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Listening Strategy Use of Korean EFL Middle School Students

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This research investigates listening strategies and the relationship between the employment of strategy and listening proficiency of Korean EFL middle school students. One hundred and four middle school students (N = 104) participated in this study and their strategy use was assessed through a questionnaire adapted from Oxford's (1990) SILL and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). To measure listening proficiency, the English Listening Ability Test designed by 15 city and provincial offices of education in Korea was used. The results show that students employed a moderate use of strategies; compensation strategies were used most frequently and metacognitive strategies were used the least frequently. Significant differences were found in the use of implicit strategy among different listening proficiency groups, but not in their use of behavioral strategy. Furthermore, there were significant differences in the use of implicit memory, cognitive and compensation strategies among groups of students with different listening proficiencies, but not in their use of metacognitive strategy. The results from multiple regression analysis indicate that implicit strategy use could play an important role in listening comprehension. The findings suggest the need for additional research to explore the effect of listening strategy training for English language learners.

[English listening/listening proficiency/English listening strategies]

Ⅰ. INTRODUCTION

Language learning has been examined in light of four language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Among these four skills, listening can be a crucial driving force behind the development of other skills: "Listening comprehension is a highly integrative and active process and plays an important role in language learning and acquisition, facilitating other language skills" (Vandergrift, 1999, p. 168).

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Traditionally, listening has been treated as a passive process. The teaching of listening skills has been neglected for a long time, playing only a minor role in a speaking program. However, listening as an essential part of communicative competence plays a vital role in language learning and acquisition since it provides language input for the learner (Dunkel, 1991; Feyten, 1991; Krashen, 1985).

In recent years, learning strategies have drawn great research attention, as the focus of language teaching and learning shifted from teacher-centered classrooms to student-centered ones. Students' active learning processes play a significant role in language acquisition and might influence the effect of language teaching. These active processes can be referred to as *learning strategies*. Strategy use involves some conscious awareness on the part of the learner (Green & Oxford, 1995). Learning strategies based on cognitive theories have received great research interest, focusing on good language learners' behaviors to facilitate language development. Strategies can help the development of language competence in various ways (Oxford, 1990; Rigney, 1978).

Numerous research studies have investigated the kinds of learning strategies that learners use in listening (e.g., Murphy, 1987; O'Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989; Vandergrift, 1997), and the relationship between the strategy use with other variables, especially with listening proficiency (e.g., Bacon, 1992; Chao, 1997; Goh, 1998; Lee, 2009; Park, 1997; Vandergrift, 1992, 1997; Young, 1996). Some studies show that more proficient listeners employ a greater and wider variety of strategies, while less proficient listeners employ fewer strategies (Bacon, 1992; Chao, 1997; Chung, 2006; Goh, 1998; Vandergrift, 1992, 1997; Young, 1996). Also, research studies suggest that listening strategies can be taught and that strategy instruction is needed (e.g., Mendelsohn, 1994, 1995; Thompson & Rubin, 1996). However, since the majority of the past studies on listening strategies have been conducted with university-level or high school students, the findings might not be fully applicable to younger children.

In addition, in a foreign language setting like Korea, where learners' exposure to the target language is insufficient and access to language use are limited, the use of listening strategy might play a significant role in language classrooms. In particular, middle school English education may be a critical period for listening instruction in Korea, because students begin devoting to learning English with increased English class hours. According to the Seventh National Curriculum Revision, middle school students need to maintain and even increase the interest in English they have developed in elementary school, and develop basic communication ability based on English taught at the elementary level (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2006). In reality, while elementary school English education focuses on speaking and listening skills, without any burden of pressure of written exams, English education in middle schools seems to fail to develop students' communicative competence. As Y. Kim (2006) suggested, due to the competitive nature of university entrance exams, middle school English education in Korea

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emphasizes on other fields such as rote memory of grammar and reading comprehension, rather than listening skills, and such emphasis also diminishes students' interest in English.

Furthermore, the importance of listening skills is increasingly recognized in line with the government plan to include a speaking test and to raise the proportion of listening test in Korean university entrance exam. Also, with student-centered and individualized instruction by leveled English classes, the use of listening strategies might be needed to help students comprehend language input. Listening strategy research may therefore have some implications for teaching practices in English classrooms at Korean middle schools.

The purpose of this study is to examine the listening strategy use of Korean middle school students who are learning English as a foreign language. It also investigates the possible differences in the use of strategies between Korean middle school students of different levels of listening proficiency, and the relationship between listening strategies and listening proficiency. This research addresses three research questions.

1. What listening strategies do Korean EFL middle school students frequently use?
2. Are there any differences in the use of listening strategies among students with different levels of listening proficiency?
3. What is the relationship between the listening strategy use and listening proficiency?

With respect to research question 2, two hypotheses are formulated. First, there should be a significant difference in the use of behavioral strategies among students with different levels of listening proficiency. High proficiency listeners should be more aware of listening strategies and use them more frequently than low proficiency listeners. Students with higher listening proficiency have shown the greater use of strategies (e.g., Chao, 1997; Chung, 2006). Second, there should be no significant difference in the use of implicit strategies among students with different levels of listening proficiency. Green (1991) suggested language input consciousness, and found that advanced language learners used some learning strategies less frequently than intermediate learners, who in turn used them more often than beginners did. As for implicit listening strategies, high proficiency listeners might have automatized their learning behavior and may be using the strategies subconsciously. In contrast, low proficiency listeners might not be aware of or have not developed the conscious implicit repertoire of learning strategies.

