

Listening Learning Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation Strategies in the EFL Blended Context

Tuo Yang^{1, a}

¹Lyceum of the Philippines University – Batangas, Philippines

^aqrohsjennifer5@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigated the EFL learners' listening learning self-efficacy and self-regulated behavior in the blended context. 316 English major students were invited to offer their responses to the self-efficacy and self-regulated strategies in their blended listening learning process. Results showed that the students' self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies were at moderate levels. In addition, the result showed that male students had higher level of self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies in their listening learning; there was no significance differences between self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies when grouped by grade level. Listening self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies was positively related. Some suggestions were proposed to further improve students' listening learning efficiency and teaching quality in the blended learning situation.

Keywords

Learning self-efficacy, Self-regulation strategies, Blended context.

1. Introduction

The integration of technology and education provides broad space for the reform of English teaching in China. The technology-based teaching mode would make English teaching and learning unrestricted by time and place, and make the teaching and learning move towards personalized and independent direction. In response to the requirement, many universities have implemented online teaching reform and set up some online learning center to maximalize the quality of online English teaching. In addition, influenced by Covid-19, blended learning was given a compelling rise and has become an unprecedented large-scale practice in the history of education in China.

Many studies have investigated the factors influencing the efficiency of English learning in blended environment. As one of the learner-centered teaching approaches, learners' characteristics, learning motivation and strategies, learners' autonomous learning ability and the learners' adaptation to the online learning environment are important factors for successful English learning in the blended context (Deng et al., 2012). However, the EFL learners' online learning self-efficacy and self-regulating strategies has been overlooked.

Self-efficacy and self-regulation strategy are one of the important factors for successful online learning. Rahimi and Fathi (2022) stress that students' high self-efficacy is one of the necessary components for self-regulated online learning. Online learning self-efficacy is the learners' perception to their abilities to accomplish their learning tasks in the online setting. While, self-regulated strategies are those that learners utilize to monitor, and control their learning process. In the context of online learning, students are allowed more flexibility to choose their learning content and the pace of their study. Additionally, they take more responsibility in organizing and managing their learning behavior (Artino & McCoach, 2008). The goal of the

present study was to explore EFL learners' English learning self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies when learning listening the blended context.

In addition, the change in the learning mode had an impact on the learners' listening learning activities. Compared with other skills, listening is a complex and difficult skill to be achieved, because it has the heaviest processing demand for language learners. In the listening process, students need to retain and comprehend the information they have heard in their short-term memory system as well as respond appropriately to the information heard. It is challenging to implement online listening learning for EFL learners due to the complexity of listening comprehension (Susilowati, 2020). Rost (2001, cited by Ateia, 2016) asserted that further focus should be given to listening teaching and listening strategy development in order to demystify the complex process. Many language instructors and learners claim the difficulties of listening are result from the difficulty of the listening materials and their low listening ability, with little awareness of the ineffective strategies they use. One way to promote EFL learners' listening skills is to investigate the factors that influence their behaviors in online listening learning.

According to the relevant studies, there is a strong relationship between students' self-regulation strategies and their listening skills in traditional classroom teaching. In generally, self-efficacy demonstrates how confident learners are in their capacity to complete the learning activity. It is crucial in determining the learners' ability for learning and their usage of strategies. Furthermore, the self-regulation in the learning process can help students monitor their learning process and find new strategies when the previous one did not lead to successful learning. However, studies have not given enough attention to relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies for listening learning in the blended context.

For the above reasons, the present study aims to fill this gap by examining the learners' listening learning self-efficacy and use of self-regulation strategies in the blended context. The study tried to 1) describe the profile of the respondents in terms of sex and academic year; 2) identify the respondents' level of listening learning self-efficacy in terms of technology use, online learning task, instructor and peer interaction and communication, and online learning motivation; 3) determine the respondents' level of self-regulation strategies as to six categories: goal setting, environment structuring, task strategies, time management help-seeking, and self-evaluation; 4) analyze the difference in responses on listening learning self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies when grouped according to the profile; 5) test the significant relationships between the self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies of respondents' in the blended context.

2. Methodology

2.1. Instrument

The descriptive analysis method was utilized in the study to explore the levels of students' listening learning self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies and the relationship between the two variables.

The survey questionnaire for this study had three sections. The respondents' demographic data, which included their sex and grade level, was shown in the first section. The second part measured students' listening learning self-efficacy using an online listening learning self-efficacy questionnaire that was created based on Sun and Rogers (2021). The third part evaluated the learners' self-regulation strategies in their listening learning process and was based on a modified version of a questionnaire developed by Zheng et al. (2016)'s questionnaire to judge the learners' self-regulation strategies in their learning process. The pilot study's result demonstrated that all scales' Cronbach Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.893 to 0.933, indicating the high reliability of the variables.

2.2. Participants

316 English major students from a private university in China participated in this study. All of the participants had the first-hand experience of listening learning through the blended teaching mode, and they all understood how to manage their learning motivations and strategies.

