

## INTRODUCTION

Listening skill comprehension is an essential skill in learning foreign language communication. According to Umarova (2022), listening is an essential skill that must be acquired in second and foreign language learning. Rost (2002), as cited by Saraswaty (2018), also argued that listening comprehension is a complex interactive process because the listener is directly involved in the dynamic construction of meaning. But to become fluent in English, one must first master its four essential language skills: speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Ali, 2022). The present study emphasizes listening skills because it, as an acquired skill, is essential for developing students' language skills and practices. As an active process, listening is a receptive talent (Rintaningrum, 2018).

Research showed that listening is the most used in communication of the four language skills. According to Agustin and Ayu (2021), “in reality, people spend 45% of their time listening, 30% for speaking, 16% for reading, and 9% for writing” (p.3). Listening ability is essential in creating a background for spoken communication and spoken production (Yavuz & Celik, 2017). It means we always want to know what others say and listen to. Therefore, listening strategies and the ability to use them effectively may contribute to learning achievement in listening classes. However, most students may think that listening comprehension is not an easy activity to do.

Listening skill is not that simple to acquire. There are some challenges that people face when listening. The success or failure in learning English listening can be caused, among some, by the learning strategies used by the students themselves. Therefore, listening requires effort to process what comes from outside, to capture important information for our background knowledge and then process it for specific purposes. In other words, input skills here are

receptive skills where people receive things through their sense of hearing to get information. Wang (2018), as cited by Izzah and Keeya (2019), notes that with this receptive skill, learners can input and produce linguistic data in communicative discourse. Here, learners' strategies can contribute to the success of processing inputs.

This research is interested in the learning strategies of successful students in the Academic Listening class at the English Language Education Program at the Faculty of Language and Art, SWCU. The criteria for students who are successful in academic listening classes in this study are students who get an A or AB grade without repeating the course before. While the A-score students are those who scored between the range of 80-100, the AB-score students are those who scored between the range of 75-80.

Many studies have focused on weak students by looking at the difficulties they face. Rarely did studies focus on successful students by looking at the strategies used in academic listening classes. The researcher's purpose in this study is to identify effective listening learning strategies by students who are successful in Academic Listening classes and provide recommendations on learning strategies that can be useful to improve the listening skills of students who have not been successful in that class learning from the successful ones. While the previous studies were conducted quantitatively in schools using questionnaires and, more or less, the results were quite similar, this study focuses more on the voices from the students. Thus, this research is also interested in understanding how students use strategies to complete academic listening classes successfully. This study is conducted qualitatively, focusing on the depth of understanding of the phenomenon of strategies used. It used the reflective journal followed by interviews to obtain more information, and participants were asked to elaborate further on their perspectives on listening strategies. Therefore, the researcher intends to conduct this research to

answer the research question: *What strategies are used by successful students in Academic Listening classes?* By finding out the types of learning strategies used by students in listening and by investigating students' challenges underlying the strategies, it is hoped that students can minimize their difficulties in academic listening classes and apply some valuable strategies that can be their turning point in learning to achieve success.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section attempts to review previous studies and theories related to academic listening strategies used by EFL students.

### **Understanding of Academic Listening Course**

Academic listening consists of several active listening skills to focus on the speaker and then understand and capture the message or meaning conveyed in oral communication. These are also crucial in academic learning and are usually used coherently. Academic listening skill is a prerequisite for English Language Program (ELP) students at English-speaking university programs and are also critical to their success in understanding conference lectures (Rahimirad & Moini, 2015). As stated by Taghizadeh and Safavi (2019), it can be inferred that the concept of self can impact students' understanding of how to listen academically, with the concept of self as an independent variable. Students not only learn to listen in class but can also develop their vocabulary skills in this course. These studies have shown that English courses and academic English courses have comparability in increasing students' self-efficacy to succeed in content courses, among other benefits, and for directly enhancing their academic English knowledge and

preparing them for learning content through L2 English (Thompson et al., 2019). In an Academic Listening course, students are expected to improve their listening skills in an academic context.

### **Learning Strategies Used in Listening Class**

Many researchers convey different concepts and thoughts about learning strategies in their research, thus leaving the meaning of learning strategies open (Azizmohammadi & Barjesteh, 2022). Here, the understanding of language learning strategies is adopted from Bramantya (2021), who stated that strategies are specific actions or ways of thinking to improve their second language acquisition. The researcher found that strategies are often conscious and goal-driven. That is, the learner was aware that using a particular strategy could help them understand the material they were studying for the purpose of a broad understanding of listening, especially in the early stages of tackling foreign language tasks.

Hsueh-Jui (2008) argued that a significant relationship exists between students' listening strategies, style, and proficiency level. He further explained that the significant relationship between the two was very complex and could vary depending on the context and the individual concerned. Concerning individuals, students should have the ability to apply listening strategies in activities, of course, by using practice. Practice should be more than just routine in applying these strategies, but also the students' background knowledge. Without practice, all these things were useless. Every student had different learning abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, so it is important to recognize what they were good at and used it to their advantage.

According to experts, there are several strategies that can help students to improve their listening skills. O'Malley and Chamot (1990), cited by Sudharni (2018), found that learning strategies fall into three categories according to this classification: metacognitive,

cognitive, and social strategies. The researcher mentioned that planning and thinking about learning, such as creating learning goals, are examples of metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies were deliberated approaches to learning, including taking notes and finding resources (using dictionaries and other resources, among others). Social strategies include working with other students or asking teachers for help as a way to learn through interaction with others.

The metacognitive strategy refers to the ability to relate one knowledge to another, such as planning, monitoring, or evaluating the success of a learning activity. Metacognitive knowledge consists of knowledge about people, learning tasks, and strategies (Yang, 2009). He further explains that the metacognitive approach is more of a technical design for students to overcome problems when listening in class. Students used this strategy during the listening process, both at the beginning, middle, and end of the listening activity.