Ⅱ. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies are "specific actions or steps taken by learner to make

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learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), these strategies involve "special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 1). Despite the absence of agreement as to the degree of consciousness (Cohen, 1998; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002), language learning strategies reflect some levels of learners' conscious movement learning (e.g., Bialystok, 1978; Cohen, 1998; Oxford & Cohen, 1992) to improve the effectiveness of their own learning. Cohen (1998) defined language learning strategies as "a process consciously employed by learners to enhance the learning or use of a second language through storage, retention, recall, and application" (p. 4). In the same vein, Schmidt argued that "if students are not able to identify their strategies because they are used unconsciously, the behavior should be referred to as a 'process' not a strategy", and Ellis suggested that "if strategies are unconsciously and automatically used, they lose significance as strategies" (as cited in Cohen, 1998, p.11). Oxford and Cohen (1992) argued that explicit strategy training is useless if strategies are unconsciously employed.

Language learning strategies assist learners in becoming more independent as they build learner autonomy and consciously control their own process (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Chamot (2005) argued that learning strategies play a significant role in second language learning and teaching, because "students and teachers can get insight into metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective process during the language learning process" (p. 112). Thus, research studies suggest that learning strategy might help less proficient language learners who can be taught appropriate learning strategies to become better language learners (Grenfell & Harris, 1999).

2. Classifications of Language Learning Strategies

Researchers have proposed different comprehensive classifications of language learning strategies (e.g., O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981). Oxford's (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) strategy systems have received considerable attention (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002) and have been extensively employed by researchers. First, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have differentiated and categorized language learning strategies as metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. The classification system of learning strategies is based on the cognitive psychology theory of information processing. Metacognitive strategies plan, monitor, or evaluate cognitive learning processes so that the mental processes proceed effectively. Cognitive strategies directly manipulate the information or apply specific techniques for understanding or recalling the learned materials. Socio-affective strategies involve interaction with other persons, or control over emotions in order to complete a task.

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Second, Oxford (1990) developed a strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) and presents six categories of language learning strategies: three direct strategies (cognitive, memory, and compensation), and three indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social strategies). Direct strategies can directly affect language processing, whereas indirect strategies might relate to overall management of language learning.

According to Oxford's (1990) classification system, memory strategies help remember and retrieve new information, for example, grouping, associating/elaborating, using imagery, semantic mapping, structured reviewing, using key words, representing sounds in memory, and using physical responses or sensation. Cognitive strategies directly manipulate the language material by processing information and restructuring (Oxford, 1990). Some examples are reasoning, practicing sounds and forms, analyzing, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to activate schemas, and translating (Oxford, 2001). Compensation strategies help learners to make up for missing knowledge and to overcome linguistic knowledge gaps through guessing, guessing from context or by using linguistic and other clues.

Oxford's (1990) metacognitive strategies are concerned with managing and controlling the learning process overall. Examples of such strategies are paying attention, arranging a schedule, identifying and planning a goal of task, regulating or monitoring mistakes, and evaluating progress. Affective strategies control emotions, and develop self-confidence and encouragement in language learning, such as lowering anxiety by using deep breathing or music, making positive statements, and rewarding oneself for good achievement. Social strategies are related to cooperation with others and being culturally and socially aware of language learning, including asking for clarification, cooperating with others or native speakers, and improving cultural understanding.

Hsiao and Oxford (2002) compared classification theories of language learning strategies. They proposed that O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) cognitive strategies integrate Oxford's (1990) cognitive and memory strategies, and that Oxford's compensation strategies can be a part of O'Malley and Chamot's cognitive strategies. In addition, Oxford (1990) classified O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) socio-affective strategies into separate social and affective strategies. However, Hsiao and Oxford (2002) argued that Oxford's (1990) classification system is superior, as it considers the variety of strategy use reported by language learners. For example, Oxford (1990) separated memory from cognitive strategies. Memory strategies seem to have a clear distinctive function to help storing and retrieving information from long-term memory. This is distinguished from cognitive strategies involving deep processing (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Oxford's (1990) compensation strategy can compensate for missing knowledge in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

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3. Language Learning Strategy Use in Listening and Listening Proficiency

A number of studies have demonstrated the differences in strategy use from more and less proficient listeners in foreign and second language environments. Murphy (1987) examined differences in strategy use of ESL college students of different levels of listening proficiency. Higher proficiency listeners used many more specific and a greater variety of strategies when interacting with a text than did lower proficiency listeners. O'Malley et al. (1989) discovered a different use of listening strategy between more and less proficient ESL high school students in the phases of listening (perceptual, parsing, and utilization). They found that more proficient listeners used more self-monitoring, elaboration, and inferencing than did less proficient listeners.

