



## **My Friend TED:**

Implementing Effective Listening Strategies into Academic Listening  
Using TED Talks

**Author's Name: Naheen Madarbakus Ring**  
**Sheffield Hallam University**

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Implementing Effective Listening  
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## **My Friend TED: Implementing Effective Listening Strategies Into Academic Listening Using TED Talks**

### **Abstract**

The research project uses TED Talks as a principle listening text to investigate if listening strategies can be implemented successfully into academic listening. Additionally, research also determines differences in listening attitudes and approaches employed by students.

Literature presents listening as passive and undervalued in EFL teaching, advocating that educators should be equipped more appropriately to teach listening (Field 2008, Nation and Newton 2009). Additionally, students lack confidence and experience in listening, preferring their own learning styles (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). In EAP, no specific guidance is provided to students with limited listening experience, resulting in detrimental learning effects (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008).

Therefore, this study has investigated the effective employment of listening strategies using a 25-lesson TED Talk listening programme. Two EAP classes at a Korean university (consisting of 32 middle-class students aged 19-21 years) participated in the ten-week study, meeting three times a week for 200 minutes of *Academic English* instruction.

TED Talk texts were developed using accompanying worksheets, journals and checklists. Specific pre-chosen bottom-up (lexical) and top-down (semantic) learning methods implemented combinative meta-cognitive, cognitive and socio-affective learning strategies into three-stage lesson formats to measure improved strategy use (Field 2004, Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Additionally, pre-course and post-course questionnaires measured differences in student attitudes and approaches and subsequent focus groups elicited further insider accounts (Dornyei 2007).

The study found systematic pedagogy is tentatively possible using orchestration in three-stage lesson frameworks (Vandergrift and Goh 2012). TED Talk lessons have also successfully improved seven of the 12 listening approaches employed by increasing student confidence using transferable skills. EAP conventions were addressed using authentic, content-based monologues in academic listening, providing educators with cohesive cognitive, linguistic and cultural frameworks to use in teaching (Field 2008). Results also found students shifting from Confucian-influenced group thinking generalisations toward becoming more autonomous, self-efficacious collaborative learners.

However, the study also found several limitations. Students relied on isolated approaches rather than parallel processing, resulting in unnecessary learning demands. In texts, speed, accent and context were problematic, suggesting familiarity as integral to developing listening competence. Overexposure and grading demands have also produced negative attitudes toward listening, suggesting fewer components and strategies should be employed. Therefore, further training is needed to equip educators with formulaic approaches to listening while addressing learner difficulties to provide familiarity and motivation in learning environments.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### TED Talks: Implementing Effective Listening Strategies in EAP Programmes

This research project aims to establish whether TED Talks<sup>1</sup> can be employed to successfully implement listening strategies in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) syllabi. In this chapter, the current attitudes of listening in EFL are described, the research context is introduced and the motives and research aims are presented.

#### 1.1 Defining Listening

*“Listening is the Cinderella skill in second language learning”* observes Nunan (1999, p199) in his description of the receptive practice. Over 50% of language learning research is devoted to listening but the skill remains the least investigated of the four traditional skills<sup>2</sup> (Nation and Newton 2009). Viewed as passive due to the inherent difficulties in measuring progress (unlike speaking and writing) and manipulating input (unlike reading) (Lynch 2011, Field 2008), educators may feel unqualified to teach listening, often overwhelmed by the terminology or restricted by the lack of authentic texts available. Indeed, teachers undervalue listening and categorise the skill as lower priorities in syllabi, and may possess limited knowledge about how to teach listening competencies (Field 2008).

Students have indicated similar frustrations in being unable to evaluate or monitor progress sufficiently, preferring tangibility in their learning (Zhang 2012). Therefore, the behaviour and attitudes of language learners could inform researchers about the effects of listening instruction and should be considered when looking to achieve efficacious listening. Roe (2013) identifies widely acknowledged claims that listening ability improves from frequent aural exposure. Consequently, comprehensive syllabi (Field 2008, Vandergrift and Goh 2012, Takaesu 2013) could make skills more accessible to learners and teachable for educators by integrating specific listening strategies into longitudinal language learning.

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<sup>1</sup> TED Talks: TED is an acronym for “Technology, Education and Design” (Takaesu 2013)

<sup>2</sup> Four language skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (Richards and Schmidt 2010)

## 1.2 Listening Pedagogy

An understanding of listening as a learnable skill can be better achieved if the individual processes are considered:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Neurological</b>	<i>Listening consciously through hearing and attention</i>
<b>Linguistic</b>	<i>How words are grouped and recognised in spoken language</i>
<b>Semantic</b>	<i>Using memory and prior experiences to understand events</i>
<b>Pragmatic</b>	<i>Actively identifying relevance of input to own ideas and meaning.</i>
<b>Automatic</b>	<i>Listening via simulation (eg: computers)</i>

*Table 1.1: Listening Processes (Rost 2011).*

Listening processes are often viewed as complex and scientific by educators who may feel unsuitably trained to teach strategies effectively (Field 2011). These processes are also ignored by those teachers assuming language skills are automatically acquired; however, these perspectives may prove detrimental to learners who lack knowledge of fundamental strategies to improve (Nation and Newton 2009). Thus, to provide more effective approaches to listening instruction, Lynch (2009) argues that listening skills (automatic language acquisition by learners) need to be distinguished from listening strategies (controlled conscious methods employed to compensate for incomplete knowledge) to develop appropriate strategic training.

In response, Field (2004) recognises bottom-up and top-down directives. Bottom-up processes construct messages linguistically from the smallest unit of speech, individual sounds or phonemes to larger units of meaning (eg: phrases, clauses or sentences) (Nation and Newton 2009, Vandergrift 2010). These units are used to capture individual ideas and relationships needed to successfully communicate the message (Flowerdew and Miller 2005).

In top-down processes, listeners build a contextual framework from prior semantic knowledge and long-term memory by using larger interpretations of meaning to make sense of the individual units recognised from bottom-up processing (Vandergrift 2010).

With students unable to predict meaning from bottom-up processes alone, context and schema from previous frameworks (or experience) allow messages to be decoded successfully (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Thus, parallel processing combinations must be used simultaneously to achieve successful text comprehension by compensating for lacking strategies. Consequently, bottom-up and top-down processes could provide strategic training foundations in listening comprehension (Rost 2011, Wells-Jensen and Kim 2003, Field 2004, Vandergrift 1999).

Subsequently, these listening processes lead to three specific learning strategy distinctions:

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b><i>Cognitive</i></b>	<i>Manipulate incoming information directly to enhance learning</i>
<b><i>Meta-cognitive</i></b>	<i>Planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity</i>
<b><i>Socio-affective</i></b>	<i>Interacting with another person to assist learning</i>

*Table 1.2: Learning Strategies (Field 2008, p294)*

Adapted by numerous researchers over the last 30 years (Vandergrift and Goh 2012, Roe 2013), the original categorisation by O'Malley and Chamot (Field 2008) has created "a comprehensive taxonomy of (listening) strategies" (p79). Numerous studies have tested and observed how students make sense of what they hear (cognitive), plan, monitor and aid understanding (meta-cognitive) and interact with other people to understand (socio-affective) to achieve listening improvements using combinative approaches (Lynch 2009). Therefore, previous teaching limitations and student restrictions could be avoided by using these distinctive strategies to promote simpler and more direct learning environments in listening.

### 1.3 Listening in EFL

Listening research since the 1960s has applied these concepts to EFL<sup>3</sup>. Studies have investigated how to make listening more accessible for students by improving instruction, strategy use and assessment. Consequently, educators have been provided with a better understanding of how to approach listening using parallel bottom-up and top-down processes to implement more digestible cognitive and meta-cognitive practices in the classroom (Field 2004, 2008).

Studies have also modified traditional *pre/while/post* formats of listening, adding vocabulary and context specific tasks to authentic teaching materials (Field 1998).

Stage	Prior Listening Format	Current Listening Format
<b><i>Pre-listening</i></b>	- Pre-teach vocabulary for maximum understanding	- Establish context - Create motivation - Pre-teach critical vocabulary
<b><i>While-listening</i></b>	- Extensive: general context questions - Intensive: detailed comprehension questions	- Extensive: General Questions for context/attitude - Intensive: Pre-set questions/Check answers
<b><i>Post-listening</i></b>	- Teach any new vocabulary - Analyze language/grammar - Paused play (listen & repeat)	- Functional language in text - Infer meaning of words - Play: Look at transcript

Table 1.3: Early and Current Formats For Listening Lessons (Field 2008, p14-17)

Field's (2008) methodological comparison shows how listening developments over 25-years comprise of shorter *pre-listening* tasks and longer *while-listening* and *post-listening* activities. Identifying a listening competence shift from passive comprehension to discussion practices, learner consciousness is now heightened. Field (2008) explains how "*communication requires two-way traffic*" (p2), recognising that listening practices also need speaking interaction to reflect real-life listening. Thus, effective skills should include specific strategy, process and task-based approaches to equip students for interpretation, assembly and comprehension of messages through realistic, active practice (Field 2008).

<sup>3</sup> EFL = English as a Foreign Language (Richards and Schmidt 2010, p196)

## 1.4 Listening in EAP

Further observations indicate that listening remains central to EAP programmes using content-based lectures to present information, explain concepts and provide examples (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008). Lectures employ different listening lesson formats<sup>4</sup> from EFL structures, resulting in learning difficulties for students.

Academic Listening Lesson Format		
Pre-Listening	While-Listening	Post-Listening
- Read notes from previous lecture	- Listen once, make decisions of notes to make	- Recycle/link new ideas to previous ones independently

*Table 1.4: EAP Listening Structure (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008)*

In contrast to contemporary listening lessons, academic listening primarily focuses on the application of content to later assessments, a method consistent with the development, recycling and transferability of language skills in EAP (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008). Learners are not pre-taught vocabulary or pre-listening contexts and are expected to use any (ungraded) strategies to record information. Consequently, learners are pressured to develop top-down mental representations to integrate possibly limited previous knowledge and experience without guidance; a method detrimental to bottom-up taxonomies (Flowerdew and Peacock 2001). Thus, these unsupportive methods may result in L2<sup>5</sup> EAP learners lacking motivation and confidence to measure their listening progress or deal with possible difficulties.

However, given the salient nature of lecturing, listening remains an integral component of the EAP environment, and therefore strategies that educators can employ to develop student listening ability are required (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008). Consequently, sufficient and effective strategy training is needed to provide supportive listening approaches in academic programmes.

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<sup>4</sup> See Table 1.3: Field (2008)

<sup>5</sup> L1 = First Language and L2= Second Language to show learner distinctions (Richards and Schmidt 2010)

## 1.5 The Research Context

In Korea, English education is taken very seriously, having been incorporated into primary school curriculums since 1997 (Cho 2004). From the age of 3, children have bi-weekly lessons that encourage interaction between students and native teachers before middle school courses vigorously prepare learners for predominantly reading and grammar-based university entrance exams using visual and rote-learning techniques (Cho 2004, Robinson 2003). University curriculums vary widely, offering a plethora of optional general English courses and compulsory academic English credits; however, students remain highly motivated at this level, seeking to obtain English certificates for study abroad or enhance their employment prospects (Cho 2004).

However, systematic language differences between Korean and English hinder bottom-up approaches, affecting learner interpretations of word order, consonant and vowel sounds or cohesive link concepts (eg: relative clauses) (Cho 2004). Top-down processes also encounter cultural differences, with Korean literal closed question responses problematic in rhetorical, conditional and hypothetical sentences. Additionally, Confucian attitudes that promote inclusivity (so not to offend others) and hierarchical relationships potentially leading to passive, shy and defensive students in the Korean classroom (Cho 2004), emphasise systematic and cultural differences that should be considered when implementing the study.

Research was conducted with two freshmen *Academic English* classes at a Korean University over a 10-week period. The learners were aged between 19-21 years old, meeting three times a week for 200 minutes of instruction. The four skills were practised equally, incorporating 70% major-related content. Currently, the researcher's *Academic English* listening component includes using six TED Talk monologues for students to practice note-taking and summary skills for a final exam.

Listening receives a mixed reception in class: some students recognise the value of improving their listening repertoires while others remain uninvolved, perceiving tasks as difficult or daunting.

Additionally, the researcher's experience has highlighted how students lack appropriate strategic knowledge to approach listening systematically, often unable to complete tasks or feeling overwhelmed by the input due to limited specific guidance or

instructions. The key problems are finding particular digestible strategies that raise student awareness of employing and applying these methods effectively to improve listening by monitoring and/or evaluating progress.

### **1.6 The Purpose of the Listening Project.**

Nation and Newton (2009) claim listening is an equally important skill and thus, requires increased attention in establishing pertinent pedagogic methodologies. It is evident to the researcher from previous classes that students enjoy listening but do not possess the strategies to *learn* from it.

Consequently, the study developed listening materials using 25 TED Talks to offer an EAP pedagogic approach to evaluate increased listening strategy employment and potential student attitude improvements. The listening programme was used to determine its capacity in raising student's awareness of listening strategies and measure the effectiveness of these methods in a ten-week longitudinal study.

TED Talks were chosen as a suitable resource to develop a strategy-based listening syllabus for EAP learners. TED.com has been available online since 2007, consisting of native and non-native speakers delivering monologues primarily in English, but also including over 40 other languages (Takaesu 2013). Talks are divided into regular and TedEd (education) categories and offer corresponding transcripts for educators to use. Roe (2013) and Takaesu (2013) conclude how employing similar authentic input in their own listening research motivated students by providing accessible listening platforms using autonomous, process-based strategy practices. Thus, TED Talks replicate the real-time, authentic monologues required in creating goal-specific, interactive listening so learners can acquire, retain and retrieve information using realistic deep-end, parallel processing opportunities to develop their academic listening (Flowerdew and Peacock 2001).

The study aims to answer the following questions:

**a) How can listening strategies be implemented effectively with TED Talks in Academic English programmes?**

\* Use listening worksheets and journals to monitor and evaluate strategy employment.

\* Use checklists and worksheet activities to measure strategy usage.

\* Use journals to record meta-cognitive reflections and cognitive experiences (Field 2008).

***b) What student approaches and attitudes have changed toward listening throughout the Academic English course?***

\* Use Pre/Post-course questionnaires and focus groups to compare student profiles.

\* Use qualitative questionnaire, journal and semi-structured interview comments to provide supporting insights (strategy usage, listening and TED Talk attitudes) (Dornyei 2007).

\* Be informed of increased strategy use and listening motivations to determine the effectiveness of TED Talk listening programmes.

The project aims to provide students with methodical and interesting opportunities to develop individual and autonomous listening skills. Listening strategies aim to build confidence and offer guidance through interactive and conversational activities designed to raise awareness and encourage students to solve potential difficulties themselves (Flowerdew and Peacock 2001). TED Talk lessons integrate academic listening skills using real-time authentic monologues to reflect both EAP curriculum and realistic situations (Dudley-Evans and St John 2005, Field 1998). Therefore, it is hoped that the study will improve student attitudes toward listening and consequently, equip individuals with competent strategies that can be applied to real-life listening outside the classroom.

