A Correlative Study on English Listening Beliefs and Strategies of Chinese High School Students—A Case in Fujian Province

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Abstract—This study investigates the correlation between language learning beliefs and strategies in terms of listening comprehension. Data were collected from 94 tenth graders in a Chinese high school in Fujian Province through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The findings show a significant and positive correlation between English listening beliefs and strategies, which influence each other to varying degrees. Specifically, the participants were reported to hold various beliefs on English listening while employing a range of strategies for listening comprehension, though the frequency of their overall strategy use was at the medium level. Furthermore, cognitive strategies were found to be the most frequently used ones, followed by socio-affective strategies and metacognitive strategies. Based on the research findings, this article suggests that high school English teachers should help learners foster positive beliefs which normally lead to effective use of learning strategies; meanwhile, learners are advised to keep aware of what beliefs they hold, what strategies they use most or least, and what alternative strategies they can select so as to enhance their metacognition level and improve their listening comprehension.

Index Terms—learning beliefs, learning strategies, listening comprehension, high school students

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, interest in EFL teaching has shifted to student's learning because learners are considered as active participants and play important parts in the process of language learning. Consequently, lots of studies in the field of EFL/ ESL learning investigate issues relevant to learners and individual differences (ID), including age, motivation, language aptitude, anxiety, personality, intelligence, learning style, etc.

As two important ID factors in L2/FL learning, learner beliefs and learning strategies have gained much attention of researchers from home and abroad. By investigating the relationship between the two variables, it is recognized that learners' preconceived beliefs about conscious and unconscious language learning affect the way they choose strategies, and some beliefs are likely to restrict learners' range and flexibility of strategy use (Horwitz, 1988; Wen & Wang, 1996a; Yang, 1999; Mokhtaria, 2007, as cited in Hassan, 2015).

However, given the importance of L2 listening comprehension (LC), particularly in EFL contexts, it is surprising to find little research has investigated the relationship between learning beliefs and strategies in terms of L2 listening. According to Vandergrift (1999), listening comprehension plays a key role in facilitating language learning, so it is necessary to address how students listen and what beliefs they hold towards listening comprehension, as learners are likely to have certain beliefs about listening, which may influence the way in which they approach and modulate the efficacy of strategy utilization (Graham, 2006; Cross, 2009). In today's China, under the great pressure of Gaokao (the National College Entrance Examination), high school students are working under huge stress and are facing incredibly tough competition. Particularly, after a listening section has been added in the English test for Gaokao, most high school students find it a greater challenge to excel in the listening part. Generally speaking, after at least six years of English learning at school, Chinese high school students have formed some sort of beliefs towards and preference of strategy use about EFL. Therefore, it is of significance for us to explore high school students' listening beliefs, the corresponding strategies they employ in the process of listening, and the correlation between these two variables. Hopefully, these research findings will shed some light on facilitating teachers' future instruction in terms of listening comprehension through better understanding students' listening problems and taking appropriate and tailored measures. It is also expected that, by receiving correct and effective guidance and tuition from teachers, students will do better in enhancing their English listening competence and improving their performance in English exams as well.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Learner Beliefs about Language Learning

Learner beliefs about language learning are preconceived notions or misconceptions about learning a second/ foreign language (Horwitz, 1988). According to the *Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (2002, as cited in Kamberi, 2013), learner beliefs include learners' ideas about different aspects of language, language learning and language teaching, which may have an effect on their learning strategies and learning outcomes. In this study, we define learner beliefs about EFL listening as "students' perceived notions or ideas about EFL listening and the learning strategies for listening comprehension."

In order to assess student beliefs, Horwitz (1988) developed an instrument known as Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), which encompasses five major dimensions: beliefs about difficulty of language learning, foreign language aptitude, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and learner motivations and expectations. Later, Nix and Tseng's (2014) designed an inventory called Beliefs on EFL Listening Abilities (BELLA) to investigate listening beliefs, which consists of strategy-related listening beliefs, native-speaker-related listening beliefs, and assessment-related listening beliefs. Hence, in our study, learner beliefs about English listening include three dimensions: general beliefs about listening, strategy-related listening beliefs, and individual-difference-related listening beliefs.

