CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses the EFL/ESL listening process, factors affecting listening comprehension, and studies related to listening strategies diagnosis and instruction. First, the listening process and the definition of listening strategies are discussed. Then, factors affecting listening comprehension are introduced. After that, four related studies on listening strategy diagnosis and instruction are reviewed. To sum up, a summary is made to present what the previous studies have or have not done. An alternative approach, sociocultural theory, is suggested to widen the previous understanding of the issues of strategy instruction and learner autonomy.

2.1 The EFL/ESL Listening Process

Prior to the 1970s, listening was commonly characterized as a receptive language skill in which listeners passively assimilate the messages presented to them by speakers (Morley, 1984). However, listening involves a more complex process than just hearing (Burlley-Allen, 1982). From the 1980s to the 1990s, research highlighted the important role that listening plays in language acquisition (Brown & Yule, 1983; Ellis, Tanaka & Yamazaki, 1994; Faerch & Kasper, 1986; Long, 1985). Listening comprehension has been described as an "interactive, interpretive process in which listeners engage in a dynamic construction of meaning" (Murphy, 1991, p. 56). It may involve linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, meaning construction, and responding. Researchers have been identified several steps which appear to be involved during the listening process such as that in Clark and Clark's model in which listening is further divided into 4 steps: 1) the listener takes in the raw speech and

holds an image of it in short-term memory. 2) An attempt is made to organize what was heard into constituents, identifying their content and function. 3) As constituents are identified, they are used to construct propositions, grouping the propositions together to form a coherent message. 4) Once the listener has identified and reconstructed the propositional meaning, these are held in long-term memory, and the form in which the message was originally received is deleted (Richard, 1983).

Anderson (1983) also divided listening comprehension into three interrelated cognitive processes: the perceptual process, parsing, and utilization. In the perceptual process, listeners focus on the oral text and preserve the sounds in echoic memory. Therefore, selective attention and directed attention are suggested to be crucial in this stage (Vandergrift, 2003). In the second parsing process, listeners use words, messages, and linguistic knowledge such as phonology, syntax, and semantics to segment the aural input stored in the short-term memory and to construct meaningful mental representations. Grouping and inferencing were suggested as being crucial in the second stage. And finally in the last utilization process, the mental representations of the textual meaning are linked with previous knowledge. Listeners use prior knowledge to assist comprehension and recall. Elaboration seems to be the dominant strategy at this stage (Vandergrift, 2003). To sum up, with the help of listening strategies, listeners construct meaning from the oral input by drawing upon their prior knowledge of the world and of the target language (Byrnes, 1984; Young, 1997). They also generate information in their long term memory and make their own interpretation of the spoken texts (Murphy, 1985; Mendelson, 1994) and fill in the gaps with logical guesses (Long, 1989; Omaggio, 1986; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994). Therefore, Brown (1977) claimed that both "bottom-up" and "top-down" processing play a crucial part in listening comprehension. Listeners may predict what is to be

heard or anticipate what will occur next based on their existing knowledge. Still other researchers proposed a more pervasive interactive model, integrating "bottom-up" and "top-down" processing, to illustrate the listening comprehension process. They asserted that listeners not only phrase the incoming aural stimuli into meaningful segments, but also actively use their personal world knowledge and previous experience to infer the intention of the speaker, make assumptions about what will happen next, and then verify their assumptions by inferring relevant cues from the speakers' utterance and nonverbal clues (Lin, 2000). It is believed that listeners apply both "bottom-up" and "top-down" models flexibly in the process of listening.

