



## STRATEGIC APPROACHES IN TEACHING CRITICAL LISTENING TO EFL LEARNERS: A CLASSROOM CASE STUDY

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### Abstract

This qualitative case study investigates how a university EFL lecturer integrates multiple instructional strategies to teach Critical Listening to third-semester English Education students in Indonesia. Employing classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis, the study identifies three key strategies: bottom-up, top-down, and direct instruction. Findings reveal that these approaches, applied in a complementary manner across different teaching stages, foster improved vocabulary acquisition, comprehension of audio texts, and critical engagement. Challenges such as limited class time, lack of student motivation, and insufficient vocabulary were documented, alongside practical solutions such as media adaptation and flexible lesson planning. The study contributes to understanding effective pedagogical frameworks in EFL listening instruction and emphasizes the contextual factors that influence their success. Implications highlight the need for adaptive strategy use, increased teacher support, and future research into self-regulated learning integration.

**Keywords:** Bottom-up strategy, critical listening, direct strategy, EFL instruction, top-down strategy.

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## INTRODUCTION

Listening has long been recognized as one of the most demanding skills for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in higher education contexts where learners are required to process complex academic input in real time (Mathumathi et al., 2024; Rukthong, 2021). Unlike reading, listening involves transient input that cannot be easily revisited, placing heavy cognitive demands on learners as they simultaneously decode sounds, access vocabulary, and construct meaning (Khallaf et al., 2024; Yu & Wen, 2024). These challenges are intensified in EFL environments where exposure to authentic spoken English is limited and learners encounter a wide range of accents, speech rates, and discourse styles (Rukthong, 2021; Wu, 2025). As a result, listening is frequently reported by EFL students as the most anxiety-inducing language skill, often associated with frustration, low confidence, and avoidance behaviors that further impede learning (Almanea, 2023).

Within higher education, listening competence is not only foundational for language learning but also essential for academic success, as students are expected to comprehend lectures, participate in discussions, and engage critically with spoken information (Robillos & Bustos, 2022; Duman et al., 2021). In this context, the notion of critical listening has gained increasing attention. Critical listening extends beyond basic comprehension to include the evaluation, interpretation, and judgment of spoken information, requiring learners to analyze arguments, identify implicit meanings, and reflect on the credibility and relevance of what they hear (Khallaf et al., 2024). While general listening skills enable learners to understand spoken texts at a surface level, critical listening emphasizes higher-order thinking and reflective engagement, making it particularly relevant in academic and professional settings (Khallaf et al., 2024; Rukthong, 2021).

Despite its importance, achieving effective listening instruction in EFL classrooms remains problematic. Many university-level EFL programs continue to report that listening learning objectives are not fully achieved, even after years of formal instruction (Aldukhayel, 2023; Ducker, 2022). One recurring issue is the limited repertoire of instructional strategies employed by lecturers, which often results in teacher-centered practices that emphasize passive listening rather than active meaning construction (Almanea, 2023; Yaacob et al., 2021). In addition, students' insufficient vocabulary knowledge poses a significant barrier to comprehension, as unfamiliar lexical items disrupt processing and increase cognitive overload during listening tasks (Zhang & Graham, 2019;

Zhang & Zhang, 2020). These difficulties are frequently compounded by inadequate instructional media, limited access to technology, and restricted time allocation for listening practice within crowded curricula (Aldukhayel, 2023; Yaacob et al., 2021).

Motivational factors further complicate the teaching and learning of listening. Research consistently demonstrates that learners' motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a critical role in their engagement with listening tasks and their willingness to employ effective strategies (Cervetti et al., 2020; Du & Man, 2023). Learners with low motivation are less likely to persist in challenging listening activities or to reflect on their listening processes, leading to stagnation in skill development (Xu et al., 2022). At the same time, listening anxiety—often triggered by fear of misunderstanding or negative evaluation—can undermine motivation and reduce learners' capacity to process spoken input effectively (Almanea, 2023; Zhang & Wu, 2024). These interrelated factors highlight the need for pedagogical approaches that address not only linguistic difficulties but also cognitive and affective dimensions of listening.

Previous research has explored a range of instructional strategies aimed at improving EFL listening outcomes. Studies have documented the use of bottom-up strategies that focus on decoding linguistic elements such as sounds, words, and grammatical structures, as well as top-down strategies that activate learners' background knowledge and contextual understanding to construct global meaning (Rukthong, 2021; Milliner & Dimoski, 2021). In addition, cognitive and metacognitive strategies—such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating comprehension—have been shown to enhance learners' awareness of their listening processes and improve overall performance (Fathi et al., 2020; Payaprom, 2022). Strategy-based instruction (SBI) has therefore emerged as a prominent pedagogical approach, emphasizing explicit strategy training to foster active, self-directed listeners rather than passive recipients of spoken input (Rukthong, 2021).