So far, studies into beliefs about listening have been conducted in different ways. For example, Chiou (2004) compared the English listening beliefs and strategy use of teachers and students from the same university in Taipei, Taiwan; Graham (2006) investigated the perceptions held by English learners regarding listening comprehension in French; Shabani and Heidarian (2015) probed into the effect of metacognitive instruction on Iranian EFL learners' perceptions about listening, and Li (2016) explored beliefs about EFL listening held by high school students.

B. Language Learning Strategies

According to Chamot (1987), learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take so as to facilitate the learning, recall of both linguistic and content area information (cited in Macaro, 2008). Cohen (2014) argues that the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from those processes that are not strategic. Hence, learning strategies for listening comprehension in this study are defined as "deliberate actions taken by learners to facilitate listening comprehension and language learning".

Among the various proposed classification systems, the work of Rubin (1981), O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990) are frequently and widely cited. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) validated a body of learning strategies and proposed a classification scheme grounded in cognitive theory (see Table 1). They argue metacognitive strategies as essential to the development of effective target language skills, orienting their research towards the use of strategies in speaking, listening, and writing. Building on their work, Vandergrift (1997) identified a range of metacognitive and cognitive listening strategies reported by L2 learners thinking aloud while listening to texts in French, offering supporting evidence of the strategies outlined by O'Malley and Chamot. The present study follows O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) strategy classification framework in that it is more widely used in studies related to listening strategies.

TABLE 1
O'MALLEY AND CHAMOT'S (1990) CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Primary strategies	Metacognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies	Socio-affective strategies
Definitions	Higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity	Operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning	Represent a broad grouping that involves either interaction with another person or identical control over affect
Representative secondary strategies	Planning, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring, self-evaluation	Note taking, repetition, grouping, elaboration, inferencing, summarization, transfer	Questioning for classification, cooperation, self-talk and self-reinforcement

Regarding studies of leaning strategies concerning listening, several studies have focused on the effect of strategy instruction on learners' listening comprehension proficiency (Rasouli et al., 2013; Ngo, 2016). Some studies focused on exploring learners' use of listening strategies and its relationship with listening comprehension, the result of which confirmed the positive association between them (Kassem, 2015; Vahdany et al., 2016).

C. Studies on Correlation between Beliefs and Strategy Use

A large number of studies (Wenden 1987; Yang 1999; Park, 1995, as cited in Ellis, 2013) have investigated the relationship between learning beliefs and learning strategies, adding more evidence that learner beliefs are related to strategy choice. However, the results are somewhat mixed as to whether they are positively or negatively related.

Sioson (2011) investigated 300 first year college students in Philippine and found out that language learning

strategies in general were negatively correlated with language learning beliefs, while in the studies of Abedini, Rahimi and Zare-ee (2011) and Azar and Saeidi's (2013), the results revealed a significant positive relationship between participants' beliefs and their use of strategies. Similar findings were also obtained among some Chinese scholars, who have found a positive or negative correlation between these two variables (Wen & Wang, 1996a; Zhang, 2008; Liu, 2010).

Different from the above-mentioned studies that explored the relationship between general language learning beliefs and strategy use, Liu (2011) attempted to examine the correlation between language learning beliefs and strategies in terms of listening comprehension. Findings manifested that all dimensions of beliefs about EFL listening were associated with those of learning strategies except for motivational beliefs. Specifically, learners' strategy-related beliefs were strongly related to the use of strategies.

To sum up, most of the existing studies focused on investigating the relationship between learners' beliefs and strategies about English learning in general, with few studies exploring their relationship from a particular aspect, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides, the participants were mainly university students, with only a few studies looking at high school learners' beliefs and strategy use. In addition, much of the research has relied heavily on quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. Undoubtedly, a research which adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis is much more scientific, rational and desirable.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Participants

The participants were 100 tenth graders from a provincial key high school in Fujian. They come from two different classes but are taught by the same English teacher.

B. Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the status quo of high school students' beliefs and strategy use concerning listening comprehension and the relationship between listening beliefs and strategies. To fulfill this purpose, the following questions were explored in this study:

1. What beliefs do high school students hold about EFL listening?
2. What learning strategies do high school students use for listening comprehension?
3. What is the relationship between high school students' learning beliefs and learning strategies in terms of listening comprehension?

C. Instruments

A combination of quantitative and qualitative method was employed in the current study. To be specific, a questionnaire was firstly used to investigate 100 tenth graders in Fujian Province, and then 6 students were randomly selected for a semi-structured interview based on their listening scores from the Mid-term English exam, which had just been held when the study was conducted.

The questionnaire that was adopted by the researchers is called *Questionnaire for Learners' Beliefs and Strategy Use for Listening Comprehension* (QLBSULC). It is composed of three sections (see Table 2) and was mainly adapted from the work of Nix and Tseng's (2014), Zhang et al. (2013), Ji and He (2004), Vandergrift (1999) and Wen and Wang (1996a).

The first section of the questionnaire collects students' personal information, including name, gender, age, and class. In the second section, twenty items and an open-ended question are constructed to investigate students' beliefs about EFL listening across three dimensions. The five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) is used. The third section investigates students' use of learning strategies for listening comprehension, which is primarily based on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of learning strategies. Altogether 34 items are put into three categories with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never or almost never true of me) to 5 (always or almost always true of me) being used.

By analyzing the data from 44 valid questionnaires in a pilot study, the reliability coefficients of the belief scale and the strategy scale are 0.809 and 0.914 respectively (see Table 3), which indicate that the two scales are reliable.

TABLE 2
QUESTIONNAIRE: QLBSULC

	Dimension	N of Items	Example Items
Belief Scale	General understanding of listening	6	1. Good pronunciation is important for listening comprehension. 5. Understanding the culture of English-speaking countries is important for listening comprehension.
	Strategy-related listening beliefs	6	11. Listening to English materials which interest me (e.g. English songs, English radios) will improve my listening. 12. While listening, guessing the meaning of new words actively will help improve listening comprehension.
	Individual differences-related beliefs	7	17. Good listening comprehension is important for improving my English test scores. 18. I believe that I will ultimately develop good listening skills.
	Open-ended question	1	21. Do you have other opinions or suggestions concerning the listening skills that have not been included above?
Strategy Scale	Metacognitive strategies	13	1. Before doing listening exercises, I will figure out my listening tasks by obtaining relevant information from titles or requirements of the items. 2. Before listening, I am able to get prepared to concentrate on what I am going to hear.
	Cognitive strategies	14	18. While listening, I try to understand each sentence. 22. I can guess the meaning of words or sentences based on the context.
	Socio-affective strategies	7	30. I get impatient when I can't understand the listening content. 31. I always encourage myself to be confident so as to strive for progress in English listening.

TABLE 3
RELIABILITY STATISTICS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Belief Scale		Strategy Scale	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.809	20	0.914	34

Apart from the questionnaire survey, a semi-structured interview was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between students' beliefs and use of strategies for listening comprehension. The interview questions were mainly based on the analysis of participants' questionnaire data, with reference to a list of open questions compiled by Wen (1996, cited by Cheng & Zheng, 2002). Some questions were improvised simultaneously during the process of interview if necessary.

D. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through two stages: in the first stage, 100 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the participants, with 94 copies being considered valid. SPSS 19.0 software was used to analyze the data collected from questionnaire survey. The statistical analysis procedures include 1) descriptive statistics (e.g. frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) which were computed to depict the distribution of learners' beliefs and strategy use for listening comprehension; 2) Pearson correlation, which was conducted to analyze the correlation between learning beliefs and learning strategies in terms of listening comprehension.

