

A Study On The Correlation Between Motivation, Strategies And Achievement Of English Majors' Listening Learning —Take Panzhihua University As An Example

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Abstract:

This study probes into the correlation between listening motivation, strategies, and achievement in English listening among 150 senior English majors at Panzhihua University, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The gathered data were meticulously analyzed using SPSS statistical software, specifically version 27.0. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between listening motivation and achievement, suggesting that a stronger listening motivation leads to better performance. Similarly, a positive relationship was observed between the use of listening strategies and academic performance, highlighting that effective listening strategies contribute to superior academic outcomes.

Background: *For the majority of Chinese English learners, listening poses the greatest challenge. Many English majors struggle to pass their course examinations and other professional tests due to their poor performance in English listening. The aim of this study is to identify the primary cause of the issue and subsequently give a hint to enhance students' listening achievement.*

Materials and Methods: *This study employs a questionnaire survey to survey 150 senior English majors at Panzhihua University on their listening habits. The gathered data were meticulously analyzed using SPSS statistical software, specifically version 27.0.*

Results: *The findings revealed several key points: firstly, the participants' listening motivation primarily encompassed test-oriented motivation, personal development motivation, and instrumental motivation, with cognitive strategies being the most frequently employed by students. Secondly, there exist significant disparities between high-achieving and low-achieving students in terms of test-oriented motivation and the use of cognitive strategies.*

Conclusion: *A notable positive correlation exists between listening motivation, strategy use, and academic achievement. Both listening motivation and effective listening strategies exert a considerable influence on students' performance in English listening.*

Key Word: *English majors; listening motivation; listening strategies; achievement; correlation*

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I. Introduction

Learning motivation and learning strategies are two important concepts in educational psychology, and they are also two crucial factors that affect the achievements of students. ^[1] Based on the study of experts, motivation is an internal drive that inspires and sustains an individual's action and helps him or her to accomplish a task. ^[2] At the same time, Oxford believes that learning strategies are the behaviors or actions that learners take to make language learning more successful, purposeful, and enjoyable. ^[3] In addition, learning strategies are the methods and means adopted by learners to improve their foreign language learning level, and are reflected in the whole process of language acquisition and language use. There is a positive correlation between learning motivation and academic performance, that is, the stronger the learning motivation, the better the academic performance, and there is also a positive correlation between learning strategies and academic performance. Effective learning strategies help to improve learning results and thus achieve better academic performance. Learning motivation and learning strategy influence each other, and they act together on academic achievement. On the one hand, learning motivation affects the choice and use of learning strategies; On the other hand, the use of learning strategies can also affect learning motivation. Learners with positive learning motivation and effective learning strategies can often master knowledge better, improve learning effect, and achieve better academic achievements.

For most Chinese English learners, listening comprehension poses the greatest challenge. Beyond the scarcity of a language environment, insufficient listening skills and unreasonable use of listening strategies are the main reasons for many Chinese students' poor performance in English listening. Scholars have conducted extensive research on this issue and discovered that learning motivation and strategies employed during English listening exercises significantly impact the achievements. In order to examine the utilization of listening motivation and strategies among English majors at Panzhihua University, the study adopts a quantitative approach, surveying 150 English majors to delve into whether there is certain correlation between listening habits and academic achievements.

II. Material And Methods

Research Subjects

The study involves 150 senior English majors from Panzhihua University, comprising 28 male and 122 female students. Despite having comparable ages and backgrounds in English studies, there is notable variation in their individual listening skills. The participants were divided into two groups based on their listening grades of TEM-4, and the listening scores were converted into a 100 scale, those with scores ≥ 60 were divided into high score group and the rest were in low score group.

There were 81 students in high score group, including 18 boys and 63 girls. The scores of the students in the high score group were between 60 and 80, and the average score was 66.26, among which the number of students with the score of 63 was the largest, accounting for 14.81% of the students in this group.

There were 69 students in the low score group, including 10 boys and 59 girls. The average score of the students in this group was 53.55. The average score of the students in the high score group was 12.71 points higher than that of the students in the low score group. The number of students with the score of 58 were the largest, accounting for 18.84% of the students in the low score group.

Table 1 Grade Division (N=150)

	N	Grade Division	Average	The highest	The lowest
High Score Group	81	≥60	66.26	80	60
Low Score Group	69	<60	53.55	58	42

N= number of students

The Design of Questionnaire

The questionnaire design draws upon the research of Wang Wengang^[5] and Wang Xiaofang^[6], with particular emphasis on the finding that “students tend to use cognitive strategies more frequently than other strategies during the listening process”^[7]. Accordingly, the learning strategy questions focus primarily on cognitive and social/affective strategies. The questionnaire comprises 21 items, structured into two main sections: the first section includes 8 questions related to listening motivation, while the second section contains 12 questions concerning listening strategies.

