strategies.

Goh (2002) conducted a questionnaire survey among 118 Chinese English learners to identify their learning and comprehension strategies for listening. The study shows differences between the learning and comprehension strategies, whilst there are high similarities between genders in using the strategies. Under the framework of metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective strategies, the participants reported that five out of fifteen comprehension strategies are most frequently used and only one learning strategy is frequently employed.

Based on the strategy framework of metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective, Serri, Boroujeni and Hesabi (2012) attempt to find the relationship between 40 Iranian university English learners' use of strategies and individual differences. Four different questionnaires were applied in the study in order to achieve the research goal. The results show that motivation and learning styles of learners have some effect on the use of the strategies. In addition, social-affective strategies are seldom used by the learners in the study.

Selamat and Sidhu (2012) employ both quantitative and qualitative methods among 34 freshmen in one of the Malaysian public universities to examine their awareness of using listening comprehension strategies and the metacognitive strategies they employed to facilitate their academic lecture comprehension. Pre- and post- tests were given to witness any improvement that has been gained after a 10-week strategy training programme. After three weeks of training, the subjects were required to complete a questionnaire on metacognitive awareness of listening strategies. The questionnaire was adapted from Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal and Tafaghodtari's (2006), which consisted of five items related to metacognitive strategies. The questionnaire data was analyzed through frequency counts. Last but not least, the interview sessions with

the respondents were corroborated with the questionnaire results and further illustrated some potential reasons that may have lead respondents to do so. The present study imitates the idea of using both questionnaire and interview to investigate listeners' use of listening comprehension strategies. However, the present study not only focuses on metacognitive strategies but also cognitive and social-affective strategies.

2.4 L2 Listening Comprehension Strategies Employed by Different Levels of Listeners

In this section, methods to differentiate effective and ineffective listeners and their different use of listening comprehension strategies are reviewed.

It is agreed among L2 researchers that the L2 proficiency of learners affect their use of learning strategies in all types of language learning. Thus, it is essential to study the different levels of listeners and to find out what types of listening comprehension strategies work best for them. However, the problem of how to differentiate the listening proficiency level of listeners emerged. Researchers have come up with various ways to solve that problem. Yet, it still remains as a priority for researchers when doing research amongst different levels of participants.

O'Malley et al. (1989) designated 11 high school students as effective and ineffective based on their English teachers and the researchers' observation and assessment including students' attendance in the English class, ability and willingness to follow and get involved in listening process. By doing so, eight (8) students were selected as effective and 3 as ineffective listeners. Using the think-aloud procedure, the results can be seen in general, in which, effective listeners employ both top-down and bottom-up strategies while ineffective listeners focus more on individual words and

their meanings. The use of self-monitoring, elaboration and inferencing strategies distinguishes effective listeners from ineffective ones in three phases of comprehension. Specifically, in the perception processing phase, effective listeners are more aware of their absence from attending listening tasks and would adjust their attention back to the tasks. Whereas, ineffective ones just give up on the listening activities when they encounter such situations. In the second parsing phase, effective listeners usually listen for phrases or larger units of words instead of listening for individual words which is what ineffective listeners are used to doing. Only when there are breakdowns in the process of listening comprehension, effective listeners rely on the bottom-up strategy to decode linguistic features, word by word. In the utilization phase, effective listeners take advantage of their prior knowledge and personal experience to facilitate comprehension in relating input information with their knowledge, while the ineffective ones fail to do so.

Teng (1998) conducted a listening test within a group of 51 Taiwan university freshman who have been learning English for at least six years to designate them as effective and ineffective listeners according to their scores (18 or above out of 20 was grouped into effective listeners; 17 or below out of 20 was grouped into ineffective listeners). The main instrument for investigating the students' use of listening comprehension strategies was a likert-scale questionnaire based on Oxford's (1990) classification of learning strategies. The statistical results show that effective listeners employ more compensation strategies but less affective strategies, whereas ineffective listeners employ more cognitive strategies but less social strategies. Besides that, the effective listeners' usage of listening strategies is more frequent than the ineffective listeners. In addition, the study also discovered the highest frequently used listening

comprehension strategies by effective listeners, namely: translating, delaying speech production to focus on listening, formally practicing with sounds and writing systems, transferring, paying attention and taking risks wisely (p.11).

Shang (2008) first divided 97 Taiwan university sophomores into three levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced) according to their simulated TOEFL listening texts scores. The beginning and advanced groups consist of 65 subjects. The results relate to the use of listening comprehension strategies show that the listeners in beginning level rely heavily on memory strategies whereas the advanced level listeners made use of each strategy (cognitive, memory and compensation strategies).

2.5 Applying Thematic Analysis into Qualitative Interview Data

2.5.1 Thematic Analysis (TA)

Thematic Analysis (TA) is one of the most useful qualitative data analysis methods. It is widely applied to different fields of study, such as psychology, social sciences and education. The main focus of TA is to find patterns and identify both explicit and implicit meaning among the dataset. According to Daly, Kellehear, and Gliksman (1997), the patterns are themes, which play a vital role in describing the phenomenon which are keys to answering the relevant research questions. The theme is interpreted into different categories for further analysis (Fereday, Jennifer; Elimear Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Therefore, it is understood that TA is a qualitative research method in analyzing themes in the data (Daly et al., 1997).

Coding is the preliminary process in finding the themes among the raw dataset. The codes are always regarded as interpretation markers to represent themes that are related to the data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011). In order to interpret these codes,

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the frequency and co-occurrence of themes needs to be identified, and the relationship between each theme needs to be demonstrated (Guest et al., 2012).

As Guest et al. (2012) points out that TA also reflects phenomenology, which stresses on expressing the feelings, perceptions and experience of participants subjectively. This allows them to explain or give opinions to the topics freely. In the meantime, it also makes up for the disadvantage of quantitative fixed questions as they are more constrained.

There are two ways of data analysis: deductive and inductive (Braun, Virginia & Victoria Clarke, 2006a). In a deductive way, the researcher uses a well-built theory or frame to guide the analysis process, i.e. theory-driven. Usually, there are less descriptive results as they only focus on limited aspects which are set before data analysis. On the other hand, an inductive approach is data-driven, which suggests that there is no need to fit the data into a specific frame or model. However, the choice of the approach depends on the epistemologies of the researcher. Therefore, considering the current situation, the researcher determines to use the inductive approach to analyze the data (see Chapter Three).

2.5.2 Theme

In TA, a theme is regarded as the outcome of the coding process, which is definitely different from the codes. For example, "security" could be a code, whereas "a false sense of security" could be another theme. (Saldana & Johnny, 2009)

The theme represents the pattern of data and is linked to the research questions. To determine a theme is to decide its prevalence that occurred in the dataset. However, this is not always the case as high frequency does not necessarily show that the theme is the

most suitable for answering the research questions. The most important factor is the researcher's own judgment, as it may causes a big concern about the reliability of coding which are not coded from raw data but based on research questions (Braun, Virginia & Victoria Clarke, 2006c).

Themes can be defined at different levels, semantically or latently. To define a theme semantically means to define its explicit meaning. On the contrary, latent themes mean implicit meaning or underlying meaning (Richard, B., 1998).

2.5.3 Approach

For the current study, the inductive approach is employed to look at the theme. There are six (6) consistent phases in TA (See Table 2.1): being familiar with the data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up (Braun, Virginia & Victoria Clarke, 2006b):

Table 2.1: Six (6) Phases in Thematic Analysis

Phase	Content and Important Steps	Result
1: Being familiar with the data	Become fully immersed and familiar with the data by reading through the content over and over again. Paying much attention to the potential patterns by marking important data that might be related to researcher questions. ☐ Transcription: after data collection stage, all the audio data should be transcribed	Initially start to code from the raw data.

	into written format. Before transcribing, the criteria should be set in order to avoid ambiguity and bias during data interpretation.	
2: Coding	This phase is a key procedure throughout the TA as codes are generated. These codes may reflect the main features of the dataset so as to answer the research questions. The process is more of a cyclical way rather than a linear way since it needs the researcher to go back and forth to refine the codes by changing, adding, simplifying, summarizing and combining the potential codes. ☐ Data reduction: by reducing or simplifying data, the researcher can segment the data into specific categories. ☐ Data complication: by going beyond the data and asking questions about the data, the researcher can find a more in-depth insight or interpretation about the data.	Comprehend data by de-contextualization and re-contextualization.
3: Searching for themes	After defining the potential codes, it comes to the theme searching. At this stage, a number of potential themes are listed out. In the	Lists of potential themes are generated.

	meantime, there is the search for broader patterns among data. They are then combined. The researcher starts to figure out the relationship between the codes and themes, also between themes of different levels. The difference between themes and codes is that themes are phrases or sentences which tell us what the data mean. At this stage, the researcher tries to include as many themes as possible as some seemingly less important themes might be useful in the later phases of analysis.	
4: Reviewing themes	At this phase, the researcher needs to look into the data that either supports or goes against the proposed theory. Some listed potential themes might be condensed or collapsed in two different levels: ☐ Level One: review the coded data and identify if they are valid. If they are, skip to Level Two; if they are not, identify a new theme; ☐ Level Two: at this level, the researcher should be very clear and confident about	Consistent and coherent connections between the individual themes which may tell a complete story behind the data.

	the relationship among the individual themes. The story behind the data can be told.	
5: Defining and naming themes	This phase involves analyzing the data within each theme, defining the themes according to the different aspects that are captured and interpreting the behind story of each.	A detailed analysis of themes will come out, which will facilitate in comprehending the data.
6: Writing up	At this final phase, researchers should make decisions on the final themes that could answer the research questions. A concise, logical, thematic analytical report will be presented.	A persuasive and detailed report will be presented.

2.6 Summary of Chapter

The Modal model of memory is proposed at the beginning of the Chapter: sensory memory perceives the initial stimuli (aural input), short-term memory (STM) is responsible for meaning-making, and information is stored in long-term memory (LTM) which influences the initial perceptual processing and directs the function of STM (Bruning, Schraw, Norby, &Ronning, 2004). The three-phase mode of language comprehension is perception, parsing, and utilization; with each phase interrelated and recursive (Anderson, 1985). Two different directions of listening comprehension processing are bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up is the fundamental linguistic processing initiated from the wordlevel, and top-down is a metacognitive function stemming from prior knowledge (O'Malley & Chamot,

1990). Prior knowledge can be in the form of schemata (Rumelhart, 1981) or mental models (Tyler, 2001).

Listening problems mainly come from the L2 proficiency of learners, the interference of the L1 knowledge of learners', and the lack of effective L2 listening comprehension strategies (Byrnes, 1984; Rubin, 1994; Ur, 1984). Major factors affecting L2 listening comprehension are related to learners' L2 proficiency and knowledge, listening comprehension strategies, world knowledge, and STM capacity (Goh, 1999; 2000). Anxiety can also impede listening comprehension (Bacon, 1989; Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft, & Evers, 1987; Lund, 1991).

EFL listening comprehension strategies can be systematically divided into three categories: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewener-Manzanares, Kupper, & Russo, 1985). Cognitive strategies are mental activities for manipulating the target language to accomplish a task (Vandergrift, 1997). Metacognitive strategies are mental activities for directing language learning (Vandergrift, 1997). Socio-affective strategies are strategies used through interaction with others, and strategies used through self-regulation of attitudinal and emotional factors in understanding and learning the target language (Oxford, 1990).

Higher proficiency listeners are self-confident. They listen actively in search of meaning (Fujita, 1985). They use a wider range of strategies and make flexible use of these strategies (Murphy, 1985). They are more aware of their strategy use and use metacognitive strategies effectively (Vandergrift, 2003). They are more interested in the topic of the listening task and use their prior knowledge as a top-down strategy for selective attention (Goh, 2002). This results in the efficiency of listening comprehension (Vandergrift, 2003).

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Lower proficiency listeners largely use the translation strategy (DeFilippis, 1980). Their attention is mostly on word-level surface meaning mapping (O'Malley et al., 1989). They depend on the text for meaning and cannot relate new information to their own experiences (Murphy, 1985). They use fewer metacognitive strategies and use more lower-level strategies (Goh, 1998; 2002). They try to understand every word without selective attention (O'Malley et al., 1989) and, thus, their STM can be easily overloaded (Goh, 2002). This results in the overall or partial breakdown of listening comprehension (Vandergrift, 2003).

Applying thematic analysis into qualitative interview data is a useful analysis method to the current study. By defining the themes from the coded data, researchers can find the relationship between the themes and the connection to the research questions. Although there are six (6) consistent phases to analyze the data, the reality is that when the size of the data is not large enough, the researcher may mix some phases together. Therefore, the biggest concern in applying TA into interview data analysis is the reliability. Nevertheless, the analysis process involves consistent and coherent steps to ensure the reliability and validity of the results.

Not only the TA has its advantage in qualitative data entry, but it also is flexible for multiple theories to apply to. Besides, it allows the participants to express their own experience and perspectives rather than answering the fixed quantitative questions.

In a nutshell, after reviewing related work of previous scholars, the current research is going to employ a mix method of TA and frequency count in order to avoid the drawbacks of one single method. Besides, listening comprehension strategy taxonomy (Vandergrift,1997), Flowerdew and Miller (1992)'s and Flowerdew (1994)'s conclusion on listening problems and difficulties are used as the framework of the current study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a description of the methodology and the rationale of sampling and data collection. The following sections in this chapter are sequenced under: 1) research design, 2) research settings, 3) respondents, 4) data collection, 5) data analysis, 6) theoretical framework, 7) ethical issues and 8) summary of the chapter.

To meet the guidelines of consistency, accuracy and clarity of writing, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 2010), *Guidelines for the Preparation of Research Reports, Dissertations and Theses by University of Malaya* (2013), *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed., Creswell, 2012) and *Research Method in Education* (6th ed., Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) were used.

