

The Efficacy of New Technologies in Developing Listening Comprehension Strategies for Iraqi EFL College Students

By

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Abstract

This paper is a practical investigation into the efficacy of digital technologies in developing listening comprehension strategies among future English teachers who are enrolled in universities of higher education. Methods of The research consisted of a questionnaire survey, and Anderson-Darling and Student's t-tests were used to analyze the data. The listening comprehension skills of students in the control (CG) and experimental (EG) groups are comparable (52% and 56%). The level of learning in CG and EG is below the threshold, indicating that students have inadequate training in these areas. Cognitive, pragmatic, and reflective criteria are most prominent. Implementing educational content adaptation strategies and multiple self-study controls increases the cognitive component. Consequences of The study revealed that digital technologies are highly effective for training future philologists' listening comprehension strategies. Experiments have demonstrated the effectiveness of digital multimedia educational tools and the ability to hear a foreign language very well. Prospects Future research should identify effective methodological and technical tools for developing strategies for listening comprehension. To do this, you need to look at different digital tools and choose the ones that work best.

Keywords: Digitalization of education, foreign language competences, higher school, linguistic education, modern education.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation is key in modernizing higher education. The creation of a digital society drives digitization. The transition to a personalized and efficient educational process in the electronic information and educational environment is a hallmark of digitalization. Modern, multicultural, multilingual societies value foreign language proficiency in higher education, especially English. Mastering a foreign language is necessary for communication and future career success. Due to this, one of the most important tasks of higher philological education (Widodo et al., 2022) is to determine how to use digital technologies to help people learn to comprehend speech.

The pedagogical design of the educational process of students in higher education institutions, which is based on adaptability and considers the dynamic characteristics of students, is urged in terms of enhancing educational quality. The pedagogical design of the educational process should incorporate effective digitalization approaches, taking into account the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of modern students. Digitalization allows for the development of students' individual educational paths during process

organization. This is done through microproportional structuring of subject content, management of the educational process, and multidimensional assessment of subject learning outcomes. Such models are not available. In the context of digitization, this makes it hard to give personalized, adaptive training to philology majors (Poliakova, 2022).

Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are linguistic activities taught. In methodological writing, "listening comprehension" is used. The opposite of "listening" Listening is the acoustic perception of sound scale; listening comprehension is the language perception, understanding, and interpretation of audible information. Listening comprehension can be done on its own or as part of a conversation (Kochubei, 2022). Therefore, listening comprehension is a reactive language skill. Listening comprehension can occur without outward signs, but it is an active process that takes intellectual effort. During listening comprehension, the listener does a lot of complex perceptual-mnemonic activities and mental operations, like analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction, comparison, contrast, abstraction, and concretization.

Listening comprehension training includes linguistic, psychological, and methodological components

(Table 1). This sort of language comprehension activity should be tried only once (Ma & Yan, 2022).

Table 1: *Structure of training listening comprehension skills*

Linguistic component	Psychological component	Methodological component
a) a systematic lexico-grammatical and phonetic minimum b) difficulties associated with language form perception c) text requirements for listening comprehension (cognitive orientation, fantastic content, linguistic simplicity for understanding texts, text authenticity)	a) study of students' motives and interests b) auditory abilities and skills c) professional abilities (hearing phonemic and intonation, anticipating language) d) Psychological mechanisms, including long-term and operational memory, recognition and reconciliation, and comprehension. e) difficulties associated with language form perception f) The nature of the relationship between listening comprehension and other forms of language activity (particularly speaking).	a) independent work skills in listening comprehension b) The use of various aids to aid comprehension of what has been heard.

It is a mentally perceptive memory - related activity. Listening should play a significant role in the initial phase of language teaching (Qureshi et al., 2021). Mastering listening comprehension enables the achievement of pedagogical, educational, and developmental objectives. It enables the teaching of students to carefully listen to a speech, develop the ability to predict meaningful utterances, and thus cultivate a culture of attentive listening not only in a foreign language, but also in their native tongue. Developing the ability to understand language aurally has a positive effect on the development of memory, particularly auditory memory, and thus has educational value (Mohammed, 2020).

1.2. Inaccessible challenges

The core issue is still the lack of activities that aim to improve students' listening comprehension via the use of communication technology, which has tremendous opportunities. The following are some potential benefits of digitalization:

- 1) Clarity in terms of knowledge and diversity.
- 2) Authenticity and individuality
- 3) The availability of a sociocultural component in addition to the linguistic component
- 4) The presence of motivational and entertaining elements in addition to intellectual and informative elements.