Rost and Ross (1991) found that more proficient Japanese listeners used forward inferences and continuation signals, whereas less proficient listeners used lexical reprises and global reprises. They proposed that the choice of receptive strategies is related to language proficiency and cognitive constraints. Vandergrift (1992, 1997) compared different patterns of strategy use of more and less proficient Canadian high school students learning French. The results of his study indicate that the use of metacognitive strategies might be a predictor of learners' listening proficiency. While both more and less proficient listeners used cognitive strategies, the former showed much greater use of metacognitive strategies than the latter. Less proficient listeners relied heavily on repetition or translation to compensate for their limited linguistic knowledge. Chao's (1997) study of EFL college students in Taiwan showed that higher proficiency listeners employed strategies more frequently than lower proficiency listeners.

The results of Korean EFL studies also show the differences in listening strategy use among learners of different levels of proficiency. Park (1997) found that Korean EFL university students' use of listening strategies was significantly correlated with listening proficiency. D. Kim's (1999) study of Korean university students showed a significant positive correlation between the use of metacognitive strategies and listening proficiency. Chung (2006) investigated the strategy use of Korean university students, and revealed that more proficient listeners used a wider variety of listening strategies except for social strategies. She also noted that metacognitive strategies distinguished listening proficiency groups and predicted students' listening proficiency. Lim and Cha (2007) reported that Korean university students largely used metacognitive and affective strategies. They also found that the use of strategies was positively correlated with listening proficiency. Advanced students used metacognitive and affective strategies more frequently than did intermediate and beginning students. Advanced and intermediate students used more cognitive strategies than beginners.

Moon (2005) investigated effective listening strategies of Korean high school students,

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and reported that more proficient listeners used more strategies than less proficient listeners. Affective strategies were often used, and social and metacognitive strategies were infrequently used; however, there was a significant difference in the use of metacognitive strategies between more and less proficient listeners. Kwon (2005) examined the listening and reading strategy use of Korean high school students, and discovered that there was a linear relationship between listening strategy use and listening comprehension. Metacognitive strategy was a significant predictor of listening comprehension.

Most previous studies on Korean students' listening strategies have looked at the strategic behaviors of university-level or high-school students. There were a few studies examining elementary school students' use of listening strategies. However, the studies involving middle school students are relatively limited. Maeng's (2006a) case study of Korean middle school students showed that a highly proficient listener employed more cognitive strategies and top-down strategies. Maeng (2006b, 2006c) investigated the strategy use of Korean elementary students, and found that higher proficiency listeners used more listening strategies than did lower proficiency listeners. High proficiency listeners employed compensation strategies most frequently.

Ⅲ. METHODOLOGY

1. Subjects

The subjects are 104 third grade Korean middle school students in Seoul. These subjects consist of both male and female students ranging in age from 13-16. Average age of the subjects is 14.58; one subject age 13, 46 subjects age 14, 53 subjects age 15, and four subjects age 16. The numbers of male and female students are 57 and 47, respectively. All of them have received compulsory public English education starting from third grade of elementary schools. The number of students who visited or lived in English speaking countries is eight, each for a period of less than 6 months. The daily hours of English study outside the classroom at school averaged 1.5 hours.

2. Instruments

1) Background Information Questionnaire

The background information questionnaire investigated specific information about the subjects' characteristics and educational background: age, gender, period of studying English, experiences in living or studying in an English speaking country, period of

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studying abroad, amount of daily English study, listening proficiency self-ratings, and language learning attitude (8 multiple-choice questions).

2) Listening Strategy Questionnaire

The listening strategy questionnaire was conducted to identify the variety and frequency of use of listening strategies by the subjects. This listening strategy questionnaire was comprised of 38 self-report multiple choice items and 2 short answer form questions.

The 38 multiple choice items consist of two different types of strategies: 14 behavioral (observable and more conscious strategies) and 24 implicit strategies (mentalistic, unobservable and less conscious strategies)[1]. The inventories of behavioral listening strategies were based on Oxford (1990) and Chung (2006). The inventories of implicit (while-listening) strategies were selected and adapted from Oxford (1990), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Vandergrift (1997), and Goh (1998).

The strategy items are also categorized into four different types of listening strategies: memory strategies (6 items), cognitive strategies (13 items), compensation strategies (5 items), and metacognitive strategies (14 items). This strategy categorization was based on Oxford's (1990) SILL. The SILL has been used extensively throughout the world in a variety of language setting (Chamot, 2004; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Philips, 1991). The choice items were selected and adapted from Oxford (1990), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Vandergrift (1997), Goh (1998), and Chung (2006) to use with Korean middle school students.

Memory strategies (1 to 6) are used to help listeners store and retrieve the new information effectively. Implicit memory strategies include elaboration, contextualization, and imagery (Goh 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997). Behavioral memory strategies include reviewing new words or sentences and using mechanical techniques. Cognitive strategies (7 to 19) are employed to manipulate or transform the language material in some direct way. Implicit cognitive strategies include fixation (Goh, 1998), getting the idea quickly, summarization, note taking, and translation. Behavioral cognitive strategies include practicing by repetition, practicing naturally, and using resources. Compensation strategies (20 to 24) are used to make up for missing knowledge and overcome linguistic knowledge gaps: inferencing and predicting from context or by using linguistic and other clues. Metacognitive strategies (25 to 38) are used for managing and controlling the listening process overall. Implicit metacognitive strategies include identifying the purpose of a language task, directed attention, selected attention, monitoring,

[1] Cohen (1998) states that "*behavioral* strategies can be directly observable and *mentalistic* strategies are not directly observed" (p. 12).