3.1 Research Design

The research design is qualitative in nature. It was designed to investigate the preference in the use of listening comprehension strategies between higher proficiency and lower proficiency EFL postgraduate students. In addition, the research design aims to explore the factors and difficulties that might influence the two groups of students'use of strategies. For the purpose of this research, the questionnaire survey was administrated among a selectedgroup and it was followed up with an interview. The two approaches, which are questionnaire survey and follow-up interview aim to fulfil the gap which an individualapproach is unlikely to experience. Creswell (2012) states that a mixed-method researchdesign can provide a better understanding to the researchquestionsand problems.

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In the present study, the surveyed data are not strong enough to solve the research problems. Having been aware that it was one-dimensioned, a follow-up interview with selected participants was then added, to minimize biasness and to ensure that the information acquired is valid. Thus, the two sets of approach can collaborate with each other to help answer the research questions with more accuracy.

3.1.1 Survey Approach

The survey comprised of a demographic information questionnaire and a listening comprehension strategies questionnaire. Due to the nature of the study, the demographic information of respondents was needed to divide the subjects into two groups; higher proficiency and lower proficiency. This was accomplished through their TOEFL/IELTS listening scores. Besides, the demographic information would also be useful in selecting first-year master's students. Furthermore, the questionnaire was set for differentiating the respondents' English, whether it was as foreign language, second language or first language. This is because there were possibilities that respondents came from a country where English is treated as a foreign language, but they were raised or grew up in a country where English is regarded as a second or first language (Crystal, 2003).

The second section of the questionnaire focuses on the listening comprehension strategies. It was developed to investigate their preference to the use of listening comprehension strategies while they were listening to academic lectures in English. The questionnaire was built upon the descriptions of the three listening comprehension strategies:cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and socio-affective. The categorization of the listening comprehension strategies in the questionnaire was based on Vandergrift's (1997) taxonomy of listening comprehension strategies withdefinitions and explanations (See Appendix A).

3.1.2 Follow-up Interview Approach

   In the pursuit of acquiring more detailed information on the preference of the respondents to the use of listening comprehension strategies in terms of difficulties and factors that might influence their use of strategies, a follow-up interview with 10 selected respondents (five higher proficiency ones and five lower proficiency ones) were carried out. Due to the nature of the data collection, the accessibility to contact the questionnaire's respondents was quite low. Therefore, the 10 selected respondents were chosen not only because of their higher accessibility but also based on their questionnaire survey results which showed the frequency of selection on 'strongly agree' are more than that of 'agree'. Based on the above two criteria for selecting the 10 respondents, the researcher intended to find out what impelled the two groups of respondents' preference towards listening comprehension strategies in terms of difficulties and factors that might influence them when they are in academic listening.

3.2 Research Settings

3.2.1 Survey Setting

   To conduct the survey, potential respondents of master's students from UM were approached by the researcher via snowballing the hardcopies of questionnaire and online Google questionnaire link. This part of survey was gave from 1st of May 2014 to 1st of June 2014 and it generated 68 valid questionnaires out of the 279 ones that were sent out. In the process of snowballing, the questionnaires were distributed or approached not only by the researcher but also through the help of other participants. So there were invalid questionnaires, which showed the respondents were not EFL master's students in their first academy year.

Then, the researcher went to UPM on the 2nd of June 2014 (Monday). She stayed there from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., walking back and forth Blocks A, B and C to look for suitable respondents. Both hardcopies and online questionnaire link were given. This part of survey was lasted for one day and 30 out of 50 valid questionnaires were collected.

In short, the survey approach was conducted at two universities and it lasted 32 days.Altogether 98 valid questionnaires were collected for the current study.

3.2.2 Follow-up Interview Setting

The follow-up one-to-one interviews were conducted only at UM because of higher accessibility to the participants compared with UPM ones. It took the researcher three days to analyze the raw questionnaire data in order to select the interview respondents.This session lasted from the 6th of June, 2014 to the 12th of June, 2014. The sites of doing interviews were negotiated by both researchers and the subjects through SMS or phone calls. Due to the fact that the interviews needed to be recorded, the place should not be too noisy. Places such as library and faculty lounge were chosen to do the interviews.

The further details in conducting questionnaire survey and follow-up interview will be elaborated in part 3.4 Data Collection.

3.3 Respondents

A total number of 98 respondents from two major public universities in Malaysia were sourced for the current study. Since the researcher is currently a master's studentat UM, it is easier to access to the target group at UM. However, given the fact that there

might not be enough suitable respondents from UM, UPM was also considered as a research site because of its geographicadvantages as well as its public university nature. In addition, it was suggested by the researcher's supervisor that the larger sample size the stronger the evidence the research would produce. Because of the complexity of the study, a mixed sampling including snowball sampling (i.e. access to a larger group of participants via a small number of individuals who can connect the researcher with the target group of people), purposive sampling (i.e. the sample has been chosen purposively based on some criteria) and convenience sampling (i.e. accidental or opportunity sampling) become a factor of this research design (Cohen et al., 2007).

Altogether, 98 questionnaires were collected as the initial data in order to divide the respondents into the levels of beginning, intermediate and advanced levels, based on their TOEFL/IELTS listening test scores. For the equality and unity of assessment, all the TOEFL scores were equalized to IELTS scores (See Table 3.1, 3.2) according to *Linking TOEFL iBT ™ Scores to IELTS® Scores-A Research Report* (2010). The Mean of all the scores was 6.5 and Median was also 6.5. The lowest score among the respondents was 4, whereas the highest one was 9. Thus, 4-5.5 was considered as beginning level, 6-6.5 was considered as intermediate level and 7-9 was considered as advanced level. Based on the above standards, the 98 respondents were then divided into 35 advanced levels,30 intermediate levels and 33 beginning levels. For the purpose of the current study, only the 33 beginners and 35 advanced levels of respondents were selected for the better effects of comparison. They were then considered as higher proficiency students and lower proficiency students.

Table 3.1: Linking TOEFL iBT™ scores to IELTS scores---Listening section

IELTS Score	TOEFL Score
9	30
8.5	29
8	28
7.5	27
7	24-26
6.5	20-23
6	12-19
5.5	7-11
5	4-6
4.5	3
0-4	0-2

Table 3.2: Linking TOEFL iBT™ scores to IELTS scores---Total score

IELTS Score	TOEFL Score
9	118-120
8.5	115-117
8	110-114
7.5	102-109
7	94-101
6.5	79-93
6	60-78
5.5	46-59
5	35-45
4.5	32-34
0-4	0-31

3.3.1 Survey Respondents

A total number of 68 respondents (38 male and 30 female) aged from 22 to 40 were chosen. At the time when the study was carried out, they were all enrolled in either the first or the second semester of their master's degree programmes. The reasons for choosing the first-year master's students were because they were comparatively new to the environment and still in the process of adapting to English as the medium of instruction in the university. All respondents (See Table 3.3) were from countries where English was regarded as a foreign language. This is shown in the demographic questionnaire which has indicated that foreign language means only for studying English courses in school (e.g. 29 Chinese, 9 Indonesians, 6 Korean, 2 Japanese, 10 Iranians, 10 Arabians and 2 Thais).They were specialized in various fields (e.g. 9 in computer and science, 10 in engineering, 2 in law, 16 in education, 19 in languages and linguistics, and 12 in business).All subjects have studied English for at least 10 years and above. Besides, it was reported that they have been trying different methods to self-improve their English listening proficiency, e.g. Watching English movies, hearing TED talks and reading English novels. Their personal information and data were ensured to be kept confidential.

Table 3.3: Profile of 68 Survey Respondents

		Higher Proficiency	Lower Proficiency
Gender	**Male**	20	18
	Female	15	15
Nationality	**Mainland Chinese**	18	11
	Indonesian	2	7
	Korean	1	5
	Japanese	0	2
	Iranian	8	2
	Arabic	6	4
	Thai	0	2
Age Group	**18-25**	0	2
	26-35	31	29
	36-45	4	2
Faculty*	**L&L**	16	3
	C&S	3	6
	Edu	9	7
	Busi	6	6
	Egin	0	10
	Law	1	1
Semester	**1**	16	15
	2	19	18

* L&L: Languages and Linguistics; C&S: Computer and Science; Edu: Education; Busi: Business; Egin: Engineering.

3.3.2 Follow-up Interview Respondents

Among the 68 respondents, the researcher selected 5 higher proficiency students and 5 lower proficiency students (See Table 3.4) to do the follow-up interviews. The rationale for selecting the 10 students was based on high accessibility and their results of surveys, i.e. the higher proficiency students who selected 'strongly agree' items more frequently than the others were regarded as the representative to do the follow-up interviews.The same selection methods were also applied to the lower proficiency students. During the follow-up interviews, the questionnaire respondents were having their term break. Although the researcher had sent those emails and SMS, there were still rather limited responses received.

Table 3.4: Demographic Information of 10 Follow-up Interview Respondents

	Higher proficiency					Lower proficiency				
Name	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Gender	M	F	M	F	F	M	M	F	M	F
Age Group	25-34	25-34	25-34	25-34	25-34	35-44	18-24	35-44	25-34	25-34
Nationality	Iran	China	China	Iran	Iran	Japan	China	Arab	China	Thai
Faculty*	L&L	L&L	Edu	Busi	Edu	Egin	Busi	C&S	C&S	Egin
Semester	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

English study length (years)	13	13	19	19	13	10	6.5	9	12	13
Listening test score	8	7	7	9	8	5	5	4	5	5
Total test score	8	8	8	8.5	7.5	5	5.5	4	5	5

* L&L: Languages and Linguistics; C&S: Computer and Science; Edu: Education; Busi: Business; Egin: Engineering.

3.4 Data Collection

A list of international postgraduate students from the Institute of Graduate Studies of UM was applied for the research use. It contained the students' information, including the year enrolled, nationality and contact numbers. Confidentiality was well kept. Respondents completed the questionnaire and returned them to the researcher. Consent forms were given to the interviewees before the interviews commenced. All gave their consent willingly.

3.4.1 Demographic Information Questionnaire

A demographic information questionnaire (See Appendix B) was adapted from Abdalhamid (2012) to investigate the related background information of the respondents. Several changes were made to suit the present study. For example, thepresent study added questions on listening test scores and how they practiced English listening skills by themselves. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions. Questions 1 to 6 were about the respondents' demographic information including name, gender, nationality, age group, faculty and semester. Questions 7 to 10 were developed for

obtaining information on how respondents' English proficiency were including English as first, second or foreign language, number of years studying English, methods of practicing English listening skills and the most important part, i.e. TOEFL/IELTS listening scores/band.

3.4.2 Listening Comprehension Strategies Questionnaire (Abdalhamid, 2012)

The second and the main part of the questionnaire survey, a four-point likert-scale questionnaire ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was also adapted from Abdalhamid's (2012) master's thesis to analyze the participants' perceived use of listening comprehension strategies (See Appendix B). The questionnaire was initially adapted from a combination of previous two studies: Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) and Taguchi (2002). Since the purpose of Abdalhamid (2012) was similar with the present study and it was comparatively the latest study in the similar field, the researcher chose to adapt the questionnaire other than that of other studies. The questionnaire comprised 20 items related to cognitive strategies (inferencing, elaboration, imagery, translation, transfer, repetition and note-taking), metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, evaluation and problem-identification) and socio-affective strategies (questioning for clarification, cooperation, lower anxiety, self-encouragement and taking emotional temperature). The 20 items asked the respondents to reflect their use of each listening comprehension strategy while listeningto academic lectures in English

3.4.3 Follow-up Interview Data Collection

According to Creswell (2012), interviews have both advantages and disadvantages. Through interviewing, the researcher can obtain more specific and personalized information from participants compared to observation. It allows the researcher to access the deep insights of participants when it cannot be done through observation. However, because the interview may involve both the researcher and participants, it is believed that the perspectives of participants might be affected by the presence of the researcher. However, in the present study, the researcher managed to avoid the above two disadvantages by seeking advice from experts and peers in similar research fields in data collection and data analysis.

For the current study, face-to-face and one-to-one interviews were employed. Before each interviews, consent forms were obtained from each respondent (See Appendix C). They were told about the purpose of the study and allowed to discontinue the interview anytime they want. Each interview lasted for about half an hour to 45 minutes. English was the only language used during the interviews in order to reduce the complexity of data transcription. As suggested by research methodologists and also considering the number of questionnaire respondents, 10 respondents (5 higher proficiency ones and 5 lower proficiency ones) were selected in order to obtain an in-depth perspective from two different proficiency groups. All the interviews were recorded using Sanyo ICR-XPS01M digital recorder with the permission of the subjects.

Ten interview questions adopted from Jeon (2007) (See Appendix D) were asked to the respondents. All questions were developed as open-ended questions in order to

obtain as much information as possible from the respondents. Among the questions, three of them were designed to ask about the perspectives on the importance of background knowledge and L2 proficiency when listening to academic lectures in English; four of them were developed for investigating what factors or difficulties might influence their listening to academic lectures; the other three questions involved their use of strategies and factors that might affect their selection of strategies.

Before each interview, the respondents viewed a short video from YouTube on a laptop of about 2-3 minutes on a Malaysian university lecture, to re-enact their memories of the scene when listening to academic lectures in English. The purpose was not to focus on comprehending the lectures, but to get adapted to the listening context.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Survey Data Analysis

Vandergrift's (1997) taxonomy of listening comprehension strategies and Abdalhamid's (2012) categorization of questionnaire items were employed to categorize questionnaire item number 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 as highly related to cognitive strategies;questionnaire item number 3, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20 as highly related tometacognitive strategies; and questionnaire item number 12, 13, 15, 17 as highly related to socio-affective strategies. Under the cognitive strategies, items 4 and 5 are related to inferencing strategies, items 6 and 7 are related to elaboration strategies, item 2 is related to imagery strategy, and items 1 and 9 are related to translation strategies. Under the metacognitive strategies, item 10 is related to monitoring strategy; items 3, 8, 14, 18 and 19 are related to planning strategies; and item 11, 16 and 20 are related toevaluation strategies. Under the socio-affective strategies, items

12, 13 and 14 are related to lower anxiety strategies, and item 17 is related to taking emotional temperature strategy (See Appendix E, F).