2.3. Data Collection

On the online platform-wenjuanxing, the formal survey was run. The participants had the option to participate or not in the research, and their personal information was kept confidential. All the participants were informed about the purposes of the research and the content of questionnaires. The SPSS was used to analyze the participants' response after the data had been downloaded. The result of the data was given a detailed analysis, and relevant suggestions were proposed based on the research findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Analysis of the Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	77	24.4
Female	239	75.6
Grade Level		
Sophomore	145	45.9
Junior	171	54.1

The distribution of respondents by sex and grade level is shown in Table 1. There are 77 male students and 239 female students. The gender gap is one of the typical features of language related majors, which is stereotypically female domain. According to grade level, there are 45.9% sophomore students and 54.1% junior students with the number of 145 and 171 respectively. The result indicates that the respondents are distributed evenly in terms of grade level.

3.2. The Level of Respondents' Online Listening Learning Self-efficacy

Table 2. Online Listening Learning Self-efficacy

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Technology Use	2.54	Agree	3
2. Online Learning Task	2.53	Agree	4
3. Instructor and Peer Communication	2.55	Agree	2
4. Online Learning Motivation	2.56	Agree	1
Composite Mean	2.55	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 describes the respondents' listening learning self-efficacy and the different rankings of four dimensions in the blended context. The composite mean of 2.55 shows that the respondents' self-efficacy for online listening learning is at moderate level. The result may help to explain why most students have developed a stable confidence in their ability to learn listening online and have developed the strategies for learning listening in blended context. The results are consistent with those of Han et al. (2021), who found that Chinese EFL learners had high levels of self-efficacy in online learning and actively engage in it.

In addition, as for the four dimensions of listening self-efficacy, the weighted mean of online learning is the highest, which is 2.56. The following dimension is instructor and peer communication self-efficacy whose weighted mean is 2.55. However, the weighted mean of online learning task self-efficacy is the lowest, coming in at 2.53. The respondents' self-efficacy in assessing their ability to complete the listening learning tasks is lower.

Given the lowest mean of the online learning task self-efficacy, it is suggested that the teachers provide learning activities that encourage students to complete specific tasks successfully within their actual capabilities and to increase their sense of attainments. This would prevent students from losing the confidence to perform an assignment and giving up easily due to prior failures.

The amount of learning strategies used and students' academic performance are both likely to be influenced by students' self-efficacy toward a task (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2023). Therefore, teachers ought to encourage students to have high levels of task efficacy because doing so will improve their academic performance and usage of learning strategies.

3.3. The Level of Respondents' Online Listening Self-regulation Strategies

Table 3. Online Listening Self-regulation Strategies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1.Goal Setting	2.58	Agree	5
2.Environment Structuring	2.58	Agree	5
3.Task Strategies	2.60	Agree	1
4.Time Management	2.58	Agree	5
5.Help Seeking	2.59	Agree	2.5
6.Self Evaluation	2.59	Agree	2.5
Composite Mean	2.59	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 3 shows the respondents' overall level of self-regulation strategies in the online listening learning. The composite mean 2.59, which indicates a moderate level of self-regulation strategies used by the respondents. Task strategies are the most preferred one. Help-seeking and self-evaluation are comparatively low. The respondents' least-used self-regulated learning strategies for online listening are goal planning, environment structuring, and time management, all with weighted means of 2.58. The result differs slightly from that of Su et al. (2018), who found that students' agreement with regard to environment structuring was the greatest, followed by goal-setting and help-seeking. Task techniques are the least important factor. The different findings may be related to the different language skills concerned. Su et al. (2018) focused on the online self-regulation in speaking, reading, writing, and listening, whereas, the present study focuses on the listening skills. The strategies used in specific skills learning are different from of English learning for general purposes.

Students' weak self-regulated learning abilities in the online listening learning process are demonstrated by the respondents' low usage of goal setting, environment structuring, and time management methods. The possible reason might be related to the traditional teacher-centered learning environment, in which students follow on the teachers' teaching plan and steps. Students are not encouraged to develop their own learning strategies in the class. This approach is beneficial for raising students' linguistic proficiency. However, it is not beneficial for the development of students' independent learning skills and their learning strategies. Therefore, students need to regulate their online learning process and be committed to their

goals. At the same time, teachers need to give feedback for students' goal achieving and guide students to use their external resources to avoid learning distractions.

3.4. Online Listening Learning Self-efficacy Among the Respondents

Table 4. Self-efficacy When Grouped According to Profile

Sex	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Technology Use	33.285	0.000	Highly Significant
Online Learning Task	19.150	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor and Peer Communication	32.915	0.000	Highly Significant
Online Learning Motivation	7.420	0.007	Highly Significant
Grade Level			
Technology Use	1.445	0.230	Not Significant
Online Learning Task	0.531	0.467	Not Significant
Instructor and Peer Communication	2.916	0.089	Not Significant
Online Learning Motivation	1.531	0.217	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 4 displays the significant differences in listening self-efficacy when grouped according to sex. It shows that male students are more confident in the online listening leaning than their counterparts. The result supports the previous findings of Chang et al. (2014) 's earlier findings that male students have greater levels of self-efficacy for online learning than female students. Their internet literacy is correlated with their self-efficacy in online learning. Male students are more assured in their capacity to finish the online task and learn online.