According to Coskun (2010), most students embrace the idea that regular use of pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities promotes mastery of metacognitive strategies. From the results of research conducted by Pupiales (2023), almost most students indirectly use metacognitive strategies when listening to spoken language to control their understanding. According to Pupiales (2023), students can acquire useful metacognitive skills to facilitate their learning tasks by doing pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities regularly. For example, students can learn how to identify listening goals, monitor their understanding during the listening process, and reflect on what they have learned after it has ended.

According to Nowrouzi et al., (2014) the pre-listening strategy is the learner's preparation for listening by manipulating the environment, focusing attention, applying

advanced organizers, selecting attention, and deciding to think in English. His study explained that the while-listening strategy is the learner's focus on monitoring their listening and attracting their attention. And post- listening strategies were evaluating their understanding of listening and figuring out what they should do better to help improve their listening comprehension.

Another strategy that students use successfully in academic listening classes is cognitive strategy. As Erinta and Listyani (2022) mentioned, the cognitive approach relates to how individuals perceive, process, and store information, regardless of whether the information is stored in short-term or long-term memory. According to Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), “cognitive strategies are related to understanding and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval” (p.981). The strategy can describe how students prepare for the listening process to support their long-term learning. The impact of this strategy also increases students' understanding of listening. According to Nowrouzi (2014), categorizes cognitive strategies into top-down and bottom-up processing strategies. His study found that students successfully used top-down and bottom-up strategies.

The bottom-up strategy analyzes sounds, words, clauses, and sentences (Dita et al., 2022). They mentioned that a cognitive strategy is not only for single use but for more extended service. So whenever students repeat the listening activity, they can overcome their challenges. Cognitive strategies work directly on incoming information, modifying it to facilitate learning (Bao, 2017; Serri et al., 2012). Serri et al., (2012) argued that typical cognitive strategies for listening comprehension include practice, organization, inferring, summarizing, deduction, imagery, transfer, elaboration, etc. For example, when a student

encounters a word that is difficult or new to him/her in an audio or recording and then infers the meaning of that word from its context, he/she is using a cognitive strategy.

The social-affective approach refers to interactions with other people to aid learning. Sumalinog (2018) also reported that learners often use socio-affective strategies to overcome their listening anxiety. For example, students who are unsure of their answers and knowledge can ask friends to confirm their answers and knowledge. They unconsciously use socio-affective strategies because they involve other people in helping their understanding. Vandergrift (2003), cited by Lim (2020), defines social affective strategies as techniques listeners use to collaborate with others, verify understanding, or reduce anxiety. Habte-Gabr (2006), cited by Zeynali and Motlagh (2015), stated that socio-affective strategies are strategies that are non-academic and involve stimulation and determine the level of empathy between lecturers and students in learning. Therefore, students do not only focus on listening comprehension, but socio-affective strategies can help students to interact socially and support their listening skills to understand listening.

### **Previous Learning Strategies Studies in Listening Class**

Researchers have investigated listening skills and strategies for dealing with listening problems in several countries. A study conducted by Bidabadi and Yamat (2011) in Iran aimed to identify the listening proficiency level of new Iranian EFL students and the listening strategies they used to investigate the relationship between these two variables. Ninety-two (92) new students were involved in this study. They found that most students used metacognitive and cognitive strategies first, followed by cognitive and socio-affective strategies to solve their hearing problems. The researchers found a significant and positive relationship between listening skills and the listening strategies used by advanced, intermediate, and low-level students and

their listening proficiency levels at low and high levels, respectively. The high use of meta-cognitive strategies among Iranian EFL freshmen in this study proves they are essential to improving their language learning and listening skills.

Another study was conducted in Vietnam by Duy and Quan (2021) related to English listening strategies. This study aimed to investigate the listening performance of learners who have identified listening strategies as a critical factor contributing to the success of effective listeners. By examining the listening strategies used by 81 students majoring in Vietnamese English, who were divided into two groups - practical and less effective listeners based on IELTS scores, Duy and Quan (2021) found that effective listeners tended to use a variety of strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, while less effective listeners relied mainly on cognitive strategies such as guessing and focusing on individual words. The study showed that effective listeners can better use a combination of listening strategies to aid their understanding and processing of spoken language. In contrast, less effective listeners may not benefit from instruction on using the broader strategies due to limitations in using the correct learning strategies. Although no significant differences were found between the group's use of the three overarching strategy categories, some differences were identified regarding their individual strategy use, which has important implications for listening. This finding is related to a study by Bidabadi and Yamat (2011), which showed that Iranian EFL freshmen used metacognitive rather than cognitive and socio-affective strategies more frequently.

Another study conducted in Iran by Golchi (2012) is related to English listening strategies. This study investigated listening anxiety and its relationship to listening strategy use and listening comprehension among IELTS students from two language institutions in



Shiraz. The results of this study reveal that listening anxiety has a negative impact on listening comprehension in using listening strategies because it affects students' knowledge of their listening skills. Moreover, the findings showed that students with low anxiety use more metacognitive strategies than students with high anxiety. Regarding cognitive and social/affective strategies, the two groups did not differ significantly.