### **1.7 Outline of the Research Paper**

The paper is divided into six chapters. Chapter Two introduces a literature review of salient strategies practiced in academic listening, listening text considerations and current learner attitudes and motivation in listening. Chapter Three presents the research methodology, the development and piloting of listening materials, and the participants' consent. Chapter Four shows the data processing methods and results in tabular form followed by the discussion and analysis of the data in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Six summarises the findings, presents reflections on the entire project and discusses recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review: Historical and Current Perspectives in Teaching Listening**

Ridgway (2000) claims “*strategies have become a bit of a bandwagon in ELT over the past 20 years or so...spreading from language learning to communication*” (p179), describing the existing enormity and potentially futile components of the research area. However, prominent researchers have identified salient strategies to simplify the complex position that listening skills have assumed in language learning (Flowerdew and Miller 2005, Vandergrift 2010, Field 1998, 2004, 2008). This chapter focuses on how learning strategies have shaped listening, first presenting historical views to understand listening processes, followed by a discussion of the key debates surrounding current listening strategies. Links between strategies and materials are then presented, before considering student attitudes in listening.

### **2.1 Existing Listening Issues**

Traditionally, listening is categorised as a secondary receptive skill with learning priorities given to speaking and writing (Nunan 1999). However, research since the 1960s has highlighted the importance of listening in learning, realising complexities far beyond being a passive activity where listeners only receive information from speakers (Vandergrift 1999, Nation and Newton 2009). Additionally, researchers realised that L1 acquisition could no longer be assumed as language learners approach tasks differently in their L2 (Teng 2000). Field’s (1998) initial observations claim a rethinking toward listening strategy needs to examine how to teach the skill rather than practice it, thus also offering educators effective guidance (Field 2008). Earlier lesson formats have established pre/while/post listening stages<sup>6</sup> using information processing methods, later incorporating cognitive learning models to dominate current listening strategies and materials that explore interactive and autonomous learning; thus changing traditional passive perceptions of listening (Nation and Newton 2009).

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<sup>6</sup> See figure 1.3 (Field 2008)

### 2.1.1 Early Listening Observations: Information Processes

Listening importance as a precursor to speaking was identified in the 1980s, highlighting listening comprehension as a necessity before speaking in language learning (Nation and Newton 2009). Human Information Processing (HIP) observes learners attending to input by acquiring, retaining and retrieving information (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). The process involves coding received input by creating and holding exact images in the short-term memory before deciding if previous knowledge can be matched with existing schema frameworks and possibly committed to long-term memory banks within 15 seconds (Rost 2011). These processes are indicative of passive inference and prediction practices. However, Vandergrift (1999) argues potential comprehension difficulties arise from a cognitive overload in lexis and syntax limiting output resulting in learners unable to retrieve knowledge not yet retained. Consequently, HIP emphasises that attention to retrieval methods could result in effective listening output.

A later response, Maley's Information Processing (IP) model (Lynch 2009) formed the basis of Anderson's (Lynch 2009) cognitive<sup>7</sup> approach to realise initial retrieval efforts. Recognising IP uses perceptual processing to identify input, parsing to interpret messages at word and sentence level, and utilisation to respond with appropriate output, previous HIP notions were advanced by including non-verbal interpretations of auditory input, predicting specific parts of the message with previous knowledge and producing output with these interpretations (Lynch 2009). Both Anderson and Maley's work acknowledged the cognitive complexity of listening using one's existing knowledge and specific linguistic processes to comprehend effectively using previous interpretations. Consequently, parallel linguistic and semantic processing were pertinent inclusions to recognise how listeners construct meaning by linking input to prior knowledge and life experiences (Vandergrift and Goh 2012).

### 2.1.2 Bottom-up and Top-down Processes

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<sup>7</sup> See figure 1.2: Cognitive = "Operating directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning" (Field 2008 p294)

An understanding of these earlier processes led scholars to specific processing definitions (Nation and Newton 2009, Graham 2006, Field 2004). Bottom-up involves parsing (or dividing) speech using linguistic processing and top-down methods employ semantic processing (or one's previous knowledge), highlighting the necessity for parallel listening perspectives (Rost 2011, Lynch 2009). Consequently, Lynch (2009) recognises how *"identifying, interpreting and responding to information using multiple sources"* (p12) encourages parallel learning approaches that employ linguistic and communication strategies to assist comprehension in semantics (Field 1998, 2008, Nation and Newton 2009).

### **2.1.3 Bottom-up and Top-down Criticism**

Although parallel processing is viewed as more effective, reliance on one process is problematic. Beginners tend to rely on bottom-up processes while advanced learners (having mastered phonology and syntax) favour top-down skills development (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Thus, these isolated approaches mean bottom-up lexical dominance maximises memory capacities and restricts top-down contextual interpretations.

Swain's (Nation and Newton 2009) investigation proves these criticisms further, finding students compartmentalising strategic training using individual linguistic or semantic sub-skill components rather than developing parallel skill competence. Swain's study shows the demerits of neglecting bottom-up approaches; her 1970s and 1980s French/English Canadian immersion programme study focusing on top-down comprehension priorities resulting in bottom-up grammatical inaccuracies when speaking. Therefore, pedagogical approaches should prevent such disparities, suggesting an appropriate parallel processing balance of skill development using top-down and bottom-up strategies as fundamental in listening (Nation and Newton 2009, Field 2004).

#### **2.1.4 Summary**

This section considered pertinent historical perspectives and existing issues in teaching listening. Early listening observations showed how students interpret input in information processes and employ parallel top-down and bottom-up methods to achieve comprehension and output. However, debates reveal how one process may dominate another as learners compartmentalise sub-skills rather than develop entire listening skill repertoires. The next section addresses this issue, presenting two salient listening strategy developments as potential pedagogic framework.

## **2.2 Current Listening Perspectives:**

Defined as “a specific mental procedure for gathering, processing, associating, categorizing, rehearsing and retrieving information or patterned skills” (Flowerdew and Miller 2005, p62), debate revolves around whether learning strategies are useful in listening (Selamat and Sidhu 2013, Graham 2006, Nation and Newton 2009). O’Malley et al (Flowerdew and Miller 2005) purport 638 strategies exists, signifying the enormous difficulty in developing effective listening pedagogy. However, pertinent scholars have presented both directives and debates in teaching listening (Vandergrift and Goh 2012, Field 2008, Flowerdew and Miller 2005).

### **2.2.1 Listening in EAP**

EAP literature proposes listening frequency and strategy selection as important inclusions. Top-down and bottom-up approaches employed in authentic monologue texts should provide varied strategic training using modelling, group scaffolding and individual self-study methods (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008, Dudley-Evans and St John 2005).

### **2.2.2 Listening Learning Strategies**

Thirty years of research has developed a catalogue of learning strategies in language listening derived from several sources (O’Malley and Chamont 1990, Lynch 2009, Vandergrift and Goh 2012). More specifically, Oxford’s (Flowerdew and Miller 2005) Strategy Invention for Language Learners (SILL) establishes a 34-item strategy-based approach using three conventional distinctions: meta-cognitive (to plan, monitor and evaluate learning), cognitive (processes used to acquire language) and socio-affective (involve others to enhance learning) strategies<sup>8</sup>:

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 1: Learning Strategies Table

### **2.2.2.1 Meta-Cognitive Strategies**

Meta-cognition controls planning, monitoring and evaluating approaches, supporting learners in training to cope with listening demands (Selamat and Sidhu 2013). Substantial work by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) has developed the Meta-cognitive Awareness Learner Questionnaire (MALQ<sup>9</sup>), which could diagnostically indicate then consciously manipulate existing strategies a student possesses to comprehend effectively.

### **2.2.2.2 Cognitive Strategies**

Cognitive strategies operate automatically, constructing meaning from input using previous knowledge, life experiences and various top-down and bottom-up processes (Vandergrift and Goh 2012, Field 2008). Listening tasks include predicting content (inferencing), identifying cues (note-taking) and interpreting paraphrases (summary) that could manipulate input by encouraging automatic tendencies to learn (Lebauer 2010a, Vandergrift 1999).

### **2.2.2.3 Socio-Affective Strategies**

Socio-Affective strategies define interactive listening. Small-group discussions could encourage negotiation or clarification by comparing ideas, vocabulary or experiences using suitable listening activities to potentially lower anxiety and increase motivation (Lynch 2009, Vandergrift 1999, Lebauer 2010a).

### **2.2.2.4 A Pedagogic Approach**

Consequently, combinative meta-cognitive, cognitive and socio-affective approaches could equip learners with listening methods to understand syntax, lexis and reduced input (Field 2008, Graham 2006). Learners could be trained in using cognitive (to execute an action) and meta-cognitive tools (to *plan* to execute an action) to understand listening texts and use socio-affective practices to internally motivate or interact with others (Field 2008, Lynch 2009).

Flowerdew and Miller (2005) suggest combinative approaches successfully maximises strategy awareness:

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 2: MALQ Questionnaire

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
1	<i>Introduce topic using discussion question</i>	<i>Advanced Organisation (MC)</i>
2	<i>Inform video will be played once. Learners should listen for general ideas and relax to enjoy the clip.</i>	<i>Directed Attention (MC) Lowering Anxiety (SA)</i>
3	<i>Feedback discussion of main themes and topic ideas. Video played a second time for details.</i>	<i>Inference Between Parts (C) Selective Attention (MC)</i>
4	<i>Groups summarize main points from clip</i>	<i>Cooperation (SA) Performance Evaluation (MC) Personal/Academic/World Elaboration (C)</i>
5	<i>Listen again for note-taking practice</i>	<i>Note-taking (C) Academic/World Elaboration (C)</i>
6	<i>Pair practice giving oral summary from notes</i>	<i>Summarisation (C) Personal Evaluation (MC)</i>

Table 2.1: A Pedagogic Approach (Flowerdew and Miller 2005, p81)

C=Cognitive MC=Meta-Cognitive SA=Socio-Affective

Additionally, scholars observe how applying lesson-stage divisions could support learners further:

<b>Lesson Stage</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Pre-Listening</b>	<i>1. Link prior experience to text (using Language, Ideas, Skills, Text-Type)</i>	Pre-teach vocabulary, establish context and increase motivation.
<b>While-Listening</b>	<i>2. Guidance through text</i>	Pre-set questions, check answers
<b>Post-Listening</b>	<i>3. Use Cooperative Learning Arrangements 4. Provide opportunities to achieve comprehension independently (eg: self-study)</i>	Reinforce functional language, infer vocabulary

Table 2.2: Supporting Listening (Nation and Newton 2009, p46 and Field 2008, p85)

Lessons could employ combinative cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective stages: *pre-listening* reducing anxiety and familiarising learners with listening contexts; *while-listening* encouraging conscious planning, monitoring and evaluation of listening texts; *post-listening* providing collaborative discussion or individual self-evaluative

opportunities (Field 2008). Thus, pedagogic frameworks could provide guidance for students using multiple strategies over three stages to internalise the expertise required to become competent listeners (Nation and Newton 2009).

### **2.2.3 Listening Strategy: Current Debates**

Numerous scholars have welcomed these frameworks, reporting increased strategy use improves listening performance (Zhang 2012, Chen 2005, Selamat and Sidhu 2013). Specifically, O'Malley and Chamont (Vandergrift 1999) and Goh (Flowerdew and Miller 2005) note how MALQ brings high reliability and validity when measuring L2 learner strategy use. However, scholars remain sceptical about effectively prioritising strategy-based listening tasks into categorised pedagogy, debating consciousness, learner disparities and learning styles as potential difficulties in teaching listening (Ridgway 2000, Lynch 2009).

#### **2.2.3.1 Consciousness**

Confusion revolves around whether listening strategies should be taught consciously (controlled use in meta-cognition) or unconsciously (automatic use in cognition) (Ridgway 2000). Automatic processing has indicated that learners listen unconsciously; however strategy use which is *consciously* taught contradicts automaticity by activating controlled processing attributes (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Ridgway (2000) argues conscious strategies are unrealistic and unbeneficial, depreciating real-time listening practices by students artificially stopping to think about content. Lynch (2009) describes "*teaching cognitive strategies such as guessing a waste of time*" (p82) as L2 listeners would lack processing directives in real-time listening. Thus, the most effective approach remains ambiguous.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) respond, suggesting the orchestration hypothesis "*includes an awareness of when and how to use specific strategies*" (p89). Orchestration heightens the student's *conscious* controlled processing to raise awareness of suitable automatic or *unconscious* cognitive and socio-affective strategy selections to listen competently. Thus, if successful, conscious behaviour may be essential in distributing automatic strategy skills as dictated by individual learner needs.

#### **2.2.3.2 L1 and L2 Disparities**

Another salient debate questions L1 and L2 disparities. It is often assumed students know how to listen (Flowerdew and Miller 2005) although Mendelsohn (Field 2008) claims L1 skills may not be automatically transferred into comprehensive L2 strategies. Rost (2011) explains how controlled interpretations for one learner may be automated actions for another, identifying fundamental differences in neurological or input/interaction experiences. Additionally, Flowerdew and Miller (2005) compare how L1 listeners perfect linguistic interference and knowledge compensatory skills from hours of passive listening input and L2 learners rely on controlled processing interactions, unable to equal the sophisticated schemata of native listeners. Thus, difficulties remain in how to monitor progress and address such disparities (Graham 2006, Park 1997).

Consequently, MALQ-adapted diagnostic tasks could provide a viable solution to establish strategic knowledge gaps before teaching relevant methods (Field, 2008, Nation and Newton 2009). By establishing the specific skills learners possess, educators could choose appropriate teaching strategies to address recognised listening deficiencies (Vandergrift 1999, Lynch 2009). Individual development checklists could evaluate listening performance by establishing the necessary compensatory approaches required to equip learners with effective learning strategies to resolve recognised listening problems (Field 2008).

However, concerns surround the diagnostic accuracy of MALQ. Lynch (2009) disputes only five correlations (Problem Solving, Planning/Evaluation, Mental Translation, Person Knowledge and Direct Attention) or 13% of the available listening strategy inventory is employed by MALQ; highlighting meta-cognitive dominance relegating cognitive and socio-affective factors to secondary skills. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) respond, emphasising meta-cognitive instruction benefits self-regulated learning, listening proficiency and motivation. Consequently, adapted checklists should include combinative learning methods to alleviate meta-cognition dominance and equip learners appropriately (Teng 2000).

