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Investigating the Relationship of Direct and Indirect Skills as Listening Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Listening has played a critical component of the educational process, especially in the ESL setting as it can help the learners to understand comprehensively and to respond accordingly. However, there are some strategies that can be used to overcome the obstacles. This study aimed to explore ESL learners' perceptions on direct skill and indirect skill used as listening strategies. This study also sought to investigate the relationship between direct skill and indirect skill used as listening strategies. The data was gathered using a quantitative survey featuring a 5-point Likert scale rooted from Tuyen et al. 's (2020). 122 post-secondary ESL learners from a public university responded to this survey. Findings revealed that for direct skills, the majority of the participants were willing to inform the speakers when having difficulties in understanding the discussed topic, pay attention to the speaker's voice and try their best to identify the speaker's main points. Meanwhile, for indirect skills, a majority of participants agree that they would guess speakers' intention, focus on the speaker's intonation and identify the meanings of unfamiliar words while listening. It also revealed a strong positive relationship between direct and indirect skills. Therefore, to enhance listening comprehension skills, ESL educators are encouraged to introduce and promote the application of both direct and indirect strategies. Additionally, learners need to recognize and apply direct and indirect listening techniques when encountering listening challenges.

Keywords: listening strategies, direct skills, indirect skills, English as second language

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Listening skill has been one of the essential skills that needs to be acquired by English as Second Language (ESL) learners as a receptive skill that acts as a crucial component in language acquisition. According to Erinta and Listyani (2022), effective listening skills contribute to the improvement of one's capacity to acquire and adjust to new information, knowledge, and skills. Listening strategies require learners to employ their language knowledge as well as contextual knowledge to be able to achieve high effectiveness. Despite its importance, listening is often overshadowed by the teaching of grammar and other skills in classroom settings (Ariana & Apsari, 2018, as cited in Rukmana et al., 2023). Similarly, Basopi et al. (2021) stated that less emphasis is placed on the teaching of listening compared to other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. This is evident in the teaching approaches used for listening instruction, which often left students feeling disengaged and lacking motivation. Therefore, the ability for one to master listening skills is crucial as it will eventually improve one's communication skills, comprehension skills and growth in motivation.

Having the ability to listen and comprehend well in English is a skill that is highly demanded especially among language learners, specifically in tertiary education. Since English is commonly used as the language of instruction in most tertiary institutions, it would be beneficial for this skill to be instilled among learners so that the learning process will be at ease. When learners are able to adept listening skills well, they will eventually become successful speakers along the way. Additionally, these two skills have a great demand by employers in the workforce, especially



among fresh graduates. Therefore, this study is in quest of exploring how ESL learners perceive direct skills and indirect skills as listening strategies and whether there is a relationship between these two skills as listening strategies.

Statement of Problem

ESL learners mostly rely on a few strategies when attempting listening comprehension tasks. Strategies are useful methods that assist learners to become active in managing their own learning, thus, learners need to employ various strategies in the learning to achieve success in language listening. Listening strategies can be categorised into four different domains: cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social (Bao & Guan, 2019). These involve skills like note-taking, translating, summarising, evaluating and checking the notes or answers and managing emotions while listening (Bao & Guan, 2019). Tuyen et al. (2020) group these strategies into direct and indirect categories, including negotiation for meaning, fluency-maintaining, scanning, getting the gist, non-verbal, less-active-listener and word-oriented.

Previous studies on listening strategies have looked into effective and ineffective learning strategies utilized by students according to their language proficiency levels (Piamsai, 2014), effects of listening strategies on students' listening skills (Zanjani & Izadpanad, 2016), the relationship between learners' self-efficacy and metacognitive awareness of listening strategies (Abd Latip et al., 2022) and challenges encountered by students in attempting listening tasks (Permatasari et al., 2023). However, few studies have been done to look into the details of listening strategies used among post-secondary ESL learners who have been exposed to listening strategies in their listening classes. So, how do our learners navigate from one strategy to another? Which strategy is mostly used? And in which listening context? Therefore, the study seeks to explain how learners negotiate meaning while listening, maintaining and scanning strategies employed by learners in listening and how they perceive the 'when revising' stage.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study investigates learners' perceptions regarding their utilization of listening strategies. Specifically, it aims to address the following research questions:

- How do learners perceive direct skills as listening strategies?
- How do learners perceive indirect skills as listening strategies?
- Is there a relationship between direct and indirect skills as listening strategies?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening Strategies

Listening strategies are techniques that learners employ to enhance their comprehension and recall of spoken English (Chamot, 2004). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) categorize these strategies into three types: psychological, metacognitive, and socio-affective.