Several studies above have shown similar results. That is, most listeners use metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. However, the other research on learning strategies for successful students in academic listening is expressed by Saks and Leijen (2019); Yang (2007), who have reported similar findings. Yang's (2007) findings aim to identify learning strategies for various ethnicities and group skills used. An Inventory of Strategies for Language Learning (ISLL) was administered to 451 junior students for junior college students in Taiwan. It was found that ethnicity does play a role in the selection of language learning strategies. More proficient students reported using the cognitive strategies more frequently than less proficient students. For example, the cognitive category, ranked second by the high proficiency group, was rated third by the intermediate group and fifth by the low proficiency group. Furthermore, findings from Saks and Leijen (2019) reported that the use of metacognitive strategies should be supported in combination with cognitive strategies. The use of metacognitive strategies, such as understanding monitoring, problem identification, and selective attention, appears to be important factors that differentiate successful listeners from less successful listeners. Maarof et al., (2018) noted that several studies have shown that less proficient learners tend to employ more cognitive and memory strategies and fewer social strategies. On the other hand, more efficient learners tend to apply more diverse and flexible learning strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies.

Although there is research on students who have not been successful in academic listening classes, here the researcher focuses on successful students. While the previous studies were conducted quantitatively in schools using questionnaires and, more or less, the results were quite similar. Thus, this research is also interested in understanding how students use strategies to complete academic listening classes successfully. This study is conducted qualitatively, focusing on the depth of understanding of the phenomenon of strategies used. It used the reflective journal followed by interviews to obtain more information, and participants were asked to elaborate further on their perspectives on listening strategies.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **The Study**

This research explored the learning strategies of successful students in the Academic Listening class at the English Language Education Program (ELEP), Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. To achieve this goal, the researcher approached the study qualitatively. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research is “an inquiry that yields descriptive data: the words people say or write about themselves, their behaviours, their experiences, and their thoughts” (p. 39). Descriptive data means that participants write or describe themselves in the form of reflective journals and through interviews to find out the learning strategies that make them successful in class.

## **Context of the Study**

This research was conducted in the English Language Education program (ELEP), Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. In this program, there are three types of listening courses, namely Extensive Listening, Intensive Listening, and Academic Listening. The higher level in this listening course is Academic Listening. This study focused on students' perspectives on the strategies they use to overcome what they perceived as problems in Academic Listening classes.

## **Research Participants**

The participants in this study were EFL students in the 2020, 2021, and 2022 batches who got A and AB grades without repeating the academic listening class at English Language Education Program (ELEP), Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. Participants in this research were divided into two, namely participants who took online and offline classes. The researcher in this study focused on the strategies used and ignored the differences in strategies for online and offline classes.

The criteria for students who are successful in academic listening classes in this study are students who get an A or AB grade without repeating the course before. While the A-score students are those who scored between the range of 80-100, the AB-score students are those who scored between the range of 75-80. Those who got an A were likely students who demonstrated an understanding of the learning material and exceptional skills. For example, they consistently excelled in various aspects of the course, such as active listening, comprehension, participation, and engagement. Then, students who got an AB grade were likely to show above-average performance. Students in this range have performed well in listening courses, demonstrating a good understanding of the material and strong listening

skills. While they may not have reached the level of excellence equivalent to an A, they still demonstrate a strong understanding of the content. Eight participants who met the criteria for successful students were selected from each Academic Listening class in the even semester of 2022 – 2023.

The researcher used criteria-based sampling in selecting participants. According to Creswell (2014), criteria-based sampling methods can be categorized into two types, namely purposive sampling and snowball sampling. However, the researcher used purposive sampling, where participants were selected purposively based on specific predetermined criteria for successful students. To meet these criteria, the researcher collected data from available student documents and asked the lecturers who teach Academic listening directly.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

The data collection methods in this study were semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. Semi-structured interviews are a more powerful type of interview method than other types of interviews for qualitative research because they allow researchers to obtain in-depth information and evidence from the interviewees while considering the focus of the research (Ruslin et al., 2022). Interviews and reflective journals were used to gain a better understanding of students' learning strategies. The aim is to find information and evidence about students' behavior and opinions regarding strategies and understanding of the material that made them successful in class. The interview was conducted for 30-60 minutes in a comfortable place for the participants. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or via video call. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed.

The participants were also asked to write reflective journals to reflect students' feelings in text form so that researchers could obtain information from their reflection journals. According to Moon (2004), reflective journaling is a data collection method that involves writing about personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings to explore and gain insight into a particular topic or phenomenon. Participants wrote their experiences, thoughts, and feelings regarding the topic in the reflective journals. The reflective journal was guided by questions created by the researcher in the Google Form. The link is sent to students via email and WhatsApp chat. The questions covered the areas of learning experience during the academic listening class, what strategies were used to succeed, and how to apply these strategies. Then the researcher asked the participants to fill out. This method also allowed the researcher to get a more comprehensive and in-depth picture of the learning strategies used by university students in Academic Listening classes.

### **Procedures of Data Analysis**

Data analysis from student reflective journal and interview methods was carried out using thematic analysis, carried out by identifying themes from the interview data and then grouping and mapping these themes into more significant categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data groupings were carried out to find out the general theme of the learning strategies used by students. In grouping the data, participants' responses were processed using tables in Microsoft Word using thematic categories to answer research questions. This analysis will provide an overview of the strategies used by students. The themes were then presented and discussed by illustrating the data and linking them to the previous studies and theories. This

report provides information about what and how learning strategies are used by successful students in academic listening classes based on the thematic analysis results.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the analysis of the reflective journals and interviews on successful students' behaviour and opinions about strategies used in the Academic Listening class. The thematic analysis has found the background challenges and strategies that the participants used: metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies.

### **Background Challenges to the Strategies Used by Successful Students**

Before discussing the strategies used by successful students in Academic Listening classes, it is necessary first to understand the background that led to these strategies emerging among successful students. Successful students are not free from problems, and the following are the problems they face:

#### Excerpt 1

".....the difficulty is only when listening, I find sometimes, the speakers are too native, meaning their voices speak too fast, and the vocabulary I have is still limited".

(participant#1/interview/translated by researcher).