2.2 Factors Affecting Learners' Listening Comprehension

Since listening is a complex active process in which learners decode and construct the meaning of the text by drawing on their previous knowledge about the world as well as their linguistic knowledge, there seems to be many factors that affect listening comprehension. Some researchers have classified these factors into different categories (River, 1981; Boyle, 1984; Dirven & Oakeshott-Taylor, 1984; Samules, 1984; Power, 1986). After conducting an interview with thirty teachers and sixty students from two Hong Kong universities, Boyle (1984) suggested the lack of practice as the most important factor. He also pointed out such factors as linguistic understanding, general background knowledge, while attitude and motivation may affect listening indirectly but more powerfully. Two other factors that were mentioned by the students but not teachers in Boyle's interview were "memory" and "attention/concentration." Generally speaking, the factors identified by Boyle can be divided into four categories, i.e., listener factors, speaker factors, stimulus factors, and context factors. In her study, Teng (1993) further divided these factors into a

comprehensive list as presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 *Factors Influencing Listening Comprehension*
Adapted from Teng (1993)

A. Listener factors
1. Language facility, including phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic knowledge   (River; Dirven & Oakeshott-Taylor; Boyle)
2. Knowledge of the world (Boyle; Samuels)
3. Intelligence (Boyle; Samuels)
4. Physical condition (Boyle; Samuels)
5. Metacognitive strategies (Samuels; Power)
6. Motivation (Boyle; Samuels)
B. Speaker factors
1. Language ability: native speaker vs. nonnative speaker (Boyle)
2. Accent/dialect (Boyle; Power)
3. Speed of delivery (Boyle; Power)
4. Degree of pauses and redundancies (Boyle; Samuels; Power)
5. Prestige and personality (Boyle; Samuels)
C. Stimulus factors
1. Discussion topic (Samuels)
2. Abstractness of material (Boyle; Power)
3. Vagueness of words (Boyle; Power)
4. Presentation mode; audio only vs. audio and visual (Boyle; Power)
5. Acoustic environment (Boyle; Samuels; Power)
D. Context factors
1. Type of interactional event (Rivers; Samuels; Power)
2. Distraction during listening (Power)
3. Interval between listening and testing (Power)
4. Note-taking (Power)

2.3. The Need for Effective Listening Strategies

Table 2.1 reveals that both Samuels (1984) and Power (1986) regarded

metacognitive strategies as one of the factors that influence listening comprehension.

In general, researchers of listening comprehension strategies (Bacan, 1992a, 1992b; Henner-Stanchina, 1987; Murphy, 1985; Vandergrift, 1996) have found that listeners who were able to use various listening strategies flexibly were more successful in comprehending spoken texts, whereas listeners without the ability to apply adequate listening strategies tended to concentrate only on the text or word-for-word decoding. Therefore, the use of listening strategies seems to be an important indicator of whether a learner is a skillful listener or not. And the language teachers' task is not only to give students an opportunity to listen but to teach them how to listen well by using listening strategies (Mendelsohn, 1995). Many researchers have also endeavored to diagnose listening strategy use when the learners are engaging in different listening tasks (O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989). Still others have studied the instruction given in listening strategies and demonstrated its positive effect on listening comprehension (Thompson & Rubin, 1996). It is believed that listeners will use different listening strategies to assist their retention of the oral input since most listeners have a limited memory capacity for the target language (Richard, 1983).

In the following section, this researcher will review several studies that are related to listening strategies firstly, by presenting a definition of listening strategies and a released inventory, secondly, by reviewing certain studies that were conducted to diagnose second /foreign learners' listening strategies, and thirdly, by reviewing certain studies that were done to explore the effect of instruction in listening strategies. To sum up, a summary of what these certain studies have or have not done will be illustrated and Vygotskian sociocultural theory will be suggested and adopted to deal with the issue of strategy instruction in order to account for the phenomenon that the previous studies have not paid enough attention to.

2.4 Definition and Inventory of Listening Strategies

Studies of the listening strategies of successful language learners have identified a number of cognitive and metacognitive as well as social/ affective strategies that are used by second and foreign language learners (Brown & Palinscar, 1982; Thompson & Rubin, 1996). According to Derry and Murphy (1986), cognitive strategies are behaviors, techniques or actions used by learners to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or a skill. These strategies can be further divided into inferencing, elaboration, imagery, summarization, translation, transfer, and repetition. Metacognitive strategies are management techniques by which learners control their learning process via planning, monitoring, evaluating, and modifying their learning approaches (Rubin, 1990). They can also be divided into planning, monitoring, evaluation, and problem identification (Vandergrift, 1997). McDonald et al. (1979) who conducted a study of cooperative learning proposed a third type of strategy called social/affective strategies. Chamot, Küpper, and Impink-Hernandez (1988) also defined such categories as those that involve interacting with another person to assist learning or using affective control to assist a learning task. They are divided into cooperation, question, and self-talk.