By adding the number of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' choices together in each group (See Table 3.5, 3.6), the frequency use of each strategy was then manually counted. After the initial analysis on counting the number of selections to each item, further analysis on ranking the percentage of each item/strategy was presented (See Appendix E, F). This was to illustrate the higher preference of each group towards each strategy. By doing so, graphics on higher proficiency students' and lower proficiency students' preference to listening comprehension strategies would be demonstrated clearly.

Table 3.5: Higher proficiency respondents' frequency use of each strategy

	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Item 1	6	1	7
Item 2	16	4	20
Item 3	14	1	15
Item 4	18	6	24
Item 5	14	10	24
Item 6	20	4	24
Item 7	18	3	21
Item 8	11	1	12
Item 9	8	1	9
Item 10	19	1	20
Item 11	12	3	15

Item 12	15	3	18
Item 13	15	7	22
Item 14	17	1	18
Item 15	14	4	18
Item 16	18	4	22
Item 17	18	3	21
Item 18	17	2	19
Item 19	16	4	20
Item 20	8	0	8

Table 3.6: Lower proficiency respondents' frequency use of each strategy

	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Item 1	19	0	19
Item 2	20	7	27
Item 3	20	3	23
Item 4	19	12	31
Item 5	17	15	32
Item 6	17	14	31
Item 7	16	9	25
Item 8	18	6	24
Item 9	18	2	20
Item 10	20	4	24
Item 11	17	8	25

Item 12	17	8	25
Item 13	19	10	29
Item 14	16	10	26
Item 15	10	11	21
Item 16	18	7	25
Item 17	18	8	26
Item 18	19	6	25
Item 19	21	7	28
Item 20	14	10	24

Data analysis would be based on three research questions and then under the first two research questions, they would then be categorized again into three listening comprehension strategies. Each strategy would be presented in one table to show the percentage and ranking. If the interview findings concur with the survey results, related interview transcriptions would be presented after the analysis of survey results. Research Question One and Two would be answered by using both the survey results to illustrate answers and the interview findings to support the findings.

3.5.2 Follow-up Interview Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to the follow-up interview data analysis, which strictly followed the 6 phases of analysis procedure. All the interview data were firstly transcribed by the researcher verbatim. However, for the purpose of the study, the transcriptions were presented in a way where only related information remains asgrammatical errors. Then initial coding was conducted from the raw transcribed data.

After finding the codes, the researcher asked some peers and qualitative research experts to guide the process of searching for the initial themes. The process of defining themes was circular instead of linear, which meant that they were constantly refined, added and removed until the themes were perfectly matched to the research questions.

The extracted transcripts and their themes were then presented to either support or add additional findings to the survey results. This is the only way of analysing the third research question. In this way, the reliability and validity of the research would be met.