As found by Tersta and Novianti (2016), more than 90% of students stated that unfamiliarity with native English caused a lot of difficulties for them to understand the meaning. Participants in this study also faced similar difficulties with those 90% of students in Novianti's study. Students tended to find it not easy and complicated to understand the meaning because native

speakers speak too fast (Anandapong, 2011). Other noticeable issues experienced by the participants were the limited vocabulary and the native speakers being too native.

Another problem experienced by successful students could be said to come from external factors. For example: Support networks and devices. External factors are problems that occur from outside the individual. External factors also affect students in listening to recordings.

#### Excerpt 2

"...the problem or difficulty is more external...the audio sent, for example, is unclear and problems on the internet network..."(participant#5/interview/translated by the researcher).

The class that participant 5 attended in excerpt 2 is an online class because the participant took the academic listening class during a pandemic situation. Unclear audio quality also causes problems in listening comprehension, which unstable networks or unsupportive devices can cause. Such as the recording suddenly stops, cannot access, and cannot return to the previous recording. Poor audio quality causes the input provided to be unclear, causing problems in listening comprehension. External factors can bring undesired impact on completing the course. Chao (2013) found that 62% of students failed the listening test due to unclear pronunciation caused by technology. Although this undesired effect did not occur to the participants in this study, the external factor still posted difficulties to successful students.

The problems faced by successful students are lack of vocabulary knowledge or not familiar with the vocabulary. External factors faced, such as internet interference and media, such as computers or cell phones used, are not supportive. These things are the basis for the emergence of strategies that successful students did. Here are some strategies used by successful students in academic listening classes.

**Table 1:** Challenges faced by successful students in Academic Listening Class

The challenge aspect	Type of challenge	Concrete form of the challenge
Native speaker problems	- Accent	- Unfamiliar with a native speaker - Lack of vocabulary - The native speaker speaks too fast
External factor	- Device  - Internet problem	- Unclear audio quality  - The recording cannot be accessed - The recording suddenly stops

**Metacognitive Strategies: The importance of Pre, While, and Post-listening Strategies Approach in Improving Listening Skills and Encouraging Students' Development.**

Some successful participants in academic listening classes reported that they employed the metacognitive strategies in three areas: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. This corresponds to Coskun (2010) that most students adhere to the idea that the regular use of pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities can enhance the mastery of learning. Active involvement in regular pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities can help them be more effective in understanding and mastering learning material.

The first point found in metacognitive strategy is pre-listening. It is preparation before starting the class meeting. The forms of pre-listening strategies conducted by the participants



found in this study were listening to the audio recording from the teacher in Schoology, watching or listening to music on YouTube, doing practice tests on the internet, reading summaries, formulating questions, and identifying objectives.

### Excerpt 3

“Before class, I listen to podcasts or audio and video from my lecturer on Schoology. Then I play them many times until I understand what the video is about, I also practice my listening skills by listening to music and watching short videos before class, or practicing doing TOEFL test on Youtube or the internet”.  
(participant#4/interview/translated by the researcher).

As reported by participant 4, before class, she did a pre-listening strategy by practicing the listening audio recording provided by the teacher in the Schoology. Schoology is one of the media used to facilitate the participant in practicing listening because audio and video are available to listen to before learning as preparation materials provided by the lecturer. The way she practiced listening to the audio was by playing it several times. According to Amir (2019), allowing students to hear audio recordings of exercises with native English speakers several times can improve their understanding completely. So that it can make students familiar with English speakers. Moreover, participant 4 also explained that she used several other media to support practicing her listening skills. The media in question is YouTube or the Internet. On YouTube, she could find podcasts, videos, and audio in English and some practice questions in listening practice. Based on research conducted by Qomariyah, Permana, and Hidayatullah (2021), students feel more interested in using YouTube videos as a learning medium and provide a positive and significant alternative to listening comprehension performance. So YouTube is a supporting media used by students as preparation material. Learning using YouTube is a fun learning media while also improving listening skills. In addition to listening practice using YouTube media, the participants also did vocabulary review exercises, as illustrated in excerpt 4:

#### Excerpt 4

“Before class, I do some vocabulary guessing or matching. When I usually do vocabulary matching, all I have to do is match it and tell me the meaning. Later, I can check the answers with my lecturer”. (participant#1/interview/translated by the researcher).

Participant 1 also reported that he practiced vocabulary to check his comprehension to prepare himself before class. Such as practicing matching the words in each sentence provided, or guessing the word in the practice text and then looking at the answer on the recording. Similarly found by Javadi-Koma (2012), cited by Madani and Kheirzadeh (2022), vocabulary preparation improves listening comprehension for Persian EFL learners. This aligns with what Stæhr (2009) argued that general and specialized EFL students in Iran mostly get better listening results when students are familiar with vocabulary. Expanding new vocabulary can help students to understand what native speakers say. So it has a beneficial impact on learning, as reported in excerpt 5:

#### Excerpt 5

“The impact is that my vocabulary is wider than before, I can understand English further and feel more prepared to face GE in academic listening class”(participant#5/interview/translated by the researcher).

As illustrated in excerpts 3, 4 and 5, according to participants, the pre-listening strategy had a positive impact in helping them to prepare themselves before class started. The recording prepared by the lecturer before class provided the description of the topic or context they will hear to be better prepared to participate in a class or graded exercise. Meanwhile, the vocabulary practice before class helped them to increase their understanding of new vocabulary.

The second point found in metacognitive strategy is while-listening. While-listening refers to the activities carried out during learning. These strategies include taking notes, asking questions, or participating in discussions. These activities usually involve students taking notes

while listening and searching for keywords from the recording. Participants reported that taking notes while listening helped make it easier for them to do the graded exercises because by taking notes, they could find keywords from the recording.