Oxford (1990) developed a comprehensive inventory of learning strategies in which strategies for all four skills were divided into two categories each containing several subgroups. The first category was that of direct strategies that included the use of memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies; the other category was that of indirect strategies that included metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. Direct strategies are believed to be strategies that directly involve the target language, whereas indirect strategies are those that support and manage learning without directly involving the target language (Oxford, 1990). Among these strategies,

listening strategies consisted of 52 different items. Table 2.2 was made to show an

inventory of listening strategies based on Chamot (1993), Vendergrift (1997), Young

(1997) and Oxford (1990).

Table2.2 *Inventory of Listening Strategies*
Adapted from Vandergrift (2003, 1997), Chamot (1993), Young (1997) and Oxford
(1990)

Strategy Type	Definition
Metacognitive Strategies	Metacognitive strategies are executive processes used to plan, monitor, and evaluate a learning task.
1. Planning	Developing an awareness of what needs to be done to accomplish a listening task, developing an appropriate action plan or contingency plan to overcome difficulties that may interfere with successful completion of the task.
1a. Advance Organization	Clarifying the objectives of an anticipated listening task and/or proposing strategies for handling it.
1b. Directed Attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to the listening task and to ignore irrelevant distractors; maintaining attention while listening.
1c. Selective Attention	Deciding to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that assist in understanding and/or task completion.
1d. Self-Management	Understanding the conditions that help one to successfully accomplish listening tasks and arranging for the presence of those conditions.
2. Monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a listening task
2a. Comprehension monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting one's understanding at the local level.
2b. Double-Check Monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting one's understanding across the task or during the second time through the oral text.
3. Evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's listening comprehension against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.
4. Problem Identification	Explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion.
Cognitive Strategies	Interacting with the material to be learned, manipulating the material physically or mentally or applying a specific technique to the language learning task.
1. Inferencing	Using information within the text or conversational context to guess the meaning of unfamiliar language items associated with a listening task or to fill in missing information.
1a. Linguistic Inferencing	Using known words in an utterance to guess the meaning of unknown words.

1b. Voice Inferencing	Using tone of voice and /or paralinguistics to guess the meaning of unknown words in an utterance.
1c. Extra-linguistic Inferencing	Using background sounds and relationships between speakers in an oral text, material in a response sheet or concrete situational referents to guess the meaning of unknown words.
1d. Between-Parts Inferencing	Using information beyond the local sentential level to guess at meaning.
2. Elaboration	Using prior knowledge from outside the text or conversational context and relating it to knowledge gained from the text or conversation in order to fill in missing information.
2a. Personal Elaboration	Referring to prior experience personally.
2b. World Elaboration	Using knowledge gained from experience in the world.
2c. Academic Elaboration	Using knowledge gained in academic situation.
2d. Questioning Elaboration	Using a combination of questions and world knowledge to brainstorm logical possibilities.
2e. Creative Elaboration	Making up a storyline or adopting a clever perspective.
3. Imagery	Using mental or actual pictures or visuals to represent information.
4. Summarization	Making a mental or written summary of language and information presented in a listening task.
5. Translation	Rendering ideas from one language in another in a relatively verbatim manner.
6. Transfer	Using knowledge of one language (e.g., cognates) to facilitate listening in another.
7. Repetition	Repeating a chunk of language (a word or phrase) in the course of performing a listening task.
8. Note-Taking	Writing down key words and concepts while listening.
9. Deduction	Reaching a conclusion about the target language because of other information the listener thinks to be true.
10.Resourcing	Using available references about the target language, including textbooks or the previous tasks.
Social/ Affective Strategies	Working with another person on a task or controlling one's emotion while listening.
1.Cooperation	Working together with peers to solve a problem, pool information, check a listening task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance,
1a. Reprising	Showing the speakers that they didn't get the message across.
1b. Feedback	Giving comments about the aural text.
2. Questioning	Asking for understanding of what has been said to you without committing yourself to a response immediately.
2a. Uptaking	Using kinesics and paralinguistics to signal the interlocutor to go on.
2b. Clarifying	Asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the language and/or task, or posing questions to the self.