### **2.2.3.3 Learning Styles**

Kyriacou et al's *Description of Learner Styles* suggests learning variations encourage students to think, act and execute tasks differently (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Effective strategy selection for learners to address learning variations debates whether

educators should change teaching methods to suit learning styles, force students to use their chosen efficient styles or clash with previous dominant learning styles (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Field (2008) identifies potential motivational drawbacks in teaching students existing knowledge or unneeded strategies as Lynch (2009) argues the oversimplification of categorising methods pedagogically is not indicative of one's listening behaviour. Field (2008) advocates approaches should synthesise authentic listening situations while preparing learners more realistically for the outside world. Thus, learner training should implement a systematic and principled response, using in-class materials to scaffold individual strategies, and facilitate independent self-study so students can respond and utilise skills in their own time (Selamat and Sidhu 2013).

#### **2.2.4 Summary**

This section presented prominent listening frameworks, using cognitive, socio-affective and meta-cognitive strategies. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) advocate orchestration approaches using the diagnostic tool MALQ. Debates revolve around conscious meta-cognitive processes in automating L1 and L2 knowledge discrepancies and whether learner training attends to student needs appropriately. The next section presents how strategies can be implemented in teaching.

## **2.3 Critiquing Effective Listening Materials**

A controversial assumption is that vast exposure and extended practice leads to better listening skills, although studies have failed to conclusively demonstrate if strategy training works (Field 1998, 2008). Therefore, this section considers how strategy-based listening could be implemented into teaching materials effectively.

### **2.3.1 Listening Materials in EFL**

Textbook materials have been designed to integrate strategy training into listening practices from beginner to advanced levels (Flowerdew and Miller 1997, 2005). Often criticised for language limitations and out-of-date tendencies, educator's creating their own recordings is suggested to provide learners with sporadic, authentic and informal texts (Field 2008). However technology has increased online component accessibility, offering realistic unscripted, non-verbal and natural spoken language characteristics to practice listening effectively (Lynch 2009).

### **2.3.2 Listening Material Content**

Strategies can be divided into sub-skills recognising redundancy, paralinguistic features, rhetorical questions and cohesive discourse structuring as flexible lesson components (Field 1998, Flowerdew and Miller 1997). McGrath's eight guiding principles<sup>10</sup> (Field 2008) could benefit appropriate text selection determined by cultural, linguistic and cognitive demands. Tasks should not cognitively overload learners, instead employing combinative parallel processes to reproduce the message in post-listening product approaches. Thus, students could process lexical and predictive pre-listening stages before using additional visual clues to support authentic video materials in while-listening tasks then complete post-listening meaning-focused information transfer activities to retain message details successfully (Lynch 2009, Nation and Newton 2009). By promoting parallel notions, learner confidence could improve using familiarity and background knowledge in context to support linguistic, contextual and prosodic approaches to listening (Field 2008, Lynch 2011).

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 3: Authentic Guiding Principles

A systematic listening syllabi or appropriate sub-skills task list has yet to be devised. Thus, Field (1998) observes how educators lack adequate materials to incorporate effective practices into teaching claiming texts pay “lip service” (p113) to listening using sporadic task labelling (eg: listening for gist), focusing on product-based rather than process-based tasks. Additionally, limited resource availability for educators dictate whether sub-skills are compartmentalised as individual features or taught concurrently using wider frameworks (Field 2008). However, sub-skills remain a pertinent listening material inclusion by enhancing existing L1 competencies using a flexible taxonomy of compensatory strategies to address individual discrepancies and control the transfer of L1 skills into L2 strategies effectively (Field 1998).

### **2.3.3 Listening Log Journals**

Additionally, Roe (2013) recognises the meta-cognitive value of listening journals to monitor progress, reflect on processes, and encourage personal critical thinking responses. Takaesu (2013) and Teng’s (2000) studies employ journals, incorporating active-thinking approaches to better understand strategies. However, Roe (2013) observes how ambiguous links between listening topics and personal experiences in critical-thinking questions need clarification and although grade allocation could promote completion, providing individual feedback is potentially a time-consuming drawback to avoid journal repetition.

### **2.3.4 Listening Materials in EAP**

Listening remains a pertinent fixture of EAP curriculum, using lecture monologues to practice parallel processing, interpret language and understand context (Dudley-Evans and St John 2005). Authentic texts are integral to EAP syllabi, encapsulating the content-based and prosodic spoken features of listening, although learner training to develop and acquire principled comprehension and competence strategies using in-class and self-study materials is required (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008). Specifically, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) acknowledge salient skimming, scanning, inferencing and report writing study skills requiring more attention than individual listening strategies.

### **2.3.5 Listening Material Debates**

Listening resources include many components that identify salient debates surrounding product or process approaches, authenticity and visual materials.

#### **2.3.5.1 Product and Process Approaches**

Prioritising lessons with process or product tasks is a salient listening materials debate. Product approaches provide correct tangible answers in the outcomes of listening while Process approaches focus on *how* the interpreted and reconstructed message was achieved (Field 1998, 2008). Lesson formats have shifted from detailed product answers to focus on listening processes, promoting listening skills over language content comprehension (Field 1998). Although Roe's (2013) study employs primarily meta-cognitive process approaches so learners could reflect upon problem-solving methods, Teng (2000) and Field (1998) advocate how incorrect product answers can also provide significant process insights into learner weaknesses. Process-based strategies could teach students how to use listening effectively while product tasks analytically determine appropriate repair strategies needed by learners to improve listening, recognising the significance of both in learning (Field 2008).

#### **2.3.5.2 Authenticity**

Although authenticity debates suggest texts should replicate real-life language and circumstances by genuine speakers, current graded textbook materials are manipulated to feature grammatical patterns and functions assumed at the appropriate level (Field 2008). Pre-mediated scripted recordings include artificial prosody, lacking sufficient false starts, hesitations and filler devices to replicate real conversations (Field 2008). However, language manipulated recordings removed from original contexts immediately de-authenticating listening texts raise authentic integrity concerns alongside logistic and copyright consent complications (Nunan 1999, Ridgway 2000, Lynch 2009).

Contrastingly, Field (2008) argues graded textbook recordings successfully address specific learning levels unlike the ungraded language structures of real-world input. Producing news or drama scripts from authentic texts could prove beneficial if learners respond appropriately by employing suitable listening strategies (Lynch 2009, Field 2008, 1998). Furthermore, online listening selections could be manipulated using

McGrath's authentic principles<sup>11</sup> (Field 2008) to attend to cultural, linguistic and cognitive pedagogic demands and expose students to real-life input. However, as learners do not understand everything they hear and may irrespectively encounter listening difficulties, graded/ungraded materials remain an unresolved dispute (Field 2008, Ridgway 2000).

### **2.3.5.3 Auditory and Visual Materials**

Authentic content-based video materials are indicative of EAP listening higher level competence requirements (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008). Texts under 15-minutes long support learners using visuals, gestures and language cues to fully comprehend input (Roe 2013). Topic interest and background knowledge provides scaffolding for learners using cognitively demanding materials (Lynch 2009). However, non-native competence tends to be hindered by faster speech, lacking inferential processes to compensate for knowledge gaps (Field 2008). Flowerdew (1994) claims limited listening benefit derives from exaggerated slower speech, suggesting text selections that familiarise students with various English accents could develop competence effectively.

### **2.3.6 Summary**

This section has considered listening material development. Literature suggests difficulties in producing systematic syllabi and relevant sub-skills attending to learner disparities effectively but recognises authentic monologue texts and journals as salient tools in improving listening. Debates have criticised product and process task priorities, questioning the suitability of graded/ungraded tasks and the audio and visual benefits of authentic texts as effective listening materials. The next section discusses how learner attitudes potentially affect listening success.

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 3: Authentic Guiding Principles

## **2.4 Learners and Listening Attitudes**

Literature indicates combinative cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies as integral in-class and self-study components to address individual learner needs. However, despite focused teaching directives, learner attitudes, motivation and interactive approaches could affect listening improvements.

### **2.4.1 Learner Attitudes**

Language learners perceive listening as the most difficult of the four skills, often feeling passive or unmotivated as listeners to improve their strategic abilities (Graham 2006). Graham (2006) claims frequent listening practice emphasises failure rather than provide learners with a sense of control suggesting real-time practice insecurities could decrease confidence and motivation (Field 2004).

However, Teng (2000) and Roe (2013) observe shifts toward positive attitudes in their research, claiming strategy instruction improves awareness and promotes learning by attending to listening difficulties using active-thinking approaches. Indicative of EAP practices, interactive discussions could reduce learner anxiety and promote positive socio-affective approaches in listening (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008).

### **2.4.2 Cultural Attitudes**

Culturally, socio-affective strategies are potentially problematic for Korean learners. Confucian-influenced tendencies possibly generalise Asian learners as respectful, obedient and accepting of the teacher's knowledge (Cho 2004, Robinson 2003). Further studies concur East Asian students may be teacher-dependent, reticent or unwilling to participate in discussions or too shy to present their opinions (Cheng 2000). Confucian features also accustom tangible rote-learning, imitation and observation to learners who may be embarrassed to give incorrect answers or feel self-conscious working with peers (Cho 2004). Thus, Confucianism could create learning obstacles from potentially passive and withdrawn learner attitudes.

Cheng (2000) disputes these Asian learner generalisations, reporting findings from two studies showing students as active, positive participants. Visual cuing opportunities could develop audio learning using Korean learning tendencies beneficially (Robinson 2003). Additionally, topic relevance and global appropriateness should consider existing knowledge and individual interests to avoid comprehensibility issues (Field

2008). Therefore, relevant and visual listening initiatives could engage and involve students readily to challenge passive, Confucian-based views.

### **2.4.3 Learner Motivation**

Limited research has also identified low motivation in L2 learners, lacking self-confidence, self-efficacy and strategy knowledge (Takaesu 2013, Vandergrift and Goh 2012). Learner training could provide motivational opportunities by increasing strategy awareness to attend to learning demands while reducing student anxiety in different listening situations (Graham 2006, Field 2008). Heightened motivation could also result from skill and strategy development for specific task demands, using meta-cognitive forethought to incorporate previous knowledge and encourage student reflection on progress using self-monitoring and self-regulated autonomous learning (Field 2008, Nunan 1999).

### **2.4.4 Individual and Group Learning**

*“Learning to listen remains an individual affair”*, state Vandergrift and Goh (2012, p82). Independently, learners can use self-study methods to listen, re-create and interpret the meaning of messages by controlling the pace or re-checking potentially incomprehensible texts (Field 2008). However, individualism is criticised for learners working solitarily, and raises questions of potentially detrimental motivational effects, resulting from repeated listening, over-exposure or unreflective experiences of real-life listening (Field 2008).

Therefore, collaborative peer components could support listening training by alleviating individual pressures (Liao n.d). Supportive collaborations provide students with opportunities to clarify strategy methods and reinforce individual listening ideas (Field 2008). Similar to Confucian practices, group-oriented thinking could be promoted but without hierarchical teacher-led dictated ideas (Cho 2004). Cheng (2000) concurs learner-centred group work could be effective in supporting individual listening with the correct orientation and briefing. Thus, instruction ambiguity or resistance towards Western methods could be avoided by familiarising learners with socio-affective practices before collaborating.

### **2.4.5 Summary**

This section presented debates surrounding learners and their listening attitudes. Literature suggests students perceive the skill as passive, solitary and difficult, resulting in lower motivation and confidence. Specifically in Asia (the region of this study), students have been generalised as passive and reticent learners, often adhering to Confucian hierarchical views and using the teacher as knowledge (Cho 2004). However, studies by Cheng (2000) and Cho (2004) show shifts towards positive student attitudes, reporting successful socio-affective collaborative practices. Consequently, providing opportunities for students to control texts may encourage learner training by addressing listening difficulties and reducing anxiety to result in positive attitudes.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### An Approach to Implement Effective Listening Strategy in EAP Listening

This section describes the methods used to develop and employ listening strategies with EAP learners. First, the research context, participants and ethics are summarised. Next, the instruments used to pilot and implement the listening strategies are detailed while the tools developed to measure student attitudes and listening approaches are explained. Finally, the potential weaknesses of the methodology are discussed.

#### 3.1 Research Context

*“Listening is the least understood and the most difficult (skill) to investigate”*, claims Vandergrift (2010). Researchers have found listening to be an under-investigated skill that students perceive as complex and inaccessible (Flowerdew and Miller 2005, Rost 2011, Takaesu 2013). Limited listening studies in Asia suggest linguistic discrepancies contribute toward negative assumptions although learning style presumptions and cultural generalisations are changing toward positive attitudes in current EAP classrooms (Cho 2004, Lee and Oxford 2008, Wells-Jensen and Kim 2003, Cheng 2000, Teng 2000). Recent listening studies have focused on improving EAP methods to use note-taking in assessment (Chen 2005), effective strategies in classroom application (Liao n.d) and specific material design (Takaesu 2013) to shift learning from listening comprehension toward skill development. Therefore, this study proposes to implement listening strategies into lesson forms to effectively increase skill knowledge, and in turn, monitor potential improvements in learner attitudes and approaches toward listening.

#### 3.2 Research Sample Participants

The research took place at a private SKY Korean University<sup>12</sup> in Seoul, where students attended 200 minutes of *Academic English* instruction per week over two 16-week semesters. Two classes consisting of 32 EAP learners (11 males, 21 females), aged 19 to 21 years old, were Korean L1 speakers from middle-class backgrounds. Students had approximately 16-years of English language learning exposure, predominantly

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<sup>12</sup> SKY Universities refer to one of the top 3 ranked universities in South Korea.

practicing speaking and writing for CSAT and CAET examinations with limited focus on listening and reading skills (Holstein 2003).

The Public Health major students were allocated to CEFR level B1 classes after completing an initial placement test and one semester of *Academic English*. Chosen by convenience sampling, the learners were representative of the university's population and homogenous conventions (Dornyei 2007), sharing similar learning characteristics by studying in the Korean education system only.

### **3.3 Research Ethics**

A university-conducted study required permission from both the institution and the participants. First, an information letter and consent form<sup>13</sup> was produced for the *Academic English* programme co-ordinator, outlining the aims and directives of the study. Benefits to the students' academic performance and presenting a 'listening bank' employing strategic listening pedagogy to the academic faculty were detailed and read by the programme coordinator before an active consent document was signed, agreeing to the study being conducted on university premises.

Similar documents<sup>14</sup> also obtained active consent from the students, outlining the study's intended benefits to increase awareness and confidence in listening strategies. The learners' participatory commitments to use listening materials and guaranteed rights of withdrawal, anonymity, and access to the completed report were also stated. Information was presented in English and explained verbally using lesson material references so students could visualise the workload requirements, thus minimising potential deception. Clarification questions referring to course withdrawal and assignment anonymity were answered, and signed consent forms were returned immediately (although obtained the next lesson from three absent students).

Privacy and confidentiality has been observed throughout the study using specific code numbers (eg: *Student1 = C41*) to record anonymous qualitative comments (Dornyei and Taguchi 2010). In addition, audio-recorded focus groups were conducted after permission was obtained from all participants then transcribed using similar coding.