First, psychological strategies are divided into top-down and bottom-up processes. Top-down strategies focus on global comprehension, such as predicting, inferring, and summarizing, where learners assess the overall meaning of the text (Chamot, 2004). In contrast, bottom-up strategies emphasize understanding specific details, recognizing word patterns, and identifying similar terms across languages (Chamot, 2004). O'Malley et al. (1989) describe learners using bottom-up strategies as those who rely on linguistic features and stored grammatical knowledge to interpret audio texts. These learners decipher the meanings of individual words before progressing to larger units of meaning. Abdalhamid (2012) asserts that bottom-up strategies guide learners in translating words literally, adapting to speech pace, repeating texts, and closely monitoring language patterns.

Second, metacognitive strategies involve learners' regulation of their cognitive processes before, during, and after listening (Bacon-Smith, 1992). Before listening, learners prepare by organizing their environment, focusing attention, and using advance organizers. During listening, they maintain focus, monitor their comprehension, and identify important points. After listening, they assess their understanding and evaluate strategies for improvement. Field (2010) further refines this, viewing metacognitive strategies as part of one's metacognitive awareness, which includes personal knowledge. He outlines four components: planning and evaluation, focused attention, bottom-up discovery, and refraining from mental translation.

Lastly, socio-affective strategies address the emotional and social aspects of listening. Bacon-Smith (1992) describes socio-affective strategies as seeking support from others and emotional self-regulation through comfort. Vandergrift (2011) expands this by including cooperation with peers, reducing anxiety, and monitoring emotional states to maintain a positive mindset during listening activities, which helps prevent negative feelings and encourages emotional regulation.

Past Studies on Listening Strategies

Many studies have been done to investigate the listening strategies used in language learning which impact the educators as well as the learners significantly. With these listening strategies, educators are able to better help learners to improve their proficiency and learners can help themselves to improve in listening skills.

An interesting research was done by Kavaliauskiene (2008), where this study looked at the challenges students face in listening to different authentic English podcasts and analyzed learners' self-assessment data on different ways of improving their listening skills. A total of 27 first year students of different specializations (psychology, law and penitentiary activities) who study English for Specific Purpose at the Faculty of Social Policy, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania were involved. They had to evaluate their own performance in listening to podcasts using a self-evaluation survey and reflected on their listening experiences done online and in class. The result revealed that respondents had a positive attitude towards the methods used to improve their listening skills, such as listening to podcasts, watching English-language films and movies, engaging in conversations with native English speakers, and listening to authentic recordings in the classroom. Podcasts were viewed as a useful tool for practicing listening, as they allow learners to engage at their own pace and at convenient times. This approach also gives learners the freedom to explore different ways of enhancing their listening abilities, which has a positive impact on



language learning. Lastly, out-of-class activities and self-assessment further encourage and motivate learners by providing them with more opportunities to practice independently and work towards improvement.

Secondly, Piamsai (2014) investigates the listening strategies used by proficient and non-proficient learners to complete a listening task. The study was done in two stages, where the first stage involved 65 third-year students from Chulalongkorn University Commerce and Accountancy in a quantitative data collection. For the second stage, 18 students were randomly selected from the group for more in depth data. Using a questionnaire by Oxford (1990), this study reveals a significant difference between the strategies used by these two groups in certain areas in which the proficient learners use appropriate strategies in listening tasks. The proficient learners were also reported to use more strategies than the low ability listening learners such as making predictions, listening for the main idea, using context clues, listening for details, taking notes, using background knowledge about the topic, and picturing what is being listened to. Proficient learners were also noted to be more responsible for their learning, know which strategies to use and are more goal-oriented leading them to success. However, the one strategy that the non-proficient learners employed more was the translation strategy.