3.6 Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework used for this study consists of 1) Vandergrift (1997)'s taxonomy for listening comprehension strategies; 2) Flowerdew and Miller (1992) and Flowerdew (1994)'s summary on listening problems encountered by EFL listeners when listening to lectures in English and 3) Goh (2000)'s factors that may cause the listening problems. The above three theories aim to analyse the listening comprehension strategies used by EFL Master students as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ Listening to academic lectures in English │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
        ┌───────────────────────────┼───────────────────────────┐
        │                           │                           │
┌───────────────┐         ┌───────────────┐         ┌───────────────┐
│  Listening    │         │  Listening    │         │ Factors to cause │
│ Comprehension │         │ problems  and │         │ the difficulties │
│  Strategies   │         │ difficulties  │         │               │
└───────────────┘         └───────────────┘         └───────────────┘
```

| Vandergrift (1997)'s taxonomy | Flowerdew and Miller (1992) and Flowerdew (1994)'s conclusion | Goh (2000)'s conclusion |

| -Cognitive strategy
-Metacognitive strategy
-Socio-affective strategy | -Speed of delivery
-Accent
-New vocabularies and concepts
-Concentration | -Failure to use appropriate comprehension tactics
-A lack of appropriate schematic knowledge
-insufficient prior knowledge
-limited processing capacity in short-term memory |

Figure 3.1 Theoretical Framework

3.7 Ethical Issues

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) points out that the ethical issues raised when doing observation and interview are closely related to the research methodology. Since the present study conducted one-to-one interviews with 10 selected subjects, the

following ethical issues were considered during the whole process of doing the research:

1. Subjects' willingness to participate in the study: they were given the consent form to prove their willingness of participation.

2. Subjects' privacy: including their names, ages, education background, test scores and question answers were kept confidential.

3. Flexibility: subjects were allowed to discontinue the interviews at any time, or choose not to answer a particular question.

3.8 Summary of Chapter

Chapter Three presents a detailed methodology of conducting the research including the rational of the current research design derived from previous literature reviewed, the description of subjects in the study and how they were selected and divided into higher proficiency and lower proficiency groups, the description of research settings where different phases of research were carried out, the explanation of research instruments and process of collecting data, the demonstration of method to analyze data and some important ethical issues concerned in the present study. Chapter Four will thence present the findings and discussion of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and research findings. Firstly, the purpose of the research and research questions are restated. Next, the analysis of each research question is presented. For the first two research questions, the analysis comprised two strands: questionnaire survey results which are based on Vandergrift's (1997) taxonomy and the thematic analysis of the interview data. To answer the third research question, a thematic analysis is conducted by following Flowerdew and Miller's (1992) listening problems and difficulties of EFL learners, and Goh's (2000) factors to cause the difficulty in using listening comprehension strategies. Finally, the comparative summary between higher and lower proficiency respondents on their preference to listening comprehension strategiesis demonstrated.

4.1 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the study as mentioned in Chapter One is to identify listening comprehension strategies used by higher and lower proficiency first-year EFL master's students in Malaysian public universities. The following research questions are restated in this section:

1. What are the preferred listening comprehension strategies employed by higher proficiency respondents?

2. What are the preferred listening comprehension strategies employed by lower proficiency respondents?

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3. What factors or difficulties might influence their use of listening comprehension strategies?

4.2 Findings

In this study, the researcher employs both the questionnaire survey and a follow-up interview to illustrate the preferences of the use of listening comprehension strategies between higher and lower proficiency respondents. The findings are presented in a way where both the survey results and the interview findings are collaborated with each other so as to answer the research questions, thus, fulfilling the research purpose.

The six (6) phases of the Thematic Analysis have been discussed in Chapter Two and they are repeated here for the purpose of guiding the analysis and interview findings in this section:

Phase 1: Being familiar with the data
Phase 2: Coding
Phase 3: Searching for themes
Phase 4: Reviewing themes
Phase 5: Defining and naming themes
Phase 6: Writing up

4.2.1 Research Question 1: What are the preferred listening comprehension strategies employed by higher proficiency respondents?

There are a total of 35 higher proficiency respondents who participated in the current study. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the survey results are presented in the rank of percentage to show higher proficiency listener's preference to listening comprehension strategies (See Appendix E). Figure 2 below is displayed to show the

ranking. The vertical axis is the content summary for each questionnaire item, whereas the horizontal axis is the percentage of higher proficiency respondents' preferences to each strategy item. Overall, they are presented from the lowest preference rate to the highest one.

Key notes:
Cognitive---CLI: cognitive-linguistic inferencing; CBPI: cognitive-between parts inferencing; CPE: cognitive-personal elaboration; CAE: cognitive-academic elaboration; CI: cognitive-imagery; CT: cognitive-translation;
Metacognitive---ME: metacognitive-evaluation; MCM: metacognitive-comprehension monitoring; MSM: metacognitive-self-management; MAO: metacognitive-advance organization;
Socioaffective---SLA: socio-affective lower anxiety; STET: socio-affective taking emotional temperature.

Figure 4.1: Rank of Higher Proficiency Respondents' Preference to LCS

In general, from Figure 4.1 above, it can be concluded that there are seven (7) items for cognitive strategies, nine (9) items for metacognitive strategies and four (4) items for socio-affective strategies. Hence, by adding up each category's percentage rate

and then dividing them by the number of items, the average percentage for each strategy is acquired (See Figure 4.2). By looking at the percentage indicating from highest to lowest, it appears that socio-affective strategy ranked number one with an average of 56.3% (225÷4 ≈ 56.3), followed by 52.9% (370÷7 ≈ 52.9) of cognitive strategy and 47.2% (425÷9 ≈ 47.2) of metacognitive strategy. In other words, Figure 4.1 shows that higher proficiency respondents prefer to use socio-affective strategies more than the others, while listening to academic lectures in English.
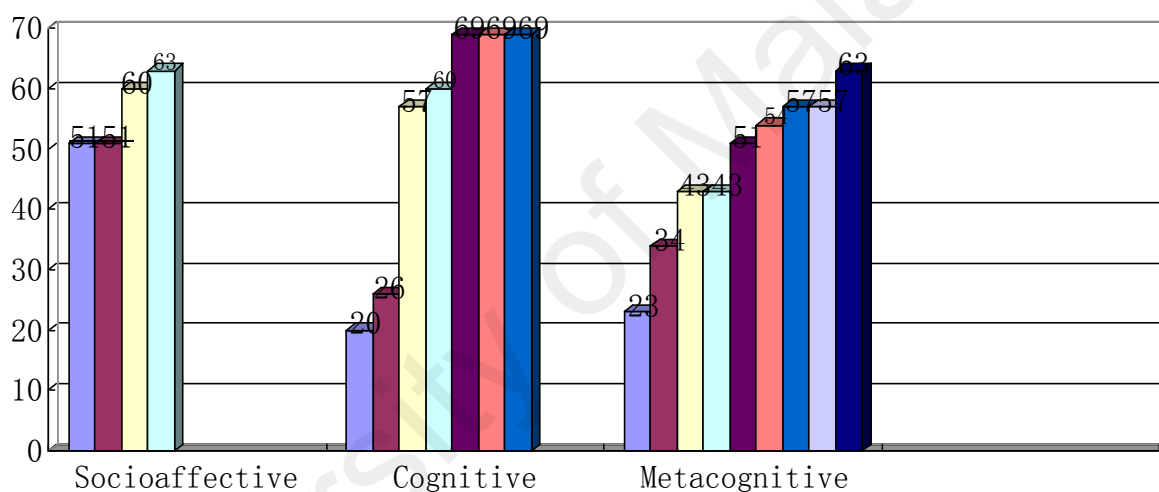
Key Notes:
The sum of Socio-affective Strategy: 51+51+60+63=225
The sum of Cognitive Strategy: 20+26+57+60+69+69+69=370
The sum of Metacognitive Strategy: 23+34+43+43+51+54+57+57+63=425

Figure 4.2: The Total Sum of Listening Comprehension Strategies-Higher

Proficiency Respondents

The interview findings data are then extracted to collaborate with the above survey results:

H1: *"...If I feel it still difficult to understand, I will <u>try to relax</u> and <u>take a deep breath</u> and stop listening for a while. After the class, sometimes, we will have small <u>group discussion</u> on the assignments to <u>exchange notes</u> about what we have understood..."*

H2: *"...if I couldn't understand the lecturer, I <u>try not to be panic</u> and keep myself calm down, then I will <u>raise questions</u>. Sometimes, we will group or pair discussion on some topics, I think it's very good for us. After the class, we usually have a small <u>study group</u> for assignment purpose..."*

H3: *"...I tell myself it's ok not understanding at this point, and <u>encourage myself</u> that I will understand the next point. So I always take down the notes that I don't understand during the class and <u>ask questions</u> after the class..."*

H4: *"...when I couldn't follow what the lecturer are saying, I will <u>request for repeating and explanation</u> rather than just let it go or <u>ask my classmates who are sitting next to me</u>, I always sit with local students, because I feel they knows better..."*

H5: *"...I like to ask questions during the class and <u>talk about</u> what we learnt and read after it..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'try to relax'*, *'take a deep breath'* and *'try not to be panic'* as well as *'keep myself calm down'* are to illustrate the 'lower anxiety' theme, i.e. 'reducing anxiety by using mental techniques'.

Words like *'group discussion'*, *'exchange notes'*, *'study group'*, *'ask my classmates who are sitting next to me'* and *'talk about'* are to represent the 'cooperation' theme, i.e. 'working together with someone else to solve the problems'.

Words like *'raise questions'*, *'ask questions'* and *'request for repeating and explanation'* are to indicate the 'questioning for clarification' theme, i.e. 'asking for explanation and posing for questions'.

Words like *'encourage myself'* is to indicate the 'self-encouragement' theme, i.e. 'provide self-motivation during a listening activity'.

The next section discusses the higher proficiency respondents' preference to the three listening comprehension strategies: 1) socio-affective, 2) cognitive and 3) metacognitive, respectively.

4.2.1.1 Higher Proficiency Respondents' Preference to Socio-affective Strategies

As discussed above, the average percentage of first-year EFL master's students' preference to socio-affective strategies is the highest among the three strategies. Under the socio-affective strategies' items, there are two sub-strategies provided in the questionnaire survey as mentioned in Chapter Three: A) Lower anxiety and B) Taking emotional temperature (Vandergrift, 1997).

A)Lower anxiety- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the lower anxiety strategy as 'reducing anxiety through the use of mental techniques that make one feel more competent to perform a listening task.' Table 4.1 below is extracted from Appendix E. It shows the results of the questionnaire survey indicating the 'lower anxiety' strategy. The results reveal that 63% of the respondents feel nervous but try not to feel so while listening in English. 51% of the respondents try to relax during listening activities and 51% of the respondents try not to worry so much when they do not understand what the lecturers are talking about.

Table 4.1: Lower Anxiety-Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
4	I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English.	63
12	While listening, I try to relax.	51
14	When I don't understand something, I try not to worry so much about it.	51

The above results are further collaborated with the follow-up interview data provided by respondents:

H1: *"when I was listening to lectures, I feel very nervous, I was afraid that teacher will ask me questions that I don't know. So I ask myself to be cool and relax…so these are some strategies I use to help me understand…"*

H2: *"if suddenly I couldn't follow lectures speech, I would try to relax and stop for several seconds and continue listening to the next part of the speech…in this way, I won't feel so stressful…"*

(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*feel very nervous*', '*was afraid that*', '*couldn't follow*' supports the theme of 'feel nervous while listening'.

Words like '*to be cool and relax*', '*try to relax and stop for several seconds*' and '*won't feel so stressful*' indicate the 'lower anxiety' theme as 'reducing anxiety by using mental techniques'.

Note that both H1 and H2 say '*relax*', it is clear that they are learning how to calm themselves or in other words, lower their anxiety level.

B)Taking emotional temperature- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines taking the emotional temperature strategy as 'becoming aware of, and getting in touch with one's emotions while listening, in order to avert negative emotion and to make the most of the positive emotion.' Table 4.2 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on taking emotional temperature strategy. It is said that 60% of the respondents try to adjust their listening emotional temperature into a positive one by encouraging themselves to enjoy listening.

Table 4.2: Taking Emotional Temperature-Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
7	I always try to enjoy listening.	60

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the higher proficiency respondents:

H3: *"...I feel very sad when I couldn't understand the lecture and when I see others are enjoying listening very much, I try to enjoy also. I was a good listeners when I studied in China. So I always tell myself I can do it..."*

H5: *"before the class, I will try to find some similar materials to link what I have learnt with the lecture, in that case, I can always be very enjoy the listening, especially when the lecture talked something that I know..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'feel very sad', 'couldn't understand', 'try to enjoy'* and *'enjoy the listening'* show the 'taking emotional temperature' theme, i.e. 'becoming aware of and getting in touch with one's emotions in order to make the most of positive ones while listening'.

In this case, H3 mentions that *'I always tell myself I can do it';* H5 says that '*I can always be very enjoy the listening'*. It is clearly seen that they are aware of their emotional status and try to adjust their emotion to a positive condition.

Besides 'lower anxiety' and 'taking emotional temperature' strategies, the interviews with the subjects also show that other strategies can be seen. They include 'cooperation', 'questioning for clarification' and 'self-encouragement' strategies. It seems clear that higher proficiency listeners also like to use these strategies to help them accommodate to their listening comprehension in English lectures, which the survey results could not show due to the limited items for socio-affective strategies:

H1: *"...after the class, sometimes, we will have small <u>group discussion</u> on the assignments to <u>exchange notes</u> about what we have understood..."*

H2: *"...I will <u>raise questions</u>. Sometimes, we will group or pair discussion on some topics, I think it's very good for us. After the class, we usually have a small <u>study group</u> for assignment purpose..."*

H3: *"...I tell myself it's ok not understanding at this point, and <u>encourage myself</u> that I will understand the next point..."*

H4: *"...I will <u>request for repeating and explanation</u> rather than just let it go or <u>ask my classmates who are sitting next to me</u>..."*

H5: *"...I like to <u>ask questions</u> during the class..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

As mentioned in Chapter Two, there are other sub-strategies under the socio-affective strategies (See Appendix A). In the above statements, words like *'group discussion'*, *'exchange notes'*, *'study group'* and *'ask my classmates who are sitting next to me'* are to represent the 'cooperation' theme, i.e. 'working together with someone else to solve the problems'.

Words like *'raise questions'*, *'ask questions'* and *'request for repeating and explanation'* are to indicate the 'questioning for clarification' theme, i.e. 'asking for explanation and posing for questions'.

Words like *'encourage myself'* is to indicate the 'self-encouragement' theme, i.e. 'provide self-motivation during a listening activity'.

Note that H1 and H2 mention about *'group discussion'* while H2, H4 and H5 mention about *'ask questions'* and H3 mentions that *'encourage myself'*. All these indicate the use of other sub-strategies, i.e. cooperation, questioning for clarification and self-encouragement.

From the data above, it seems that both the interview findings and survey results are in agreement to show that higher proficiency respondents tend to use all kinds of socio-affective strategies during and after listening to academic lectures in English.

The factors that caused them to do so will be analyzed and elaborated under the third research question.

4.2.1.2 Higher Proficiency Respondents' Preference to Cognitive Strategies

As discussed above, the percentage of preference to cognitive strategies is the second among the three strategies with 52.9%. Under the cognitive strategies' items, there are four sub-strategies provided in the questionnaire survey as mentioned in Chapter Three: A) Inferencing, B) Elaboration, C) Imagery and D) Translation.

A)Inferencing- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the inferencing strategy as 'using information within the text or conversational context to guess the meanings of unfamiliar language items associated with a listening task, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information.' Table 4.3 below shows the results of questionnaire survey on inferencing strategy. It is revealed that 69% of the respondents use the words that they understand and the main ideas of the texts to help them guess the unfamiliar language items while listening. This strategy ranks the highest above all, which means nearly all the higher proficiency respondents would use inferencing strategy whenever they see unfamiliar words.

Table 4.3: Inferencing-Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
1	I use the words I understand to help me guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	69
2	I use the main idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't know.	69

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the higher proficiency respondents:

H1: *"...definitely I cannot understand each word that the lecturer said, so sometimes I would <u>take my chance to guess</u>...for example, the <u>general picture</u>..."*

H4: *"...<u>knowing the main idea of the text</u> can really help me understand the most parts of the lecture..."*

H5: *"...some terminologies are quite difficult, so I just <u>use what I have already learnt to guess</u>..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, phrases like *'take my chance to guess'*, *'general picture'*, *'knowing the main idea of the text'* and *'use what I have already learnt to guess'* are to indicate the 'inferencing' theme, i.e. 'use information within the text or conversational context to guess the meanings of unfamiliar language items'.

Note that H1 and H4 mention *'general picture'* and *'main idea',* and H5 mentions *'use what I have already learnt',* which shows that they are using the information or words from the text to predict the outcomes.

B)Elaboration- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the elaboration strategy as 'using prior knowledge from outside the text or conversational context and relating it to knowledge gained from the text or conversation in order to fill in missing information.' Table 4.4 below shows the results of questionnaire survey on the elaboration strategy. It is revealed that 69% of the respondents prefer to use their personal knowledge and experience to understand the texts and 60% of the respondents compare what they know about the topic with what they understand. This also shows a high preference towards the elaboration strategy as more than half of the respondents tend to use it.

Table 4.4: Elaboration- Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
3	I use my knowledge and personal experience to help me understand the topic.	69
6	As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I already know about the topic.	60

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the higher proficiency respondents:

H2: *"...I link my <u>prior knowledge</u> with the topic to help me understand the lecture..."*

H3: *"...I usually <u>relate the topic with my own working experience</u> to know better about the topic..."*