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 4 for Programme Coordinator letter and consent form

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 5 for student information letter and consent form

### 3.4 Research Approach

The study attempts to measure listening strategy employment and changes in student attitudes when using an academic TED Talks programme. Mixed method approaches were employed to provide greater insights into the physiological and cognitive interplay that listening requires using a triangulation of data (Vandergrift 2010). A TED Talks listening component was integrated into the regular *Academic English* course to monitor increased strategy use and awareness using journals and strategy checklists, with fortnightly feedback providing guidance during the 10-week longitudinal study (Dornyei 2007). Pre-course and post-course questionnaires established initial and final listening attitudes and further qualitative insights were elicited from semi-structured focus groups to obtain clarification of preliminary behavioural data. The method was adapted from recently conducted empirical studies (Takaesu 2013, Roe 2013, Zhang 2012, Teng 2000) investigating listening strategy improvements which suggest further research is crucial.

### 3.5 Research Methods

To evaluate the effective implementation of listening strategies into an *Academic English* course, the study has developed a TED Talks listening programme and used three main research components: listening materials, pre/post-course questionnaires and focus groups.

#### 3.5.1 Ted Talk Materials

Using a 25 TED Talks listening programme<sup>15</sup>, lesson materials<sup>16</sup> comprising of checklists, worksheets and journals were used to measure listening improvements.

The first development was adapting Vandergrift's (Flowerdew and Miller 2005) listening strategy statements by pre-choosing twenty-eight EAP appropriate skills to create a checklist<sup>17</sup>. Strategies were coded by category then numbered by skill (eg: SAS1) for easier identification during analysis before comprehensible, level-appropriate strategy descriptors were written for students. Next, ideas from Lebauer (2010a/b), Liao (n.d), Nation and Newton (2009), Chen (2005), Jones and Mort (2010) and Pennstate University (2005) were adapted to develop strategies and subsequent activities for five group "head" lessons:

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 7 for TED Talks list

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 7-7B for TED Talks lesson material samples

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 6A for study Checklist statements and Appendix 1 for original statements.

<b>Group</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strategies</b>	- Predictions - Cues - Vocabulary - General Ideas	- Transcripts - Specific Ideas - Micro-Language	- Abbreviations - Predictions - Voice Changes - Details	- Macro Language - Symbols - Voice - Transcript	- Predictions - Vocabulary - Symbols - Timelines -General/ Specific Ideas
<b>Skill Sheets</b>	<i>1.Key Words</i>	<i>2.Systems</i>	<i>3.Codes/ Symbols</i>	<i>4.Skill Review</i>	<i>5.Summary</i>

Table 3.1: Content of Group Lessons (A-E)<sup>18</sup>

Each head lesson provided in-class skills and worksheets to scaffold listening approaches. Students were familiarised with lesson stages by following step-by-step instruction sheets<sup>19</sup> explaining the learning procedures for the pre-chosen strategies (Liao n.d). Self-study workshops were then scheduled within a week of in-class head lessons for students to complete one of four similarly skilled listening log lessons to recycle and transfer previously taught strategies. In-line with EAP curriculum components (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008), TED Talk selections adapted McGrath's (Field 2008) guiding principles criteria<sup>20</sup>, to promote the authentic principles required when using short (under 15-minute) content-based monologues (Roe 2013).

### 3.5.2 Journals

Additionally, students completed five graded journals<sup>21</sup> corresponding to the self-study lessons completed over the 10-week period. Adapted from Takaesu's (2013) and Roe's (2013) own research models, summary, reaction, approach justifications and goal improvement prompts provided meta-cognitive opportunities before the next listening.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 6B (skill sheets) and Appendix 7-7B (lesson list & sample lessons)

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 7A for instruction sheet sample

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 3 for McGrath's Guiding Principles for choosing authentic materials (Field 2008)

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix 6C journal page

Journals helped promote active-thinking approaches for students to develop their listening strategy repertoires using information transfer activities to engage in the listening event while simultaneously reinforcing skills (Vandergrift 2010, Nation and Newton 2009). Students also monitored and evaluated their attitudes and approaches by providing continuous 'insider' accounts into listening experiences using natural, informal (self-study or homework) contexts rather than be affected by potential classroom anxieties (Field 2008, Dornyei 2007). Roe (2013) and Teng (2000) also reported higher motivation with journal writing conducted by students in their L1; however as entries were written in English due to the researcher's lack of Korean, grade allocation for journals intended to encourage completion. Consequently, journals could improve listening performance by increasing strategy awareness and reducing listening anxiety using reflective opportunities (Vandergrift 2010).

### **3.5.3 Questionnaire**

Pre-course and post-course questionnaires<sup>22</sup> compared initial and final attitudes among learners to establish the effectiveness of the TED Talks listening programme. Questionnaires were designed to collect primarily numerical behavioural and factual data using multiple-choice items to provide insightful and comparative student profiles by establishing individual learner attitudes, existing skill preferences and changes in strategies employed (Vandergrift 2010, Dornyei 2007). Opening questions collected general listening behaviour and factual skill trends using Likert rating scales to determine accurate summations of strategy usage by students (Dornyei and Taguchi 2010).

In addition, quantitative approaches and skill selections were supported by optional qualitative explanations to identify habits, perceptions and themes of interest (Takaesu 2013). Privacy and confidentiality was respected by removing participant details and gratitude was expressed in a final 'Thank you' greeting.

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<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 8A and Appendix 8B for Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2 templates

### 3.5.4 Focus Groups

Next, focus groups were conducted after pre-course and post-course questionnaire collection. Semi-structured discussions consisted of 5 students in two 25-minute sessions using 10 open-ended questions<sup>23</sup> to elicit specific experience descriptions and explain skill preferences raised from the initial data (Graham 2006, Dornyei 2007). Focus groups were audio recorded by Dictaphone after obtaining participant permission and later transcribed verbatim using coding to respect anonymity (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). Zhang's (2012) experiences conducting similar verbal report protocols successfully elicited valuable insights by students identifying problematic strategies requiring further attention, which this study hopes to emulate.

### 3.6 Piloting

Piloting was conducted with the two classes before implementing the TED Talks programme to discover:

- Do students understand the checklist statements?
- Can instructions and worksheets be employed successfully in lessons?
- Are questionnaire items appropriate for the research data?

First, checklist statements were piloted as a discussion task to determine student comprehension. Students were instructed to read and choose the statements that reflected their listening habits before discussing their answers informally in groups. Strategy codes were removed from the checklist to avoid potential ambiguity and the researcher answered student questions to clarify statements.

In the next lesson, TED Talk 16<sup>24</sup> was piloted with both classes. Students followed instructions and completed activity worksheets while supported by in-class modelling. The lesson was not recorded; however the researcher compiled observation notes referring to student attitudes, behaviour and materials during and after the session.

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 8D and 8E for Focus Group 1 and Focus Group 2 semi-structured interview questions

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 7-7B for full lesson sample (TED Talk Bart Knols – Group A head lesson sample)

Additionally, fellow educators were asked to complete listening questionnaires<sup>25</sup> to pilot item clarity. Teachers indicated their listening attitudes, current teaching methods and interest in trialling lessons in their own curriculums.

### 3.6.1 Piloting Results

Material piloting resulted in some pertinent observations including:

- Students want to discuss notes between first and second play
- Unclear which instruction was being completed
- Unfamiliar with journal component
- Lack time to complete post-activities in-class

Lesson stages were adapted to provide discussion opportunities between plays and a 'check' column was added to instruction sheets to indicate lesson stage completion. Optional ungraded head lesson journals were added to achieve student familiarity and a feedback<sup>26</sup> component to accompany graded self-study journals was developed to provide fortnightly written support throughout the 10-week course.

Checklist statements were understood by learners although technical vocabulary (eg: *pitch*) was explained to five students. Additionally, 'journal' and 'listening log' (self-study) components were unfamiliar to learners and require clear introduction before usage.

Listening stages were standardised, recommending twenty-minute periods for each *before/while/after* section to avoid pre-listening dominance and provide cohesive lesson frameworks for students to follow in self-study workshops.

Finally, questionnaires were circulated to 50 educators over a 10-day period but resulted in only six completed surveys. These limited responses have prompted the researcher to complete student questionnaires within lesson time and also eliminate teacher perspectives from this study due to lack of interest.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 8C for Teacher Questionnaire

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 6D Journal Feedback page

### 3.7 Research Procedure

The TED Talks programme was implemented as a listening component in the *Academic English* course over 10 weeks. Head lessons developed around pre-chosen group skills were modelled in-class before subsequent self-study computer room workshops were scheduled:

<b>Head Lesson</b>	<b>In-Class Instruction</b>	<b>Self-Study Workshop</b>	<b>Computer Room</b>
<b>A1</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> September	<b>A2-5</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> September
<b>B1</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>B2-5</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> November
<b>C1</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>C2-5</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> November
<b>D1</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>D2-5</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November*
<b>E1</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>E2-5</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> December
* 20 <sup>th</sup> November will be completed as homework			
Self-Study Journal Feedback was returned to learners by the following in-class instruction			

Table 3.2: Schedule of Group Lessons A-E<sup>27</sup>

#### 3.7.1 Questionnaire and Focus Group Procedures

Initial questionnaires were distributed before the first head lesson and final questionnaires were given after the last self-study workshop. Consequently, comparative data from questionnaire responses analysed listening behaviour and student attitudes to validate and support the study's conclusions.

Focus group questions<sup>28</sup> were developed from survey data to highlight pertinent findings further (Graham 2006). In-class semi-structured interviews were conducted in two 25-minute sessions with 5-student groupings to avoid fatigue and alleviate potential group anxiety (Dornyei 2007). Learners were directed to the discussion area arranged by the researcher at the rear of the classroom before the interview format and Dictaphone presence was explained. The researcher used a guide approach, prompting students as necessary from the questions left in view on the table during the interview (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). After the sessions, audio recordings were transcribed and coded, providing strategy use examples and listening opinions from students to further support initial questionnaire data responses.

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 6B (skill sheets) and Appendix 7-7B (lesson list & sample lessons)

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix 9A-9E for Qualitative Transcript sample

### **3.8 Limitations/Weaknesses of Research Methods Chosen**

The chosen methods have resulted in potential research limitations and weaknesses. Questionnaires may pose a reliability threat, raising concerns that those students inexperienced with listening strategies could leave questions unanswered (Brown and Rodgers 2002). Thus, blank items will be omitted from final data calculations to present accurate findings from completed responses only.

Extra workload difficulties and content repetition in frequent journaling have also raised concerns (Roe 2013). Therefore, self-study grade credit should alleviate workload demands by providing motivational prompts from individual journal feedback to encourage completion. Although feedback guidance may prove time-consuming for educators, it is hoped to counter repetition and motivation concerns (Field 2008).

Additionally, creating TED Talk materials has been a time-consuming project. Although initial methodical clarity could benefit the educator's institution using systematic lesson models (Field 1998), future research could develop a complete TED Talks academic listening programme.

Self-study workshops could also present potential cultural limitations. Korean-learning tendencies highlighting student embarrassment by incomprehension or failures may result in peer plagiarism or academic dishonesty relating to transcript use, times viewed and worksheet completion (Cho 2004). Additionally, students may find individual think-aloud protocols as problematic in contrast to Korean group-oriented thinking, resulting in insubstantial journal entries. Therefore, self-study workshops conducted during class time aim to reduce academic dishonesty, and additional discussions during head lessons intend to train learners to use effective critical thinking procedures (Lee and Oxford 2008, Vandergrift 2012).

Finally, focus groups have resulted in interviewer bias shaping student responses and de-contextualised audio interview recordings that lack situation dynamics (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). Videos could have provided increased prosodic and contextual analysis although cameras could raise potential anxiety for students and be distracting from the semi-structured interview objectives. Consequently, limited focus

group perspectives were collated as fewer students volunteered, indicating qualitative data from larger samples could result in more significant findings.

### **3.9 Summary**

This section has presented the study's research context and convenience sample participants. Ethics have discussed consent procedures and anonymity throughout the research procedure. Mixed method approaches used questionnaires, focus groups and self-study journals to employ the triangulation of data. Piloting has resulted in required adjustments to instruction sheets, lesson-stage times and journal feedback to encourage completion and increase student motivation. Finally, questionnaire, material and focus group limitations and solutions were discussed. The next section explains how the data results were processed, tabulated and presented.

## Chapter 4: Data Processing and Research Findings

### Processing Methods and Presentation Of Results

#### 4.1 Data Approaches and Research Findings

The study investigates how listening strategies can be implemented effectively using TED Talks in EAP syllabi. Questionnaires have provided the study with ample data to compare changing attitudes, strategy employment and skill repertoires among students. Additionally, qualitative comments examine student reasons for strategy selections and changing attitudes. The chapter first details the systematic approach employed to prepare the mixed methods results by triangulating quantitative questionnaire data into tabular form and qualitative coded questionnaire, journal and focus group transcripts. Secondly, the tables present listening strategy and material observations over the 10-week course, followed by a comparison of pre-course and post-course student approaches and attitudes to determine if listening improvements are evident.

##### 4.1.1 Quantitative Data:

##### Pre-course and Post-course Questionnaires and Checklist

Initial and final questionnaires<sup>29</sup> were processed to illustrate behavioural, attitudinal and factual learner perspectives (Dornyei 2007). Questionnaires achieved a 100% response rate from 32 students and were tallied using Microsoft Excel workbooks to code items using Likert Scale variables:

##### Extract A-Questionnaire

##### Item Responses

Answer	<i>Very Difficult Never Not Very Helpful</i>	<i>Difficult Rarely Not Helpful</i>	<i>Neither Sometimes Neither</i>	<i>Easy Usually Helpful</i>	<i>Very Easy Always Very Helpful</i>
Likert Scale	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 9A-9C for Coded Qualitative Responses sample.

Codebooks were created to represent ordinal data values, using higher numbers for positive item responses (Dornyei and Taguchi 2010). Incomplete responses from *Questionnaire 1* were excluded from final data totals to avoid ambiguity or assumption (Dornyei and Taguchi 2010). Thus, raw data tallied individual item responses by calculating the percentage of participants per question to provide totals from 100% respondents<sup>30</sup>.

Checklists employed similar tallying methods presenting *improved* or *needing improvement* responses by omitting incomplete answers to calculate data from 100% respondents. Questionnaire and checklist raw data were then converted into percentages, using colour-coded histogram and percentage tables to show significant student approach and attitude trends clearly (Brown and Rodgers 2002, Dornyei 2007).

#### 4.1.2 Qualitative Data:

##### Questionnaire, Journal Samples and Focus Group Transcripts

Qualitative questionnaire comments supported initial quantitative findings by providing participator insights (Dornyei 2007). Selecting optional responses using convenience sampling, questions, items and student codes categorised responses systematically<sup>31</sup>.

##### Extract B-Questionnaire2

##### Q1-How do you feel about listening in English?

Code/Item	Comments	Student
Enjoyable	I enjoy interpreting what I listen	C46
Useful	Because many of classes are delivered in English	C413

Informative probing responses from focus group transcriptions supported initial data further (Dornyei 2007). Each question item was divided using student codes and time stamps to locate original comments easily (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000).