The utilization of communications technology to teach listening comprehension will enhance students' cognitive activity and lead to a more thorough understanding of the education system. The goal is to do an empirical review of how well digital technologies help future lexicographers learn strategies for understanding what they hear.

The objective of the study

The purpose of the study is to identify techniques and applications for making use of digital technologies that could assist EFL students in enhancing their listening comprehension abilities.

The question of the study

Will the use of digital technology during the phases and assessment of curriculum application, as well as the effectiveness with which a set of tasks and instructional methods are applied, improve students' capacity to comprehend what they hear?

2. Literature Review

According to Altunkaya (2018), foreign language communication is based on the "integrative" communication ability determined by the mastery of language activities such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to the author, there are three stages in the development of foreign language communication skills and abilities: introduction, training, and practice. When familiarizing themselves with a new social experience, students receive the information necessary to comprehend the action procedures, thereby preparing themselves for training. During training, new things are done repeatedly until they become second nature. This is the basis for being able to communicate in a foreign language. The evolution of technology has influenced and improved every aspect of our lives. According to (Warni, Aziz, & Febriawan, 2018; Hafner, 2019), education is one of the fields impacted by technology. Students were afforded the opportunity to independently study and collaborate due to the increased accessibility of technology. Regarding how technology aids and develops educators, Warni et al. (2018) noted that students are a significant factor in the success of learning. In light of technological advancements and the significance of students' roles, teachers must modify teacher-centered learning in order to improve the classroom environment. In computer-assisted language learning, researchers, teachers, and students all play a role. Hafner (2019) believes that the development of technology has altered the way in which people read, write, and communicate. The modification was intended to provide new digital presentation formats for context. Such a development prompted educators to reconsider the curriculum and assignments. The researchers investigated digital literacies in English language learning in order to examine reading, writing, and communication in novel ways. Walker and White (2013) stated that everyone is able to read and write digitally via an Internet connection and websites with a shared interest. Warni et al. (2018) noted that e-

learning is advantageous for student autonomy due to the adaptability and time extension that students will enjoy with technology. E-learning gives students the chance to do useful activities at home, where they have more freedom than in the classroom. Likewise, Medoukali (2015) emphasized, "The 21st century has witnessed a revolution in the field of technology, making it an integral part of people's lives." It is necessary for those of us who live in a technologically advanced society to be surrounded by technology, which has permeated our lives and altered our methods of communication and information search. It has even altered our shopping habits " Medoukali (2015). According to Castells & Cardoso (2005), "wealth, power, and knowledge are counting on society to profit from the use of technological systems, such as computing, microelectronics, and digital communication." Likewise, technology can engage students in "authentic language learning experiences" (Bataineh and Al-Abdali, 2014, p. 160); it is a "valuable learning tool for listening and speaking and fundamental elements of interaction." In a similar vein, Zhang (2016) assumed "The significance of developing your listening and speaking abilities. Karanfil (2020) and Ibatova et al. (2021) say that practice makes it possible to use skills in things like natural communication. Kim (2020) states that exercises that are suitable for the described stages in their purest form are exceedingly uncommon, as familiarization is typically combined with other types of educational activities. The majority of methodical works present a two-stage scheme for mastering foreign language communication. Moreover, Rboul (2021) distinguishes three stages of learning language materials: the stage of skill development, the stage of skill improvement, and the stage of language skill development. In his article from 2018, Lu suggests that students do activities that are cognitive, transformative, and value-based to help they develop specialized communication skills. Therefore, it can be referred to as a stage of communication functioning in which success contingent on the quality of skills and abilities is developed in the early stages of learning a foreign language. According to Shamsitdinova (2021a), listening comprehension and speaking are two methods of oral communication in a foreign language. These types of language activities are supported by both the organizational activity of the teacher and the personal qualities of the language partner, whose presence is required for the speech to occur. From a linguistic perspective, speaking skills are developed through the acquisition of new lexico-grammatical material and generalized methods for its phrase-level assimilation. This process was reflected in Shakhakimova's study (2020). Numerous scientists have investigated issues concerning the growth of listening skills and capacities. Zagirovna et al. (2019) identified the mental processes underlying listening as a language activity. The researchers identified the specifics of listening comprehension as a type of language activity, as well as the obstacles that arise during the process of perceiving and comprehending a foreign language aurally, as well as strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Researchers developed exercises for teaching listening comprehension as well as methods for regulating the proficiency of this skill. They also created the theoretical foundations for the content and structure of listening comprehension teaching aids for students. Some researchers have also looked at the relationship between listening comprehension and other language activities, like speaking and reading (Ahmed & Ganapathy, 2021).