In the second stage, the 94 participants were divided into three groups (the high-score group, the medium-score group and the low-score group) according to their listening scores in the mid-term English examination, and two interviewees were chosen respectively from each group (see Table 4). On average, every interviewee was interviewed for 15 minutes and all interviews were audio-taped, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to inductive qualitative data analysis by the researchers.

TABLE 4
BASIC INFORMATION OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewees	Age	Gender	Listening scores	Group
Student 1	15	Female	24	High-score
Student 2	16	Male	24	
Student 3	16	Female	18	Medium-score
Student 4	15	Female	15	
Student 5	17	Male	10.5	Low-score
Student 6	16	Male	10.5	

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Students' Beliefs about EFL Listening

After studying English for six years, most first-year high school students have formed certain beliefs about English listening. In order to discover their beliefs about EFL listening, the descriptive statistics (percentages and means) of the data covered in questionnaires were computed, offering a detailed explanation of those items in this part.

1. General Understanding of Listening

Beliefs in this dimension include 6 items and focus on the fundamental nature and the defining characteristics of EFL listening and listening ability. The results (see Table 5) show that the overall mean value is 3.94, indicating most participants hold positive beliefs. The highest mean value of 4.61 is noted for Belief 1 (Good pronunciation is important for listening comprehension.) while Belief 3 (Understanding the culture of English-speaking countries is important for listening comprehension.) scores the lowest mean value of 3.49. Combining the percentage under "agree" and "strongly agree", 94.7% of students agreed with Belief 1, while only 45.8% of students agreed with Belief 3. This is in agreement with the results of Chiou's (2004) study, which indicated that the majority of students recognized the importance of good pronunciation in comprehending listening texts, but only about half of the students believed it was necessary to know the English-speaking culture. As we know, if students are not familiar with the pronunciation of words or do not master the right pronunciation, they cannot associate the words they hear with the words they have learned correctly, which hinders their process of listening comprehension directly. Meanwhile, if students underestimate the importance of cultural knowledge, they will be inclined to neglect their development of intercultural awareness and competence, thus experience more difficulties when it comes to assimilating listening materials that are embedded with cultural background or knowledge, which may lead to more frustration and discouragement in listening comprehension.

2. Strategy-related Listening Beliefs

Beliefs 7-13 are mainly about learning strategies that students normally use in listening practice. It was discovered that beliefs in this dimension have the lowest mean value of 3.85 (see Table 5), indicating that some students may hold negative beliefs about certain strategies. While Belief 11 (Listening to English materials which interest me will improve my listening.) enjoys the highest mean value of 4.26, Belief 7 (The best way to take down what I hear is to write it down in Chinese.) shows the lowest mean score of 2.98, which implies that respondents are not sure whether this is a good strategy or not. Although there is no consensus on the function of mother tongue-reliance in second language acquisition, it is generally believed that its negative effects outweigh the positive ones (Ji & He, 2004; Wen & Wang, 1996a). As for Belief 11, most participants hold positive belief about it, and this is verified in the interview of this study. For example, Student 3 mentioned: "Students who want to improve listening should practice listening as much as possible. Doing listening exercises is not enough, he should also listen to materials that interest him. Interest is the best teacher."; Student 1 said: "I like watching English movie and TV dramas, and I think my listening gets improved accordingly." Apparently, this is easy to understand. As in the mobile internet era, students can effortlessly gain access to various kinds of listening materials, such as the latest English songs, foreign broadcasts, English talk shows, and these audio sources are more interesting than traditional ways of listening practice, so it is more popular with students.