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 9D and 9E for Respondent Records

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 9A and 9B for Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2 qualitative responses sample

### Extract C-Focus Group 2<sup>32</sup>

#### Q9-Any other comments about listening?

Question/Theme	Time	Comment	Student
9.Any other comments	B16.07-16.21	The talks are very helpful. In high school, it is very artificial.	D93
	B16.25-16.32	They listen to the same form. So this is a little different.	D99

Furthermore, similar tables categorised journal responses by strategy, using maximum variation sampling to capture listening experiences (Dornyei 2007). Informative active-thinking processes have presented valuable qualitative “*insider account*” opinions to contextualize initial strategy findings further (Vandergrift 2010, Dornyei 2007, p38).

### Extract D-Journal Transcriptions<sup>33</sup>

Code	Strategy	
CE1	<i>I think about how the topic relates to my personal experiences</i>	
Lesson	Comment	Student
14	Next time, I'll think about how the topic relates to my personal experiences. By connecting topic to experiences, it will be more exciting and fun	D92
9	I think it was a little helpful. If I don't know my friend who escaped North Korea, I cannot understand this story. But photos were helpful.	D910

#### **4.1.3 Data Processing Issues**

Data processing highlighted some pertinent research limitations. First, *Questionnaire 1* presented missing data collection, resulting from ambiguous wording (*easy/difficult*) and requests for one-item responses.

### Extract E:

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix 9A and 9B for Focus Group 1 and Focus Group 2 Responses

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal Responses

### Questionnaire1 Limitations

<p>Q3.What is <u>usually easy</u> to understand when listening in English? (Choose <u>at least one</u> answer) Please number your answers, using 1=Very Easy/2=Easy/3=Not Easy or Difficult</p>
<p>Q4.What is <u>usually difficult</u> to understand when listening in English? (Choose <u>at least one</u> answer) Please number your answers, using 1=Very Difficult/2=Difficult/3=Not Easy or Difficult</p>

Consequently, Q3 collected 25 responses and Q4 resulted in 18 replies, highlighting the necessity to avoid negative constructions and promote neutral question reliability (Dornyei 2007). Therefore, *Questionnaire 2* was modified.

### Extract F:

#### Questionnaire2 Modifications

<p>Q3.How would you rate the following when listening in English? (Please choose a number for <u>all</u> choices) Please number your answers, using 1=Very Difficult/2=Difficult/3=Not Easy or Difficult/4=Easy/5=Very Easy</p>
---

These modifications collected 32 complete responses from *Questionnaire 2*<sup>34</sup>. *Questionnaire 1* Q3 and Q4 answers were re-calculated to combine both totals and then divide by two to formulate 100% response rates. However, compulsory completion raises data reliability concerns, considering prestige questions could elicit exaggerated answers and affect interpretive validity rather than encourage true responses (Dornyei 2007, Brown and Rodgers 2002).

Finally, focus group transcriptions resulted in repetitive questionnaire responses (Dornyei 2007). Despite students being given probing questions before interviews, modifications should include more direct forms to elicit explicit insights.

#### 4.1.4 Summary

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<sup>34</sup> See Appendix 9D and 9E for Respondent Records

This section presented processing methods employed to prepare the research data. Quantitative data was processed on Microsoft Excel, creating Likert Scale response codebooks to calculate the listening attitudes and approaches employed by students. Raw data was converted into percentages to compare pre-course and post-course findings between items. Processed qualitative data also supported initial quantitative findings using questionnaire, journal and interview comments chosen by maximum variation sampling. Additionally, comments coded by question then item provided thematic and contextual support for quantitative findings. Thus, mixed method data triangulation has enhanced the study, concluding in the following findings.

## 4.2 Presentation of Results

This section presents the findings from the small scale study. First, results show the strategy employment and preferred material components by students. Secondly, pre-course and post-course comparisons present patterns in student approaches and listening attitudes throughout the longitudinal study.

### 4.2.1 Listening Strategies

Meta-cognitive, cognitive and socio-affective listening strategies were used in all 25 listening lessons. Additionally, eight pre-chosen *Group-Specific Skills* were rotated between the five lesson sets (eg: Group A), to train students in using these specific strategies<sup>35</sup>.

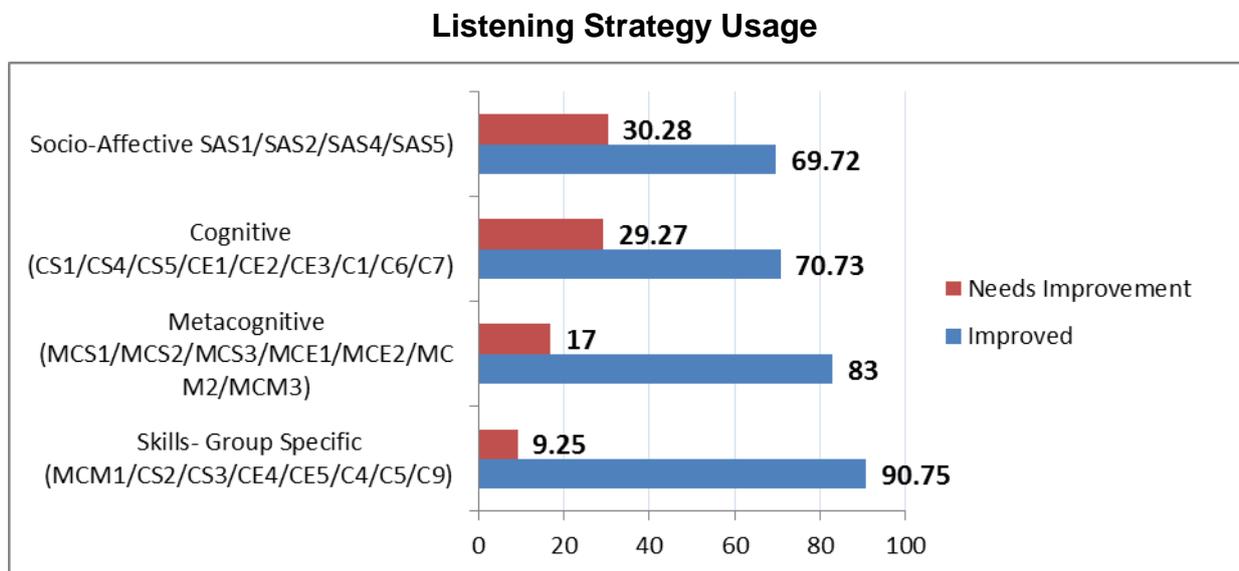


Figure 4.1: Checklist Listening Strategy Usage<sup>36</sup>

*Group-Specific Skills* were used by 90.75% students, suggesting specific learner training could increase strategy usage. C417<sup>37</sup> explains planning to listen using taught methods “*improve(s) my listening skill (by using) general listening then specific ideas*”, demonstrating how specific skill instruction could increase strategic knowledge.

Additionally, *meta-cognitive* practices, used by 83% of students, indicated potential dominance over *cognitive* (70.73%) and *socio-affective* (69.72%) skills. Replicating

<sup>35</sup> See Figure 3.1

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 10A for a breakdown of individual strategies

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q10)

Vandergrift and Goh's orchestration hypothesis (2012), results showed how the initial consciousness of strategies could be salient in automating familiar listening practices. C44<sup>38</sup> explains *"at first, worksheets were difficult to me because I wasn't accustomed to filling in them. However, now I know how to do them exactly so I managed to (do) them more easily"*.

However, students failed to employ parallel processes successfully<sup>39</sup>. Isolated approaches dominantly employed top-down meta-cognitive *Prediction* practices as *"making predictions was helpful for concentrate in the talk"* (D98)<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, contextual *Background Tasks* (91%), cognitive *Personal Experience* (65%) and *Guessing Unknown Words* (61%) presented heightened semantic knowledge usage, recognising how *"imagination before listening gives me the chance to think about the topic freely, so I could concentrate on the talk well"* (C412<sup>41</sup>). Solitary bottom-up tendencies also indicated limited lexical strategy employment with *Word Families* chosen by only 44% of students, suggesting possible inference problems with vocabulary. Therefore, dominant top-down contextual strategy use may be indicative of over-compensating for limited bottom-up knowledge, highlighting parallel processing discrepancies.

Socio-affective distinctions found individual *Journal Reflection* (73%) and *Personal Goals* (73%) more favoured than group *Questions* (65%) and *Discussion* (66%) activities. Possibly due to limited collaboration opportunities, D91<sup>42</sup> comments *"I have no chance to work with others because this is self-study workshop. But it was a nice experience to think for myself"* suggesting although individual practices encourage meta-cognitive reflection, collaborative learner-centred tasks are required.

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q7)

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 10A for a breakdown of individual strategies

<sup>40</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcript (MCS2)

<sup>41</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcript (MCS1)

<sup>42</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcript (SAS2)

## 4.2.2 Listening Materials

The following materials were rated positively by students at course completion:

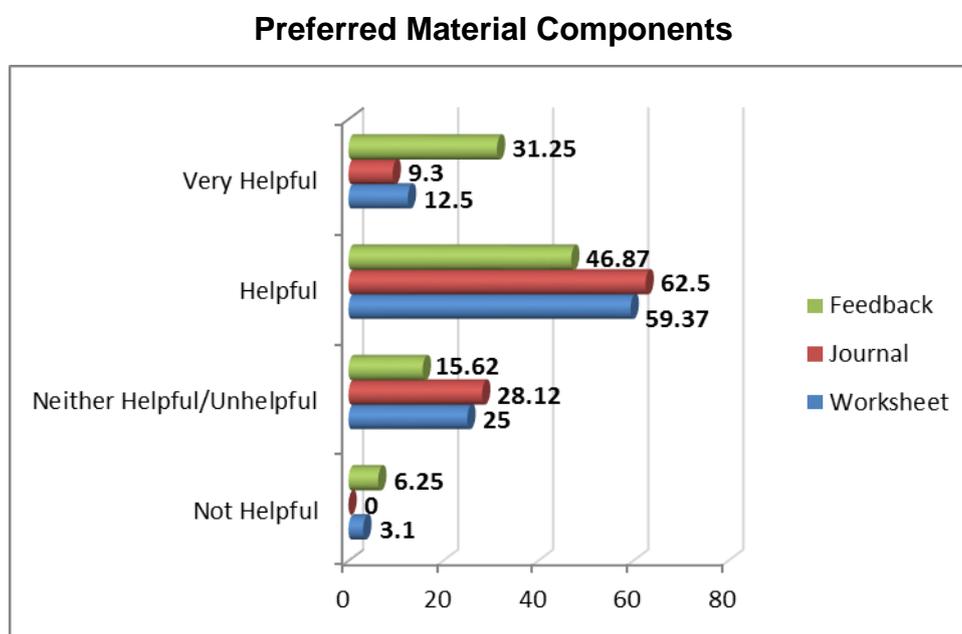


Figure 4.2.1: Preferred Material Components

Worksheets, journals and feedback were most favoured material components. Feedback was categorised as 75% *Helpful* and *Very Helpful* collectively “because I can adjust my listening habit” (C413)<sup>43</sup>, thus encouraging learner autonomy. Journals were rated 62.5% *Helpful* in improving organisation and listening comprehension (C419)<sup>44</sup>, indicating how meta-cognitive strategies can reflect upon strategy use appropriately. Finally, worksheets scored 59.37% *Helpful* as “practices generally help me to increase my listening level” (C48)<sup>45</sup>, suggesting systematic pedagogy could benefit competence. These product-based components were also chosen more readily than process-based approaches, suggesting tangible tasks may be favoured.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q4)

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q4)

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q7)

### Least Preferred Material Components

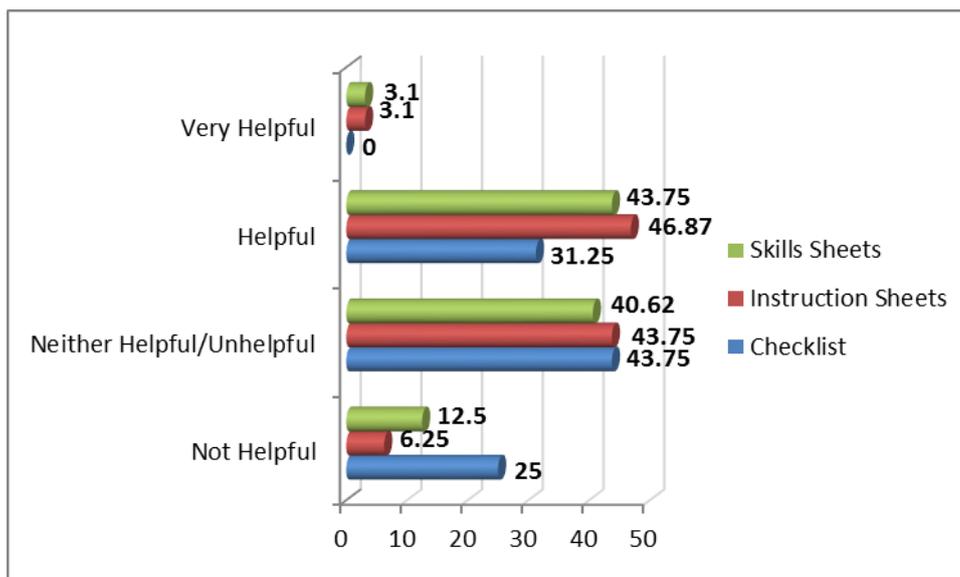


Figure 4.2.2: Least Preferred Material Components

Contrastingly, instruction and skills sheets were considered jointly *Helpful* and *Neither Helpful or Unhelpful* by approximately 40% respondents in each category. C415<sup>46</sup> states “it’s hard to follow or remember about listening skills when I listening to TED Talks”, suggesting several material components could contribute toward an overload in task demands (Vandergrift 1999). More saliently, checklists were perceived 43.75% *Neither Helpful or Unhelpful* and 25% *Not Helpful*, particularly as numerous statements were overwhelming to remember (D96<sup>47</sup>). Thus, transparency and reducing the strategies presented may be required to achieve successful listening application.

### 4.2.3 Strategy Approaches

Student improvements were recorded in seven of the twelve categories. *Usually* or *Always* strategy employment increased by 40% or more, reducing *Never* and *Rarely* usage to under 10%<sup>48</sup>.

*Write Notes, Write Summary* and *Use Transcript* presented salient improvement trends in *Always* and *Usually*, suggesting these skills consist of heightened transferability value (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008). *Visual Aids* were also applied effortlessly as “writing some notes while listening and predicted by some pictures...really helps me

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q4)

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 transcript (Q4)

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix 10D and 10E for full strategy results table

to understand well” (D93)<sup>49</sup>. Consequently, Confucian-influenced approaches possibly benefited learners by exploring previous learning styles using audio and visual codes (Flowerdew and Miller 2005, Robinson 2003).