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

Several stages of research and experimentation were conducted to determine how digital technologies can support students in learning how to comprehend what they hear: evaluative stage: review of theoretical studies on the problem, identification of general

theoretical regulations, and data collection on the educational level of students in the control and experimental groups prior to the study.

Formative stage: formation of a task system aimed at improving students' listening comprehension skills through the use of video materials. Using this system in the experimental group during research and experimental work means figuring out how well the tasks are designed to improve students' ability to understand what they hear by using video materials, testing students' ability to understand what they hear, analyzing the data, and generalizing the results.

The null statistical hypothesis H₀ states that the formation of listening comprehension strategies is unaffected by the method of instruction. The alternative statistical hypothesis (H₁) is that incorporating digital technologies into education makes learning how to understand what people are saying easier.

3.2. Sampling

The research was conducted at the English language and literature department of the college of education at the University of Kufa in Najaf, Iraq. Students in the Department of English were selected at random to participate in the survey. Students in their fourth year of study conducted research and conducted experiments. The control group consisted of 50 persons, including 25 young men and 25 young women. The experimental group consisted of 50 persons, 11 of whom were male and 39 of whom were female. The age distribution of the study groups was identical, and all groups were studied according to the same higher education standard.

Throughout theoretic and practical learning, a single team of instructors worked with groups. Students in the experimental group were subjected to pedagogical conditions for the use of digital technologies in education. In the control group, students followed the standard curriculum. A group of five EFL teacher consultants also participated in the study.

Each participant was instructed to answer the survey questions truthfully and objectively. The survey was conducted in accordance with general ethical standards and norms. Everyone who responded to the survey agreed that their personal information and research findings could be used to write the article.

3.3. Methods

The choice of methods, the sequence and technique of their application are determined by the aim and objectives of the research. The study involved the following research methods.

1. Questionnaire survey.

The students reflected their opinion about these skills with the help of several questions contained in the questionnaire (Appendix A), which allowed us to study their problems and difficulties in learning listening comprehension and speaking skills.

2. The delphi technique based on the criteria of the level of development of the listening comprehension strategy

(Steinberg & Down, 2020). The conditions for the development of listening comprehension skills show that the main factors affecting the effectiveness of this process are:

- 1) Motivation of students for listening comprehension
- 2) Mechanisms of comprehension, memory, and prediction of listening comprehension results
- 3) Language actions of students.

Therefore, the following criteria for determining the level of development of listening comprehension skills will be considered:

- 1) Motivational
- 2) Cognitive
- 3) Executive. As shown in table 2.

Table 2: *Criteria for determining the level of listening comprehension skills*

Criteria	Description of the criterion	Diagnostic methods
Motivational	Reproduction of motivational characteristics of the individual: needs; goal setting; motives; systems of motivation	Questionnaire survey
Cognitive	Reproduction of knowledge taking into account: mental operations; comprehension mechanisms; memory; probabilistic forecasting.	Certification, delphi technique
Supervisory	Reproduction of skills: aural understanding of the text; performing language acts	Delphi technique

Using the criteria, we compared the hypothesis H0: "the data follow a normal distribution" to the alternative H1: "H0 is invalid" (Roldan, 2021).

Calculating the Student's t-test is as follow:

$$t = \frac{x_1 - x_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}, \quad (1)$$

X1 and X2 represent the samples.

N1 the number of participants at the input control;

N2 the number of participants in the final control;

S Represents the square root of the mean deviation (Formula 2):

$$s_x = \sqrt{\frac{1}{(n-1)n} \sum_{i=1}^n (x - x_i)^2}, \quad (2)$$

The survey was built using Google Forms. Data entry and processing were performed utilizing Microsoft Excel and SPSS Statistics 19.0. All information is presented relative to the number of participants (as a percentage).

4. Results

Figures 1 and 2 depict the dynamics of learning outcomes in EG and CG, respectively. The radar charts illustrate the proportion of students with basic and advanced levels, or the "productive" level of competence, at the beginning and end of the experiment.