Data Collection and Analysis

150 valid questionnaires were collected for this study. To facilitate the authenticity of the questionnaire, the author explained to the participants that the data collected from the survey would be used for research purpose only, and no one except the present researcher would have access to their responses.

Reliability analysis conducted using SPSS revealed an Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.835, which exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold, thus confirming the high overall reliability of the questionnaire and enabling valid data analysis. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed by the statistics software of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) 27. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between listening motivation, strategies and listening scores. The T test was used to compare the significance differences in learning motivation and strategies between high and low score students

III. Results

The results showed that, first, the subjects’ listening motivation mainly included test-oriented motivation, personal development motivation and instrumental motivation. The strategy students often use was cognitive strategy. Second, listening motivation and strategies have a certain impact on grades. Third, there are significant differences between high score and low score students in test-oriented motivation and cognitive strategy.

IV. Discussion

Analysis of Listening Motivation and Strategy

According to the results of the questionnaire, the average score of listening motivation and strategies of senior English majors at Panzhuhua University was calculated. The results are presented in table 2 and table 3.

Table 2 Average Score of Listening Motivation

Test-oriented Motivation			Personal Development Motivation		Instrumental Motivation		Interest Motivation	
Q2	Q3	Q8	Q4	Q6	Q5	Q7	Q9	

Mean Value	2.27	2.29	3.12		1.95	2.47		2.33	4.10		3.93
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It can be seen from table 2 that the main listening motivation of students are motivation presented in Q2(Mean=2.), Q3(Mean=2.29) among test-oriented motivation, Q4(Mean=1.95), Q6(Mean=2.47) among personal development motivation, and Q5(Mean =2.33) among instrumental motivation (Mean<3). Specifically, students are motivated to practice listening for the purpose of passing the course exam and TEM-4 test, to improve their listening abilities, to better communicate with others, to prepare for the future works. However, Q8(Mean=3.12) among test-oriented motivation, Q7(Mean=4.10) among instrumental motivation, and Q9(Mean=3.93) among interest motivation (Average Score >3) were not the main motivation for students to learn.

Table 3 Average Score of Listening Strategies

	Cognitive Strategies										Social/Affective Strategies	
	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q16	Q21
Mean Value	3.75	3.84	3.45	3.76	3.05	3.28	3.83	3.03	3.17	3.45	3.50	2.54

From Table 3, it is evident that the learning strategies most commonly employed by senior English majors at Panzhuhua University are primarily those listed under cognitive strategies, specifically questions Q10 (Mean = 3.75), Q11 (Mean = 3.84), Q12 (Mean = 3.45), Q13 (Mean = 3.76), Q14 (Mean = 3.05), Q15 (Mean = 3.28), Q17 (Mean = 3.83), Q18 (Mean = 3.03), Q19 (Mean = 3.17), and Q20 (Mean = 3.45). Additionally, among social/affective strategies, the method described in Q16 (Mean = 3.50) is also frequently utilized (Mean ≥ 3). These strategies include pre-reading and predicting content before listening, inferring correct answers from the speaker's tone, swiftly noting down key words, listening for thought groups, utilizing cultural background knowledge to comprehend the material, and marking potential answers as candidates. However, the strategy outlined in Q21 (Mean = 2.54) within the social/affective category is less frequently adopted by students (Mean < 3).

Correlation Analysis Between Listening Motivation and Achievement

SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the correlation between listening learning motivation and listening performance. Table 4 shows that there was a certain correlation between listening motivation and performance and listening motivation has a certain impact on listening performance. Among the 9 different questions, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q6, Q8 were significantly correlated with listening performance (P <0.05), while Q4, Q7, Q9 were not significantly correlated with listening performance (P >0.05).

Specifically, it is observed that questions Q2, Q3, and Q8 exhibit significant positive correlations with listening performance. The motivation reflected in these questions is test-oriented motivation, which is the most prevalent form of motivation among students. This type of motivation drives students to practice listening primarily to succeed in exams. The findings indicate that higher motivation scores are associated with higher listening scores. The data reveal that English majors at Panzhuhua University are significantly influenced by test-taking motivation. Students who are more motivated to complete assignments, pass course exams, and succeed in the TEM-4 examination tend to achieve higher English listening scores. This suggests that students are inclined to dedicate more time and effort to listening practice, particularly in the period leading up to exams, and they

often adopt the most efficient short-term strategies to ensure exam success.

Q5 and Q6 showed a significant negative correlation with listening performance. Motivation presented in Q5 belongs to instrumental motivation. It means that students with this motivation will make an effective plan to practicing listening, creating more opportunities to communicate with others in English.