### Listening Approaches Used

Skill	Usually	Always	Total	Difference
H. Visual Aids	33.3	16.6	49.9	+ 34.47
	<b>59.37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>84.37</b>	
K. Write Notes	20.8	16.6	37.4	+ 46.97
	<b>40.62</b>	<b>43.75</b>	<b>84.37</b>	
L. Write Summary	8.3	0	8.3	+ 32.32
	<b>28.12</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>40.62</b>	
M. Use Transcript	20.8	12.5	33.3	+ 13.57
	<b>34.37</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>46.87</b>	

Figure 4.3: Student

Listening Approaches

White cell = pre-course Blue cell = post-course

Employed

Similarly, *Make/Check Predictions* showed decreased employment in *Never* or *Rarely* but only limited *Sometimes* and *Usually* improvements. C413<sup>50</sup> reasons “*I don’t like the ‘ideas after listening’ because comparing ‘before’ and ‘after’ have no special effect...only ‘ideas before listening’ is effective for my journal*”. However, C412<sup>51</sup> suggests *Always* improvements may result from student familiarity with topics, commenting “*I learned about the contents...(after) I compared my prediction with the talk (to) make me ready!*”.

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcript (C7)

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcript (MCM2)

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcript (MCM2)

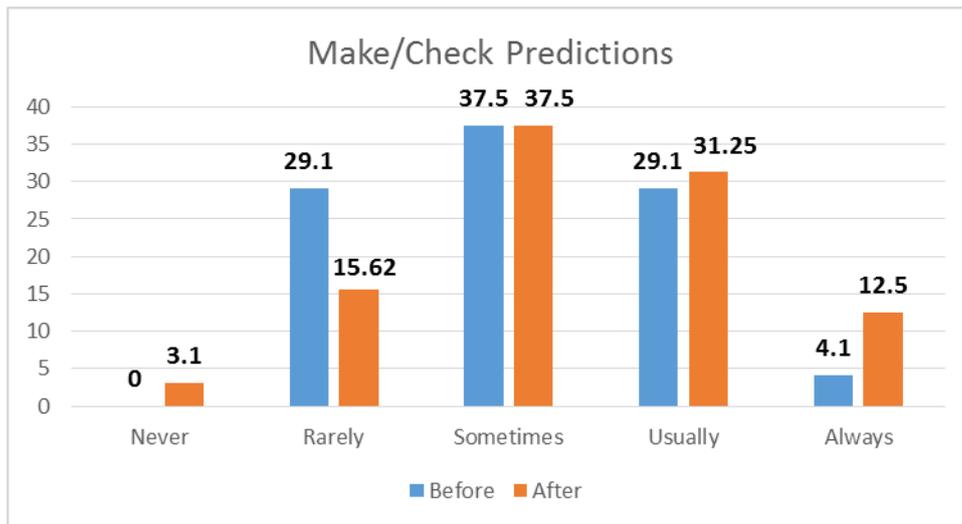


Figure 4.4: Student Employment: Make/Check Predictions

*Previous Experience* also presented limited improvements if topics were unfamiliar or irrelevant to student lifestyles<sup>52</sup>. Although similar *Sometimes* and *Usually* usage was recorded, increased *Always* employment was evident if topics related to the learner's existing contextual and semantic knowledge.

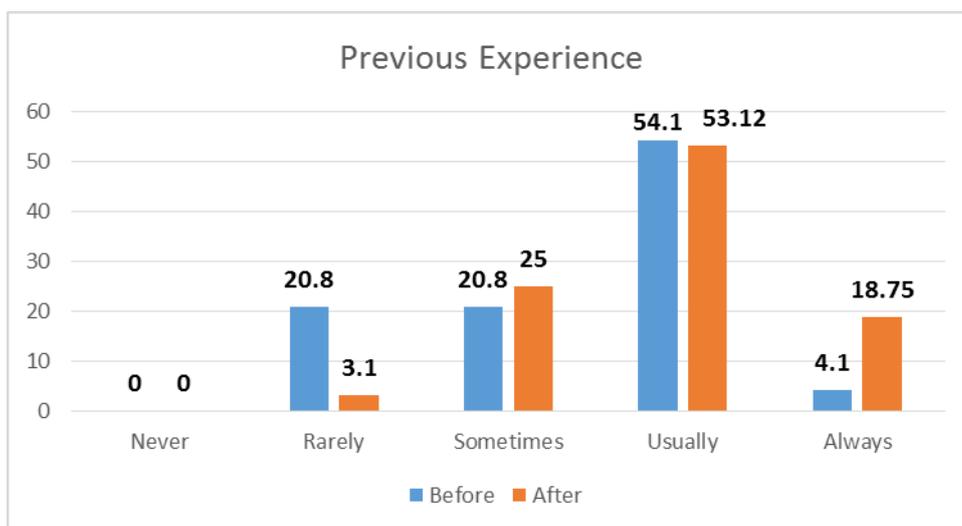


Figure 4.5: Student Employment: Previous Experience

<sup>52</sup> See Appendix 9B for Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q6, number 11)

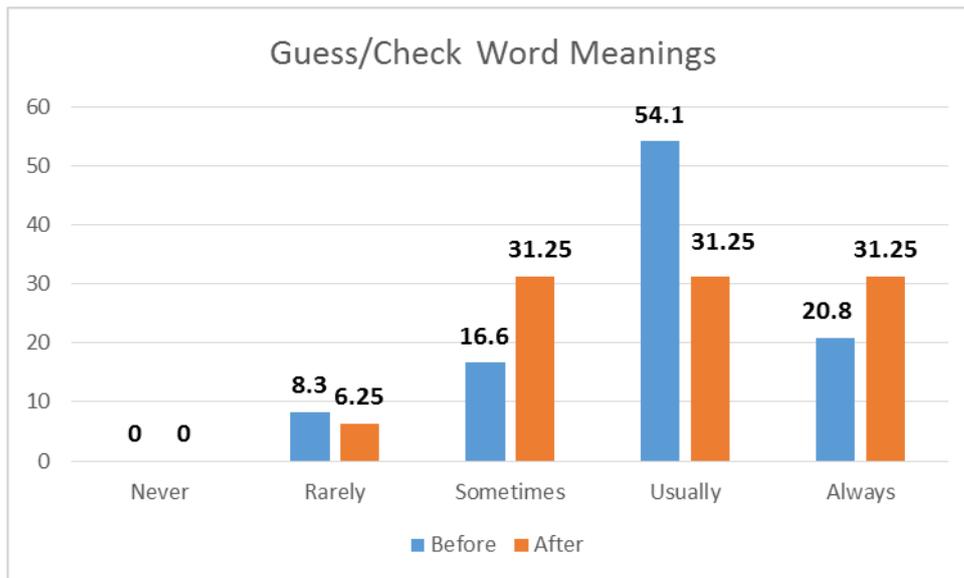


Figure 4.6: Student Employment: Guess/Check Word Meanings

*Guess/Check Word Meanings* also presented limited improvements using bottom-up tendencies. D98<sup>53</sup> comments “(If) vocabulary said too fast, I cannot understand what this is talking about. If I found the vocabulary in the listening, it’s very good to understand what he is talking about”, suggesting the strategy’s improved *Always* employment is perhaps dependent on existing lexical knowledge.

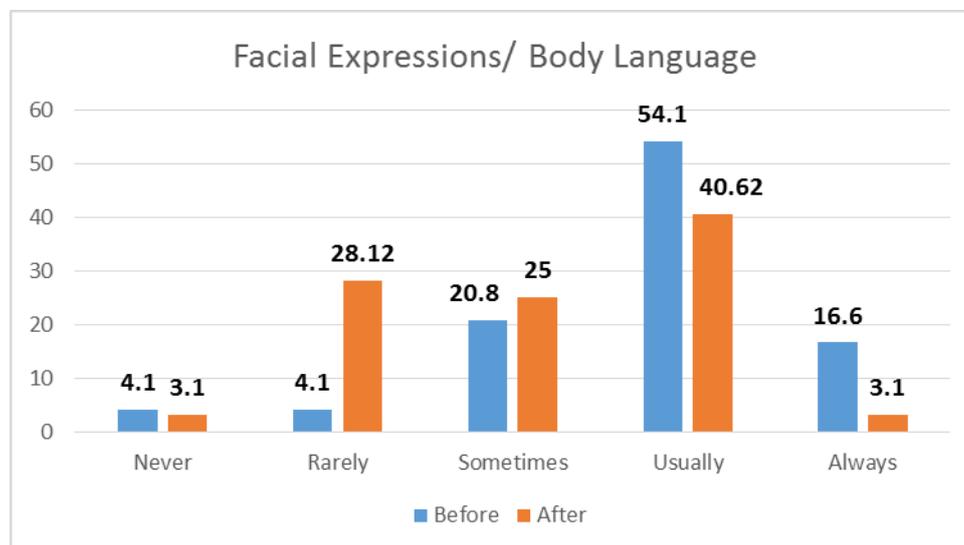


Figure 4.7: Student Employment: Body Language

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 Transcript (Q3)

Additionally, problematic *Accent/Speed* and *Body Language* findings show 28.12% students *Rarely* using each skill. *Body Language* difficulties denote potential cultural and familiarity limitations by students may need addressing (Robinson 2003). Furthermore, *Accent* data contradicts previous listening requests for various English speaker texts<sup>54</sup>, indicating familiarity may limit comprehension; although *Always* doubling from 4.1% to 9.3% shows some evidence of improvement (C422/C420)<sup>55</sup>.

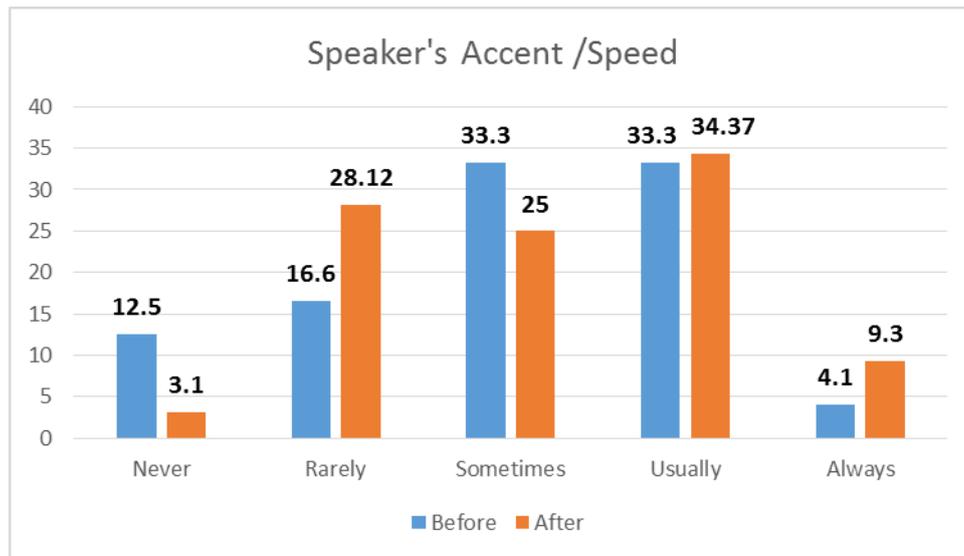


Figure 4.8: Student Employment: Accent/Speed

#### 4.2.4 Skill Preferences

Students indicated heightened listening preferences using *Background*, *Visual Aids* and *Structure* to assist TED Talk comprehension. Students<sup>56</sup> claim background knowledge helps familiarity with structure to increase listening confidence in tasks while C419<sup>57</sup> comments interpreting valuable visual components could improve listening competence, irrespective of the linguistic difficulty.

<sup>54</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 1 transcript (Q1 and 2)

<sup>55</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q3)

<sup>56</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q3 – D92 and C48)

<sup>57</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q3)

### Skill Preferences

Skill	Very Easy	Easy	Not Easy or Difficult	Total	Difference
Structure	4	22	37.85	63.85	<b>+11.15</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>18.75</b>	<b>56.25</b>	<b>75</b>	
Background	6	32	25.85	63.85	<b>+26.74</b>
	<b>3.1</b>	<b>53.12</b>	<b>34.37</b>	<b>90.59</b>	
Visual Aids	16	30	34.55	80.37	<b>+19.63</b>
	<b>9.3</b>	<b>68.80</b>	<b>21.90</b>	<b>100</b>	

Figure 4.9: Preferred Skill Employment

White cell = pre-course

Blue cell = post-course

Limited *Vocabulary* skill employment raised potential cognitive overload concerns (Vandergrift 1999), indicating students relied on memorising new words or lacked lexical knowledge<sup>58</sup>. Additionally, *Speed* and *Accent* were the most problematic skills to employ, reiterating previous fast speakers or less familiar pronunciation concerns as salient difficulties<sup>59</sup> for students (Flowerdew 1994).

### Limited Skill Preferences

Skill	Very Difficult	Difficult	Not Easy or Difficult	Total	Total
Vocabulary	16.65	25	30.3	71.95	<b>+6.3</b>
	<b>6.25</b>	<b>31.25</b>	<b>40.62</b>	<b>78.25</b>	
Speed	8.3	25	36.65	69.95	<b>+26.92</b>
	<b>15.62</b>	<b>56.25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>96.87</b>	
Accent	16.65	22.2	33.1	71.95	<b>+12.38</b>
	<b>9.3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>84.3</b>	

Figure 4.10: Limited Skill Employment

White cell = pre-course

Blue cell = post-course

<sup>58</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q3 – C42 and C47)

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q3)

#### 4.2.5 Student Attitudes

Students displayed mixed attitudes toward listening before and after the course:

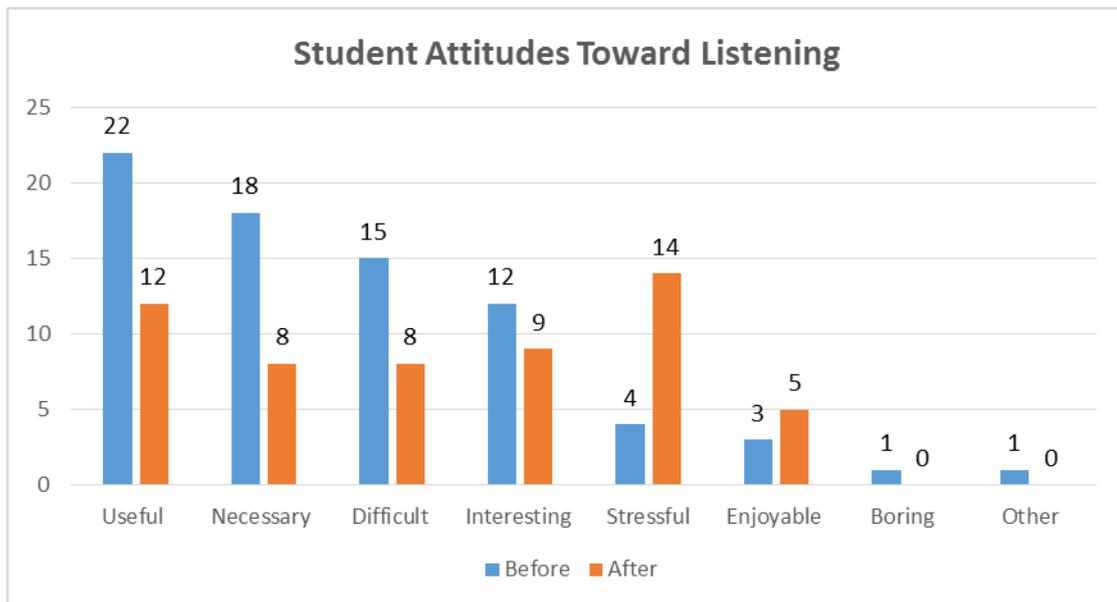


Figure 4.11 Pre-Course and Post-Course student attitudes toward listening.