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problem identification, and evaluation. Behavioral metacognitive strategies contain organizing, seeking listening practice opportunities, and centering the learning.

This questionnaire asks subjects to report how frequently the listening comprehension strategies are used. The questions are designed in a multiple-choice fashion using a five-point scale (Likert scale) from 1 = "Never or almost never true of me" to 5 = "Always or almost always true of me".

The 2 short answer form questions are designed to support the use of the strategies, and increase the validity associated with the questionnaire method. The two questions are as follows: 1) Do you concentrate and think it hard or do you just listen without much concentration and catch it when you are listening to English? 2) What types of things do you do to help you understand the listening task?

3) Listening Comprehension Test

The English Listening Ability Test given by 15 city and provincial offices of education in Korea was used to measure the participants' listening comprehension ability. The listening ability test is conducted at public Korean middle and high schools throughout the country two to four times per year. The test consists of 20 multiple-choice questions with high reliability and valid items. The listening test is designed to evaluate literal and inferential comprehension of short dialogues and monologues.

3. Procedures

This study was conducted with the third grade Korean middle school students by the English teacher during the students' regular class hour to minimize the impact of the environment. These students are in three English classes, taught by the same teacher who administered the survey and proficiency test as part of the classes. The students were first given 5 minutes of instruction regarding the listening test and strategy questionnaire. The teacher explained the purpose of the task to the students. They were asked to pay attention to what they consciously do while taking a listening comprehension test. Then, they were given 20 minutes to answer the 20 multiple-choice questions of the listening test. Afterward, the background information and listening strategy questionnaire was distributed to the students. They were reminded to complete the questionnaire within approximately 25 minutes.

4. Analyses

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 was used to compute

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descriptive statistics, ANOVA, correlation, and multiple regressions. The standard significance level of 0.05 ($p < .05$) was used for this study. An internal consistency reliability test for the strategy questionnaire was executed before conducting further analysis. A coefficient alpha (Cronbach alpha) was used to estimate the coefficient of internal consistency reliability. Table 1 shows that the reliabilities of the questions for each listening strategy category were high.

TABLE 1

Reliability Analysis of Strategy Questionnaire

Strategies		Alpha	No. of Items	Questions
Overall Strategies		.94	38	Question 1-38
Behavioral Strategies		.89	14	Question 5-13, and 25-29
Implicit Strategies		.91	24	Question 1-4, 14-24, and 30-38
Memory Strategies		.76	6	Questions 1-6
Cognitive Strategies		.83	13	Question 7-19
Compensation Strategies		.82	5	Question 20-24
Metacognitive Strategies		.88	14	Question 25-38
Behavioral	Memory	.68	2	Question 5-6
	Cognitive	.84	7	Question 7-13
	Metacognitive	.81	5	Question 25-29
Implicit	Memory	.78	4	Question 1-4
	Cognitive	.58	6	Question 14-19
	Compensation	.82	5	Question 20-24
	Metacognitive	.85	9	Question 30-38

Ⅳ. RESULTS

1. Descriptive Statistics

1) Summary Statistics

Table 2 represents the results from descriptive statistics, including the means, standard deviation, minimums, and maximums of the listening strategy use. The mean use for overall listening strategies is 2.91, indicating the subjects gave listening strategies about medium use (means of 2.5 to 3.4 indicate “somewhat true of me”). The implicit strategies ($M = 3.10$) were more commonly used than the behavioral strategies ($M = 2.59$). Compensation strategies were used with the most frequency ($M = 3.34$), whereas metacognitive strategies were used with the least frequency ($M = 2.78$). No strategy categories had a mean above that medium range.

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TABLE 2

Descriptive Statistics

	M	SD	Min	Max
Overall Strategies	2.91	.65	1.16	4.55
Behavioral Strategies	2.59	.81	1.14	4.64
Implicit Strategies	3.10	.66	1.08	4.83
Memory Strategies	3.01	.76	1.00	5.00
Cognitive Strategies	2.84	.71	1.31	4.77
Compensation Strategies	3.34	.90	1.00	5.00
Metacognitive Strategies	2.78	.74	1.00	4.43

Note. The scale for strategy use ranges from a minimum of 1 to maximum of 5.

As shown in Table 3, within behavioral strategies, the Korean middle school students used cognitive strategies (M = 2.75) most frequently, whereas metacognitive strategies were used least frequently (M = 2.40). Within implicit strategies, compensation strategies were most often used (M = 3.34) and metacognitive strategies (M = 2.83) were least often used. No means of any listening strategies were above medium range.