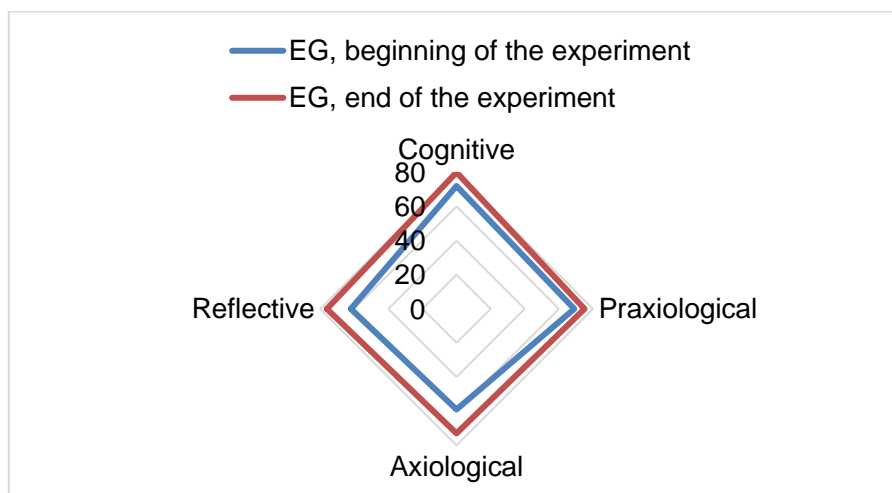


Fig. 1. Dynamics of the level of listening comprehension competence in the EG Based on the results of the study

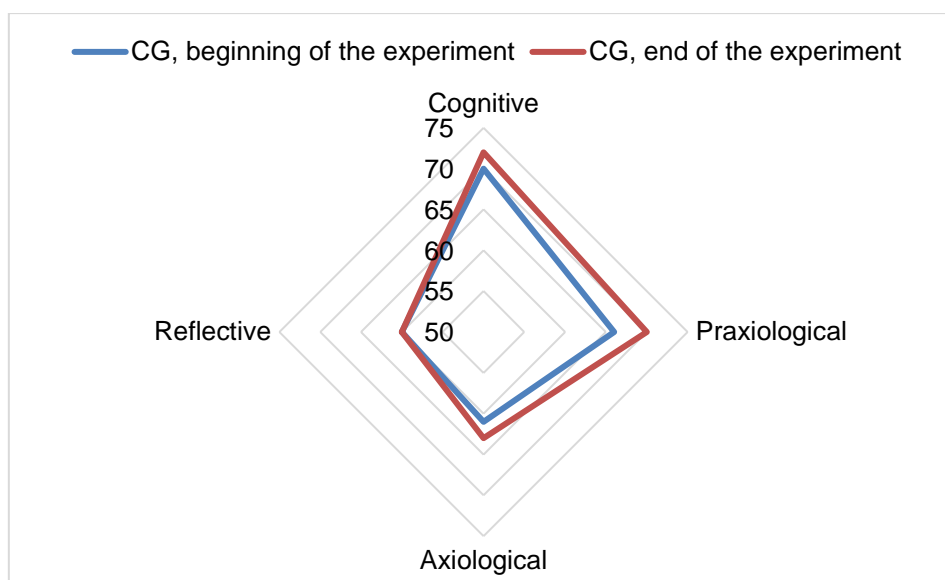


Fig. 2. Dynamics of the level of listening comprehension competence in the CG Based on the results of the study

The experimental group is more effective at developing competencies utilizing the methodology proposed by the study and digital technologies. Cognitive, pragmatic, and reflective criteria exhibit the most variance. The increase in the cognitive component is determined by the implementation of educational content adaptation strategies and multiple self-study process controls. An increase in the praxeological component is contingent on the increased activity of students in the educational process and, consequently, the growth of the activity component. The growth dynamics of the reflective component are determined by the inclusion of self-assessment methods and operational monitoring mechanisms for one's own learning outcomes. When the block of controlling influences was added to the structure of the educational process management sub-model, the axiological part of the model grew.

The results of participants' answers to the questionnaire's questions are depicted in Figure 3. The majority of participants to the first question indicate that they do not speak properly during English classes.