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF BELIEF SCALE

Dimensions of Listening Beliefs	Mean
General understanding of listening	3.94
Strategy-related listening beliefs	3.85
Individual differences-related beliefs	4.20

3. Individual Differences-related Beliefs

Individual Differences-related Beliefs，which are mainly about motivation and aptitude, include 7 items in the questionnaire. The mean value in this dimension being 4.20 (see Table 5) indicates that the participants generally hold positive beliefs about motivation and aptitude. We noticed that Belief 18 (I believe that I will ultimately develop good listening skills.) gets the lowest mean value of 3.75, and this clearly suggests that some students lack confidence in their listening study. In particular, only 61.7% of the participants believe that they will develop good listening skills in future, whereas nearly 40% of them don't think so. This result discovered in the questionnaire survey is further supported in the open-ended question. For instance, someone wrote: "Maybe I am not good at listening."; another one wrote: "I think listening is more difficult than reading. I think it's too hard for me to improve my listening skills."; still another one wrote: "I want to improve my listening, but it is so difficult." In a way, these findings indicate that students' negative beliefs about their language aptitude are probably due to their inability to select appropriate strategies and put them into listening practice. Therefore, they are likely to attribute the difficulties to their self-assumed low aptitude.

B. Students' Use of Learning Strategies for Listening Comprehension

With regard to students' use of learning strategies for listening comprehension, the means and standard deviations obtained from the questionnaire data were computed. In calculating the frequency of strategy use, the researchers followed Oxford's scoring system (see Table 6).

TABLE 6
OXFORD'S FREQUENCY SCALE

Averages	Frequency of strategy use	Frequency level
4.5-5.0	Always or almost always used	High use
3.5-4.4	Usually used	
2.5-3.4	Sometimes used	Medium use
1.5-2.4	Generally not used	Low use
1.0-1.4	Never or almost never used	

1. Overall Strategy Use

From the mean score of 3.27 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.48 in Table 7, it can be inferred that these strategies are employed only in medium frequency by a majority of participants. The result also displays that no participant reports extremely high or low frequency of strategy use in the study.

TABLE 7
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE OVERALL STRATEGY USE

	Always or almost always used	Usually used	Sometimes used	Generally not used	Never or almost never used	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean level	4.5-5.0	3.5-4.4	2.5-3.4	1.5-2.4	1.0-1.4	3.27	.47826
Frequency	0	33	58	3	0		
Percent	0%	35.1%	61.7%	3.2%	0%		

Table 8 demonstrates the results of each category. Clearly, the mean value of cognitive strategies is the highest (3.36) followed by that of the socio-affective strategies (3.25), with metacognitive strategies showing the lowest mean score of 3.18. This indicates that cognitive strategies are most frequently used by the participants while metacognitive strategies the least frequently.

TABLE 8
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF STRATEGY CATEGORIES

Categories	Always or almost always used	Usually used	Sometimes used	Generally not used	Never or almost never used	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean level / Percent	4.5-5.0	3.5-4.4	2.5-3.4	1.5-2.4	1.0-1.4		
Metacognitive	2.1%	39.4%	45.7%	12.8%	0%	3.18	.61632
Cognitive	0%	39.4%	58.5%	2.1%	0%	3.36	.46887
Socio-affective	1.1%	34.0%	52.1%	11.7%	1.1%	3.25	.63414

The finding is in line with that of Shen's (2010), which may be explained from the following perspectives: as cognitive strategies are usually concrete strategies and techniques (e.g. note taking, elaboration, inference, etc.) that can be directly employed by students in the actual process of listening, it is understandable that the participants tend to have more and easier access to them, even if they may not receive any targeted strategy training. On the contrary, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies are usually indirect strategies which exert an indirect effect on students' learning process. Technically speaking, metacognitive strategies are used to supervise, manage and regulate behaviors in the process of learning, and socio-affective strategies are expected to assist learners in taking advantage of the learning opportunities, asking for help or manipulating their affect in order to complete a language learning task. These two types of strategies cannot be used simultaneously to solve learners' problems in the listening process in a direct way, so they are very likely to be ignored or underestimated by students, which lead to their low frequency use.