Resulting in positive *Useful*, *Necessary* and *Interesting* listening attitudes, students<sup>60</sup> found TED Talk topics comprising of useful subjects for everyday life possibly contributing to increased *Enjoyable* trends. C48<sup>61</sup> also commented practices had enhanced listening skills, indicating improved attitudes may correlate with listening competence developments.

Additionally, initial *Difficult* perceptions reduced almost 50% by course completion. Students indicated although increased strategy repertoires helped reduce difficulties<sup>62</sup>, presenters speaking too quickly (C42/C415)<sup>63</sup> have restricted further improvements.

<sup>60</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q2)

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q2)

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q2)

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q2)

Post-course data also recorded a 350% increase in *Stressful* attitudes. C47<sup>64</sup> explains “*listening and feedback was nice but skills, journal, worksheet were too much*”, indicating potential listening over-exposure and grading demands may have reduced positive attitudes (Dornyei 2007). Thus, results show listening attitudes were affected by grading pressures although strategy employment improved (Richards and Rodgers 2001).

#### **4.2.6 Summary**

This section presented pertinent results from the study. Students predominantly employed meta-cognitive strategies, possibly directing cognitive and socio-affective strategies in later processing stages. Additionally, familiar strategies were favoured, isolating compensatory top-down and bottom-up approaches to query successful parallel processing methods. Beneficial feedback, journal and worksheet materials aided organisation and increased strategy repertoires. However, checklist, instruction and skills sheet components were less utilised, indicating overwhelming tendencies requiring further transparency. Student approaches showed an increase in concrete product approaches but limited previous knowledge, body language and speed/accent familiarity may cause comprehension difficulties. The listening programme was initially perceived positively *Necessary* and *Useful* by students. However, despite a reduction in *Difficult* perceptions, *Stressful* attitudes by course completion raises workload and overexposure concerns. The next section discusses these findings in more depth.

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<sup>64</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q4)

## Chapter 5: Investigation Results

### Analysis and Discussion

#### 5.1 Discussion of Results

The study aims to establish if listening strategies could be used effectively with TED Talks in EAP programmes and observe changes in student approaches and attitudes throughout the 10-week course. This section discusses evidence of increased strategy employment and identifies three predominantly used material components. Results also show a failure to fully enhance learner training, finding a shift toward negative listening attitudes before research limitations are discussed.

#### 5.2 Learning Strategies

##### 5.2.1 Strategy Orchestration

Meta-cognitive approaches were found to determine cognitive and socio-affective employment. Emulating Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) orchestration hypothesis, heightened controlled tendencies helped select appropriate automatic listening processes. This evidence indicates if students choose the methods they will employ, automaticity to resolve listening difficulties can be achieved (Roe 2013). Disproving previous notions that controlled practices depreciate real-life listening, findings suggest orchestration could encourage increased strategy employment (Vandergrift and Goh 2012, Ridgway 2000).

##### 5.2.2 Strategy Instruction

Group specific strategies employed by 90%<sup>65</sup> of students also highlight the importance of instruction. Challenging views that teaching cognitive strategies is artificial, taught skills have promoted autonomous strategy employment (Lynch 2009, Field 2008). C44<sup>66</sup> confirms learning became manageable once lesson stages were accustomed to as "*using the steps were really useful to me*". Consequently, guided instruction could enhance learning repertoires successfully (Flowerdew and Miller 2005).

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<sup>65</sup> See Figure 4.1

<sup>66</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q7) and Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (SAS1)

### 5.2.3 Strategy Isolation

However, isolated strategy usage by students failed to encourage intended parallel processing methods. Top-down meta-cognitive (*prediction* and *background*) and cognitive (*previous/personal/academic experience*) methods<sup>67</sup> resulted in students interpreting contexts to improve comprehension (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Relegating intended parallel priorities further<sup>68</sup>, isolated vocabulary-driven bottom-up tasks (eg: *Word Families/Guess Word Meanings/Listen For Language*), resulted in unnecessary retention and retrieval demands for students (Vandergrift 1999).

### 5.2.4 Parallel Processing

Consequently, some evidence of successful parallel processing suggests students could elevate vocabulary comprehension to assist limited contextual knowledge (Vandergrift and Goh 2012):

*“Words like oncology, tumour, genetic code made me think...that topic of listening is study about inherited cancer...Really, topic is kind of that but doesn’t match exactly....Those were helpful to my listening in that forecasting topic of listening”.*

*D91<sup>69</sup> (Talk 25)*

Explicit links between lexis and context demonstrates how students can compensate for lacking competencies by using existing knowledge to complete tasks (Lynch 2009). Consequently, self-evaluative MALQ-adapted diagnostics could identify and attend to pertinent discrepancies more explicitly (Vandergrift and Goh 2012). Diagnostics could also inform about the necessary skills learners require to prioritise linguistic knowledge when background is limited, (and feature a lesser role when the context is apparent), to encourage parallel processing successfully (Lynch 2009).

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<sup>67</sup> See Appendix 10A for a breakdown of strategy results

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (C9)

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (C6)

### 5.2.5 Individual and Group Strategy Employment

Heightened individual responsibility in *Journal Reflection* (73%) and *Personal Goals* (73%) suggest successful post-listening perception tasks (Vandergrift and Goh 2012, Field 2008). Individual opportunities to “*organize my thoughts and content of the talk*” (C45<sup>70</sup>) could support listening demands by reducing potential student anxiety to complete real-time activities (Flowerdew and Miller 2005, Vandergrift and Goh 2012).

Additionally, group collaboration potential is realised in *Discussion* (65%) and *Asking Question* (65%) findings. D96<sup>71</sup> states “*where I didn’t listen correctly, I shared and talked with friends*”, alleviating individual learning limitations. Results suggest how discursive collaboration can lower anxiety and improve self-evaluation while attending to emotional temperature (Vandergrift and Goh 2012). Therefore, group collaborations could encourage learner autonomy by supporting individual listening practices.

### 5.2.6 Summary

Findings show how orchestration and instruction can direct the successful implementation of listening strategies. Although students relied on isolated bottom-up and top-down processes, these linguistic and semantic variances could encourage parallel processing by attending to recognised learner discrepancies established from MALQ-adapted checklists. Individual practices have provided successful self-evaluative opportunities and could be supported further by combinative collaborative activities.

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<sup>70</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q8)

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (SAS2)

## 5.3 Listening Materials

This section discusses how listening materials can be used effectively.

### 5.3.1 Implementing Pedagogic Approaches

Worksheet preferences indicated heightened strategy implementation. *Pre-listening* activities increased confidence when preparing topic knowledge and *while-listening* and *post-listening* tasks encouraged skill practice and strategy development (Flowerdew and Miller 2005, D97<sup>72</sup>) Increased *Background* and *Visual Aids* preferences suggest familiarity heightens listening confidence<sup>73</sup> although some students<sup>74</sup> were unmotivated, perceiving information transfer tasks as unnecessary or time-consuming. Therefore, worksheets could implement pedagogic listening stages, although modifications to simplify task demands for motivation are needed.

### 5.3.2 Utilising Journals

Journal components also enhanced listening organisation by improving monitoring, reflective and active-thinking value<sup>75</sup> (Roe 2013). Additionally, feedback successfully improved strategy awareness of reflection approaches<sup>76</sup> by “*increasing learner ownership of their (listening) progress*” (Vandergrift and Goh 2012, p264). However, automatic feedback application should not be assumed as C49<sup>77</sup> admits not reading directives, indicating explicit feedback employment is required to achieve EAP self-study notions (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008).

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<sup>72</sup> See Appendix 9A for Focus Group 2 transcripts (Q4)

<sup>73</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q3 – D92 and D910)

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q4 and Q7)

<sup>75</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q8)

<sup>76</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (C412, C420 and C11 Q8)

<sup>77</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q8)

### 5.3.3 Identifying Material Limitations

Contrastingly, checklist, instruction and skills sheets were identified as unnecessary material components. Adapting Flowerdew and Miller's (2005) methods to scaffold self-study, the components resulted in repeating worksheet directives. Therefore, content could be included on one comprehensive component (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008, D99<sup>78</sup>).

Additionally, blank or incorrectly completed MALQ-adapted checklists failed to measure strategy knowledge accurately. Learners<sup>79</sup> admitted to misunderstanding statements or remembering items as overwhelming, suggesting in-class modelling by facilitators should demonstrate strategies visually to students; thus providing learners with conscious self-study encouragement to achieve skill automaticity (Vandergrift and Goh 2012, C413<sup>80</sup>).

### 5.3.4 Product and Process Divisions

Findings also disproved parallel product and process approach assumptions. Heightened worksheet, journal and feedback preferences suggest students prioritise 'correct' product answers (Field 1998, 2008). C46<sup>81</sup> confirms "*(when) I predicted what speaker will talk about...I had a hard time when my predictions were wrong*", suggesting students perceive tangible product tasks as more significant than abstract process skills (Robinson 2003). Therefore, intangible checklists and skills sheets have resulted in limited application by students, preferring to measure progress using concrete answers.

Similar to Roe's (2013) experiences, repetitive journal entries listed rather than discussed strategy use<sup>82</sup>. Feedback prompts encouraging evaluation of *how* processes were employed were ignored, as students prioritised product tasks instead. Field (2008) claims tangible responses require less attention in learning than for abstract process evaluations. Consequently, with greater value placed on product

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<sup>78</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (C411 and C420 - Q4)

<sup>79</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 transcripts (Q4)

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q4)

<sup>81</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (MCM2)

<sup>82</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (SAS4)

answers, evaluation tasks should include tangible modifications to increase motivation and task achievement (Field 1998, 2008, Vandergrift and Goh 2012).

### 5.3.5 TED Talks Suitability

Providing authentic major-related, content-based contexts using real-life language by speakers (Field 2008), “*TED Talks are not recorded artificially like TOEIC, TEPS so I feel like I practice REAL English listening*” (C422<sup>83</sup>). Monologues replicated proposed authentic EAP lecturing conventions and exposed students to natural speech components to “*become familiar with the real cadences*” of language (Field 1998, p114; Takaesu 2013, Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008).

Additionally, TED Talk texts successfully implemented McGrath’s (Field 2008 p275) authentic guiding principles by employing EAP content-based and prosodic listening requirements. Students<sup>84</sup> found major-related topics innovatively broadening active-thinking protocols through empathy “*since (Talk5) gave me a new way of handling stress*” (C46<sup>85</sup>). However, non-academic topics were perceived as more interesting<sup>86</sup> than academic content<sup>87</sup> emphasising selection should be sensitive to learning and cultural demands (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008).

### 5.3.6 Summary

This section discussed listening material potential using *pre/while/listening* pedagogic frameworks (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Journals presented reflective evaluation tools for students to successfully raise awareness and control their learning. However, materials were perceived as excessive, with findings strongly suggesting lesson components be reduced to provide transparency between taught strategies and skills employment in listening practices. Additionally, product-based approaches dominated process-based tasks, suggesting further parallel processing methods are required. However, TED Talks have provided authentic, content-based, visually-effective EAP text components for listening programmes.

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<sup>83</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q10 – students own capitalisation used)

<sup>84</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q2)

<sup>85</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q5)

<sup>86</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q5)

<sup>87</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (C413 and C418 in Q2 )

## 5.4 Listening Approaches

This section discusses the approaches employed by students in listening.

### 5.4.1 Effective Listening Approaches

Results show increased employment in seven approaches. *Note-taking*, *Summary*, and *Transcript* product-task preferences correlate with existing ‘correct’ response tangibility expectations by Asian students, perhaps originating from cultural backwash and visual imitation tendencies (D95<sup>88</sup>, Cho 2004, Robinson 2003). *Visual Aids* (C419)<sup>89</sup> supported audio content in texts (Vandergrift and Goh 2012), C422<sup>90</sup> confirming “*I enjoyed (Talk2’s) way of presentation speaking, like putting his arm in mosquito’s cage*”. Thus, Confucian-influenced visual learning could positively enhance listening comprehension (Lynch 2009, Robinson 2003).

Disproving previous reticent and passive group-oriented thinking observations, heightened collaborative methods have promoted successful student interaction (Cho 2004, Cheng 2000). Increased *Discuss Topic*, *General* and *Specific Ideas* usage suggests teaching directives have improved confidence and encouraged autonomous tendencies by “*transmitting knowledge...without teaching ‘how to learn’*” (Park 1997, p212). Therefore, tangible product activities could measure individual achievement using transferable collaborative approaches.

### 5.4.2 Ineffective Listening Approaches

Contrastingly, speed, accent, body language and graded texts demonstrated approach limitations. “*Speaker...is too fast to understand*” (C415)<sup>91</sup> resulted in student reliance on listening to texts repeatedly or checking content with transcripts (D910)<sup>92</sup>. Roe (2013) suggests “Audacity” software could manipulate speed although Flowerdew (1994) questions the authentic integrity of slower speech, claiming listening familiarity as a better solution.

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<sup>88</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 transcript (Q3)

<sup>89</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q3)

<sup>90</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q5).

<sup>91</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q3)

<sup>92</sup> See Appendix 9C for Focus Group 2 transcripts (Q5)

American accents were also perceived easier than British (D99/D97<sup>93</sup>), advocating that familiar sounds result in fewer comprehension demands (Flowerdew 1994). Students<sup>94</sup> used transcripts as compensatory methods<sup>95</sup> to predict, define or understand faster or unfamiliar speakers. However, these methods should be implemented cautiously to avoid potentially dominating reading tendencies.

Additionally, Western and Asian culture differences could reduce comprehensible *Body Language* interpretations. D91<sup>96</sup> comments speakers with limited movement failed to assist understanding. Therefore, corresponding body language and prosodic components in texts need to clarify potential contextual and kinesic differences to aid comprehension (Dudley-Evans and St John 2005).

*Previous Experience* and *Guess/Check Meanings* were also difficult to apply if contexts were unknown to students. “*It is difficult (if) I don’t know all of the story although I listened in Korean*” (C414<sup>97</sup>), suggesting familiar contexts as salient for listening competence (Cho 2004).