Next, a study by Zanjani and Izadpanad (2016) looked at the impact of listening strategies in improving learner's listening skills with 103 Iranian EFL learners who answered a general proficiency Nelson test and 81 respondents who answered the listening section of TOEFL. These respondents were also classified into two different categories which are effective and ineffective listeners based on O'Malley et al. (1989) subject criteria and the students' score in TOEFL. Some of the treatments given to the experimental group are introduction, modeling and practicing the listening strategies. From this study, it is observed that language learning strategies, specifically listening strategies can explain the differences in a learner's listening proficiency and the type of listening strategy learners employ in an appropriate situation is important as it helps tackle a particular task consciously. Based on the experiment and treatment done, it is concluded that listening strategies are skills that can be taught to learners to enhance their listening skills.

Basopi et al. (2021) carried out a study to look at the effectiveness of integrating Listening Media Software (LMS) in improving different listening skills as well as overall listening comprehension. The respondents involved were 64 third-grade students from a private senior high school in Indonesia, Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Al-Furqon Tasikmalaya. This study used a quasi-experimental design, where the 64 respondents were equally distributed into a control group and an experimental group, involving a pre-test and a post-test. Results showed that the experimental group performed slightly better as compared to the control group. The difference was observed in the National Examination Listening Test (NELT) where the study concluded that the implementation of LMS was beneficial to the students.

Another study looking at the relationship between self-efficacy and metacognitive awareness of listening strategies (MALS) was conducted by Abd Latip et al. (2022). This study also aims to provide empirical insights into listening skills to help students improve their listening abilities throughout their degree programs. Two instruments were utilized: the English Listening Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (ELSEQ) and the Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies Questionnaire (MALQ). The results showed that students demonstrated a moderate level of listening self-efficacy. Furthermore, students partly agreed with their metacognitive awareness of listening strategies, with problem-solving receiving the highest average score, followed by directed



attention. Notably, there was a positive correlation between the learners' self-efficacy beliefs and their MALS scores.

Similarly, Erinta and Listyani (2022) conducted research looking at the listening strategies that are commonly used by EFL learners in online settings. This study aimed to investigate the strategies employed by students in an English Language Education Program during an online Academic Listening course. By utilizing qualitative research method, the data was gathered by using a questionnaire which consist of both close-ended and open-ended questions. It was administered to 34 students from the 2020 cohort enrolled in the online class. Additionally, interviews were conducted with select students who provided unique responses to gain further insights. The results revealed that students utilized six main strategies in the online listening course: metacognitive, cognitive, memory, compensatory, social, and affective strategies. Among these, metacognitive and cognitive strategies were the most commonly used by the students.

Finally, Salmi (2023) explored the cognitive and metacognitive strategies employed by learners to comprehend listening texts, using a quantitative approach. The aim was to identify the most frequently used strategies among 41 intermediate-level students in the second year of the baccalaureate at a public school in eastern Morocco. A questionnaire, adapted from Vandergrift et al. (2006), was utilized in the research. The findings revealed differences in how listening strategies were used, based on both individual factors and gender, with females demonstrating greater skill in listening than males. The study recommends incorporating soft skills into listening instruction, emphasizing that listening is a crucial skill for communication beyond just textbook-based learning. Some of the listening strategies used by students included planning, evaluation, directed attention, prior knowledge, and problem-solving.

These studies collectively highlight the diverse range of listening strategies that can be employed and suggest that both cognitive and metacognitive approaches, along with technological aids, contribute to enhanced listening comprehension.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study investigates the perception of learners on their use of listening strategies. According to Rahmat (2019), the mind influences what the learners can hear or understand in listening activities. There are basically two types of listening skills and they are: direct and indirect skills. In the context of this study, direct skills include strategies by Tuyen et al. (2020) such as negotiation for meaning, fluency-making, scanning and word-oriented. Next, indirect skills include strategies by Tuyen et al. (2020) such as getting-the-gist, non-verbal and less-active listeners.