H5: *"...I find <u>something similar</u> with what I learnt in my degree course, so it is easier for me to understand what the lecturers are talking about if I <u>compare them</u>..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, phrases like *'prior knowledge'*, *'relate the topic with my own working experience'*, *'something similar'* and *'compare them'* indicate the 'elaboration' theme as 'using prior knowledge from outside the text or conversational context to understand the input information'.

Note that H2, H3 and H5 mention that *'prior knowledge'* and *'compare them'*, clearly to indicate that they are using prior knowledge from outside the text to compare and relate it to the listening tasks.

C)Imagery- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the imagery strategy as 'using mental or actual pictures or visuals to represent information.' Table 4.5 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on imagery strategy. It is revealed that 57% of the respondents try to picture what the speakers are describing.

Table 4.5: Imagery- Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
8	I try to picture the setting of the conversation to understand what the speakers are talking about.	57

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the higher proficiency respondents:

H1: *"...I used to like picture things of what the lecturer has said in order to help me understand the topic and I feel it is very useful..."*

H5: *"...I am a visual person, so if I cannot understand what the lecturer say, I may use my imagination to do a mind mapping or just simply draw something..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, expressions like *'picture things', 'use my imagination'* and *'mind mapping or just simply draw something'* portrays the 'imagery' theme as 'using mental or actual pictures to comprehend input information'.

Note that H1 and H5 mention that *'picture things'* and *'use my imagination',* clearly to demonstrate that they are using mental pictures to help them comprehend the input information while listening to lectures in English.

D)Translation- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the translation strategy as 'rendering ideas from one language to another in a relatively verbatim manner.' Table 4.6 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the translation strategy. It is noted that only 26% and 20% of the respondents chose to translate and focus on the meaning of each word while listening. This means that instead of focusing on word-to-word translation, higher proficiency respondents prefer to focus on main ideas while listening.

Table 4.6: Translation- Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
18	While listening, I translate in my head.	26
20	I focus on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text.	20

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the

higher proficiency respondents:

H1: *"content knowledge is more important because we need content knowledge to help us refer to the theory and in that case to generate critical thinking…we <u>cannot rely on our L2 proficiency</u>, once we met unfamiliar words, we will be stopped by the meaning of the words…"*

H2: *"…I <u>seldom focus on the vocabularies</u>, I think I <u>focus more on the sentences</u>, I mean the <u>general ideas</u>…"*

H3: *"…because her speed is too fast, I <u>cannot focus on each word she said</u>, but I can understand what she is talking about by <u>connecting the key words together and guess</u>…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, although the interviews with the five subjects failed to

prove their use of translation strategy, it may be considered as the least preferable

strategy among the higher proficiency respondents. Words like '*seldom focus on the*

vocabularies', 'cannot rely on our L2 proficiency' and *'cannot focus on each word she*

said' prove the theme to be 'not focus on each words in the listening activity'.

Words like '*focus more on the sentences', 'general ideas'* and *'connecting the key*

words together and guess' indicate that the 'inferencing' theme is the 'focus on the

main ideas'.

Note that H1, H2 and H3 argued against *'focus on the vocabularies'*, and instead, they mentioned that they *'focus on the sentences'*. This clearly shows that they do not rely on word-to-word translation to help them understand the listening content.

Besides the above four cognitive strategies, the interview findings also revealed one more cognitive strategy that higher proficiency respondents might prefer to use, i.e. 'note-taking':

H3: *"...I tell myself it's ok not understanding at this point, and encourage myself that I will understand the next point. So I always* <u>*take down the notes that I don't understand during the class*</u> *and ask questions after the class..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statement, expressions like *'take down the notes that I don't understand during the class'* are to demonstrate the 'note-taking' theme as 'writing down key words and concepts to assist listening activities'.

In short, as for cognitive strategy, it can be said that higher proficiency respondents prefer to use the 'inferencing' strategy, followed by 'elaboration', 'imagery' and 'note-taking'. The least preferable strategy is the 'translation' strategy.

The factors that caused them to do so will be analyzed and elaborated under the third research question.

4.2.1.3 Higher Proficiency Respondents' Preference to Metacognitive Strategies

As discussed above, the average percentage of preference to metacognitive strategy is the third among the three strategies with 47.2%. Under the metacognitive strategy' items, there are three sub-strategies provided in the questionnaire survey as mentioned in Chapter Three: A) Planning, B) Monitoring and C) Evaluation.

A)Planning- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the planning strategy as 'developing an awareness of what needs to be done to accomplish a listening task, developing an appropriate action plan and/or appropriate contingency plans to overcome difficulties that may interfere with successful completion of the task.' Table 4.7 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the planning strategy. It shows that 57% of the respondents try to manage their listening conditions to make it successful; 51% of the respondents have a specific goal for the listening task; 43% of the respondents recall some similar contents before listening and only 34% of the respondents have a detailed plan about how to listen before the class starts.

Table 4.7: Planning- Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
10	I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	57
13	As I listen, I have a goal in my head.	51
15	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	43
17	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	34

The above results are further supported by the follow-up interviews with the higher proficiency respondents:

H1: *"As I listen, I know what I am going to listen, because I usually look through the power point before the class…"*

H2: *"I was very focus during the class, even I couldn't understand well, I still try to concentrate…"*

H3: *"Before going to the class, I will read the some materials or books about the topic and I will focus on the difficult part that I don't understand…"*

H5: *"Before the class, I will read everything the lecturer has givenand try to be well prepared for the discussion…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

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In the above statements, words like *'I know what I am going to listen', 'look through the power point before the class', 'read the some materials or books about the topic', 'read everything the lecturer has given'* and *'try to be well prepared for the discussion'* represent the 'advance organization' theme, i.e. 'clarifying the objectives of a listening task'.

Words like *'very focus during the class', 'try to concentrate'* and *'focus on the difficult part'* give rise to the 'self-management' theme, i.e. 'understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish listening tasks'.

Note that H1, H3 and H5 mentioned *'well prepared'* andH2 and H3 mention *'focus during the class'*, clearly to show that they are using advance organization strategy to prepare for the class before it starts and using self-management strategy to help them successfully complete the listening tasks.

B)Monitoring- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the monitoring strategy as 'checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a listening task. Table 4.8 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the monitoring strategy. It shows that 57% of the respondents will monitor the correctness of their listening comprehension.

Table 4.8: Monitoring- Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
9	As I listen, I adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.	57

The above results are further elaborated by follow-up interviews conducted with the higher proficiency respondents:

H3: *"during listening…I sometimes find myself <u>in the wrong way of understanding</u>, so I will continue <u>listening to more details</u> until I can come up with questions or comments to discuss with lecturers…"*

H5: *"during the class…if I feel like <u>what I have understood is a little bit different from the lecturers</u>, I would <u>speak to the lecturer to verify my thinking</u>…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'in the wrong way of understanding'*, *'listening to more details'*, *'what I have understood is a little bit different from the lecturers'* and *'speak to the lecturer to verify my thinking'* indicate the 'monitoring' theme as 'checking and verifying, listening comprehension while listening.'

Note that H3 finds himself *'in the wrong way of understanding'*, so he is *'listening to more details'* to check and verify the correctness. H5 finds herself *'what I have understood is a little bit different from the lecturers'*, hence, she *'speak to the lecturer to verify my thinking'*. Theabove facts clearly show that higher proficiency respondents while listening they are also checking, verifying or correcting their understanding

towards lectures.

C)Evaluation- Higher proficiency respondents:

Vandergrift (1997) defines the evaluation strategy as 'checking the outcome of one's listening comprehension against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.' Table 4.9 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the evaluation strategy. It shows that 63% of the respondents try to check the accuracy of guessing outcomes with the previous knowledge; 54% of the respondents will reflect on how they listened and evaluate the outcomes in the hope of improving their listening skill the next time; 43% of the respondents will check their listening outcomes from time to

time while listening and only 23% of the respondents evaluate their listening to academic lectures in English as a challenge.

Table 4.9: Evaluation- Higher proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
5	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.	63
11	After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	54
16	As I listen, I occasionally ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	43
19	I feel that listening in English is a challenge for me.	23

The above results are further supported by the follow-up interviews with the higher proficiency respondents:

H1: *"I don't think it is quite difficult…content knowledge is more important…so I can use my previous knowledge to check if my comprehension is right or wrong…"*

H2: *"It is not that difficult for me…After listening…or I will talk about what I have learnt from the lecture with my classmates, so I will know how much I have understood from the class…"*

H3: *"It depends…but I can understand most of the lectures…"*

H4: *"not very difficult if I can understand the lecturer's accent…"*

H5: *"depends on the content and also the lecturer, but not difficult to understand…during and after listening, I will constantly compare what I have gained with my teacher or classmates to see if I am on the right track…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'I don't think it is quite difficult', 'not that difficult for me', 'I can understand most of the lectures', 'not very difficult'* and *'not difficult to understand'* are to show the theme, i.e. 'listening in English is not a challenge'.

Words like *'use my previous knowledge to check', 'talk about…with my classmates', 'how much I have understood'* and *'compare…to see if I am on the right track'* are to show the 'evaluation' theme, i.e. 'checking the accuracy of listening comprehension outcomes with existing knowledge.'

Note that all the five respondents mentioned *'not difficult'*. Therefore, higher proficiency respondents do not regard listening in English as a challenge. H1, H2 and H5 mention *'check', 'how much…understood'* and *'compare'*. It is clear to see that they are using their existing knowledge to check the correctness of their listening comprehension outcomes.

In short, as for the metacognitive strategy, higher proficiency respondents preferred to use the 'evaluation' strategy, followed by 'planning' and 'monitoring'. Under the planning strategy, they tended to use the 'advance monitoring' strategy.

It is also important to note that the higher proficiency respondents preferred to combine the three strategies in the course of listening.

The factors that caused them to do so will be analysed and elaborated under the third research question.

4.2.2 Research Question 2: What are the preferred listening comprehension strategies employed by lower proficiency respondents?

There are a total of 33 lower proficiency respondents who participated in the current study. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the survey results shall be presented in the rank of percentage to show lower proficiency respondents' preference to listening comprehension strategies (See Appendix F). Figure 4.3 below is to show the ranking. The vertical axis is the content summary for each questionnaire item; the horizontal axis

is the percentage of lower proficiency respondents' preferences to each strategy item. Overall, they are presented from the lowest preference rate to the highest one.

Key notes:
Cognitive---CLI: cognitive-linguistic inferencing; CBPI: cognitive-between parts inferencing; CPE: cognitive-personal elaboration; CAE: cognitive-academic elaboration; CI: cognitive-imagery; CT: cognitive-translation;
Metacognitive---ME: metacognitive-evaluation; MCM: metacognitive-comprehension monitoring; MSM: metacognitive-self-management; MAO: metacognitive-advance organization;
Socio-affective---SLA: socio-affective lower anxiety; STET: socio-affective-taking emotional temperature.

Figure 4.3: Rank of Lower Proficiency Respondents' Preference to LCS

In general, as mentioned in 4.2.1, it can be concluded that the average percentage for each strategy category, from the highest to the lowest percentage, is 80.3% ($562 \div 7 \approx$ 80.3) for cognitive strategy, 76.8% ($307 \div 4 \approx 76.8$) for socio-affective strategy and 75.7% ($681 \div 9 \approx 75.7$) for metacognitive strategy (See Figure 4.4). In another words, lower proficiency respondents prefer to use cognitive strategies while listening to academic lectures in English. However, there is little difference of preference between metacognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies.
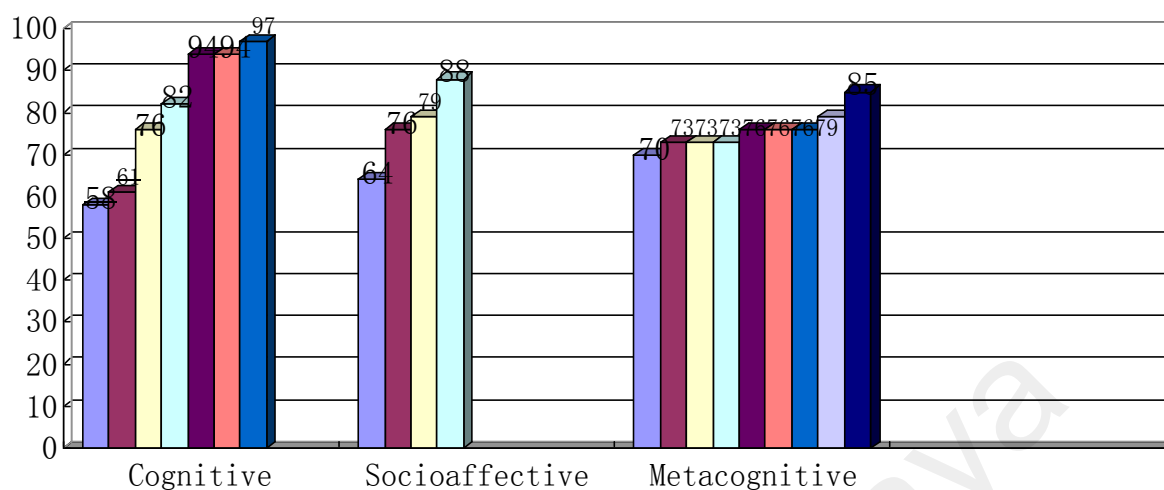
Key Notes:
The sum of Cognitive Strategy: 58+61+76+82+94+94+97=562
The sum of Socio-affective Strategy: 64+76+79+88=307
The sum of Metacognitive Strategy: 70+73+73+73+76+76+76+79+85=681

Figure 4.4: The Total Sum of Listening Comprehension Strategies-Lower

Proficiency Respondents

The interview findings are extracted in order to corroborate with the above survey

results:

L1: *"...during listening, I try to <u>use my English knowledge to help</u> me understand what the lecture say, if I can understand it, I will <u>link it with what I know</u>..."*

L2: *"...during the class, I will <u>take down some important notes or key words</u>, then I will <u>put them together to get the whole picture</u>..."*

L3: *"...in the class, I will record the lecture...after the class, I will listen to it again and again...<u>try to understand each word she say</u>..."*

L4: *"...I try to <u>read the related book in Chinese book</u>, and during the class, I can <u>relate the words to English</u>..."*
L5: *"...I can only understand some parts of the lecture, for example, some key words at the beginning, in the middle and at the end, so I <u>guess the meaning by put them together</u>...and keep <u>ask myself questions how it sounds logic</u>..."*

(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'use my English knowledge to help'* and *'guess the meaning by put them together'* are to suggest the 'inferencing' theme, i.e. 'using in-text information or conversational context to guess the meaning'.

Expressions such as *'link it with what I know'* and *'ask myself questions how it sounds logic'* are to suggest the 'elaboration' theme, i.e. 'using prior knowledge outside the text or conversational context to fill in the missing information'.

Words like *'put them together to get the whole picture'* suggests the 'summarization' theme, i.e. 'making a written summary of language in a listening task'.

As for words like *'take down some important notes or key words',* it suggests the 'note-taking' theme, i.e. 'writing down key words in short forms to assist listening task'.

Next, words like *'read the related book in Chinese book'* and *'relate the words to English'* are to suggest the 'transfer' theme, i.e. 'using knowledge of one language to facilitate listening in another'.

Lastly, words such as *'try to understand each word she say'* are to suggest the 'translation' theme, i.e. 'rendering ideas from one language to another in a relatively verbatim manner'.

All in all, the five interview respondents showed a consistent preference towards cognitive strategies during and after the listening activities.

Moving on, the next section discusses the lower proficiency respondents' preference to the three listening comprehension strategies, 1) cognitive, 2) socio-affective and 3) metacognitive, respectively.

4.2.2.1 Lower Proficiency Respondents' Preference to Cognitive Strategies

As discussed above, the average percentage of preference to cognitive strategies is the highest among the three strategies with 80.3%. Under the cognitive strategies' items, there are four sub-strategies provided in the questionnaire survey as mentioned in Chapter Three: A) Inferencing, B) Elaboration, C) Imagery and D) Translation.

A) Inferencing- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.10 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the inferencing strategy. It is revealed that 97% and 94% of the respondents prefer to use the main idea and the words they understand to help them guess the unfamiliar language items.

Table 4.10: Inferencing-Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
1	I use the main idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't know.	97
2	I use the words I understand to help me guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	94

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the respondents:

L1: *"...my vocabulary is not that enough, so I can only use the words that I know to help me guess the meaning of the text...and also when the lecturer raise his voice, I know I should focus..."*

L3: *"...after recording the lecture, I will listen to it again and again and try to understand each word she say and find out the main idea of the text, sometimes I really cannot get the word, so I just use the...main idea to guess..."*

L5: *"I can only understand some parts of the lecture, for example, some key words at the beginning, in the middle and at the end, so I guess the meaning by put them together...I know I should focus on the main idea of the lecture, but if there are so many terminologies and unknown words, I can hardly get the main idea..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*use the words that I know*' are to indicate the 'linguistic inferencing' theme, i.e. 'using known words to guess the meaning of unknown words'.

Words like '*when the lecturer raise his voice, I know I should focus*' are to indicate the 'voice and paralinguistic inferencing' theme, i.e. 'using tone of voice to guess the meaning of unknown language items'.

Words like '*find out the main idea of the text*', '*use the main idea to guess*', '*some key words at the beginning, in the middle and at the end*' and '*guess the meaning by put them together*' are to indicate the 'between parts inferencing' theme, i.e. 'using information beyond the local sentential level to guess at meaning'.