#### Excerpt 6

“I listen to the recording carefully, then take notes, or I can type on the cellphone, so later there will be complex vocabulary, I can search for the meaning on Google, and the impact of this note-taking is that it makes it easier for me to answer questions in GE... “. (participant#2/interview/translated by the researcher).

According to participant 2, by recording the screen during online classes, she could study the material again outside of class. She listened to the screen recording again, and then she took note of the important points. When she found new words from the recording material, she would use Google to search for the meaning of the word, and then she wrote it on her notes. Later on, having notes could help her find keywords in the recording. When doing the graded exercises, she again opened her notes as support material. As Carrell, Dunkel, and Mollaun (2002) found, taking notes makes students feel more comfortable when allowed to take notes during a lesson; by taking notes, students can answer questions related to the content of the subject and make it easier for students to remember what students have learned. In line with that, Gur et al., (2013) found that there is a higher level of understanding that benefits students who take notes while listening, so that students are trained to obtain active learning, active listening, and note-taking skills. “To prevent forgetting almost 80% of the content of the listening material, it is recommended that students take notes while listening” (Ozbay, 2005, (p.85)). Thus, the findings here also confirm theories that taking notes can help facilitate students in the learning process in the listening class.

The third point found in the metacognitive strategy is post-listening. Post-listening strategy refers to activities after learning. According to Movva et al., (2022), post-listening exercises are planned to discuss material and expand well-planned topics so that students can connect the content they listen to with their experiences and feelings and these activities are carried out after class hours. Post-listening exercises focus on reflection and evaluation activities. It is used by participants who participate in activities that extend the topics learned and students' understanding of listening.

Excerpt 7

“I usually work on questions and reflections too, and I also evaluate my understanding by practicing the exercise practice on the internet. For exercise practice, I have to adjust them to videos or recordings so I can see my notes earlier. Then I will re-evaluate my answers with the answer keys”. (participant#4/interview/translated by the researcher).

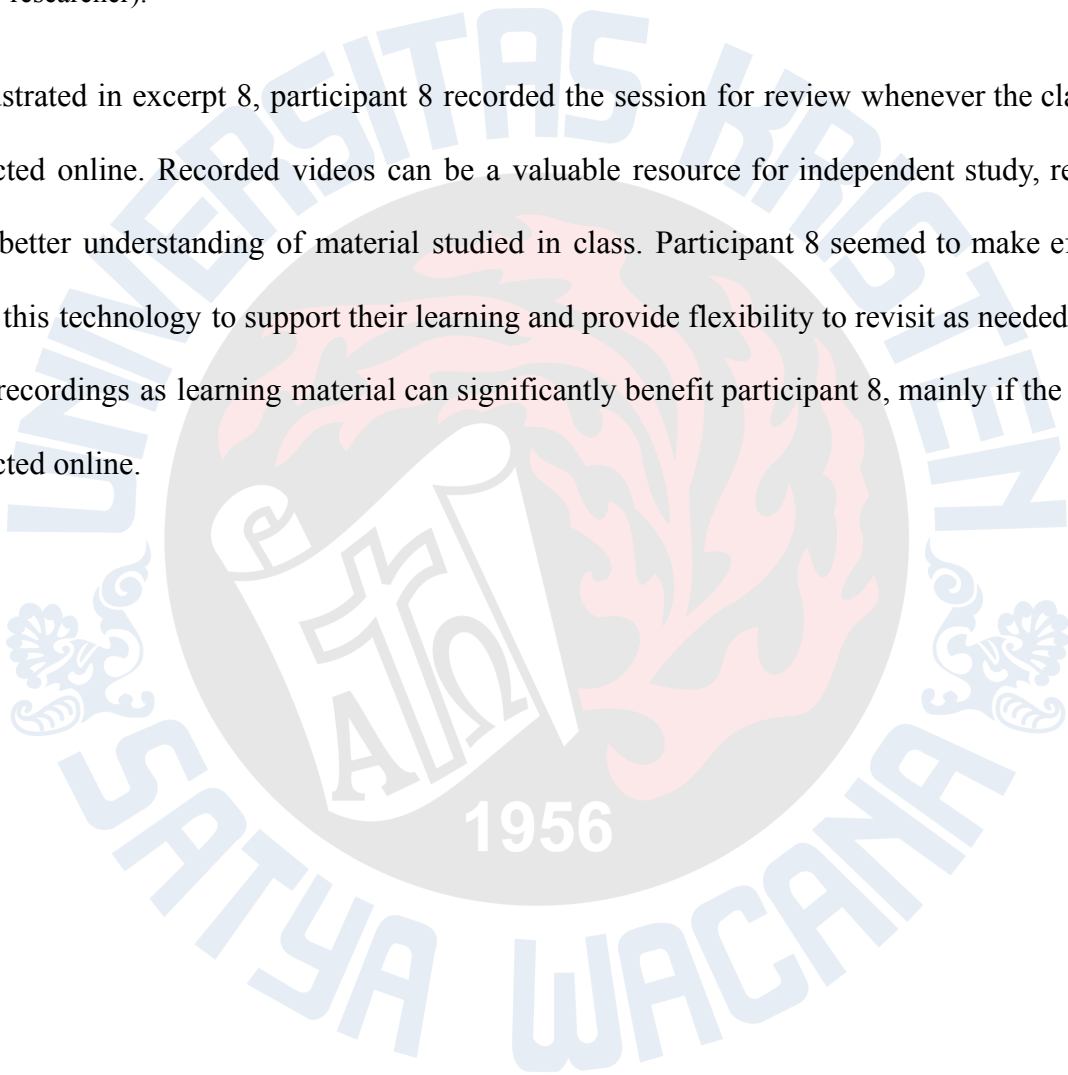
Participant 4 reported that after the class, he/she would reflect and then re-evaluate their knowledge by practicing online questions to prepare for the upcoming listening test. Participants also actively worked on questions to hone their comprehension skills and then reflected on the material they had learned. Doing the exercises online shows she was looking for various material sources and other media as additional learning materials. This process emphasizes the importance of self-evaluation. She could identify areas that need improvement by comparing her answers with the answer key. Evaluation after listening class is a strategy commonly used in listening activities by students when using metacognitive strategies (Liu, 2020). As found by Goh (2010), the type of learning when students reflect on listening performance directs students' attention to certain aspects as guided reflection. So, students use this strategy to reflect on the material covered by making a summary based on the recording of the listening material, practicing again, searching for other audio recordings on the internet, and answering the

exercises. Another strategy that students use after class is to re-record the material and then study it again. As reported by participant 8:

Excerpt 8

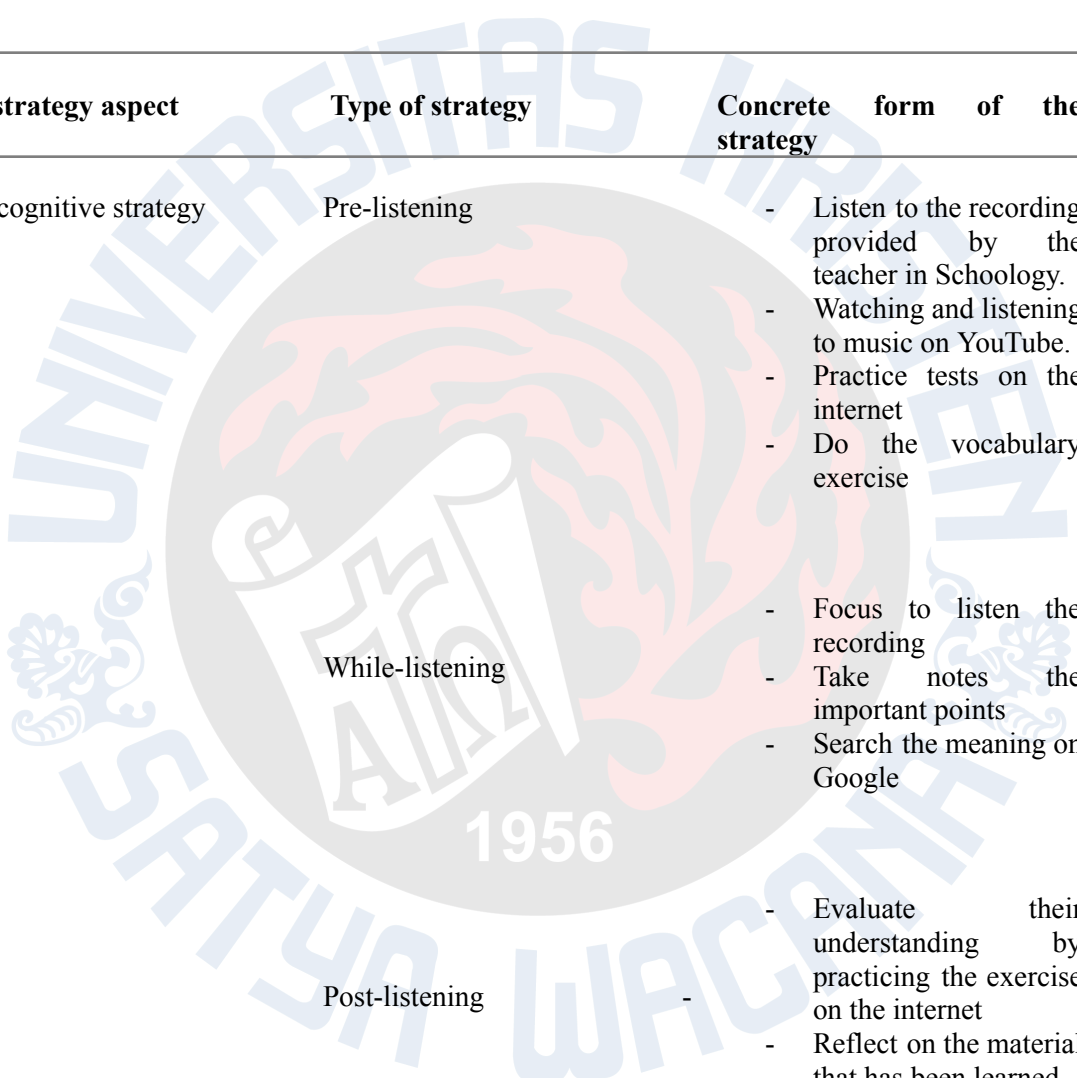
“I recorded videos during class because previously my classes were online. So I studied the material again from the video I recorded”. (participant#8/interview/translated by the researcher).

As illustrated in excerpt 8, participant 8 recorded the session for review whenever the class was conducted online. Recorded videos can be a valuable resource for independent study, revision, and a better understanding of material studied in class. Participant 8 seemed to make effective use of this technology to support their learning and provide flexibility to revisit as needed. Using video recordings as learning material can significantly benefit participant 8, mainly if the class is conducted online.



**Tabel 2:** Metacognitive strategy employed by the successful student-participants in listening class

The strategy aspect	Type of strategy	Concrete form of the strategy
Metacognitive strategy	Pre-listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen to the recording provided by the teacher in Schoology.</li> <li>- Watching and listening to music on YouTube.</li> <li>- Practice tests on the internet</li> <li>- Do the vocabulary exercise</li> </ul>
	While-listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus to listen the recording</li> <li>- Take notes the important points</li> <li>- Search the meaning on Google</li> </ul>
	Post-listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluate their understanding by practicing the exercise on the internet</li> <li>- Reflect on the material that has been learned</li> </ul>



It can be underlined that the metacognitive strategy in this research was used by successful students. There are three important parts, namely pre, while, and post listening. Pre-listening, students are able to prepare for learning before class, while while-listening, students are able to find keywords in a recording, the last, post-listening, students are able to evaluate what has been learned. Of course, metacognitive strategies are not the only strategies applied by successful students. This study also found that students use cognitive strategies in improving their listening skills, and for the next time let's discuss the cognitive strategies used by successful students.