TABLE 3

Specific Listening Strategy Use

Strategies	Behavioral Strategies				Implicit Strategies			
	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max
Memory	2.51	.95	1.00	5.00	3.26	.89	1.00	5.00
Cognitive	2.75	.93	1.14	5.00	2.95	.65	1.00	4.50
Compensation	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3.34	.90	1.00	5.00
Metacognitive	2.40	.95	1.00	4.80	2.83	.72	1.00	4.56

Note. The scale for strategy use ranges from a minimum of 1 to maximum of 5. All the compensation strategies are included only in implicit strategies, because they consist of while-listening strategies.

2) Listening Comprehension Test

The mean and standard deviation of the listening test score is 16.05 and 3.68, respectively. Maximum possible listening score is 20. The minimum score of the students was 8.00 and maximum score 20.00.

The students with a mean of listening score (16.05) could be labeled as a middle listening proficiency group. One standard deviation might be considered as standard error. Therefore, the students were divided into high, middle, and low proficiency groups based on the average listening score (16.05) ± one standard deviation (3.68). The resulting division of the listening group showed a relatively reasonable distribution: the high

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proficiency group consisted of 21 students (20.2%), the middle proficiency group was comprised of 58 students (55.8%), and the low proficiency group consisted of 25 students (24.0%).

2. ANOVA

1) Behavioral & Implicit Strategies

Table 4 summarizes the ANOVA results for listening proficiency on the behavioral and implicit strategies. There was no significant effect of different listening proficiency on behavioral strategies at the .05 level. On the other hand, a significant difference among the students with different listening proficiency was found in the use of implicit strategies ($F = 7.90$, $p < .01$). With implicit strategies, the result of pair-wise comparisons (Scheffe post-hoc test) indicates that the high listening proficiency group's use of implicit strategies was significantly higher than those of the low listening proficiency group.

TABLE 4

ANOVA for Behavioral and Implicit Strategy Use by Listening Proficiency

DV	Low		Mid		High		F	Sig.	Comments
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Behavioral	2.36	.61	2.57	.81	2.85	.92	2.166	.120	n. s.
Implicit	2.71	.64	3.09	.57	3.44	.71	7.902	.001**	H>L

*p < .05; **p < .01

2) Specific Implicit Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, and Metacognitive Strategies

Table 5 shows the ANOVA results for the use of specific implicit memory, cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive strategies by listening proficiency. As seen in Table 5, listening proficiency had a significant role in differentiating the listeners' use of implicit memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. The findings indicate more frequent use of these strategies by higher listening proficiency students. However, there were no significant differences among three different groups in the use of implicit metacognitive strategies.

With implicit memory, cognitive, and compensation strategy categories, the results of post-hoc tests show the same pattern of strategy use among different listening proficiency groups. There was a significant difference only between high and low listening proficiency groups. The high listening proficiency group used listening strategies significantly more frequently than the low listening proficiency group.

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TABLE 5

ANOVA for Implicit Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, and Metacognitive Strategy Use by Listening Proficiency

	Low		Mid		High		F	Sig.	
DV	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Memory	2.77	.76	3.24	.87	3.72	.83	7.241	.001**	H>L
Cognitive	2.64	.73	2.95	.57	3.22	.67	4.827	.010*	H>L
Compensation	2.82	.86	3.33	.84	3.80	.85	7.715	.001**	H>L
Metacognitive	2.68	.74	2.97	.72	2.64	.66	2.558	.083	n. s.

*p < .05; **p < .01

TABLE 6

ANOVA for Individual Implicit Strategy Use by Listening Proficiency

		Low		Mid		High		F	Sig.	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Memory	1	3.24	1.38	3.47	1.17	4.12	1.05	3.71	.028*	H>L
Memory	2	2.76	1.00	3.48	1.06	3.80	1.12	5.71	.004**	H>L
Memory	3	2.62	1.16	3.10	1.09	3.98	1.22	5.08	.008**	H>L
Memory	4	2.48	.87	2.91	1.11	3.28	1.10	3.24	.043*	H>M>L
Cognitive	17	2.38	1.16	2.60	1.18	3.40	1.12	5.41	.006**	H>L
Cognitive	18	2.38	1.02	3.10	1.22	3.32	1.35	3.78	.026*	H>L
Compensation	20	2.76	1.18	3.34	1.22	3.84	1.07	4.78	.010*	H>L
Compensation	21	2.67	1.11	3.33	1.16	3.56	.96	4.04	.020*	H>L
Compensation	22	2.90	1.26	3.48	1.05	3.80	.96	4.07	.020*	H >L
Compensation	23	2.52	1.21	3.12	1.08	3.84	1.07	8.28	<.001***	

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Table 6 summarizes the individual implicit strategies that higher listening proficiency group students employed significantly more frequently than lower listening proficiency group students. For implicit memory strategy use, the high listening proficiency group used imagery (Q1), elaboration (Q2 and Q3), and contextualization (Q4) strategies significantly more frequently than the low listening proficiency group. For the use of cognitive strategies, note-taking (Q17) and summarization (Q18) strategies were more often used by the high listening proficiency group. For compensation strategies, the high listening proficiency group used inferencing (Q20, 21, and 22) and prediction (Q23) strategies more frequently than the low listening proficiency group. Interestingly, the use of translation (Q16) or non-translation strategies (Q19) did not differentiate the high listening proficiency group from the low to mid listening proficiency groups.