Findings suggest that the lower proficiency respondents still believed that large vocabularies can help them comprehend the text better, having been aware that they should focus more on the main idea instead of each word. Words like '*I know I should focus on the main idea of the lecture*', '*try to understand each word she say*' and '*but if there are so many terminologies and unknown words, I can hardly get the main idea*' are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'the more knowing the vocabulary, the better comprehending the text'.

B) Elaboration- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.11 below shows the results of questionnaire survey on the inferencing strategy. It is noted that 94% of the respondents tended to use their own knowledge and experience to help them understand the topic and 76% of the respondents compared the new knowledge with their prior knowledge.

Table 4.11: Elaboration- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
3	I use my knowledge and personal experience to help me understand the topic.	94
9	As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I already know about the topic.	76

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the respondents:

L1: "*...during listening…<u>if I can understand it,</u> I will <u>link it with what I know</u>…*"

L4: "*when the class has something related to my degree courses, I have <u>my previous knowledge to help me understand the topics</u>...*"

L5: "*...I keep <u>ask myself questions how it sounds logic</u>...*"
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'link it with what I know'* and *'my previous knowledge to help me understand the topics'* are to indicate the 'academic elaboration' theme as 'referring to prior experience and knowledge gained in academic situations'.

Words like *'ask myself questions how it sounds logic'* are to indicate the 'questioning elaboration' theme as 'using a combination of questions to think about the logical possibilities'.

Nevertheless, the lower proficiency respondents showed a precondition when using the strategy, i.e. *'if I can understand it'; 'it'* refers to vocabulary.

C) Imagery- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.12 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the imagery strategy. It is revealed that 82% of the respondents will try to picture what the lecturers are saying while listening.

Table 4.12: Imagery- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
6	I try to picture the setting of the conversation to understand what the speakers are talking about.	82

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the respondents:

L1: *"...if the lecturer is talking about <u>something related with my experience</u>, I may <u>try to imagine in my head</u>..."*

L2: *"during listening, I <u>try to picture the words that I heard</u> from the lecturer to help me understand the meaning, but then I will <u>miss the next part</u>..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'try to imagine in my head'* and *'try to picture the words that I heard'* indicate the 'imagery' theme as 'using mental to represent information'. However, the use of this strategy is constrained by '*something related with my experience'*. Besides,ithas a certain side effect that can make the listeners '*miss the next part'* in the course of listening for they will spend some time in imagination while lecturers are starting the next topic.

D)Translation- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.13 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the translation strategy. It shows that 61% of the respondents would translate the speech in their heads while listening. And 58% of the respondents would focus on the meaning of each word in order to understand the whole text.

Table 4.13: Translation- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
19	While listening, I translate in my head.	61
20	I focus on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text.	58

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the respondents:

L3: *"…in the class, I will record the lecture…after the class, I will listen to it again and again…<u>try to understand each word she say</u>…"*

L5: *"…I know I should focus on the main idea of the lecture, but if there are so many terminologies and unknown words, I can hardly get the main idea, so I <u>need to translate the meaning of each word in my head</u>…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'try to understand each word she say'* and *'need to translate the meaning of each word in my head'* are to indicate the 'translation' theme as 'rendering ideas from one language to another in a relatively verbatim manner'.

Besides the above four cognitive strategies, the interview findings also revealed other cognitive strategies that lower proficiency respondents might prefer to use. They are 'summarization', 'transfer' and 'note-taking':

L2: *"…during the class, I will <u>take down some important notes or key words</u>, then I will <u>put them together to get the whole picture</u>…"*

L4: *"…I try to <u>read the related book in Chinese book</u>, and during the class, I can <u>relate the words to English</u>…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'put them together to get the whole picture'* are to suggest the 'summarization' theme, i.e. 'making a written summary of language in a listening task'.

Words like *'take down some important notes or key words'* are to suggest the 'note-taking' theme, i.e. 'writing down key words in short forms to assist listening task'.

Words like *'read the related book in Chinese book'* and *'relate the words to English'* are to suggest the 'transfer' theme, i.e. 'using knowledge of one language to facilitate listening in another'.

In short, lower proficiency respondents preferred to use both 'inferencing' and 'elaboration' strategies, followed by 'imagery', 'translation', 'summary', 'transfer' and 'note-taking'. Yet, the interview findings give rise to the fact that lower proficiency respondents would only use the listening comprehension strategies mentioned above if they can understand the meaning of the words.

The factors that caused them to do so will be analyzed and elaborated under the third research question.

4.2.2.2 Lower Proficiency Respondents' Preference to Socio-affective Strategies

As discussed above, the average percentage of preference to socio-affective strategies is the second among the three strategies with 76.8%. Under the items of socio-affective strategies, there are two sub-strategies provided in the questionnaire survey as mentioned in Chapter Three: A) Lower anxiety and B) Taking emotional temperature.

A) Lower anxiety- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.14 below shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the lower anxiety strategy. It shows that 88% of the respondents try to not feel nervous while listening in English. 76% of the respondents try to relax while listening and 64% of the respondents try to not worry so much if they could not understand something.

Table 4.14: Lower Anxiety- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
4	I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English.	88
11	While listening, I try to relax.	76
18	When I don't understand something, I try not to worry so much about it.	64

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the respondents:

L2: *"...I <u>told myself to relax</u> if there's so much information that I cannot understand…"*

L3: *"...sometimes <u>when I feel so stressful, I will stop listening</u> and <u>think of something else, something fun to cool myself down a bit</u>…and it works…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'told myself to relax', 'when I feel so stressful, I will stop listening'* and *'think of something else, something fun to cool myself down a bit'* are to indicate the 'lower anxiety' theme as 'reducing anxiety through the use of mental techniques'.

Note that L2 and L3 mentioned *'relax'* and *'cool myself down',* showing that when they feel stressed, they try to adjust their anxiety level.

B) Taking emotional temperature- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.15 shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the taking emotional temperature strategy. It is revealed that 79% of the respondents try to enjoy listening during the class.

Table 4.15: Taking Emotional Temperature- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
8	I always try to enjoy listening.	79

However, the interview failed to provide concurring findings with the above results, which means that the five lower proficiency respondents have not tried to enjoy listening during class.

Besides the 'lower anxiety' strategy, there is one more socio-affective strategy that lower proficiency respondents would prefer to use, i.e. 'cooperation':

L1: *"after listening, I will <u>ask my classmates</u> who knows about the requirements of the assignments and instructions…"*

L5: *"before the exam or quiz, I will <u>join a study group</u> to discuss what we learnt and what might be the questions for the exam…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'ask my classmates'* and *'join a study group'* represent the 'cooperation' theme, i.e. 'working together with someone else to solve a problem'. But they prefer to use this strategy only after listening to academic lectures instead of during the class, which is the main difference from the higher proficiency respondents' style.

In short, lower proficiency respondents preferred to use the 'lower anxiety' strategy and the 'cooperation' strategy after listening to academic lecturers.

The factors that caused them to do so will be analyzed and elaborated under the third research question.

4.2.2.3 Lower Proficiency Respondents' Preference to Metacognitive Strategies

As discussed above, the average percentage of preference to metacognitive strategy is the third among the three strategies with 75.7%. Under the items of the metacognitive strategy, there are three sub-strategies provided in the questionnaire survey as mentioned in Chapter Three: A) Planning, B) Monitoring and C) Evaluation.

A) Planning- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.16 shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the planning strategy. It shows that 85% of the respondents focus harder on the speech when they have trouble understanding; 79% of the respondents have a goal while listening; 73% of the respondents have a plan on how to listen before the listening task commences and 70% of the respondents think of similar texts before listening.

Table 4.16: Planning- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
5	I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	85
7	As I listen, I have a goal in my head.	79
14	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	73
17	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	70

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the respondents:

L1: *"before listening, I will <u>download the ppt</u> from spectrum and <u>check the vocabularies that I don't know</u> and <u>mark the part that I feel difficult to understand</u>..."*

L2: *"...although I <u>tried very hard to listen</u>, but after a while, I still cannot understand, so I will give up on listening to the rest part..."*

L4: *"...I try to read the related book in Chinese book, and <u>think about some similar lecture that I had in my degree time</u>..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*download the ppt*', '*check the vocabularies that I don't know*' and '*mark the part that I feel difficult to understand*' are to indicate the 'advance organization' theme as 'clarifying the objectives of a listening task'.

Words like '*tried very hard to listen*' represent the 'self-management' theme, i.e. 'understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish listening tasks and trying to adapt to it'.

Besides that, words like '*think about some similar lecture that I had in my degree time*' indicate the 'directed attention' theme, i.e. 'deciding in advance to attend in general to the listening task.'

The interview data revealed that even though the lower proficiency respondents tried to use the 'self-management' strategy, they still failed to stick to it during the process of listening.

B) Monitoring- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.17 shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the monitoring strategy. It shows that 73% of the respondents adjust their interpretation if they realize that their comprehension is incorrect while listening.

Table 4.17: Monitoring- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
15	As I listen, I adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.	73

However, the interview failed to provide the concurring findings with the above results, which means that during the course of listening, lower proficiency respondents seldom adjust their listening comprehension.

C) Evaluation- Lower proficiency respondents:

Table 4.18 shows the results of the questionnaire survey on the evaluation strategy. It shows that 76% of the respondents will check the outcomes of their listening during and after the listening process and 73% of the respondents evaluate listening to academic lecture as a challenge for them.

Table 4.18: Evaluation- Lower proficiency respondents

Rank No.	Item	Percentage (%)
10	As I listen, I occasionally ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	76
12	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.	76
13	After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	76
16	I feel that listening in English is a challenge for me.	73

The above results are further elaborated by the follow-up interviews with the respondents:

L1: *"It was quite difficult for me...at the end of listening, I will ask myself what did I learn and try to figure out a way to improve my listening to lectures..."*

L2: *"very difficult at beginning..."*

L3: *"I can hardly understand...I will check what I heard with my recording after the class..."*

L4: *"depends on the lecturer...during the class...I will check if my previous knowledge in Chinese book is consistent with the topic..."*

L5: *"at least very difficult for me..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*quite difficult*', '*very difficult at beginning*', '*hardly understand*' and '*at least very difficult for me*' indicate the theme as 'listening to academic lectures in English is a challenge'.

Words like '*ask myself what did I learn*', '*figure out a way to improve my listening to lectures*', '*check what I heard with my recording after the class*' and '*check if my previous knowledge in Chinese book is consistent with the topic*' indicate the 'evaluation' theme as 'checking the outcomes of one's listening comprehension against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy'.

In short, as for the metacognitive strategy, it appears that lower proficiency respondents preferred to use the 'planning' strategy, followed by 'evaluation' and 'monitoring'. Under the 'planning strategy', they tended to use the 'advance organization' strategy.

It is also important to note that the preference to socio-affective strategy and metacognitive strategy has little difference; however, the lower proficiency respondents tended to use the cognitive strategy in the course of listening.

The factors that caused them to do so will be analyzed and elaborated under the third research question.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: What factors or difficulties might influence their use of listening comprehension strategies?

4.2.3.1 Listening Problems and Difficulties

According to Flowerdew and Miller (1992), the three major problems that were encountered by EFL participants when they are listening to academic lectures in English are: A) speed of delivery, B) accent, C) new vocabulary and concept and D) difficulty in concentrating. The following analysis presents higher proficiency and lower proficiency respondents' interview findings in sequence.

A) Speed of delivery:

The speed of delivery will be a problem on the condition that the higher proficiency respondents could not understand a certain topic or when they just entered into the listening environment and are not ready to listen. It can be shown from the below extracts.

H1: *"the lecturer's speed in talking is a little bit fast, especially when I couldn't understand some certain topics…"*

H4: *"while listening to lecture, I think <u>at the very beginning I need to adapt to the speed</u> of the lecturer's talking, but after a while, like 10 minutes, I'll be fine…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*lecturer's speed in talking is a little bit fast*' and '*at the very beginning I need to adapt to the speed*' are to indicate the theme as 'to some certain aspects, the lecturer's speed of delivery is fast'.

On the other hand, the speed of delivery of the lecturers is a common problem for lower proficiency respondents, but not for the higher proficiency respondents. It can be shown from the below extracts.

L1:| *"<u>the lecturer is talking too fast</u>, I was thinking about the first topic and then suddenly, it jumped to another one…"*

L2: *"I think because of they talking so fast or <u>I couldn't catch the speed of their talking</u>…"*

L3: *"<u>I couldn't follow the teacher's talking, it was too fast</u>…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*the lecturer is talking too fast*', '*or I couldn't catch the speed of their talking*' and '*I couldn't follow the teacher's talking, it was too fast*' are to indicate the theme as 'the lecturer's speed of delivery is too fast that one cannot follow'.

B) Accent:

Both proficiency groups find the localized English accent hard to understand, but H1 respondents was saying that he can get used to it after one semester. It can be shown from the below extracts.

H1: *"the <u>accent</u>, at the beginning I <u>had a hard time in understanding the Malaysian English accent</u>, but after one semester, I can totally understand it…"*

H2: *"<u>some lecturers have a very strong accent</u>…"*

H3: *"at the very beginning, I <u>need to spend some time in thinking about what the words they are talking about</u>...because I get used to listen to American English accent when I study English in China..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*accent'*, '*had a hard time in understanding the Malaysian English accent'*, '*need to spend some time in thinking about what the words they are talking about* ' and '*some lecturers have a very strong accent'* are to indicate the theme as 'the lecturer's localized accent is one's difficulty in listening comprehension'.

L1: *"<u>some teachers' accents I cannot understand at all</u>..."*

L2: *"...even when I know the vocabulary, but <u>it doesn't sound like what I know</u>..."*

L3: *"<u>their accents make me feel troubled</u>..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*some teachers' accents I cannot understand at all'*, '*it doesn't sound like what I know'* and '*their accents make me feel troubled'* are to indicate the theme as 'the lecturer's accent is hard to be comprehended'.

C) New vocabulary and concept:

Higher proficiency respondents think that only particular concepts or terminologies may influence one's understanding while lower proficiency respondents have a general problem about the insufficiency of vocabularies. It can be shown from the below extracts.

H3: *"...if I <u>have no idea about the concepts and terminologies</u>, I feel it <u>quite influence my comprehension while listening</u>..."*

H4: *"some terminologies I have never heard before, so I need time to check, but after checking, maybe I missed some parts of the class…"*

(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*have no idea about the concepts and terminologies*', '*quite influence my comprehension while listening*', '*terminologies I have never heard before*' and '*after checking, maybe I missed some parts of the class*' are to suggest the theme as 'new terminology and concepts will influence one's listening comprehension'.

L1: *"…and also the vocabularies, I am not very good at it, not mention when the lecturer analyze some questions…"*

L2: *"…vocabulary is biggest problem, cuz' in my degree time, we study everything in Chinese…"*

L3: *"some words that the lecturer said I couldn't understand, so I need to stop and check if I know how to spell it…"*

L4: *"my vocabularies are very poor, so I find it very difficult to understand the lecturer…"*

L5: *"I think it is the vocabulary about some theories that will influence my understanding during the class…"*

(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, expressions like '*vocabularies*', '*not very good at it*', '*vocabulary is biggest problem*', '*some words that the lecturer said I couldn't understand*', '*my vocabularies are very poor*' and '*vocabulary about some theories*' are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'insufficient vocabularies and unfamiliar concepts will influence one's listening comprehension'.