2. Cognitive Strategies

There are a total of 14 items in this dimension, covering note taking, elaboration, inferencing, summarization, transfer, resourcing. The result indicates that Item 21 (While listening, I pay conscious attention to some key words.) scores the highest mean value (4.22) and the lowest standard deviation (0.78). It shows that this strategy is used at a high level by most participants. We can't deny that it is almost certainly a common practice that, while teaching listening skills, most teachers would highlight and recommend the strategy of listening for key words and emphasize its importance and usefulness to their students repeatedly, who therefore become familiar with it. Taking this into consideration, it is not hard to understand why the participants use it in many cases. In the interview, all students mentioned that they would often use this strategy in listening, and Student 2 thought it was particularly effective. It is worth noting that Item 15 (I try to remember the pronunciation of new words and look them up in the dictionary after listening.) shows the lowest mean value (2.43) with the standard deviation 1.10, which indicates it is a "generally unused" strategy by students. In the interview, when asked about the reason, students said it was hard for them to distinguish the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. Besides, some students said it was troublesome to look up new words in the dictionary, and some said they forgot the pronunciation of new words easily after listening to all the texts. As a result, this strategy is used at a low frequency.

3. Socio-affective Strategies

This dimension consists of 7 items, involving questioning for classification, cooperation, reducing anxiety and self-reinforcement. The results reveal that Item 28 (While listening, I can keep calm and I am not nervous.) scores the highest mean value of 3.71 (SD=1.01). Besides, Item 29 (When I feel nervous in the listening process, I will relax myself by breathing deeply or other methods. M=3.48), Item 31 (I always encourage myself to be confident so as to strive for progress in English listening. M=3.66) and Item 32 (I comfort myself when I don't understand what I am listening to. M=3.39) all manifest a higher average mean value than the general mean value of socio-affective strategies (M=3.25). In view of that, it is implied that the majority of students "often" use affective control strategies in their listening process. Interviews with students reveal that although they feel impatient when they can't understand the listening content, they can basically keep clam, try to reduce anxieties by using different methods like self-talk, and build up confidence through self-encouragement and self-comfort. The lowest mean value (2.79) goes to Item 34 (I will exchange my experience of listening with my classmates and teachers and discuss the effective ways to improve my listening with them.), indicating that some students are not willing to communicate with classmates and teachers about their listening problems. In the interview, Student 4 said she usually felt embarrassed or too shy to discuss her problems in English listening with others, and Student 6 expressed that it was unnecessary to ask questions because if something was important, teachers would certainly explain it to them.

4. Metacognitive Strategies

Altogether 13 items are constructed in this dimension to measure students' use of metacognitive strategies, including planning, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Item 1 (Before doing listening exercises, I will figure out my listening tasks by obtaining relevant information from titles or requirements of the items.) scores the highest mean (4.28) with the standard deviation of 0.95. It is therefore inferred that most students are apt to use the strategy of advance organization, i.e., they have developed the awareness of clarifying what to be done to accomplish a listening task. However, Item 4 (I have an overall scheme for extracurricular listening practice, during which there are specific, detailed arrangements for daily and weekly exercises, and the performance has been documented.) scores the lowest mean (2.18) with the standard deviation of 1.08, revealing "functional planning" is the least frequently used strategy by students. The finding here may suggest that the majority of the participants lack a systematic and detailed plan for practicing their listening. In addition, students mentioned in the interview that they needed to learn so many subjects and finish so much homework that it was hardly possible for them to spend much time in learning English, let alone setting aside a regular time to practice English listening.

C. Correlation Analysis between Beliefs and Strategy Use

In this study, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to explore the relationship between students' beliefs and strategy use for listening comprehension. The correlation coefficient (represented as "r" below) ranges from -1 to +1.

1. Correlation between Overall Beliefs and Strategy Use

Table 9 below shows that the correlation coefficient reaches 0.519 and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. The results indicate a strong positive correlation between overall beliefs and strategy use (r= 0.519, p< 0.01), which means students' beliefs have significant influence on their strategy use. Students with comparatively positive and stronger beliefs about EFL listening tend to use strategies more often.