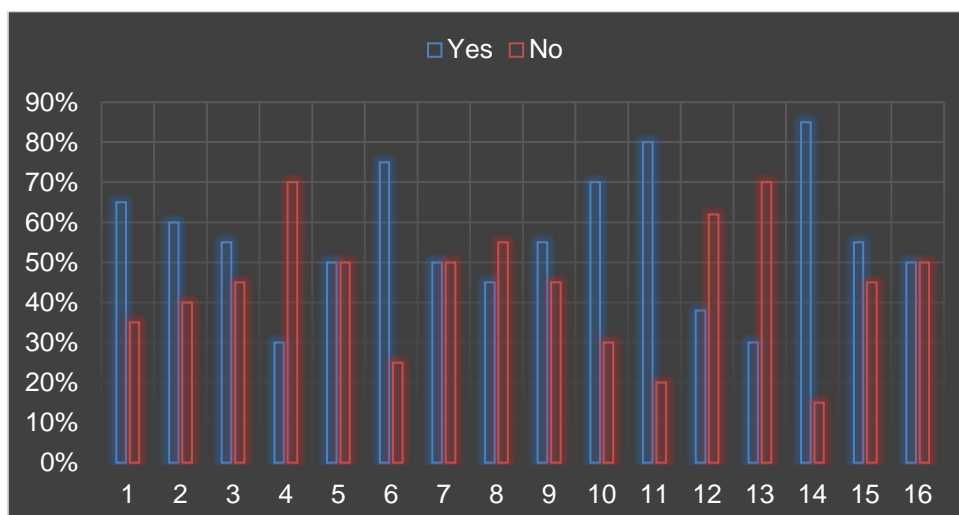


Fig. 3. *The results of respondents' answers to the questions proposed in the questionnaire based on the results of the study*

Only one-third of participants feel they cannot communicate in English with others, while the other two-thirds can do so with some difficulty. Regarding native speaker comprehension, the results are very different. More than half of students believe they can understand native speakers, but 40% say it is difficult or impossible. They admit that they usually listen to their teacher and, in some cases, audio materials.

A small number of participants say that they can watch the original version of a movie and learn what it is about or what the characters are saying, while 70% do so sometimes. Half of the participants say they usually listen to songs in English and understand them without subtitles or lyrics, while others say they can learn a song by heart but do not know what it says or how words in texts should be written.

Despite the importance of this type of activity, many students say they rarely do it in class because they are practicing grammar or reading more, which hinders speaking. Analyzing the results related to understanding different accents, about 55% of students believe their pronunciation is good and they can understand spoken expressions. The rest of the students believe they can demonstrate clear language, but they have problems.

Using statistical methods, we evaluated the reliability of research and experimental results. For example (Table 3), we will check the reliability of the experimental and control group students' input and final control.

Table 3: *Verifying the regularity of data in the EG at the beginning of the experiment*

Test statistics	p-value	A level	Conclusion
A = 0.66084	0.08258	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H ₀ on the normality of the distribution
W = 0.09589	0.1266	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H ₀ on the normality of the distribution
D = 0.06812	0.164	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H ₀ on the normality of the distribution
W = 0.98075	0.0656	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H ₀ on the normality of the distribution

Four out of five students support the importance of listening and speaking skills when learning a new language. Many of them understood the importance of listening and speaking skills and that they should spend more time in English classes. Many students believe that improving these skills is the best way to communicate in the outside world, which is important when communicating with foreigners and native English speakers. They know it is essential to know more than their mother tongue. So, all students in the selected groups answered all 16 questions before the test. This is why 100% of the survey was completed.

Analyzing the results of the tests, we can observe that the obtained p-value for the test exceeds a predefined level of significance. At a significance level of 0.05, there is no reason to reject the H_0 hypothesis regarding the rationality of the data distribution in the experimental group at the beginning of the experiment. A similar analysis was performed on the data of the control group at the beginning of the study. (Table 4).

Table 4: *Verifying the normality of data in the CG at the beginning of the experiment*

Test statistics	p-value	α level	Conclusion
A = 0.69777	0.06686	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H_0 on the normality of the distribution
W = 0.10571	0.09276	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H_0 on the normality of the distribution
D = 0.075773	0.0764	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H_0 on the normality of the distribution
W = 0.9824	0.0923	0.05	We accept the hypothesis H_0 on the normality of the distribution

Formal tests of the control group data confirm that they follow a normal distribution. The p-value significantly exceeds the predefined significance level, so it can be concluded that the initial data of the control and experimental groups are equally distributed. The students' t-test results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: *The results of Student's t-test*

	At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment
Student's t-test statistics	t = 0.82634	t = -5.7036
p value	0.5214	
A level	0.05	
Conclusion	H_0 is rejected	H_0 is accepted
Interpretation	No statistically significant differences were found between groups.	Statistically significant differences were found between groups.