D) Difficulty in concentrating:

Lower proficiency respondents revealed the fact that they can be easily distracted by external environment, whilst higher proficiency respondents only have internal factors that can cause them lack of concentration. It can be shown from the below extracts.

H2: *"some courses are quite boring that I can only fully focus half of the class, to be frank…"*

H3: *"especially when I failed to understand their analysis, I can easily lost my concentration…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*some courses are quite boring*', '*can only fully focus half of the class*', '*when I failed to understand their analysis*' and '*easily lost my concentration*' are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'difficult to concentrate when it gets bored and hard'.

L3: *"…I couldn't understand most of the class, so I guess I couldn't focus on the class…"*

L4: *"…It is really hard to focus on the two hours of lecturing with only three minutes break time in between…"*

L5: *"…I cannot be very focus during the class, sometimes I will be distracted by others…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, phrases like '*couldn't understand most of the class*', '*couldn't focus on the class*', '*really hard to focus on the two hours of lecturing*', '*cannot be very focus during the class*' and '*will be distracted by others*' are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'internal and external factors will make one lose concentration on the listening of the lecture'.

Besides the above four difficulties and problems, the interviews also revealed one more difficulty, i.e. mixed language:

L4: *"I found it very annoying when the lecturer use some other languages to describe something…it will make me stop and think what was that…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statement, words like 'use some other languages to describe something' indicate the theme as 'mixed language teaching environment will cause listeners difficulty in listening comprehension'.

4.2.3.2 Factors That Might Influence Their Use of Listening Comprehension Strategies

Goh (2000) explains possible factors that might influence L2 learners' use of listening comprehension strategies: A) L2 learners fail to use appropriate comprehension tactics, B) L2 learners are lack of appropriate schematic knowledge, C) L2 learners have insufficient prior knowledge and D) L2 learners have limited processing capacity in short-term memory.

A)Failure to use appropriate comprehension tactics:

H1: *"because I <u>didn't prepare well for the class</u>…"*

H2: *"sometimes I feel like I <u>didn't really push myself into listening</u>…"*

H3: *"I <u>have no time to evaluate my listening outcomes</u> because so many assignments, so I usually focus more on the assignment related issue, and I guess I missed a lot information…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*didn't prepare well for the class*', '*didn't really push myself into listening*' and '*have no time to evaluate my listening outcomes*' are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'lack of metacognitive strategy'.

L1: *"because my English is not that good, so I feel shy to ask teachers questions and also during discussion with classmates, I seldom talk..."*

L3: *"I think because I don't get used to the English listening environment, I don't know how to listen..."*

L4: *"most of the time I just sit and listen, I feel like I was trying hard to listen, but after the class, I know very few..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like *'feel shy to ask teachers questions'*, '*during discussion with classmates, I seldom talk*', *'I don't know how to listen*', *'just sit and listen'* and *'after the class, I know very few'* are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'lack of socio-affective strategy and awareness to use appropriate listening comprehension strategy'.

B)A lack of appropriate schematic knowledge:

H2: *"I understand that master study is beyond the foundation education in degree time, but I still find it difficult when I don't have a clear picture about the theories and schools, I feel like lack of systematic knowledge background..."*

H5: *"I try to understand the theories and models in education, but my knowledge are in pieces and not active, when the lecture mention them, only I can recall some..."*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, expressions like '*find it difficult when I don't have a clear picture about the theories and schools'*, *'feel like lack of systematic knowledge background'*, *'my knowledge are in pieces and not active'* and *'when the lecture*

mention them, only I can recall some' indicate the theme 'lack of a systematic

structured knowledge background'.

L2: *"I guess it's because what I learnt in China is different from here, so <u>my knowledge</u> <u>basis is not enough to help me comprehend the master lecturers</u>…"*

L4: *"sometimes I feel the <u>lecturer's power point is a mess</u>, it <u>make me difficult to form a</u> <u>clear picture about what he or she is trying to say</u>…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*my knowledge basis is not enough to help me*

comprehend the master lecturers', 'sometimes I feel the lecturer's power point is a

mess' and *'make me difficult to form a clear picture about what he or she is trying to*

say' are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'lack of a good foundation on the course and unclear

speech presentation during class makes one fail to formulate schematic knowledge'.

C)Insufficient prior knowledge:

H1: *"<u>definitely content knowledge is more important</u> than L2 proficiency, because if I don't know the meaning of the words but I do know what the content is about before, I can use what I have already known to guess its meaning; but <u>if I only know the words</u> <u>without having a previous understanding about the content, that will be difficult</u>…"*

H5: *"content knowledge…L2 proficiency also important when you are writing, but when listening, <u>if you don't know the prior knowledge about the topic, that can result in</u> <u>insufficient understanding towards a certain topic</u>…"*
(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, phrases like '*definitely content knowledge is more*

important', 'if I only know the words without having a previous understanding about

the content, that will be difficult' and *'if you don't know the prior knowledge about the*

topic, that can result in insufficient understanding towards a certain topic' are to

indicate the theme, i.e. 'insufficient content knowledge or prior background to the topic can cause trouble in listening comprehension strategy use'.

L1: *"...when I <u>read some materials about the course before the class</u>, I <u>feel better understanding</u>, but it's just a little..."*

L2: *"...when group discussion, <u>I feel know very little about the topic, I don't have any ideas at all, so I just keep quiet</u>..."*

(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statements, words like '*read some materials about the course before the class*', '*feel better understanding*' and '*I feel know very little about the topic, I don't have any ideas at all, so I just keep quiet*' are to indicate the theme, i.e. 'insufficient prior knowledge will lead to bad effects while listening'.

D)Limited processing capacity in short-term memory:

H5: *"I try to understand the theories and models in education, but <u>my knowledge are in pieces and not active, when the lecture mention them, only I can recall some</u>..."*

(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statement, words like '*my knowledge are in pieces and not active, when the lecture mention them, only I can recall some*' indicate the theme as 'limited processing capacity in short-term memory'.

L4: *"...I <u>couldn't remember the teacher's talking</u>, so I may record the lecture..."*

L5: *"...although I know some of the terminology that teacher has been said <u>although I know some of the terminology, I still forgot the meaning of them</u>..."*

(Note: 1. The data shown above are extracted as provided by the respondents, so it may not be grammatically correct; 2. The underlined phrases are the codes to the respective themes.)

In the above statement, words such as '*couldn't remember the teacher's talking*' and '*although I know some of the terminology before, I still forgot the meaning of them*' indicate the theme as 'low-level of limited processing capacity in short-term memory'.

It is important to note that the lower proficiency respondents have problems with low-level information processing in short-term memory.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the data analysis and research findings, which were intended to answer the three research questions. A comparative summary between higher proficiency respondents and lower proficiency respondents on their preference to listening comprehension strategies are hereby summarized as below:

Table 4.19: Differences between higher proficiency and lower proficiency respondents

Higher proficiency respondents	Lower proficiency respondents
Prefer to combine the three strategies	Prefer to use cognitive strategies
Prefer to use all kinds of socio-affective strategies	Insufficient use of socio-affective strategy
Prefer to use the evaluation strategy in metacognitive strategy	Prefer to use the planning strategy in metacognitive strategy
Prefer to use only four cognitive strategies, i.e. inferencing, elaboration, imagery and note-taking.	Prefer to use seven cognitive strategies, i.e. inferencing, elaboration, imagery, summarization, translation, transfer and note-taking.
Content knowledge is more important than L2 proficiency	L2 proficiency is more important than content knowledge
Only when the topic is difficult to understand or they are not ready to listen, speed of delivery shall be a part of difficulty when listening	No matter what, the lecturer's speed of delivery is too fast to follow
At the beginning, they need some time to adapt to the localized accent, but after a certain time, they can get used to it.	Even the sound of known words is different from what they know.
Only when they meet the new terminologies and concepts, they find it	Even for daily conversational words, they have trouble in listening.

difficult to understand.	
Difficult to concentrate because of the long hours of listening to lectures.	Difficult to concentrate because of not knowing what the lecturers are talking about.
Not being well-prepared before class is one of the factors that cause the less usage of metacognitive strategy.	Because of the limitation in L2 proficiency, they fail to read enough background knowledge before the class.
Have a problem with information processing capacity in short-term memory.	Have a problem with low-level information processing capacity in short-term memory.

Thus, it appears that this Chapter provided evidence to support the answers that could answer the research questions formulated for the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the discussion and conclusion of the study. By comparing the instruments used in the current study with those of previous studies, and discussing the key findings in this chapter, some light can be shed on how EFL postgraduate students use listening comprehension strategies while listening to academic lectures in English. Subsequently, it offers some recommendations and pedagogical applications for future studies in this area. Lastly, a summary of the current study is displayed.

5.1 Discussion and Conclusion

The present research has obtained a number of important key findings. They are in consistency with the research objectives. Accordingly, the findings focus on two axes: 1) higher proficiency respondents' and lower proficiency respondents' preference to the use of listening comprehension strategies and 2) difficulties and factors that might influence their use of listening comprehension strategies.

As mentioned in Chapters Two, the instruments were selected from Abdalhamid's (2012) listening comprehension strategies' questionnaire, Selamat and Sidhu's (2013) mix methods, Shang's (2008) classification of different proficiency level of listeners and Jeon's (2007) interview questions on listening comprehension strategies used in academic lectures. Hence, first of all, comparisons among the above mentioned studies and the current study were conducted.

In general, there are similarities and differences between the findings of Abdalhamid (2012) and the current study. Both studies find that different proficiency groups employed the three strategies. However, Abdalhamid's (2012) findings show no significance between the two groups in using metacognitive strategies. Instead, it is the current study that reveals that the higher proficiency group uses a wide range of metacognitive strategies before, during and after the listening process. Moreover, as for the lower proficiency group, only one metacognitive strategy, i.e. planning is used. The main reason is the fact that they usually give up when the listening process brakes down and they seldom review their lectures after class.

Next, both the current study and the one done by Selamat and Sidhu (2013) indicated that the two proficiency groups of listeners found difficulty in listening to academic lectures in English. It is highlighted in Selamat and Sidhu's (2013) study that only few students are aware of the use of listening comprehension strategies even when they did utilize them. This is due to the lack of instruction on listening comprehension strategies.

On the other hand, Shang's (2008) results are consistent with the current study in which the higher proficiency group combined various strategies in the process of listening to academic lectures. In addition, the lower proficiency group rely more on the memory strategy which may easily cause obstacles if the memory broke down.

In addition, Jeon's (2007) interview findings are also consistent with the current study in which both groups are aware of the important roles of content knowledge and L2 proficiency in comprehending academic lectures. Nevertheless, there are some other factors that may influence the listening, such as speech rate, interest in the topic, pronunciation, and anxiety.

Apart from that, the current study also finds that higher proficiency listeners conserve a good listening habit, such as listening to BBC or TED Talks and often practice listening skills by themselves. This finding is consistent with Jeon's (2007) study, but may not be suitable for answering the current research questions.

The following is a discussion of key findings:

Finding 1: Higher proficiency respondents prefer to combine the three strategies whereas lower proficiency respondents only prefer to use the cognitive strategy.

The finding concurs with Teng's (1998) and Shang's (2008) findings. According to them, higher proficiency listeners take advantage of all three strategies and use them more frequently than lower proficiency listeners. For lower proficiency listeners, O'Malley and Chamot (1989) find that they prefer to use the bottom-up strategy focusing on words, while higher proficiency listeners use both top-down and bottom-up at different stages of listening, i.e. perception, parsing and utilization (Anderson, 1983). In the perception phase, higher proficiency listeners try to focus on the listening task if they find difficulty in listening whilst lower proficiency listeners hardly use any self-management strategy. Whereas in the parsing phase, higher proficiency listeners focus on listening to main ideas and important points. Although the questionnaire survey showed that lower proficiency listeners also prefer to focus on main ideas, it is basically because they are aware that they should focus on the main idea but on the contrary, they can only focus on the meaning of each word during listening practice. As for in the phase of utilization, higher proficiency listeners use their prior knowledge to comprehend the lectures; however, lower proficiency listeners still believe that L2 proficiency is more important than content knowledge. Therefore, lower proficiency

respondents only prefer to use cognitive strategies in the process of listening, whereas higher proficiency respondents prefer to use different strategies when necessary.

Finding 2: Higher proficiency respondents prefer to use different kinds of socio-affective strategies, while lower proficiency respondents prefer not to.

Unlike Serri, Boroujeni and Hesabi's (2012) which they believe that social-affective strategies are seldom used by the learners in their study, it is a quite different result shown in the current study. Also, Oxford (1990) proves that less social or affective strategies are used by listeners. However, it is important to note that both the above two researches focus on university degree students; nevertheless, the current study is based on master's degree students whose learning strategy has a huge difference compared to first degree students. As one of the interview respondents suggests, postgraduate studies are based on previously acquired basic tertiary education, thus, it can be assumed that master's students in universities have a better command of a different learning strategy, especially pertaining to the listening comprehension strategy while attending academic lectures. There are numerous benefits for master's students to use socio-affective strategies while listening, for it can improve one's interaction and involvement with the academic atmosphere. This will hence raise interest and passion towards the academic subjects. On the other hand, the reason why lower proficiency respondents use less of the socio-affective strategy while listening to lectures is because they lack confidence in communicating with others and also lack in background knowledge related to the topics.

Finding 3: Vocabulary is considered one of the main factors that cause difficulty in listening for both proficiency groups. Higher proficiency listeners find it difficult when they meet unfamiliar terminologies or concepts; while lower proficiency listeners find it difficult even when listening to conversational vocabularies during classes.

This finding concurs with those of Flowerdew and Miller's (1992), Goh's (1999), Lynch's (2009) and Stepanoviene's (2012). Although they prove that unfamiliar vocabularies are considered as one of the main obstacles for listeners, they do not clearly tell the difference between different levels of difficulty where unfamiliar vocabularies were encountered. However, the current study stresses on the fact that for higher proficiency listeners, they see the vocabulary obstacle because of unfamiliar terminologies and concepts, whereas lower proficiency listeners see the vocabulary as obstacle because of conversational vocabularies as well as terminologies. This is proved by the fact that before listening, lower proficiency listeners try to prepare ahead by reading related content material, but that was not helpful because they cannot comprehend the subject matter and so they cannot use the planning strategy effectively. As for while listening, they focus on translating each word that the lecturer said; and after listening, they seldom join peer discussions or reflect on improvement. Hence, it can be concluded that the misuse of listening comprehension strategies are to an extent, caused by the lack of appropriate utilization of strategies. In other words, if the lower proficiency respondents transfer their attention on L2 proficiency to the use of listening comprehension strategies, its effect on academic listening can improve.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the current research findings, the following recommendations are made for further research and pedagogical practice in the area of academic listening comprehension strategies.

Further studies should be conducted by adding a pre-test for all participants in order to classify their listening proficiency;

Further studies should keep revising the questionnaire items in the sense of keeping them up-to-date and creating more effective selections for participants to choose from. This is very necessary for keeping updated with the latest trend of listening comprehension strategies;

Further studies could separate the participants into students who know English as a first/second language and students who know English as a foreign language to see the differences between them in terms of L2 proficiency, education background, etc.;

Further studies should be conducted in more Malaysian public universities with larger sample size for the questionnaire survey because more information could be found based on the larger sample size;