TABLE 9
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN OVERALL BELIEFS AND STRATEGY USE

		Beliefs	Strategies
Beliefs	Pearson Correlation	1	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	94	94
Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.519**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	94	94

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

2. Correlation between Categories of Beliefs and Strategies

Pearson correlation coefficients in Table 10 pertain to the relationship between students' belief categories and strategy categories. The significance level of 0.000 suggests that the probability of no correlation between each category of beliefs and strategies is almost zero, i.e., each category of beliefs has correlation with each category of strategies.

TABLE 10
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN BELIEF CATEGORIES AND STRATEGY CATEGORIES

Beliefs \ Strategies		Metacognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies	Socio-affective strategies
General understanding of listening	Pearson Correlation	.362**	.253*	.222*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.014	.031
	N	94	94	94
Strategy-related listening beliefs	Pearson Correlation	.367**	.295**	.411**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.004	.000
	N	94	94	94
Individual differences-related beliefs	Pearson Correlation	.490**	.436*	.401**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	94	94	94
	N	94	94	94

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).   *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regarding the first category of belief, the table displays a positive correlation between students' general understanding of listening and all categories of strategies. The correlation coefficient between general understanding of listening and metacognitive strategies reaches .362 and significant at the 0.01 level, while the coefficients between general understanding of listening and cognitive strategies and Socio-affective strategies are respectively .253, .222, with a significant level of 0.05. This shows that students' general understanding of listening has more significant impact on their use of metacognitive strategies. The results are further echoed by the interview results. When asked about the status and function of listening in English learning, Student 1 from the high-score group stressed the important role of listening played in facilitating the acquisition of other skills in English learning. Besides, she was found to use different types of metacognitive strategies, such as planning, reflection, advance organization, comprehension monitoring, and performance evaluation. In contrast, Student 6 from the low-score group believed that listening is mainly useful for communication purpose, so she assumed it was only related to speaking. It was no wonder that he mainly used the strategy of comprehension monitoring, without an overall plan for extracurricular listening practice. In addition, he also expressed his constant confusion about what strategies he can employ to solve problems in his listening practice.

Hence, it can be safely deduced that, to a large extent, students' general understanding of listening may affect the frequency of their use of metacognitive strategies. Students who hold more positive and stronger beliefs about general understanding of listening will know more about the fundamental nature and the defining characteristics of EFL listening as well as the interrelation of listening and other English skills. Therefore, they find it easier to develop metacognitive awareness of listening, and by employing metacognitive strategies frequently, not only are they more likely to plan, organize, monitor and evaluate the listening comprehension process, but also tend to orchestrate the deployment of specific cognitive strategies.

As for strategy-related listening beliefs, it was found to be associated with metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies (r = .367, r = .295, r = .411), with correlations being significant at the 0.01 level. This means that students' beliefs about strategies are consistent with their strategy use to a significant degree, which is congruent with the result in Liu Hengying's (2011) research. If students believe a certain strategy is effective, they will use it actively and frequently (Wen & Wang, 1996b). For instance, in the interview with Student 2, he repeatedly stressed the usefulness of finding key words in listening. Drawing on his answers in the questionnaire and the interview, we found this strategy was most frequently used by him. Student 3 reckoned that making predictions about the texts was an effective strategy that helped with her listening comprehension, so she used this kind of strategies more often than other ones. In contrast, Student 1, Student 4 and Student 5 believed that guessing the meaning of new words actively helped improve listening comprehension, so in the interviews, they all mentioned that they often guessed the meaning of unfamiliar words based on the context while doing listening exercises.

In terms of the individual differences-related beliefs, results show that they also have positive and significant correlations with the three types of strategies. As shown in table 10, the correlation coefficients reach .490, .436, and .401 respectively and are all significant at the 0.01 level. What has been found suggests that individual differences-related beliefs, which has a lot to do with learning motivation and aptitude, have a great impact on students' use of metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies. For example, while Student 5 doesn't believe that he can ultimately develop good listening skill and has no confidence in his aptitude, Student 3 has stronger motivation to improve her listening proficiency and strongly agrees that she will develop good listening skill in the end. Hence, when comparing the strategy use of Student 3 and Student 5, it appears that Student 3 uses the three types of strategies more frequently, whereas Student 5 seldom does so.