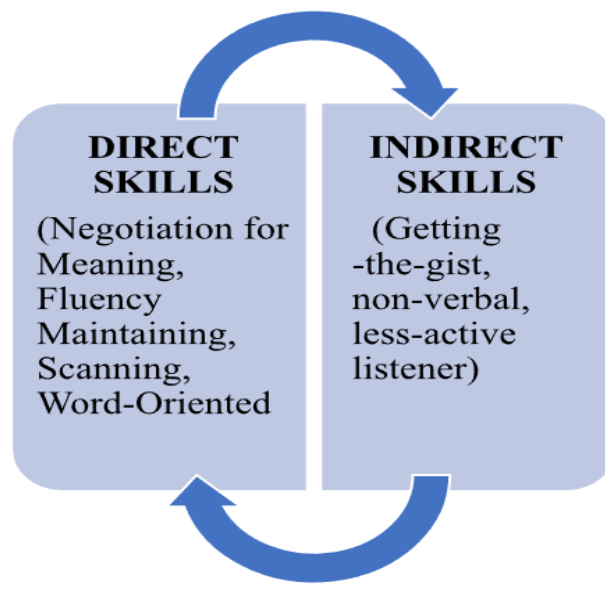


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study-
Direct and Indirect Skills in Listening

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study was done to explore the direct and indirect skills used among learners in listening strategies and the relationship between these two skills. The data for the study was collected through purposive sampling. The study included participants of both genders consisting of male and female learners, English-major students at foundation level and were all ESL learners. 122 participants responded to the survey that was distributed through Google Form. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Tuyen et al. (2020) to reveal the variables in Table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Section B has 18 items on direct skills. Section C has 10 items on indirect skills. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .849. As a result, this indicates a high level of reliability for the selected instrument. Additional analyses were conducted using SPSS to present the findings that address the research questions of this study.

Table 1. Distribution of Items in the Survey

NO	CATEGORIES	LISTENING STRATEGIES (Tuyen et al., 2020)	No of items	Total no of items	Cronbach Alpha
B	DIRECT SKILLS	Negotiation for meaning(D)	5	18	0.849
		Fluency -maintaining (D)	5		
		Scanning (D)	4		
		Word oriented (D)	4		

C	INDIRECT SKILLS	Getting-the-gist(ND)	4	10	0.67
		Non-verbal (ND)	3		
		Less-active listener (ND)	3		
		Overall (all items)		28	0.877

Table 1 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of 0.849 for Section B, Cronbach Alpha of 0.67 for Section C. This thus reveals a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

FINDINGS

Findings for Demographic Profile

Table 2. Percentage for Demographic Profile

Q1	Gender	Male	Female	
		23.8	76.2	
Q2	English Proficiency	Average	Above Average	Good
		19.7	51.6	28.7
Q3	Listening Preference (materials)	Short stories	Short info	F2F
		34.4	40.2	25.4
Q4	Difficulties	The content	The language used	The vocab
		35.2	19.7	45.1

As indicated in Table 3, female respondents represented 76.2% and the male respondents represented 23.8%. Participants' self-rated English language proficiency is as follows: average (19.7%), above average (51.6%) and good (28.7%). Most participants prefer to listen to short information (40.2%), followed by short stories (34.4%) and Face-to-Face communication (25.4%). 45.1% participants chose vocabulary as one of the difficulties in listening, 35.2% selected the content and 19.7% chose the language.

Findings for Direct Skills

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive direct skills as listening strategies?