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3. Correlation and Regression Analysis

1) Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between students' strategy use and listening proficiency. Table 7 shows that behavioral and implicit strategies were positively correlated with listening test scores at the .01 level. The findings indicate that students who used more listening strategies showed higher listening proficiency than those who used fewer listening strategies. The correlation between implicit strategies and listening scores was higher (r = .44) than the correlation between behavioral strategies and listening scores (r = .27).

TABLE 7

Pearson Correlations between Behavioral and Implicit Strategies and Listening Proficiency

	Behavioral Strategies	Implicit Strategies
Listening Score	.268**	.442**

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

TABLE 8

Pearson Correlations between Specific Implicit Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, and Metacognitive Strategies and Listening Proficiency

	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive
Listening Score	.436**	.331**	.382**	.147

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

As shown in Table 8, listening proficiency positively correlated with implicit memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies at .01 level. However, there was no correlation between listening proficiency and metacognitive strategies. Among the four specific implicit strategies, memory strategies (r = .44) showed the strongest correlation with listening scores, followed by compensation (r = .38) and cognitive strategies (r = .33). Positive correlations between listening strategies and listening proficiency indicate that the students might use all the listening strategies rather than focusing on a particular strategy.

2) Multiple Regression Analysis

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to identify effective listening strategies for listening proficiency. I have estimated two different regression models which

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were distinguished by the composition of independent variables, which are based on strategy level with the same dependent variable, listening score. Model 1 was estimated to verify the relationship between meta strategies (behavioral and implicit strategies) and listening score, and Model 2, specific implicit strategies (implicit memory, cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive) and listening score.

Table 9 summarizes the results of the stepwise multiple regression with the test of significance for estimated coefficient and accountability. Both Model 1 and Model 2 explained 19.5% and 19.0%, respectively for the variation in listening scores. Model 1 shows that only implicit strategy use was significant at < .001 level, and 1 point increase of implicit strategy use results in 2.475 point increase of listening score. Therefore, as seen in Model 2, multiple regressions consisting of specific implicit strategies were conducted to find out the effect of these implicit strategies on listening proficiency. Table 9 shows that only implicit memory strategy use was significant at < .001 and 1 point increase of memory strategy results in 1.800 point increase of listening score.

TABLE 9

Regression Models for Predicting Listening Proficiency

Model		B	Sig	t	R^2
Model 1	(Constant)	8.384	<.001***	5.323	.195
	Implicit	2.475	<.001***	4.973	
Model 2	(Constant)	10.177	<.001***	8.181	.190
	Memory	1.800	<.001***	4.891	

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Note

a. Model 1 predictor variables: (Constant), implicit strategies. Excluded variables: behavioral strategies, Dependent variable: listening score.

b. Model 2 predictor variables: (Constant), implicit memory strategies. Excluded variables: implicit cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive strategies, Dependent variable: listening score.

V. DISCUSSION

1. Research Question 1: What listening strategies do Korean EFL middle school students frequently use?

The findings show that the Korean middle school students used implicit strategies (M = 3.10) more frequently than behavioral strategies (M = 2.59). Among the implicit strategies, compensation strategies were used with the most frequency (M = 3.34), while

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metacognitive strategies were used with the least frequency (M = 2.83). With respect to behavioral strategies, cognitive strategies were used with the most frequency (M = 2.75), while metacognitive strategies were used with the least frequency (M = 2.40).

Given that compensation strategies were used the most frequently, the finding suggests that the students recognized linguistic knowledge gaps first, which they then overcame by guessing. This finding is consistent with many other language learning studies in which compensation strategies were found to be frequently used in second and foreign language situations (Chang, 1991; Lee, 2003; Maeng, 2006b, 2006c; Nakayama, 1995; Yang, 1994).

However, some previous studies have found that compensation strategies were not the most frequently-used ones. For example, Chung (2006), Goh and Foong (1997), Green (1991), Lim and Cha (2007), and Oh (1992) found that foreign and second language learners used metacognitive strategies most frequently. Also, Oxford's study (1990) shows that second language learners used cognitive strategies most frequently. Among the behavioral strategies considered in my study, cognitive strategies were most frequent, but they were still far below the compensation strategies.

The results of this study might differ from the previous studies because of a different population of language learners; the subjects of this study were younger and less advanced than the university students that were the subjects of the other studies. In fact, the listeners with high proficiency among my subjects probably have lower language proficiency than the lowest proficiency learners in the other studies. Since they have less listening ability, they were forced to rely on compensation strategies more than the subjects of the previous studies.

2. Research Question 2: Are there any differences in the use of listening strategies among students with different levels of listening proficiency?

The subjects were divided into three groups each, based on their listening proficiency (three levels: high, mid, and low proficiency groups). An overall ANOVA was performed that includes only meta behavioral and implicit strategies as a factor. Then, specific implicit strategies (implicit memory, cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive strategies) were analyzed via ANOVA and post hoc tests.