The finding indicates that students who have strong beliefs about instrumental or integrative motivations, and who have confidence in their own potential in listening skills, tend to use these three strategies more often than students who do not. Once students are highly motivated and have confidence in their aptitude for listening study, they will probably make more efforts and persist in listening practice. It is highly possible that they encourage themselves frequently and seek possible ways from teachers and classmates to improve English listening.

V. Conclusions and Implications

It is recognized that listening comprehension is at the heart of L2 learning，and the development of L2 listening skills plays an important role in developing other language skills (Feyten, 1991; Vandergrift, 2007). Research into the aspect of listening will contribute to the whole process of English learning.

Based on an adapted questionnaire and in-depth interviews, this study investigated the English listening beliefs and learning strategies and the correlation between the two variables of 94 tenth-grade high school students in Fujian. The participants were reported to hold various beliefs on EFL listening. In general, most students hold positive beliefs, but some hold negative or improper beliefs, such as ignoring the necessity of learning English cultures and underestimating the important role that listening plays in developing other language skills. In addition, the participants reported a wide range of strategy use, yet the frequency of the overall strategy use was only at the medium level. Detailed analysis of the data shows that cognitive strategies are most frequently used by the participants, followed by socio-affective strategies and metacognitive strategies. Finally, a correlation analysis shows that there exists a significant and positive correlation between English listening beliefs and strategies, which mutually influence each other to varying degrees. Students' general understanding of listening is significantly linked to all three types of learning strategies, with the strongest connection found between listening beliefs and metacognitive strategies.

The teaching implications obtained from this study are as follows:

First and foremost, it is necessary for teachers to identify and evaluate students' listening beliefs, help them change their negative and incorrect beliefs that hinder listening study. For instance, teachers can find out what beliefs their students hold about listening by using methods of observation, reading students' diaries, conducting questionnaire surveys, having interviews, and organizing group discussions (Yang, 1993). In addition, since students' beliefs are generally formed from their limited experience or knowledge, teachers had better provide some knowledge concerning the nature and process of English listening and adjust teaching methods to change students' misconceptions. For example, teachers can introduce more cultural content of English-speaking countries and non-English-speaking countries in the teaching process to raise students' attention to and awareness of the importance of cultural knowledge.

Second, from the analysis of correlations between students' beliefs and strategy use for listening comprehension, it can be easily found that students' self-assessment has a significant impact on their listening study and strategy use. Hence, it is essential for teachers to start with lower level of listening comprehension practice in order to encourage and help them build up positive concept of self-efficacy and therefore facilitate their listening study (Li, 2016; Liu, 2011).

Third, as all the three types of beliefs are found to have significant and positive correlations with metacognitive strategies, it is highly recommended that metacognitive listening strategy instruction should be conducted in teaching of listening. This deserves our attention in that it will not only improve students' use of strategy, but also change learners' probable simplistic beliefs into more realistic beliefs, which are about listening effectively (Shabani & Heidarian, 2015). Once learners adjust their beliefs, they are liable to employ more appropriate and effective learning strategies.

Last but not least, the questionnaire in this study can be used for self-assessment purposes. By using it, students will be able to know what beliefs they hold, what strategies they use most or least and what alternative strategies they can select to improve listening comprehension. Hopefully, with the guidance of teachers, students are able to identify and solve their problems more efficiently.

Despite the teaching implications based on the findings, this study has limitations as well. Firstly, the research used a convenience sampling, with only 100 high school students from one school in Fujian. Secondly, the relationships between students' listening beliefs, strategies and listening scores were not explored. Therefore, in further replication research, a larger and random sample is strongly advised and the relationships between students' listening beliefs, strategies and listening scores can be further investigated. Finally, a longitudinal study can be conducted to gain insights into students' changes of beliefs and strategy use for listening comprehension in high schools.

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