Table 3. Mean for -Negotiation for Meaning While Listening Strategies (NFM)

NO	ITEMS	MEAN
1	NFMQ1I ask for repetition when I can't understand what the speaker has said.	3.3
2	NFMQ2I make a clarification request when I am not sure what the speaker has said	3.3
3	NFMQ3I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have difficulties in comprehension.	2.7

4	NFMQ4I ask the speaker to slow down when I can't understand what the speaker has said	3.2
5	NFMQ5I make clear to the speaker what I haven't been able to understand	3.4

Table 3 above presents the mean scores for the five items which were used to examine the learners' perceptions towards the use of the strategies of negotiation for meaning while listening. With a mean score of 3.4 for NFMQ5I, a majority of the respondents agreed that they would make it clear to the speaker on the matters that they were not able to understand. This is closely followed by NFMQ1I and NFMQ2I which share a similar mean score of 3.3. The learners would ask the speaker to repeat (NFMQ1I) and request for clarification to attain better comprehension (NFMQ2I). Comparatively, asking the speaker to simplify the expression by using simpler words (NFMQ3I) scored the lowest mean of 2.7.

Table 4. Mean for -Fluency-Maintaining Strategies (FM)

NO	ITEMS	MEAN
6	FMQ1I pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation.	4.2
7	FMQ2I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid communication gaps	4.0
8	FMQ3I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well	3.3
9	FMQ4I ask the speaker to give an example when I am not sure what he/she has said.	3.9
10	FMQ5I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation	4.2

Table 4 above illustrates the mean scores for the five items which were used to examine the learners' perceptions towards the use of fluency-maintaining strategies when attempting listening tasks. Most learners opted to pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation (FMQ1I, mean score of 4.2) and to the speaker's pronunciation (FMQ5I, mean score of 4.2). The two strategies of fluency maintaining might be equally preferred by the learners due to the quality of the speaker's speech which was presumably intelligible and might potentially aid in overcoming the complexities of understanding meaning. Employing circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when the learners did not understand (FMQ3I) scored the lowest mean of 3.3.

Table 5. Mean for -Scanning Strategies (SC)

NO	ITEMS	MEAN
11	SCQ1I pay attention to the subject and verb of the sentence when I listen.	3.9
12	SCQ2I especially pay attention to the interrogative when I listen to WH-questions.	3.9
13	SCQ3I pay attention to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention	3.9
14	SCQ4I try to catch the speaker's main point.	4.4



Table 5 above displays the mean scores of the four items which were included in the questionnaire to analyze the perceptions of the learners towards the use of scanning strategies when attempting listening tasks. The scanning strategy with the highest mean score was that of trying to catch the speaker's main point (SCQ4I, mean score of 4.4). This indicates the learners' strong reliance on the organization of ideas in the interlocutor's speech when making meaning. Indirectly, this also underscores the importance of organization of ideas when speaking to the second language users of English. Ideas which are presented in an organized and logical manner would substantially facilitate the understanding of the learners. The other three scanning strategies; paying attention to the subject and verb of the sentence (SCQ1I), paying attention to the interrogatives (SCQ2I), and paying attention to the first part of the sentence and guessing the speaker's intention (SCQ3I); scored a similar mean score of 3.9, demonstrating the comparable usefulness of these strategies in listening activities.

Table 6. Mean for Word-Oriented Strategies (WO)

NO	ITEMS	MEAN
25	WOQ1I pay attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes.	4.4
26	WOQ2I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words.	4.2
27	WOQ3I try to catch every word that the speaker uses.	4.1
28	WOQ4I pay attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not	3.9

Table 6 above shows the mean scores of the remaining items which were also used to analyze the perceptions of the learners towards the use of direct skills, particularly the word-oriented strategies, when attempting listening tasks. The strategy of paying attention to the words that the speaker slowed down or emphasised (WOQ1I) scored the highest mean of 4.4. This is followed by the strategy of guessing the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words (WOQ2I, mean score of 4.2) and trying to catch every word that the speaker used (WOQ3I, mean score of 4.1). The strategy of paying attention to the first word to judge whether it was an interrogative sentence (WOQ4I) was the least opted for by the learners (mean score of 3.9), signifying the ineffectiveness of such strategy of meaning making when attempting listening tasks. Additionally, it also shows that perusing interrogatives would not aid as much in building context to help the learners understand the meaning of a message.