1) Behavioral and Implicit Strategies

The findings from ANOVA indicate that the students in the high listening proficiency group used implicit listening strategies more frequently than those in the low listening proficiency group, whereas there was no significant difference in behavioral strategy use. Some studies show the more frequent use of listening strategies by the more successful

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listeners (Chao, 1997; Chung, 2006; Maeng, 2006b, 2006c; Moreira, 1996; Murphy, 1987; Vandergrift, 1992).

In addition, the results of implicit strategy use appear to disconfirm my hypothesis that high proficiency listeners might use implicit strategies unconsciously. The findings are consistent with the students' description in question #39. Most of the high proficiency listeners reported that they usually think hard and concentrate to understand the oral text because they are not able to catch the meaning easily. The results indicate that the Korean middle school students with high listening proficiency seemed to be more aware of listening strategies, but might not have automatized their strategy use. This would explain why they reported use of implicit strategies more frequently than the low proficiency students.

In contrast, there was no significant difference in the use of behavioral strategies between different listening proficiency groups. It is possible that this result might be influenced by the exam-oriented Korean school environment, in which written English is emphasized more than spoken English. It can be speculated that the Korean middle school students might not be able to spend much time using general explicit behavioral strategies to improve their listening skills.

2) Specific Implicit Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, and Metacognitive Strategies

The results from ANOVA show that there was a significant difference among the different listening proficiency groups in the use of implicit memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies, but not in metacognitive strategies.

There was a significant difference among different proficiency listeners in the use of implicit memory strategies. The students with high listening proficiency might depend on storing and recalling the new information to understand the oral text. Contrary to behavioral memory strategies, including mechanical memorizing or reviewing new words, the implicit memory strategies included elaboration, contextualization, and imagery. The high listening proficiency group of this study appeared to frequently make a picture of the conversation and situation in their minds (imagery), relate new information to their familiar words and expressions, personal experiences, or world knowledge (elaboration), and understand and remember new words by using context (contextualization).

In addition, the high proficiency listeners used implicit cognitive strategies more often than the low proficiency listeners. They took notes, and summarized the conversations in their minds or in the margins (note-taking/summarization). However, translation/non-translation strategy use failed to differentiate the higher and lower listening proficiency group students. The compensation strategies that the higher proficiency students used more frequently include prediction and inferencing. These findings suggest the possibility that

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listening strategy use might be helpful to lower listening proficiency students to facilitate their listening process and improve listening skills.

The interesting thing was that no difference was found among the different listening proficiency groups in the use of implicit metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies include planning, monitoring, regulating, and evaluating the cognitive process. This finding might contradict previous studies on the use of listening strategies conducted with university and high school students, that more proficient listeners used more metacognitive strategies than less proficient listeners (Chung, 2006; D. Kim, 1999; Lim & Cha, 2007; Vandergrift, 1996, 1997). Vandergrift (1997) argues that novice level listeners might not use metacognitive strategies because there is little room left for attention in short-term memory for deeper processing strategies such as comprehension monitoring. The different results regarding metacognitive strategy use might be due to the different ages and language proficiency of the subjects in the different studies. The high proficiency listeners in my study might have lower language proficiency than the low proficiency listeners in the university and high school studies. Since the subjects of this study were students who had lower language proficiency and cognitive abilities than the adults, even the high listening proficiency children might not be able to frequently use metacognitive strategies.

3. Research Question 3: What is the relationship between the listening strategy use and listening proficiency?

The findings from the correlation analysis show there was a positive correlation between listening proficiency, behavioral strategies, and implicit strategies. The results indicate that higher proficiency listeners used listening strategies more frequently. Many empirical studies suggest that students with higher listening proficiency show greater use of strategies (Chao, 1997; Chung, 2006; Kwon, 2005; Lim & Cha, 2007; Murphy, 1985; Park, 1997). In particular, in this study, listening scores showed a stronger correlation with implicit strategy use ($r = .44$) than behavioral strategy use ($r = .27$). The results suggest that listening proficiency might be more related to the frequent use of implicit listening strategies than behavioral strategies.

Among specific implicit strategies, listening scores were positively correlated with all the listening strategies (implicit memory, cognitive, and compensation), except for implicit metacognitive strategies. The correlation between listening scores and implicit memory strategies ($r = .44$) was the highest out of the four listening strategies. Implicit metacognitive strategies seemed not to relate to listening comprehension for the Korean middle school students.

The multi-regression analysis indicates that the use of implicit listening strategies explained 19.5% of the variations in listening scores, and behavioral strategies did not have

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any effect on listening score. In addition, the implicit strategy model which consists of implicit memory strategies, accounted for 19.0% of the variation in listening scores, and implicit memory strategy use was a significant explanatory variable of listening scores. These findings from the multi-regression analysis suggest that students with more implicit strategy use might be expected to be better listeners.

Ⅵ. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study reveal that the high proficiency listeners used implicit strategies more frequently than did the low proficiency listeners. The use of implicit strategies—in particular implicit memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies—could distinguish the different listening proficiency groups. Implicit strategies explained some portions of the students' listening proficiency. The findings of this study might have pedagogical implications for language learners and teachers.

First, this study indicates that Korean middle school students should become more aware of implicit listening strategies and find ways to use them more effectively. Developing awareness of and using the listening strategies while listening to English can be useful to become better listeners. The use of implicit memory strategies, including elaboration, imagery, and contextualization, might be helpful for remembering and retrieving new information during a listening task.