Additionally, the results show that there is no difference in sophomore and junior students' listening learning self-efficacy. The results differ with those of Zhang (2019), in which higher grade students shows stronger self-efficacy beliefs than lower grades. This phenomenon may be that students transfer some of the listening learning preference and strategies to the online listening process. They have been accustomed to the traditional learning mode and cannot adapt fully to the new online learning environment.

3.5. Online Self-regulation Strategies Among the Respondents

Table 5. Self-regulation Strategies When Grouped According to Profile

Sex	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Goal Setting	63.120	0.000	Highly Significant
Environment Structuring	85.375	0.000	Highly Significant
Task Strategies	41.466	0.000	Highly Significant
Time Management	48.691	0.000	Highly Significant
Help Seeking	45.047	0.000	Highly Significant
Self Evaluation	53.911	0.000	Highly Significant
Grade Level			
Goal Setting	1.122	0.290	Not Significant
Environment Structuring	0.303	0.582	Not Significant
Task Strategies	1.399	0.238	Not Significant
Time Management	0.103	0.749	Not Significant
Help Seeking	2.691	0.102	Not Significant
Self Evaluation	0.170	0.681	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 5 shows the variations in self-regulation techniques' responses when grouped by sex and grade level. It is shown that there is significant difference on self-regulation strategies when grouped to sex, in which male students use more self-regulation strategies in their listening learning. The more self-regulation strategies used by male students is related to their high level of self-efficacy. The result is consistent with Wang (2018)' finding that female students performed on average better than male students. However, this difference did not reach a statistically significant level. This inconsistent is due to different research respondents, high school students are selected in Wang's study. For female students in high school, puberty begins two years earlier than it does for male students. As a result, female students outperform their male peers.

In addition, from Table 5, it can be seen that male students apply goal setting strategies a lot more than female students relatively to other kinds of strategies. They intend to set learning goals in their online listening learning. With respect the difference response in self-regulation strategies in terms of grade level, there is no significant relationship between the two grades of levels. The finding is also different from the one found by Zhang (2019) that the students' use of self-regulation strategies varies by grade. Compared with juniors, sophomores make frequently use of self-regulation strategies than senior do.

3.6. Relationship Between Online Listening Self-efficacy and Self-regulation Strategies

Table 6. Self-efficacy and Self-regulation Strategies for Online Listening Learning

		Goal setting	Environment Structure	Task Strategies	Time Management	Help Seeking	Self-evaluation
Technology Use	Pearson Correlation	.827**	.821**	.808**	.814**	.814**	.815**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Online Learning	Pearson Correlation	.805**	.796**	.794**	.778**	.803**	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Instructor and Peer Communication	Pearson Correlation	.817**	.810**	.798**	.788**	.932**	.934**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Online Learning Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.800**	.789**	.789**	.780**	.800**	.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

As shown in Table 6, there is significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies. In other words, self-regulation procedures are used more frequently when the learners' level of self-efficacy is higher. Students who are confident in achieving their listening learning tasks are likely to use more self-regulated learning strategies. With high level of self-efficacy, they are confident in their abilities to be positive and active engage in the self-regulated listening learning process. The result is supported by the claim of Li and Wang (2010), highly self-efficacious children reported using self-regulated techniques more frequently when learning to read.

In addition, the study is consistent with the research results of Yabukoshi's (2021) research findings on the use of self-control and self-efficacy to enhance listening ability in EFL contexts. The analysis of the data revealed that students with high self-efficacy were specific, varied, and frequent in their self-regulated processes, while their peers with low self-efficacy were not

active in these processes. In particular, a self-efficacious student who made more progress in listening displayed sophisticated metacognitive strategy use throughout his entire self-regulated learning process, which was likely to promote effective sel. These findings give light on possible relationships between language acquisition, self-efficacy, and self-regulation in the context of self-instructional learning.

4. Conclusion

The study presents the following major findings. Firstly, the respondents are female-dominated group and they are evenly distributed in terms of grade level. Secondly, the respondents' online listening self-efficacy are at moderate level. They have the highest value of self-efficacy in terms of online learning motivation. Thirdly, the respondents' online listening self-regulation strategies are at moderate levels. Fourthly, there is significant differences in self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies when grouped by sex. Male students are more confident in their abilities in the online listening and they use more self-regulation strategies. There is significant relationship between the respondents' online listening learning self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies.

Some limitations of the study need to be noted. The small sample size prevents generalizing the results. The future study may expand the scope of the respondents to obtain a more comprehensive result. Secondly, the study focuses the learners' self-efficacy and strategic skills in online listening learning in the whole process. Future research can examine the students' self-efficacy and self-regulation techniques in the whole listening process.

The findings also shed some implications for English teachers and students as well. Teachers should set self-regulated learning as one of their teaching objectives to help students maintain a high level of self-regulated learning skills to sustain their learning. It should be mentioned that the strategy-based listening instruction should be comprehensive, which means the strategies should be targeted during the whole listening learning process. Students need to be committed and motivated to their online listening learning in order to enhance listening learning self-efficacy. Students must use more ways to control their learning process.

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