The analysis revealed no significant differences between the CG and EG students at the start of the experiment. The t-test statistic is below the critical value and is therefore statistically insignificant. Thus, the null hypothesis is correct.

5. Discussion

In the process of learning a foreign language, listening comprehension receives the least amount of systematic attention compared to writing, reading, and even speaking. According to Abdullah (2021), future philology specialists receive insufficient training in

listening comprehension strategies. According to Barotovna's work, the process of teaching listening comprehension is still in its infancy. Students must use the language in authentic situations, not just for written assignments. In contrast, Ebrahimi and Elahifar (2021) and Shamsitdinova (2021b) report that the current level of implementation of various strategies for listening comprehension is high. Also, the authors stress how important it is to pay close attention to the content of programs for learning a foreign language. According to the aforementioned researchers, the foreign language training program should address the issue of developing communicative skills first. The issue of teachers' use of digital tools in higher education institutions is directly related to their IT skills. In his article, Tolochko (2021) asserts that the current level of pedagogical workers' readiness to use digital tools during lectures and practical work remains low. In the initial stages of learning a foreign language, the ability to comprehend spoken language plays a crucial role. Kulmagambetova and Batirgalieva (2021) note the importance of listening comprehension in the introductory stage of second language acquisition. The authors note that if the instructor lacks proficiency, the students will be unable to comprehend him or her correctly. Teachers of English are very important because they help students who have trouble speaking English after hearing it spoken by others.

Teachers should engage their students in a variety of activities to facilitate curriculum comprehension. By providing pertinent feedback on the subject being studied in class, the instructor can motivate the students. Students must be able to ask and respond to questions, as well as interrupt the lecturer to seek clarification. According to Znanetskyi (2022) and Sikora (2022), in this situation, the teacher can determine what the students do not understand and clear it up by assigning them listening comprehension-related activities. To the contrary, Manko et al. (2022) argue, to the contrary, that it is necessary to stimulate interest in self-study of a foreign language using digital means from the very beginning. In their study, Kulmagambetova and Batyrgalieva (2021) favor the use of educational videos for language acquisition. This combination of in-class and extracurricular work produces excellent results for acquiring the skill of aural speech perception, in which they attribute a significant role to digitization in the organization of student performance testing. This is also noteworthy. Digital tools facilitate both real-time and asynchronous monitoring of student progress.

6. Conclusions

The chosen research topic is relevant because foreign language students in higher education need better listening comprehension strategies. Results-based conclusions At the end of the teaching and learning experiment, the t-test statistic for EG and CG exceeds the critical value and is significant. Significant statistical differences between CG and EG at the end of the experiment allow the null hypothesis to be rejected and the alternative to be accepted. The research results showed reliable differences in CG and EG learning outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of digital technologies in developing listening comprehension strategies. The experiment showed that digital technologies can personalize student learning regardless of group size. This lets students create individual educational pathways.

Applications: The research is authentic because of the need to improve intercultural listening and speaking skills. The study's theoretical importance both theoretical and practical regulations can help present a more comprehensive picture of teaching EFL to university students. The data can be used to teach a foreign language.

Visions for further research: Future research possibilities despite widespread interest in the subject, the approach for administering listening comprehension tests using digital technologies is still in its early stages. More studies should be conducted to identify useful digital tools for methodological and technical support in the development of listening comprehension strategies.

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Appendix A

The Questionnaire

Name:	Stage/ Department:
Age:	Level:

Questions	Yes	No
1. Can you communicate in English?		
2. Do you understand a native speaker?		
3. Do you speak English during English lesson?		
4. Do you watch original revision films (English)?		
5. When you listen to English songs do you understand?		
6. In your interactive activities, do you work in pairs or groups? Group (yes) individual (no)?		
7. Is it difficult to you to understand some colloquial expression?		
8. Do you think your pronunciation in English is good?		
9. Do you have the capacity to understand different English accent (Indian, African, British, Canadian, Australian, Indonesian, and American)?		
10. Do you think that the process of practice listening and speaking are useful?		
11. How do you feel about the importance of listening skill? Important (yes), not important, less important (no)?		
12. Do you listen to English news on TV and radio?		
13. Do you speak English outside class?		
14. Could you identify the words spoken by the teacher?		
15. Do you listen to your classmate speaking in English?		
16. Does the teacher give chances to speaks and listen?		