Finally, ungraded texts have failed to benefit learners. D97<sup>98</sup> explains “*(Talk7) was an easy talk...(Talk15)...ohh...that was the toughest*” indicating linguistic differences in talks have affected student confidence to complete tasks. Consequently, TED Talk selections could be graded linguistically using CORPUS-graded vocabulary and semantically categorised by content-based contextual demands (Nation and Newton 2009). These distinctions could address varying student abilities by providing guidance to practice appropriate strategy disparities (Field 2008). Thus, categorisation could encourage parallel processing in EAP syllabi by attending to specific learner needs (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008).

### 5.4.3 Summary

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<sup>93</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 transcripts (Q3)

<sup>94</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 1 transcripts (Q4)

<sup>95</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (C4)

<sup>96</sup> See Appendix 9C for Journal transcripts (CS3)

<sup>97</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q6)

<sup>98</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 transcripts (Q6)

Students showed improvements in seven predominantly product-based approaches. Visual imitation has shifted Confucian-based learning tendencies toward collaborative methods and learner autonomy. Additionally, *Accent/Speed* listening difficulties suggests speed manipulation and familiarity as tentative solutions. Text selections should include prominent visual links to verbal content to enhance *Body Language* interpretations and include graded levels to provide talks with viable classification systems, thus attending to learner discrepancies effectively.

## 5.5 Student Attitudes

Initial *Necessary*, *Interesting* and *Useful* attitudes were perceived by students confirming listening facilitated studying overseas, improved general communication and broadened strategic repertoires<sup>99</sup>.

"Listening TED Talks was helpful and many lectures inspired me" (C420).  
"I think my English skills have improved... I have given very concrete feedbacks and various listening or summarizing skills" (C410).  
"I learned to organize what I listened by writing summary. Also I think I can listen for more details now" (C418).

Figure 5.1: Positive student comments<sup>100</sup>

Post-course *Interesting* attitudes<sup>101</sup> found original topics encouraged individuals to think innovatively. Additionally, Confucian-influenced reticent and passive learner tendencies shifted toward autonomous think-aloud protocols to promote collaborative interactions and reflective meta-cognitive journal practices (Cheng 2000). Validating Teng's (2000) proposals, content-based, empathic talks could encourage collaborative practices to promote positive listening attitudes and strategy development improvements (Vandergrift 2010, Swan and Smith 2001).

### 5.5.1 Opposing Attitudes

*Difficult* perceptions reduced 50% at course completion, indicating pre-listening *speed/accents* and *vocabulary* difficulties<sup>102</sup> improved through strategy awareness. Students<sup>103</sup> commented limited *vocabulary*, *speed/accents* and *structure* familiarity contributed toward problematic task completion. Thus, listening frequency (D96<sup>104</sup>) could increase talk structure familiarity while promoting lexical and prosodic strategies to reduce listening demands for students (D99<sup>105</sup>, Graham 2006).

<sup>99</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 1 (Q2) & Appendix 9B for Listening Questionnaire 2 (Q1)

<sup>100</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q10)

<sup>101</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q1 and Q2)

<sup>102</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q1)

<sup>103</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q1 – C45 and C412)

<sup>104</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 transcripts (Q1)

<sup>105</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcripts (Q8)

Post-course findings show *Stressful* attitudes increasing by 350%, caused by grading demands:

*“Just listening to TED Talk was very interesting. But having to do so many things was a little burdening. I would just like to talk informally about the talk. Maybe take some notes. But this is so long and too much”*

D910<sup>106</sup>

C418 concurs *“I feel stressful about writing journals”* and C412<sup>107</sup> confirms *“it took too much time”*. Although the programme increased strategic knowledge and resulted in higher self-confidence, task demands have diminished course motivation (Vandergrift and Goh 2012). Observations also show students considered TED Talks and academic listening<sup>108</sup> as single components, presenting identical *Interesting, Useful* and *Stressful* attitudes. Thus, listening frequency may cause over-exposure, contributing toward anxiety and fatigue. Although TED Talks were interesting and enjoyable, *“all the listening practices were graded so it was a little stressful”* (D99<sup>109</sup>). Reiterating excessive material component findings<sup>110</sup>, students requested coursework to feature less stressful grading demands. However, Roe (2013) warns *“if the journal task were not assessed, students would not do the (tasks)”* (p9), suggesting careful revision of coursework requirements to include fewer time-consuming and self-regulated learning demands is needed to motivate students effectively (Field 2008, Nation and Newton 2009).

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<sup>106</sup> See Appendix 9B for Focus Group 2 transcripts (Q9)

<sup>107</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire2 transcripts (Q1 and Q7)

<sup>108</sup> See Figure 4.11 for Student Attitudes Toward Listening and Appendix 10C for Ted Talk post-course Attitudes

<sup>109</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire2 transcripts (C45 - Q2)

<sup>110</sup> See Material Limitations (section 5.3.3)

### **5.5.2 Summary**

This section showed students preferring tangible activities. Results also presented Asian group-thinking perspectives shifting toward autonomous, self-directed collaborations. Limited strategy knowledge suggests speed/accent, and contextual familiarity as salient for improvements. Additionally, positive student attitudes commending empathic content-based topics have broadened strategic knowledge repertoires. However, differences in L1 and L2 contextual knowledge highlight learner variations requiring more attention and reduced coursework demands could alleviate stress to reduce negative connotations toward listening.

## **5.6 Research Limitations**

Several alterations could improve the research study should the process be repeated. First, fewer listening strategies could avoid overwhelming learners and encourage successful parallel processing. Limited strategy exposure could also control learner improvements by encouraging effective student development of fewer skills (Vandergrift 1999).

Additionally, journal feedback has proved time-consuming for the educator. Peer-evaluation methods could introduce feedback conducted in class-time to raise student awareness of self-evaluation and course checklist methods while encouraging collaboration.

Finally, focus groups were heavily prompted by the researcher, raising intervention concerns. Autonomous semi-structured guidance should be used to elicit more explicit probing responses (Dornyei 2007). More prominent teacher perspectives could also provide complete research triangulation. Additionally, working with other researchers could reduce coding demands whilst simultaneously verifying the data processes employed (Brown and Rodgers 2002).

## **5.7 Summary**

This section has considered solutions to the study's research limitations. Reducing listening strategies could avoid overwhelming strategic demands and encourage successful implementation. Journal feedback could train students effectively by adopting in-class self-evaluative methods and reducing the educator's workload. During research, focus groups should elicit more relevant student views by using explicit probing questions and include teacher perspectives. Additionally, working with other researchers would prove valuable in checking data and provide the study with different educator perspectives.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **Summary, Reflections and Future Research**

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

Literature has presented listening as passive and undervalued in EFL teaching, advocating that educators may feel uneducated or unequipped to provide suitable support and training for students in listening (Field 2008, Nation and Newton 2009). Therefore, the study has investigated the effective employment of listening strategies using a TED Talks listening bank with two EAP classes over a ten-week period. The final section summarises the research study, details recommendations in TESOL practice and for future research and finally presents reflections on the completed research project.

#### **6.2 In Summary**

Using TED Talks as a principle text, journals and checklists measured improved strategy usage. Additionally, pre-course and post-course questionnaires compared differences in student attitudes and approaches, presenting increased strategy employment but identifying shifts toward negative attitudes in listening.

First, the study has offered pertinent insights into implementing listening strategies appropriately for learners. Findings indicated that systematic pedagogic responses are tentatively possible. Disproving Ridgway's (2000) consciousness claims, strategy awareness could be increased by applying Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) orchestration hypothesis using three-stage listening frameworks. However, task demands have proved problematic, isolating bottom-up and top-down approaches to replicate the detrimental parallel processing efforts from Swain's study (Nation and Newton 2009). Therefore, tasks should encourage parallel linguistic and semantic employment by favouring tangible product tasks over abstract process activities to provide transparency when monitoring learning (Field 2008, Graham 2006).

Secondly, research has provided potential directives for material development in listening. Product-based worksheet, journal and feedback components have provided students with monitoring and evaluative training. However, checklist, instruction and

skills sheets should be reduced into fewer components and include tangible activities to measure progress effectively (Zhang 2012).

Thirdly, the suitability of TED Talks as an authentic listening text has successfully implemented McGrath's (Field 2008) cognitive, linguistic and cultural principles to provide educators with a cohesive text framework to select materials effectively. However, Field (1998) proposes educators should develop graded texts to attend to learner disparities more successfully. In line with EAP requirements, TED Talks are authentic, content-based monologues providing students with prosodic, visual and speech characteristics using various topics (Alexander, Argent and Spencer 2008). However, educators should attend to student difficulties raised by providing familiar accents, slower speed components and kinesic interpretations in selections.

Finally, students showed improvement in seven of the 12 listening approaches presented. Tangible strategies in which students could measure progress or transfer skills showed the most improvement. However, contextual limitations and speed/accent difficulties could affect listening comprehension (Flowerdew 1994, Field 2008). Culturally, students have shown heightened motivation resulting from frequent practices to develop into confident, self-efficacious learners (Roe 2013). Additionally, a shift from Confucian group-thinking generalisations toward discursive listening practices has disproved previous passive and reticent perspectives to indicate pertinent improvements in EAP listening (Cheng 2000). Positive attitudes also indicated students felt listening broadened their perspectives while being appropriately equipped to listen generally or academically. However, negative perspectives deem the course stressful, citing overwhelming and time-consuming grade demands be reduced, raising potential completion concerns (Field 2008, Roe 2013).

In summary, the study has provided tentative systematic pedagogic frameworks for educators to approach teaching listening confidently. However, further training to equip educators with competent teaching repertoires using TED Talks is needed to incorporate listening strategies formulaically. Educators could also limit learner difficulties by providing familiar and motivating texts and maximise self-evaluation and monitoring activities in self-study and collaborative opportunities.

### **6.3 Recommendations for Research Findings in TESOL Practice**

The study provides the following TESOL practice recommendations to simplify potential educator knowledge deficiencies and overwhelming tendencies of teaching listening (Field 2011).

#### **6.3.1 Informed Strategy Use**

Educators could be informed of tentative pedagogic approaches to organise learning strategy combinations into comprehensible three-stage listening lessons (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Workshop demonstrations could improve teacher knowledge regarding cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective distinctions to provide clear pedagogic directives. Parallel processing approaches should promote top-down and bottom-up techniques more explicitly; thus equipping teachers with fundamental instruction and activity ideas to orchestrate listening strategies effectively for learners (Vandergrift and Goh 2012).

#### **6.3.2 Using MALQ-adapted Listening Diagnostics**

MALQ-adapted diagnostics could measure listening progress for students by establishing knowledge disparities (Graham 2006, Vandergrift and Goh 2012). MALQ distinctions, identifying prominent learner discrepancies, could direct educators into providing specific learner training in the listening areas required. Educators could also reduce assumed meta-cognitive dominance by employing combinative learning strategies and comprehensible checklists (Lynch 2009, Teng 2000). Thus, educators could complement existing product-based knowledge (usually textbook activities) with process-based approaches (evaluative tasks) to enhance listening by attending to individual learning needs effectively (Field 2008).

#### **6.3.3 Developing TED Talk Materials**

Educators could develop effective TED Talk listening materials for EAP programmes using McGrath's guiding principles framework (Field 2008). These principles have provided appropriate development criteria to select and manipulate texts suitably when using pedagogic frameworks in academic listening (Flowerdew and Miller's 2005). Additionally, educators should consider grading TED Talk texts to assign appropriate learner levels to establish systematic graded material banks (Field 2008).

#### **6.3.4 Encouraging Student Responsibility**

Educators should consider using autonomous self-study opportunities to promote listening motivation and heighten strategy awareness. Frequent listening exposure in workshop environments could support successful student monitoring, reflection and evaluation (Field 2008). Additionally, collaborative tasks could promote deliberation and clarification opportunities to alleviate potential comprehension anxieties (Vandergrift and Goh 2012). In line with EAP directives, students should be given more responsibility to shape their learning using learner-centred listening tasks (Cheng 2000).

## **6.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

Findings have also indicated the following as potential future research areas:

### **6.4.1 Alternative Listening Texts**

Alternative listening texts like *breakingnewsenglish.com* could repeat the study using fewer material components and strategies. Comparing alternative listening texts and TED Talk findings, result consistency could be investigated to determine the reliability of this study's methodology with other studies (Dornyei 2007).

### **6.4.2 Varying Listening Levels**

This study analysed findings from intermediate *Academic English* students but could investigate research potential at other levels. Findings could compare learning tendencies between beginner, intermediate and advanced students to provide analytical insights into simplifying and addressing relevant strategy improvements effectively (Field 2008).

### **6.4.3 Journal Analysis**

Future studies could also focus predominantly on journal writing analysis. Qualitative written journal components could provide meta-cognitive insights into learner attitudes, strategy employment and motivation using active-thinking protocols (Vandergrift 2010). Although perceived ambiguous by some students (Roe 2013), a study focusing on journal reflections could provide insightful findings, detailing appropriate methods to equip students for listening improvements and difficulties (Vandergrift 2010).

## **6.5 Reflection on Research Project**

The researcher's main objectives were to become informed about teaching listening to improve student attitudes, which has been partially achieved. The study has discussed pertinent existing strategies and given the researcher an opportunity to apply theoretical approaches to practical methods. Literature perspectives have provided tentative pedagogic frameworks for teaching listening. Although limitations are recognised, study findings may offer suitable support for novice educators to teach this under-researched skill (Nation and Newton 2009).

Study achievements have included effective material development for listening practices using a highly accessible and enjoyable resource in TED Talks. The researcher's listening strategy repertoire has enhanced, resulting in confident teaching practices and better-informed attempts to attend to learner needs effectively. Furthermore, the researcher's faculty could benefit from workshops explaining how to implement these lessons in academic listening and provide material access.

However, the study has highlighted how potential grading, contextual and strategic knowledge limitations could affect student motivation to complete tasks. Consequently, the heightening of the researcher's awareness to address these learner needs more explicitly will prove valuable in future listening and other skill syllabi development.

Additionally, using mixed method approaches has broadened the educator's methodical approaches towards research. Specifically, eliciting from learner experiences has modified the researcher's teaching approaches to benefit student learning. However, these research methods did present difficulties in distinguishing between researcher and educator responsibilities at times, as researcher priorities dominated educator roles to avoid affecting data collection. Therefore, more experience is needed to benefit from this process so research and student priorities remain distinct and unambiguous.

In conclusion, the study provided insightful and tentative directives in teaching listening. TED Talk lesson models have provided potentially effective academic listening resources which could also be utilised outside of academic programmes with C48<sup>111</sup> confirming that *"I will continue to practice TED Talks"*. Although further strategy and learner training is required by both educators and learners, increased research

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<sup>111</sup> See Appendix 9A for Listening Questionnaire 2 transcript (Q10)

interest in this skill area could help disprove current oppressive listening perspectives and validate these initial findings further (Takaesu 2013). Ultimately, why teach listening? As Field (2008) explains, “*listening in language programmes (is) the skill that will be of most use to learners in the world beyond the classroom*” (p335). Thus, further research is required to promote listening effectively in learning.

**(Word Count: 14,918)**

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