Second, this study seems to support the idea that teachers need to help learners improve their awareness of listening strategies and give instruction on how best to use the strategies in classrooms. In this study, most students appeared to employ the listening strategies at a moderate level. The higher listening proficiency students did not show an automatized use of listening strategies in their listening process. Grenfell and Harris (1999) insist that less successful learners can be taught new strategies, thus helping them become better language learners. Strategy training can play an important role in affecting students' strategic behavior and strengthening their listening process. Teachers might need to consider incorporating teachable listening strategies into their classrooms.

Ⅶ. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Several inherent limitations of this study might prevent its results from being generalized. First, the data on the listening strategy use was based on a retrospective self-reporting questionnaire. Students can differ in the perception and expression of the scales on the frequency of their strategy use. Additionally, it is possible that the subjects over- or

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under-reported their actual use. Second, factors such as students' gender, motivation, learning styles, personality, cultural background, length of English studies, and difficulty of text were not considered. Third, this study was conducted with 104 students chosen from one school in Seoul, Korea. A different learning or teaching context could affect the strategy use. Thus, larger scale studies conducted across diverse regions in Korea might lead to different results.

The findings of this study suggest the need for future research. First, further research is recommended with different subjects with more and less advanced language proficiency. The expansion of the population to such groups is needed to compare and examine whether the types or patterns of strategy use can be related to language proficiency. Second, more in-depth studies combining quantitative with qualitative analysis, including verbal reporting during the listening task, might be needed to explore the actual listening process in language learners. In addition, a longitudinal approach utilizing a variety of research methods might identify differences in learner strategy choices over time. Third, future strategy training studies might need to be conducted to prove the effect of listening strategy use. This study indicates that the Korean middle school students consciously choose to use listening strategies to enhance their listening abilities. Thus, it appears that developing their awareness of listening strategies and their ability to use them effectively are important in improving listening proficiency. However, further empirical studies are needed to ascertain whether or not students can be taught listening strategy use in language classrooms and if explicit strategy training does actually improve their listening comprehension.

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APPENDIX

Listening Strategy Questionnaire

1. While listening to English, I make a picture of the conversation and situation in my mind.
2. While listening to English, I relate the new words or expressions to the words or expressions that I already know to help me understand and remember.
3. While listening to English, I relate new information to my personal experiences or world knowledge to help me understand and remember.
4. While listening to new English words, I understand and remember them by using context.
5. I review and practice words or part of the text I listened to and learned.
6. After listening, I record new words and expressions on word cards and memorize them.
7. If I don't understand the text, I listen to them repeatedly until I understand.
8. I practice dictating English texts.
9. I listen to English audio tapes or audio books.
10. I listen carefully to English native speakers pronounce words and echo them.
11. I watch TV and movies that employ English.
12. I try to understand the lyrics when listening to popular English songs.
13. I look up new words in dictionaries or resource books when I don't know the meaning while listening to English.
14. While listening to English, I ignore the individual sounds that I cannot hear clearly.
15. While listening to English, I focus on the meaning of each word or sound.
16. While listening to English, I translate words or sentences into Korean to understand the meaning.
17. While listening to English, I take notes of what I think may be important from the text.
18. While listening to English, I summarize the conversations in my mind or in the margins.
19. While listening to English, I understand the meaning in English without translating it into Korean.
20. While listening to English, I try to guess the meaning from the context or situation to understand unfamiliar words or expressions.
21. While listening to English, I try to guess the meaning from the intonation or stress used in the text in order to understand unfamiliar words or expressions.
22. While listening to English, I try to guess the meaning from the words that I already

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know in the text in order to understand unfamiliar words or expressions.

23. While listening to English, I look at pictures, charts or tables to guess what will happen or what other persons will say next.
24. Before listening to English, I skim the comprehension questions to get an idea of what the content may be in the text.
25. I plan my schedule so I have time to listen to English.
26. I have clear goals for improving my English listening ability.
27. I look for as many opportunities as possible to listen to English.
28. I go to private language institutes or study with tutors to improve English listening skills.
29. Before listening to English, I try to be in a quiet and neat place to concentrate on listening.
30. I clearly identify the purpose of the listening activity; for example, I might need to listen for the general idea or for specific facts.
31. While listening to English, I try to consciously pay attention to the listening when distracting thoughts come across my mind.
32. While listening to English, I try to listen until the end without giving up when encountering unfamiliar words in the text.
33. While listening to English, I try to listen for main ideas in the text.
34. While listening to English, I try to pay attention to specific parts according to the listening comprehension questions of the listening task.
35. While listening to English, I double-check and confirm my comprehension answers.
36. While listening to English, I constantly check whether I understand or not, to help me understand better next time.
37. I try to identify any problems during a listening task, such as speed rate, connected speech, or distractions.
38. I try to evaluate my progress and achievement in English listening skills.
39. While listening to English, do you concentrate and think hard to understand the text, or do you just listen without much concentration and catch it?
40. What types of things do you usually do to help you understand the listening task?

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Secondary

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