Findings for Indirect Skills

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive indirect skills as listening strategies?

Table 7. Mean for -Getting the Gist Strategies (GIST)

NO	ITEMS	MEAN
15	GISTQ1I don't mind if I can't understand every single detail.	2.8
16	GISTQ2I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context.	3.9

17	GISTQ3I guess the speaker's intention based on what he/she has said so far	4.1
18	GISTQ4I try to respond to the speaker even when I don't understand him/her perfectly	3.9

Table 7 above presents the mean score of the indirect skill which is getting the gist strategies (GIST). According to the data displayed, learners applied the strategy of predicting the speaker's attention based on what has been said so far (GISTQ3I) recorded the highest mean score of 4.1. Next, the strategies applied by learners which are anticipating what the speaker is going to say based on the context (GISTQ2I) and attempting to respond to the speaker even when they did not understand the speaker perfectly (GISTQ4I) resulted in the same mean scores which are 3.9. The lowest mean score of 2.8 displayed shows that learners did not bother to understand the details said by the speaker.

Table 8. Mean for- Non verbal strategies while listening (NV)

No	ITEMS	MEAN
19	NVQ1I use gestures when I have difficulties in understanding an oral presentation	3.7
20	NVQ2I pay attention to the speaker's eye-contact, facial expression and gestures in oral presentation	4.1
21	NVQ3I pay attention to the speaker's intonation	4.3

Regarding the strategies of non-verbal strategies while listening (NV), Table 8 above shows that most learners paid attention to the intonation used by the speaker (NVQ3I) with the highest mean score of 4.3. This is followed by the strategy applied by learners of paying attention to the speaker's eye-contact, facial expression and gestures in oral presentation (NVQ2I) which recorded 4.1 mean score. The least strategy being used by learners is the use of gestures when they face difficulties to understand the oral presentation (NVQ1I) which recorded the lowest mean score of 3.7 in non-verbal strategies while listening.

Table 9. Mean for Less-active-listener strategies (LESS)

NO	ITEMS	MEAN
22	LESSQ1 I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said	3.2
23	LESSQ2 I try to look for meaning of difficult words as I listen	3.9
24	LESSQ3 I only focus on familiar expressions	3.2

Table 9 above presents the mean for less-active-listener strategies (LESS), and as displayed in the table above, learners applied the strategy of trying to look for meaning for difficult words they listen (LESSQ2I) scored the highest mean score of 3.9. Additionally, the strategies applied by learners which are trying to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said (LESSQ1I) and focusing only on familiar expressions (LESSQ3I) scored a similar mean score of 3.2.



Findings for Relationship between Direct and Indirect Skills in Listening

This section provides the data necessary to address research question 3- Is there a relationship between direct and indirect skills as listening strategies? To assess whether there is a significant relationship between the mean scores of direct and indirect skills used as listening strategies, the data was analyzed for correlations using SPSS. Results are presented separately in table 10 below.

Table 10. Correlation between Direct and Indirect Skills

Correlations		DirectSkills	IndirectSkills
DirectSkills	Pearson Correlation	1	.679**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	122	122
IndirectSkills	Pearson Correlation	.679**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	122	122

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

Table 10 indicates a relationship between direct and indirect skills. The correlation analysis reveals a strong significant association between these skills, with a correlation coefficient of $r=0.679^{**}$ and $p=0.000$. According to Jackson (2015), a coefficient is considered significant at the 0.05 level, with positive correlations measured on a scale from 0.1 to 1.0. Weak positive correlations range from 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlations from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlations from 0.5 to 1.0. This suggests a strong positive relationship between direct and indirect skills.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