| 2c. Hypothesis Testing | Asking specific questions about facts in the text to verify one's schematic representation of the text. |
| 3 Self-Talking | Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to complete the learning task. |

To sum up, listening strategies, which are included in learning strategies in general, are defined as special techniques or activities that learners apply to facilitate their acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information (Oxford, 1990). These strategies have been proved to be one of the important factors that affect listening comprehension.

2.5 Studies Related to Listening Strategy

Two distinctive types of research on listening comprehension strategies have already received much attention in recent decades. One is to diagnose the learners' use of listening strategies; the other is to provide instruction in listening strategies. In this section, two areas of study will be reviewed. The first focuses on the diagnosis of strategy use in two previous empirical studies done by Vandergrift (2003) and Teng (1998); the second focuses on the effect of strategy instruction in studies done by O'Malley (1987) and Thompson & Rubin (1996).

2.5.1 Recent Studies on Diagnosing Learners' Use of Listening Strategies and Problems

  a. Vandergrift (2003)

   Based on the previous studies of McDonough (1999), Lynch (1998), Chamot, OMalley, Küpper, & Impinl-Hernandez (1987) and Vandergrift (1997), Vandergrift (2003) examined the types and the differences of listening strategies used by more skilled and less skilled 7th grade listeners while they listened to authentic texts in

French. A think–aloud procedure was employed to gather the data and it was further analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The study lasted for 2 years as a longitudinal investigation in which the progress of an experimental and a control group of 36 learners were compared. Two research questions were addressed: (a) What are the strategies that junior high school learners of French use while listening to authentic texts in French? (b)What are the differences in the use of listening strategies reported by more skilled and less skilled listeners? The learners were classified as either a more skilled or less skilled listener, according to the score obtained on a listening comprehension test in which authentic dialogues in French were first presented followed by multiple-choice questions that required learners to verify their comprehension. The researcher used a taxonomy of listening comprehension strategies to code the think-aloud protocols. This taxonomy was further divided into three major strategy categories (metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective) as well as the sub-strategies within each category. The mean and the percentage for the use of each strategy by the more skilled and less skilled listeners were also calculated.

The quantitative analysis firstly showed that all the participants used metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies. The only metacognitive strategy that didn't appear to be used was the "evaluation" strategy. Secondly, the more skilled listeners appear to gain more control of the listening process through the use of metacognitive strategies, primarily "comprehension monitoring." Thirdly, the more skilled listeners engaged in more questioning elaboration, in that they continue to ask questions about what they were hearing, thus demonstrating openness and flexibility in their approach. Finally, the less skilled listeners engaged in more direct translation. Their approach appeared to involve primarily bottom-up processing, which impedes the development of a conceptual framework and the efficient construction of meaning.

Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, compared and captured the true phenomenon about how a given strategy was used or the particular combinations of strategies used to build meaning. In the study, Rose, a less skilled listener, appeared to engage in translation and applied only a bottom-up approach which resulted in a superficial engagement with the text and with little construction of the meaning. However, in the case of Nina, a more skilled learner, she seemed to use a more dynamic approach combining both top-down and bottom-up processes to allocate more resources to organize more metacognitive strategies.

Vandergrift's studies shed light on listening strategies in several perspectives. First, more skilled listeners reported to have higher level of use of metacognitive strategies. Next, it offered an identification of a less skilled listener by showing their frequent engagement in superficial translation strategies. Third, it pointed out the different approaches employed by the listeners of different level. A more skilled listener appeared to be both more purposeful and flexible in approaching the task, whereas the less skilled listener appeared to be more passive.

b. Teng (1998)

Teng's study investigated the listening comprehension strategies used by 51 freshmen university students in Taiwan. They were at a low-intermediate level of EFL. A listening comprehension test and a listening strategies questionnaire based on Oxford (1990), that included 52 Likert-scaled items of six categories, namely memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social, and affective, were adopted to investigate the frequency and the pattern of the use of these strategies. The students first listened to an audiotape twice, and then answered 20 multiple-choice questions. They then completed the questionnaire.