### **Cognitive Strategy: The use of Top-down and Bottom-up Processing Strategies to Improve Listening Skills**

Another strategy that was used by successful students in academic listening classes was cognitive strategy. The cognitive approach relates to how individuals perceive, process, and store information, regardless of whether the information is stored in short-term or long-term memory (Listyani & Erinta, 2022). According to Gilakjani (2011), “cognitive strategies are related to understanding and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval” (p.981). The strategy can describe how students prepare themselves for the listening process to support their long-term learning. The impact of this strategy also increases students' understanding of listening. Nowrouzi (2014) categorizes cognitive strategies into two types: top-down and bottom-up processing strategies. This study found that successful students used both top-down and bottom-up strategies.

The first point found in cognitive strategy is top-down. The forms of the strategy are guessing the topic of the audio heard, then writing down important things in order to find

keywords from the recording played, as well as understanding its meaning and function in an auditory text. As reported by participant 5 in the reflective journal and in an interview with participant 3, they focused on listening by looking for keywords often used by native speakers.

Excerpt 9

“I like to summarize just to write the main points and a few keywords in there, and then I guess the topic from what the native speakers are talking about”. (participant#5/reflective journal).

Excerpt 10

“...I do not need to take notes but immediately remember, usually what is often said in recordings are keywords, so I just remember and summarize them. But the important thing is for me to understand the meaning, how it functions in a sentence...” (participant#3 /interview/translated by the researcher).

Excerpts 9 and 10 illustrate that participants have employed a top-down cognitive strategy. While participant 5 reported that he wrote the main points and keywords from the recordings, participant 3 remembered the main points to write a summary. All these practical strategies were to process the understanding of inputs through listening recordings. As said by Leonard (2019), learner-based top-down uses context as a clue to guess keywords, make predictions and summarize meaning that focuses on the listener's thought processes by using voice input to receive the speaker's original intent. Thus, it can be said that the top-down strategy helps the participants find the points intended by native speakers in the recording. The participant agreed that what made them successful in their Academic Listening class was close to the strategies they used. The strategy used is a strategy that has a practical impact on listening tasks, such as being more focused, capturing keywords that are understood to be summarized, and not translating word by word.



The second point in cognitive strategy is bottom-up. According to Dita et al., (2020), “The bottom-up strategy is to analyze sounds, words, clauses, and sentences” (p.18). Strategies such as analyzing sounds, words, clauses, and sentences can illustrate how students prepare for the listening process to support their long-term learning. This study found that participants used the strategy of analyzing the sound/pronunciation of a new word in the recording using Google Translate.

Excerpt 11

"...from the audio that I heard, I focused on listening, and I recognized every word that was there, then later, I checked the word by looking up how to pronounce it on Google Translate or British Council..." (participant#2/interviews/translated by the researcher).

As reported by Participant 2 in excerpt 11, the language in the recording had specific sound patterns or pronunciations, so she focused on paying attention to the sound patterns to help decipher unfamiliar words; that way, participants became familiar and easily found the meaning of keywords in a recording (Mandarani, 2016). To look for the pattern, sometimes participants had to repeat the recordings several times, as reported by participant 8 in excerpt 12.

Excerpt 12

“I have to focus on listening to the audio to find keywords from the recording that I hear by playing it repeatedly. For example, there is still time to repeat it, I repeat it until I understand it”. (participant#8/interview/translated by the researcher).

The impact of top-down and bottom-up strategies also increased students' comprehension in listening. This study also found that the participants believed in the advantages of this top-down and bottom-up strategy to process the knowledge information based on the context presented in the recordings, making it easier for students to understand the meaning conveyed from what is heard.

Excerpt 13

“I usually use the listening while learning method, so through new conversations, I can also learn new words, phrases, etc, and I think those are all the methods I use.”  
(participant#6/reflective journal).

As reported by Participant 6, the strategy used had a beneficial impact on her understanding of the listening process, and she felt the advantages of the strategies she used. The advantages made by Participant 6 included an increase in vocabulary, phrases and pronunciation of new vocabulary. According to Alzamil (2021), "Spoken English helps students acquire vocabulary and comprehension skills, this is very important for students to learn to listen well" (p.372). In line with what Yeldham and Gruba (2014) found, EFL learners in Taiwan selectively integrate top-down and bottom-up strategies to increase confidence, high learning motivation, and focus in the listening process. In line with what Yeldham and Gruba (2014) have found, EFL learners in Taiwan selectively integrate top-down and bottom-up strategies for increasing self-confidence, high learning motivation, and focusing on the listening process.

**Table 3:** Cognitive Strategies employed by the successful student-participants in listening class

The strategy aspect	Type of strategy	Concrete form of the strategy
Cognitive strategy	Top-down	Summarize just to write the main points and a few keywords
	Bottom-up	Analyzing the sound/pronunciation of a few a new words in the recording using google translate

The metacognitive and cognitive strategies were not the only strategies successful students used in the listening class. In addition, the present study also found socio-affective strategies in what the participants have reported. The researcher will explain another strategy found in this study, namely the socio-affective strategy.