The motivation presented in Q6 falls under the category of personal development motivation, which exhibits a significant negative correlation with listening performance. This could be due to students lacking clarity about their future plans and being in a stage of uncertainty. Despite this, students with such motivation demonstrate a strong desire to enhance their personal competitiveness, with the goal of securing better job opportunities. They also have clear future plans and believe that mastering a foreign language will benefit their career prospects.

Table 4 Correlation Analysis Between Listening Motivation and Achievement

	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0.208*	0.252**	-0.060	-.0219**	-.0244**	-0.057	0.185*	0.106
P	0.011	0.002	0.463	0.007	0.003	0.487	0.023	0.197
N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

Correlation is significant if ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Correlation Analysis Between Listening Strategies and Achievements

SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the correlation between listening strategies and listening performance. Table 5 shows that there is a certain correlation between listening strategies and performance and listening strategies have a certain impact on listening performance. Among the 12 different questions, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q17, Q19 were significantly correlated with listening performance ($P < 0.05$), while Q10, Q16, Q18, Q20, Q21 were not significantly correlated with listening performance ($P > 0.05$).

Specifically, Q11, Q12 were significantly correlated with listening performance, indicating that the use of speculative strategies in listening is beneficial to promote students' performance. That is to say, students can get correct answers based on the speaker's tone and the context. On the one hand, the tone of the speaker will change when they are in different situation, which can help students judge the speaker's emotion and attitude. On the other hand, in an article, the context is of vital importance for the listener, the correct information can be predicted according to the cultural background knowledge of relevant disciplines, common sense and discourse markers. Prediction is an interesting and challenging activity, which can not only stimulate listeners' interest in listening but also help listeners focus on the listening materials.

Q13 and Q17 were significantly correlated with listening performance. In other words, strategies such as writing down key words quickly and marking the content mentioned in the options are positively correlated with listening performance. Due to the limited storage capacity and storage time of human short-term memory, information screening at this stage can help individuals remember the key points in a long article, including time, names and places, etc. Therefore, note-taking strategies play a significant role in improving listening performance. The more critical and comprehensive the note-taking content is, the more conducive to achieving high scores.

Q14 and Q15 were significant positive correlated with listening performance. That is to say, during the listening process, students can listen to the sound according to the sense group to understand the listening material quickly. Besides, they can use the cultural background of foreign countries to understand the listening material

comprehensively, so as to obtain higher scores.

Q19 was positively correlated with listening performance. It means that repetition and summarization is the process of changing short-term memory into long term memory. In this process, learners can deepen their memory and consolidate their mastery of new knowledge by replaying the new words or expressions or even cultural knowledge they have heard. After class, summarizing what they have learned plays a significant role in improving their listening performance.

Table 5 Correlation Analysis Between Listening Strategies and Achievement

	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21
Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0.137	0.279*	0.261*	0.279*	0.264*	0.205*	0.091	0.316*	0.080	0.213*	0.118	0.147
P	0.094	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.012	0.268	0.000	0.330	0.009	0.150	0.073
N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

Correlation is significant if **p<0.01, * p<0.05

V. Conclusion

The results of the questionnaire survey reveal a definite correlation among the listening motivation, strategies, and achievements of senior English majors at Panzhihua University.

Firstly, students' primary listening motivations encompass test-oriented motivation, personal development motivation, and instrumental motivation. These motivations reflect students' desires to pass exams, enhance their overall English proficiency, improve their communication skills, and pave the way for future employment. Additionally, the listening strategies predominantly employed by students include cognitive strategies and social/affective strategies. Specifically, students frequently use pre-reading and context-based predictions, rapid keyword notation, contextual comprehension, and marking potential answers among the options.

Secondly, a clear link exists between listening motivation, strategies, and listening achievements. On one hand, listening motivation exerts a specific influence on listening performance. Notably, test-oriented motivation shows a significant positive correlation with listening scores. Conversely, there is a notably negative correlation between instrumental motivation, personal developmental motivation, and listening scores. In summary, motivations aimed at achieving higher course grades, passing exams, and succeeding in TEM-4 positively impact listening scores. On the other hand, listening strategies also have a specific influence on listening performance. Specifically, speculating, identifying keywords, utilizing cultural backgrounds, and summarizing issues contribute positively to listening performance.

Thirdly, obvious differences emerge in test-oriented motivation and cognitive strategies between high-scoring and low-scoring students. The most prominent discrepancy in learning motivation between these two groups lies in their ability to complete course assignments more effectively and attain higher scores, thereby enhancing their overall course performance. Among cognitive strategies, the most significant differences between high and low scorers relate to making predictions based on the speaker's tone and context, effectively memorizing keywords, marking potential answers among options, and summarizing and reviewing after class.

Based on the research findings, there is a close and complex relationship among learning motivation, learning strategy and academic achievement. In order to achieve better academic performance, students should actively cultivate their learning motivation, choose effective learning strategies, and constantly strive to improve their English listening level and ability.

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