The results indicated that the " compensation strategy" was that most often

employed by all subjects among the six strategy categories, "cognitive" was the next used, and " affective" was the least often used. In addition, the individual strategies with the highest frequency of use among the 52 strategies as a whole were "paying attention" and "translating." Moreover, the study showed that effective listeners used significantly more strategies than ineffective listeners did in five of the six categories, which implied that the difference in listening proficiency between effective and ineffective listeners seemed to be related to the number of listening strategies they employed. Finally, Teng's study also had some suggestions for the instruction in EFL listening strategies which were a) Instruction in listening strategies should include "note-taking" skills for the college students usually listen to lectures delivered in English in class. b) Students should be placed in the English-speaking environment as often as possible by arranging study tours or exchange programs to enable students to develop their cultural understanding. c) There should be a focus on listening practice first and speaking practice should be based on the learners' progress. d) There should be teaching activities that increase the students' employment of affective strategies and thus promote their interest. e) The students should utilize self-monitoring, self-reflection, and self-evaluation by keeping learning journals for one semester to gain more awareness about EFL listening comprehension.

To sum up, Teng's study shed light on the diagnosis of the use of the listening strategies for EFL students. The major finding that EFL students tend to use a "translating" strategy, echoed that of Vandergrift (2003) which showed that it seemed to be a "bottom-up" strategy for less skilled listeners, who in this case, were college students with low-intermediate listening proficiency.

The suggestions for the instruction in listening strategies in an EFL environment provided this researcher with many insights as to the choice of the most suitable

listening strategies for learners.

2.5.2 Related Studies on Listening Strategy Instructions

Numerous studies have suggested that strategies can be taught and that such teaching increases performance in the second language process (Chomot 1990). However, it is also believed that strategies cannot be effective if learners do not use them (Peter and Kimberly 1996). Several researchers also suggested that typically, students are not using the full range of appropriate strategies and are not aware of the available strategies that they could be using (Cohen 1990; Ehrman and Oxford 1989; Oxford and Crookall 1989). As a result, the impact of instruction in strategy use is important. In order to make the strategy instruction effective, Maclintyre (1994) proposed that one needed to know first under which condition the learner used the strategies well. He proposed the social-psychological variables to predict the learners' use of language strategies. The model suggested three factors determined the learners' use of strategies. They are knowledge of the strategy, having a reason to use it, and not having a reason not to use it. This model indicated that knowing a strategy well, perceiving its effectiveness, and not considering it to be difficult to use predict the majority of the variance in strategy use. It further suggested that strategy training that addresses only one variable (e.g., increasing knowledge) may not be effective if it does not also increase the perception of effectiveness and ease of use (Peter and Kimberly 1996). As a result, training that simply demonstrates a particular strategy without showing when it will be most effective is less likely to produce high rates of use than training that also shows when to use it.

Moreover, students with a higher motivation toward learning will be more likely to expend the effort needed to engage in the use of strategies. According to Gardner

(1985), motivation stems from the desire to meet and communicate with members of the target language community and positive attitudes towards the learning situation.

Therefore, instruction that aims to improve the learners' use of strategies needs to take account of these conditions to increase the learners' motivation, to instill in the student the perception that he or she knows the strategy well, that it will be effective, and that it is not difficult to use by promising the mastery of language process so as to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety, and maintain or improve both attitudes and motivation.