This study aims to explore learners' perceptions on direct and indirect skills used as listening strategies and identify the relationship between direct and indirect skills used as listening strategies by employing Tuyen et al. (2020)'s model. The first research question scrutinizes learners' perception of using direct skills as listening strategies. The finding reveals that a majority of participants are willing to express to the speaker that they had difficulty comprehending the discussed topics for *Negotiation for Meaning* strategy. This result reflects the findings of a study conducted by Erinta and Listyani (2022) where this is similar to *Social Strategy; Receiving Teacher Feedback* used by students in an online academic listening class. This strategy provides further clarification and verification to the listeners on the subject discussed or even helps in problem solving. Next, for *Fluency-Maintaining* strategy, it is discovered that there are two mostly preferred skills used by the participants namely pay attention to the speaker's rhythm & intonation and to the speaker's pronunciation. For *Word-Oriented* strategy, the skill of paying attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes has been used frequently by the majority of the participants. Lastly, for the *Scanning* skills on the other hand, most of the participants will try their best to catch the speaker's main point. This resembles a lot like active listening where keywords of the speech or discussion are being focused on. The final three strategies mentioned



above are in line with Tuyen et al. (2020)'s findings as the data collected from the focus groups revealed that students paid attention to the speaker's rhythm & intonation, pronunciation, intention, main ideas and key words. This is due to the fact that understanding the whole thing or word by word might be difficult for the learners, therefore they opted for these strategies instead. This aligns with Chairat's (2017) findings, which validate that the majority of students employed these strategies to address listening challenges.

The second research question on the other hand, peruses learners' perception of using indirect skills as listening strategies. The findings disclose that most learners would guess the speaker's intention based on what he/she has said so far for *Getting the Gist* strategies. Next, for *Non Verbal Strategies While Listening*, majority of the participants opt for paying attention to the speaker's intonation. This result is also similar to one of the most frequently used listening strategies in direct skill by the participants. It also aligns with the study by Abd Latip et al. (2022) which stated that the students showed moderate agreement regarding their metacognitive awareness of listening strategies, with problem-solving being rated the highest, followed by directed attention. Lastly, for *Less-active-listener* strategies, most of them try to look for the meaning of difficult words as they listen. The indirect skills used by the learners echo *Compensation Strategies* used in a study conducted by Erinta and Listyani (2022). These strategies help listeners to utilize guessing techniques by making inferences through contextual clues, linguistic analysis, and summarization to deduce certain information. Other methods include deducing from context in both listening and reading, employing synonyms for the missing word, using gestures during speech, or strategically pausing (Oxford, 2003, as cited in Erinta & Listyani, 2022). Finally, the last research question aims to explore the relationship between direct and indirect skills utilized as listening strategies. The correlation analysis reveals a significant association between these two skill sets, indicating a strong positive relationship between direct and indirect skills.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Majority of students in Malaysia are bilingual as they learn English as a second language (L2) after their mother tongue language which is Bahasa Malaysia. English has become a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education and has been used as a medium of instruction in tertiary education. It is highly encouraged for students to achieve language competence, especially in listening skills so that they can become effective users of L2. Findings suggest that ESL educators should be aware of the different types of strategies that can be used in listening because the learners may or may not be aware of the options of strategies that can be used.

Therefore, it is suggested for ESL educators to introduce the strategies implicitly or explicitly and encourage the learners to use them. By implementing a balance of these strategies, educators can enhance learners' overall listening comprehension skills by addressing both direct (bottom-up) and indirect (top-down) listening strategies effectively. Learners on the other hand, should be aware of the direct and indirect skills used for listening strategies and practicing them when they encounter any listening problems. Moreover, the present study was conducted among English-major students at foundation level, therefore the result of the findings should not be generalised. Thus, it is suggested that future studies investigate the non-English major learners at higher level institutions focussing on listening in English for specific purposes which can be conducted among students who enroll in technical and science courses. To conclude, more exposure on listening strategies



should be given to learners so that they can employ them effectively and this can absolutely improve their language competence.

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Conflict of Interest


Our research is self-funded and not sponsored by any organization. Therefore, it may not limit any future investigation or not fulfilling the desired goals of any organization.

Authors' Contributions

The study was conceived and designed by MM and FAMR. Data collection was carried out by MM, FAMR and NNEAR, while data analysis was primarily conducted by MM and FAMR. NNEAR, AAR and ARS were responsible for drafting the manuscript, which was then critically revised for important intellectual content by all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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