### **Socio-affective Strategy: Implementation of Individual and Group Learning Strategies to Improve Students' Listening Skills**

Successful students in this study also used socio-affective strategies in academic listening classes. Vandergrift (2003) defines social-affective strategies as listening techniques in collaboration with others to verify understanding or reduce anxiety. By focusing on socio-affective aspects, this approach enriches the understanding of the complexity of listening in the context of students' interaction with the social environment. The results of a study conducted by Ngonkum and Deerajviset (2022) showed that the three most often employed socio-affective strategies were clarification/questioning, monitoring emotions/lowering anxiety, and encouragement in this study, successful students used their social strategies by studying in groups and individually. Listening is a metacognitive and cognitive skill and a social process involving collaboration, problem resolution, and emotional aspects. One kind of socio-affective strategy that the participants in this study used was by collaborating with friends in a group study, as reported by the participant in excerpt 14:

#### Excerpt 14

“In my opinion, it helps more if you study in groups, I can also share knowledge and experiences with friends. Then enjoy it, so I am not too burdened to study alone, especially when it is online, so it is easier for us to study in groups and help each other.....” (participant#4/interview/translated by the researcher).

#### Excerpt 15

“I prefer to study with friends because if we do not understand the material, we can share knowledge, and there are new insights, so we do not get stuck there.”  
(participant#6/interview/translated by the researcher).

Excerpts 14 and 15 illustrate that participants 4 and 6 believed that studying in a group and cooperating with others helped clarify understanding and reduce anxiety. An approach like this did not only help students academically, such as providing a deeper understanding of the material being studied, but also non-academically, because it may increase self-confidence. As stated by Habte-Gabr (2006), cited in Zeynali and Motlagh (2015), learning is built for groups of those who are non-academic to stimulate better learning. It is a technique listeners use to collaborate with others or in groups to confirm understanding and reduce anxiety (Vandergrift, 2003). In improving listening skills, students must know how to reduce anxiety, increase personal motivation, and feel confident (Vandergrift, 1997).

However, studying in a group was not always good for some students. This study also found that several students preferred individual independent learning strategies. Some participants thought that they were more comfortable studying alone because, in the academic listening class, it is very suitable when studying independently.

#### Excerpt 16

“When listening, it is better to be alone because it makes me more focused. When I am with friends, sometimes they ask questions and make a fuss”.  
(participant#1/Interview/translated by the researcher).

Participant 1 reported that studying independently made him feel more comfortable because he felt more focused when studying individually because, based on the participant's experience, he attended classes online and found studying alone enjoyable. Thus, he could concentrate on the recording he was listening to. In applying such a strategy, Participants will choose a quiet

atmosphere where no other people exist. Then, start to play, do the graded exercise carefully, and focus so that the sound they hear is only the recording. There is no noise interference from outside. Participants can concentrate more while listening to the recording without being distracted by the surrounding situation.

In this Chapter, I have presented findings and discussed those findings on strategies used by the successful students in Academic Listening classes. For the participants in this study, the Academic Listening class was felt a little challenging by some and less challenging by others. Such backdrops have led to exploring the strategies the participants employed during their learning process in taking the Academic Listening class. In contrast, more effective listeners (successful students in my study context) tend to use various strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies. Students believe that in academic listening, there should be preparation to support the process before learning. The participants in this study made listening a frequent habit in their daily lives. Being accustomed to and practicing often became a frequent thing to do so that their listening skills improved.

**Table 4:** Socio-affective strategies employed by the successful student-participants in listening class

The strategy aspect	Type of strategy	Concrete form of the strategy
Socio-affective strategy	collaborating with other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- studying in a group and cooperating with others helped clarify understanding and reduce anxiety</li> <li>- Studying in a group can share knowledge, and there are new insights, do not get stuck there</li> </ul>
	Independent learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- studying independently made students feel more comfortable because he/she felt more focused when studying individually</li> </ul>

### CONCLUSION

This study aims to answer questions of what strategies are used by the successful students in academic listening classes. The present study found that the strategies used by successful students are metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective.

Metacognitive strategies include three points, namely pre-, while-, and post-listening. Students use preparation such as listening and summarizing the recording before class. While learning in the class, students take notes and find the keywords from the recording. After class, students evaluate and reflect. Next, cognitive strategies include two points: top-down, where

students guess the topic in the recording and write essential things. As for the bottom-up strategy, students can analyze the sounds, sentences, and sounds in each recording. Lastly, the socio-affective strategies include two points, namely, learning in groups and individually. The research found several cognitive strategies used by respondents, including note-taking strategies, practicing tests on the internet, watching and listening to English music, and supported by dictionaries to find the meaning of foreign words that respondents found in the recording. Respondents often mentioned these strategies in interviews and some reflective journal responses.

Among the many studies that describe listening classes, this study tries to reveal how students who are successful in listening classes apply strategies to learn listening. This perspective is important because we need to know what successful students do. It can be seen that successful students use all strategies, and they should practice more using learning strategies to improve learning strategies (Sari et al., 2018).

The possibility of the research having a positive impact on readers, especially English learners. English learners can see what strategies can be used to improve their listening skills. One of the supporting media that helped my participants in the process of understanding listening was using YouTube as a learning media to learn to listen. This is also supported by Yuyun and Simamora's research (2021) that shows that using YouTube can improve students' listening skills and the benefits of YouTube for EFL learners, namely increasing student confidence, enjoying the learning process, and making learning fun.

The researcher realizes that several things need to be improved in this study. First, this research was only conducted in one context: one private university. However, it should be noted that this study's results may not fully reflect the diversity of strategies due to the focus on one

private university context, so it is necessary to generalize the findings to a broader context. Second, the participants in this study were divided into two, namely participants who took online and offline classes so that different strategies occurred. It should also be remembered that strategy differences between online and offline class participants may be influenced by strategy differences, so the interpretation of the findings needs to consider this variability in the context of the analysis. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers can look for participants with the same class conditions and add more contexts for comparison. Not only in one university but perhaps in other institutions to further strengthen or enrich the learning strategies that can be used in learning academic English listening comprehension.