Several researchers have done numerous studies on the effectiveness of strategy instruction. They will be introduced as followed:

a. O'Malley (1987)

O'Malley conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the effectiveness of strategy training on ESL learners in classrooms. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of strategy training on the performance in academic listening, speaking and vocabulary tasks. The 75 subjects, who were all ESL students at an intermediate level of English proficiency and attending three high schools in the United States, were randomly grouped into two experimental groups and a control group. The experimental groups consisted of a metacognitive group and a cognitive group respectively. These two groups received instruction in listening strategies for fifty minutes daily for eight days within a two-week period. The metacognitive group received instruction in "selective-attention", "note-taking", and "cooperation" while the cognitive group received instruction in "note-taking" and "cooperation". The listening materials included four five-minute videotapes that simulate lectures on academic subjects. Each lecture was accompanied by four daily tests. In addition, pre-tests and post-tests were conducted on the first and the last days out of a ten-day

period.

Although the results from the post-test failed to indicate a significant level of improvement, yet the experimental groups still out-performed the control group in the four daily progressive tests. The failure in finding a significant difference between two experimental groups and the control group on two daily tests and the post-test were explained as follows: First, the material for listening comprehension might be too difficult for the subject. Therefore, they failed to apply the strategies to the task effectively. Second, the time for the learners to practice, familiarize, retain, internalize and transfer the strategies might be insufficient. Last, the inconclusive result may be due to the fast-fading cues.

O'Malley's study gave rise to many implications as to how listening strategy instruction may be more successful if we consider the time spent on instruction and practice. Spending a longer time on these two aspects was suggested. Also, the material selected for teaching and testing should reflect the students' current proficiency. Otherwise, students may still find it too hard to apply the instructed strategy and lose heart.

b. Thompson and Rubin (1996)

The purpose of this longitudinal, classroom-based study was to investigate whether systematic instruction in the use of a range of cognitive and metacognitive strategies would result in an improvement of listening comprehension performance in Russian. This study considered the importance of teachers' familiarity with learner strategies and also the role of vision via video in listening comprehension. The subjects were students enrolled in a required third-year Russian language course at George Washington University. Their speaking ability was in the ACTFL Novice High-Intermediate Low range at the beginning of the year. They were divided into an

experimental group and a control group. The students were taught to apply both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies were taught for each genre in the study including that of a) Drama, with a focus on the story line, b) Interview, with a focus on question-and-answer sequences and, c) News, with a focus on who, what, where, when, and how. Metacognitive strategies included planning, defining goals, monitoring, and evaluating.

The results confirmed that systematic instruction in the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies did improve listening comprehension. The students in the experimental group showed at least a ten-percent improvement on the video comprehension post-test as compared to those in the control group. However, on the audio test the differences between the two groups were not significant. The reasons for this phenomenon were as follows: First, an ETS audio test, the format of the test the researchers selected to use, was not parallel to the type of instruction which the students had been given and which focused on giving students visual cues contained in the videos to facilitate their listening comprehension. Second, the items in the ETS audio were not related to the genres that the researchers taught. In addition, the authentic materials employed in the classrooms may have been gone beyond the students' current level of listening proficiency.

To sum up, Vandergrift (2003), Teng (1997), and other researchers suggested a positive role for listening strategies and the importance of instruction. However, they focused only on the diagnosis of strategy use and left the instructional effects unexplored. Moreover, the subjects in the studies were college and senior high school students, with little attention being given to the use of listening strategies by junior high school students.

O'Malley (1987), Thompson and Rubin (1996) further explored the effect of

listening strategy instruction and noted a positive correlation between strategy instruction and listening comprehension. However, the listening material did not seem to match the students' current proficiency level, which may lead to failure in understanding listeners' progress.

In all, the studies above focused on the effects of listening strategy instruction and thus use a cognitive approach to conduct the research quantitatively to investigate the effects of the instruction. Like all those traditions in psychology and linguistic, these studies treated strategy instruction as an input and that language acquisition is basically a matter of information-processing process in which only the learner's ability to digest the input is concerned. In other words, the learner is regarded as an isolated figure and cognition is essentially individual phenomena isolated from the environment or the context in which the learning actually happens. Table 2.3 below is a summary of what the previous studies have done and what they have not done.