The questionnaire survey should be conducted right after a listening task, i.e. a lecture;

It is advisable that the university authorities design and conduct a specialized course for EFL first-year master's students in different kinds of strategies' training.

It is also advisable for students to familiarize themselves with the concept and types of strategies and their usages in order to utilize them during the process of listening;

It would be very beneficial for students if instructors could teach the theory and the use of listening comprehension strategies;

Students need to enhance their L2 proficiency by attending some intensive English proficiency courses and do enough preparation and discussion on the lecture topics.

Lecturers need to encourage group or pair work involving the combination of higher proficiency listeners and lower proficiency listeners involved in each group or pair.

Students need to develop their interests in the related courses and lectures. They can build familiarity with the accents and speed of delivery of local lecturers by interacting more with local students and lecturers, as well as increase involvements in local culture.

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Appendix A Listening Comprehension Strategies and their Definitions with Representative Examples

Metacognitive Strategies

1. Planning: Developing an awareness of what needs to be done to accomplish a listening task, developing an appropriate action plan and/or appropriate contingency plans to overcome difficulties that may interfere with successful completion of the task.

1a. Advance organization: Clarifying the objectives of an anticipated listening task and/or proposing strategies for handling it.

(I read over what we have to do. I try to think of questions the teacher is going to ask.)

1b. Directed attention: Deciding in advance to attend in general to the listening task and to ignore irrelevant distractors; maintaining attention while listening.

(I listen really hard. I pick out the words that are familiar so that... In combination with inferencina.)

Ic. Selective attention: Deciding to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that assist in understanding and/or task completion.

(I listen for key words. I establish the speakers in the conversation, their relationship by tone of voice, how they will address each other. This will limit the topics of discussion. In combination with planning, voice inferencina and elaboration.)

1d.Self-management: Understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish listening tasks and arranging for the presence of those conditions.

(I try to get in the frame of mind to understand French. I put everything aside and concentrate on what she is saying.)

2. Monitoring: Checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a listening task.

2a. Comprehension monitoring: Checking, verifying, or correcting one's understanding at the local level.

(I translate and see if it sounds right. In combination with translation. I just try to put everything together, understanding one thing leads to understanding another.)

2b. Double-check monitoring: Checking, verifying, or correcting one's understanding across the task or during the second time through the oral text.

(I might catch it at the end and then I'd go back. Sunny in Lhe morning, that's not making sense...(earlier) it sounded like a cold front, something doesn't make sense to me any more.)

3.Evaluation: Checking the outcome of one's listening comprehension against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.

4. Problem identification: Explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion.

(I'm not sure but "partager" and I'm not really sure what that means. I think that kind of has something to do with that. Music, there is something,... "des jeux", I don't know what that is.)

Cognitive Strategies

1. lnferencing: Using information within the text or conversational context to guess the meanings of unfamiliar language items associated with a listening task, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information.

1a. Linguistic inferencing: Using known words in an utterance to guess the meaning of unknown words.

(I use other words in the sentence. I try to think of it in context and guess.)

1b. Voice and paralinguistic inferencing: Using tone of voice and/or paralinguistics to guess the meaning of unknown words in an utterance.

(I listen to the way the words are said. I guess, using tone of voice as a clue.)

1c. Extralinguistic inferencing: Using background sounds and relationships between speakers in an oral text, material in the response sheet, or concrete situational referents to guess the meaning of unknown words.

(I guess on the basis of the kind of information the question asks for. I comprehend what the teacher chooses to write on the board to clarify what she is saying.)

1d. Between parts inferencing: Using information beyond the local sentential level

to guess at meaning.

(Because in the beginning she said "course," so maybe it was, maybe it was a race...may be a horse race...You pick out things you do know and in the whole situation piece it together so that you do know what it does mean.)

2. elaboration: Using prior knowledge from outside the text or conversational context and relating it to knowledge gained from the text or conversation in order to fill in missing information.)

2a. Personal elaboration: Referring to prior experience personally.

(I think there is some big picnic or a family gathering, sounds like fun, I don't know... You know...maybe they missed each other, because that happens to me lots we just miss accidentally and then you call up and say, "Well, what happened?")

2b. World elaboration: Using knowledge gained from experience in the world.

(Recognizing the names in sports helps you to know what sport they are talking about. I use the topic to determine the words that I will listen for. In combination with selective attention.)

2c. Academic elaboration: Using knowledge gained in academic situations.

(*I know that* from doing telephone conversations in class. I relate the word to a topic we've studied. I try to think of all my background in French.)

2d. Questioning elaboration: Using a combination of questions and world knowledge to brainstorm logical possibilities.

(Something about sixty-one, restaurant, sixty-one. Maybe it's the address. Urn, he said he started, probably fixing up his apartment, something about his apartment. Probably just moved in, urn, because they're fixing it up.)

2e. Creative elaboration: Making up a story line, or adopting a clever perspective.

(Sounded like introducing something, like it says here is something but I can't figure out what it is, it could be like...one of the athletes, like introducing some person or something I guess there is a trip to the Carnival in Quebec so maybe it is like something for them to enter a date, to write, or draw...)

3. Imagery: Using mental or actual pictures or visuals to represent information.

(I can picture the words in my mind. I make pictures in my mind for words I know, then I fill in

the picture that's missing in the sequence of pictures in my mind.)

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4. Summarization: Making a mental or written summary of language and information presented in a listening task.

(I remember the key points and run them through my head, "what happened here and what happened here" and get everything organized in order to answer the questions.)

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5. Translation: Rendering ideas from one language to another in a relatively verbatim manner.

(I translate. I'll say what she says in my head, but in English. A little voice inside me is translating.)

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6. Transfer: Using knowledge of one language (e.g. cognates) to facilitate listening in another.

(I try to relate the words to English. I use my knowledge of other languages: English to understand German and Portuguese - primary sound - to understand French.)

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7. Repetition: Repeating a chunk of language (a word or phrase) in the course of performing a listening task.

(I sound out the words. I say the word to myself.)

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8. Note-taking: Writing down key words and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form to assist performance of a listening task.

(I write down the word. When I write it down, it comes to my mind what it means.)

Social-affective Strategies

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1. Questioning for clarification: Asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the language and/or tasks; posing questions to the self.

(I'll ask the teacher. I'll ask for a repeat.)

---

2. Cooperation: Working together with someone other than an interlocutor to solve a problem, pool information, check a learning task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance.

(I ask someone who knows the word. I ask a friend. I ask the person next to me.)

3.**Lower anxiety**: Reducing anxiety through the use of mental techniques that make one feel more competent to perform a listening task.

(I think of something funny to calm me down. I take deep breaths.)

4. Self-encouragement: Providing personal motivation through positive self-talk and/or arranging rewards for oneself during a listening activity or upon its completion.

(I try to get what I can. O.K .. my hunch was right. I tell myself that everyone else is probably having some kind of problem as well.)

5. Taking emotional temperature: Becoming aware of, and getting in touch with one's emotions while listening, in order to avert negative ones and make the most of positive ones.

(I take it home and take it out on my family.

O.K. I'm getting mad 'cause I don't understand.)

Source: Vandergrift (1997, p.392-395)

Appendix B Listening Comprehension Strategies Questionnaire

Listening Comprehension Strategies Questionnaire

(Adapted from : Abdalhamid, 2012)

Part 1 Demographic Information Questionnaire

*(Please note, your information will **not** be sold or given to outside entities. It is for internal use only.)*

1. Name: _____

2. Gender: _____(**F** or **M**)

3. Nationality: _____

4. Age or Age group: _____

5. Faculty: _____

6. Semester: _____ (1, 2, 3...)

7. For you, English is your first, second or foreign language?

_____(First=mother tongue; Second=used in some important fields, such

as education, medical industry, etc.; Foreign=only for courses in school)

8. How many years have you been studying English in school? _____(6.5 years)

9. Have you practiced your English listening proficiency in your free time?_____

(Y or N)

If you have, please name one or two ways: _____

10.What kind of commercial English proficiency test have you taken recently?

_____(TOEFL or IELTS)

What is your score of the test? _____

What is your listening score of the test? _____**(IMPORTANT)**

Part 2 Listening Comprehension Strategies Questionnaire

The statements below describe some strategies for listening comprehension and how you feel about listening in the language you are learning. Do you agree with them? This is not a test, so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. By responding to these statements, you can help yourself and your teacher understand your progress in learning to listen. Please circle only ONE number for each statement.

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
1. I focus on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text.	1	2	3	4
2. I try to picture the setting of the conversation to understand what the speakers are talking about.	1	2	3	4
3. Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	1	2	3	4
4. I use the words I understand to help me guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	1	2	3	4
5. I use the main idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't know.	1	2	3	4
6. I use my knowledge and personal experience to help me understand the topic.	1	2	3	4
7. As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I already know about the topic.	1	2	3	4
8. Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	1	2	3	4
9. While listening, I translate in my head.	1	2	3	4

10. As I listen, I adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.   1   2   3   4

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
11. As I listen, I occasionally ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	1	2	3	4
12. While listening, I try to relax.	1	2	3	4
13. I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English.	1	2	3	4
14. As I listen, I have a goal in my head.	1	2	3	4
15. When I don't understand something, I try not to worry so much about it.	1	2	3	4
16. 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.	1	2	3	4
17. I always try to enjoy listening.	1	2	3	4
18. After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	1	2	3	4
19. I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	1	2	3	4
20. I feel that listening in English is a challenge for me.	1	2	3	4

Thank you for your cooperation. Have a nice day.

Appendix C Consent Form

Consent Form

I am a student at University of Malaya, and I am conducting interviews for my dissertation. I am studying listening comprehension strategies among first-year EFL Master students while they listening to university academic lectures.

During this study, you will be asked to answer 10 open-ended questions related to the research. This interview was designed to be approximately half an hour in length. However, please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you would rather not answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, please say so and we will stop the interview or move on to the next question, whichever you prefer.

All the information will be kept confidential. I will keep the data in a secure place. Only myself and the faculty supervisor mentioned above will have access to this information. Upon completion of this project, all data will be destroyed or stored in a secure location.

Participant's Agreement:

I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I understand the intent and purpose of this research. The researcher has reviewed the individual and social benefits and risks of this project with me. I am aware the data will be used in a Senior Project that will be publicly available at a particular journal. I have the right to review, comment on, and/or withdraw information prior to the Senior Project's submission. The

data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to my personal identity unless I specify otherwise. I understand if I say anything that I believe may incriminate myself, the interviewer will immediately rewind the tape and record over the potentially incriminating information. The interviewer will then ask me if I would like to continue the interview.

If I have any questions about this study, I am free to contact the researcher ([Wang Song, sophywang6185@gmail.com, 0173263890) or her supervisor ([Dr. Kuang Ching Hei, kuangch@um.edu.my, 0379673102]). I have been offered a copy of this consent form that I may keep for my own reference.

I have read the above form and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in today's interview.

_____   _____   _____

Participant's signature   Interviewer's signature   Date

Appendix D Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. How do you describe your understanding of the lecture? Was it difficult? Or easy?

2. What characteristics of the lecture made you describe your understanding in that way?

3. What do you think has influence on your comprehension while listening to the lecture?

4. Why do you think those factors have influence on your comprehension while listening to the lecture?

5. Between content knowledge and L2 listening proficiency, which one do you think more important to understand the lecture?

6. Why do you think content knowledge (or L2 listening proficiency) is more important?

7. Would you mind telling me how (you think) content knowledge and L2 proficiency help you understand academic lectures?

8. Would you mind telling me what procedure or strategies you use to help your understanding while listening to academic lectures?

9. Why do you think you use those procedures or strategies to help your understanding while listening to academic lectures?

10. Would you mind telling me what you usually do to understand lectures before, during, and after listening to academic lectures?

Appendix E Rank of Higher Proficiency Students' Preference to LCS

Rank No.	Item	Strategy	Percentage (%)
1	I use the words I understand to help me guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	Cognitive-Linguistic inferencing (CLI)	69
2	I use the main idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't know.	Cognitive-Between parts inferencing(CBPI)	69
3	I use my knowledge and personal experience to help me understand the topic.	Cognitive-personal elaboration (CPE)	69
4	I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English.	Socioaffective-lower anxiety (SLA)	63
5	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.	Metacognitive-Evaluation (ME)	63
6	As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I already know about the topic.	Cognitive-academic elaboration (CAE)	60
7	I always try to enjoy listening.	Socioaffective-taking emotional temperature(STET)	60
8	I try to picture the setting of the conversation to understand what the speakers are talking about.	Cognitive-Imagery (CI)	57
9	As I listen, I adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.	Metacognitive-comprehension monitoring (MCM)	57
10	I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	Metacognitive-self-management(MSM)	57
11	After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	Metacognitive-Evaluation (ME)	54
12	While listening, I try to relax.	Socioaffective-Lower anxiety (SLA)	51
13	As I listen, I have a goal in my head.	Metacognitive-advance	51

		organization (MAO)	
14	When I don't understand something, I try not to worry so much about it.	Socioaffective-lower anxiety (SLA)	51
15	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	Metacognitive-advance organization (MAO)	43
16	As I listen, I occasionally ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	Metacognitive-evaluation (ME)	43
17	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	Metacognitive-advance organization (MAO)	34
18	While listening, I translate in my head.	Cognitive-translation (CT)	26
19	I feel that listening in English is a challenge for me.	Metacognitive-Evaluation (ME)	23
20	I focus on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text.	Cognitive-translation (CT)	20

Appendix F Rank of Lower Proficiency Students' Preference to LCS

Rank No.	Item	Strategy	Percentage (%)
1	I use the main idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't know.	Cognitive-Between parts inferencing	97
2	I use the words I understand to help me guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	Cognitive-Linguistic inferencing	94
3	I use my knowledge and personal experience to help me understand the topic.	Cognitive-Personal elaboration	94
4	I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English.	Socioaffective-lower anxiety	88
5	I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	Metacognitive-self-management	85
6	I try to picture the setting of the conversation to understand what the speakers are talking about.	Cognitive-imagery	82
7	As I listen, I have a goal in my head.	Metacognitive-advance organization	79
8	I always try to enjoy listening.	Socioaffective-taking emotional temperature	79
9	As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I already know about the topic.	Cognitive-academic elaboration	76
10	As I listen, I occasionally ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	Metacognitive-evaluation	76
11	While listening, I try to relax.	Socioaffective-Lower anxiety	76
12	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.	Metacognitive-evaluation	76
13	After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	Metacognitive-evaluation	76
14	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am	Metacognitive-	73

	going to listen.	advance organization	
15	As I listen, I adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.	Metacognitive-comprehension monitoring	73
16	I feel that listening in English is a challenge for me.	Metacognitive-evaluation	73
17	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	Metacognitive-advance organization	70
18	When I don't understand something, I try not to worry so much about it.	Socioaffective-lower anxiety	64
19	While listening, I translate in my head.	Cognitive-Translation	61
20	I focus on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text.	Cognitive-translation	58