Table 2.3 *A Summary of What the Previous Studies Have Done or Not Done*

Studies	Finding	Have not done
A. Vandergrift (2003)	1. He identified types and differences of listening strategies used by more and less skilled listeners. 2. More skilled listener appeared to be more purposeful and flexible in approaching the tasks.	1. Failed to account for the learners' perspectives toward using the strategies. 2. Failed to give attention to the use of listening strategies of junior high school students.
B. Teng (1998)	1. EFL students tended to use 'translating' strategy. 2. She suggested selection of listening strategies when instructing the strategies.	1. Failed to give attention to the use of listening strategies of junior high school students.
C. O'Malley (1987)	1. He suggested a longer time for students to practice the strategy and to make the instruction successful. 2. Material selected for teaching should reflect students' current proficiency.	1. Failed to find significant difference between the groups given metacognitive as well as cognitive strategies and the groups which did not receive any instruction.
D. Thompson and Rubin (1996)	1. They confirmed that the systematic instruction in the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies do improve listening comprehension.	1. Failed to account for the learners' perspectives and the real learning phenomenon when receiving the instruction in strategies.

2.6 The Need for Sociocultural theory

Traditional SLA cognitive approach focus mostly on the effect of strategy instruction, and issues such as the learners' emotions, and attitudes toward strategy instruction are often not discussed. These aspects may also affect the learning outcome powerfully, yet they have not raised enough attention.

Therefore, this study attempted to employ Vygotskian's sociocultural perspective as an alternative approach to investigate the strategy use of four Taiwanese junior high schools. Sociocultural theory is different from traditional SLA cognitive perspectives in that it argues that learning is an interaction between the learners and the external environment including learning materials, mediations and people in this environment. Many contextual factors may intertwine to determine the outcome and the condition of learning. Kozulin (1990) pointed out that in Vygotskian sociocultural perspectives, higher mental processes, such as logical memory, selective attention, reasoning, analysis and the metacognitive dimension of problem solving, actually go beyond the individual and depend on historically specific cultural systems of mediation. As in Chao's term (2007), "All higher mental functions are results of social relationships and are mediated by culturally-developed physical or conceptual artifacts." In the meantime, these higher mental functions actually bear a striking similarity to categories of learning strategies reported in the cognitive-oriented literature (Bialystok, 1981; Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Yet, Vygotskian theory focuses more on the origin of social, cultural and historical interaction and claims that it is the concept of mediation that plays a critical role in the construct of activity and generation of higher mental processes. In fact, mediation has been considered Vygotsky's most important contribution (Wertsch, 1985, p.15). Mediation refers to symbolic tools, practices for thought or "means and practices which, through social interaction,

become internalized and thus available for independent activity" (John-Steiner, et al, 1994, p.141). In other words, it is the instrument of cognitive change. Donato & Mccormick (1994) further pointed out that the source of mediation was either a material tool, a system of symbols, notably language; or the behavior of another human being in social interaction. Therefore, mediators can be objects, symbols and persons. They will transform natural and spontaneous impulses into higher mental processes. Little (2000), following Vygotsky, believes that the individual's linguistic knowledge is socially constituted since the higher cognitive functions are internalized from social interaction. As a promoter of learner autonomy, he argues that the learners can achieve higher levels of autonomy only by first interacting with others or through the dependence on more capable peers or adult guidance. After social interaction, the learner then can find a moment to 'step back' as an external observer to reflect on what has happened to him or her and to decide what he or she needs to learn next. After planning, monitoring, and evaluation, the learner then indulge in the practice of language learning or language use autonomously once again through social interaction with others. In his sense, autonomous learning is a two-way spiral process in which the learner has to move back and forth between the social and the individual.

Enlightened by Little (2000), the researcher believes that the instruction in strategies, which aims to foster learner autonomy, needs to account for how the learner interacts with the external environment other than discussing its impact only in terms of its effectiveness. The researcher attempts to apply sociocultural theory to investigate the impact of listening strategy instruction, hoping that it may offer an alternative view to account for the learners' affective domain, their perspectives, motivation, and emotions toward the instruction. It is hoped that this case study may give a full description of the true phenomenon of what actually happens when

embedding listening strategy instruction in regular English classes at junior high level.