However, evidence also suggests that the implementation of listening strategies in classroom practice is often inconsistent and incomplete. While many lecturers acknowledge the value of bottom-up and top-down processing, these strategies are not always systematically integrated into lesson design or aligned with instructional objectives (Milliner & Dimoski, 2021; Robillos & Bustos, 2022). Moreover, direct listening strategies—characterized by immediate exposure to audio input and prompt learner responses—are frequently employed without sufficient scaffolding to support deeper analysis and reflection (Duman et al., 2021). As a result, students may demonstrate short-term improvements in comprehension without developing the critical listening skills necessary for academic engagement (Khallaf et al., 2024).

A growing body of literature has specifically pointed to gaps in the teaching of critical listening within EFL contexts. Although critical listening is widely recognized as essential in higher education, many instructional practices continue to prioritize surface-level comprehension over evaluative and analytical listening skills (Khallaf et al., 2024; Suzuki & Yamane, 2024). Traditional lecture-based approaches often limit opportunities for learners to question, analyze, and respond critically to spoken texts, thereby constraining the development of higher-order listening skills (Lee & Park, 2020; Lee & Levine, 2018). Furthermore, a lack of professional training in critical listening pedagogy has been identified as a barrier for many EFL lecturers, who may be uncertain about how to design tasks that promote critical engagement with audio materials (Du & Man, 2023; Khallaf et al., 2024).

These gaps are particularly evident in EFL higher education settings in developing contexts, where institutional constraints such as limited resources, large class sizes, and rigid curricula may further restrict pedagogical innovation (Aldukhayel, 2023; Yaacob et al., 2021). In such contexts, there is a pressing need for empirical studies that document how listening strategies are actually enacted in real classrooms, how lecturers navigate pedagogical challenges, and how students respond to different instructional approaches. Qualitative, classroom-based investigations can provide valuable insights into these issues by capturing the complexity of teaching practices and contextual factors that are often overlooked in experimental research (Ducker, 2022).

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to explore the teaching of critical listening in an EFL higher education context through a qualitative case study of a lecturer teaching a Critical Listening course at a private university in Indonesia. Drawing on classroom observations, lecturer interviews, questionnaires, and instructional documentation, the study examines the strategies employed—particularly bottom-up, top-down, and direct strategies—the challenges encountered during instruction, and the solutions implemented to address these challenges. By focusing on authentic classroom practice, this study aims to contribute context-sensitive evidence to the literature on EFL listening pedagogy.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated examination of instructional strategies, pedagogical challenges, and adaptive solutions within a single classroom context, with a specific focus on critical listening rather than general listening comprehension. While much existing research emphasizes the effectiveness of individual strategies, fewer studies provide detailed accounts of how these strategies are combined and adapted in practice, especially in resource-constrained higher education settings. By offering an empirically grounded portrayal of critical listening instruction, this study seeks to inform the development of more responsive and contextually appropriate listening pedagogy in EFL higher education, particularly in the Indonesian context.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Listening is widely recognized as one of the most complex skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it requires learners to process incoming auditory information in real time while simultaneously decoding linguistic forms and constructing meaning. Unlike reading, spoken input is transient and cannot easily be revisited, making listening a cognitively demanding process that involves perception, attention, memory, and interpretation (Mathumathi et al., 2024; Yu & Wen, 2024). In higher education settings, listening competence is particularly important because students are expected to understand lectures, participate in academic discussions, and engage critically with spoken information. However, EFL learners often encounter difficulties due to limited vocabulary knowledge, unfamiliar pronunciation patterns, varying speech rates, and insufficient exposure to authentic language use (Rukthong, 2021; Wu, 2025).

Theoretical perspectives on listening comprehension generally view listening as an active process of meaning construction rather than passive reception. According to cognitive information-processing theory, listeners continuously select, organize, and integrate incoming information with existing knowledge stored in long-term memory. Anderson's (1995) cognitive model explains that listening comprehension involves perceptual processing, parsing, and utilization stages, through which learners identify sounds, interpret linguistic structures, and connect information to broader contexts. This perspective highlights that successful listening requires both linguistic knowledge and higher-order cognitive processes, especially when learners are expected to evaluate and interpret spoken discourse critically.

Critical listening extends beyond understanding literal meanings to include the ability to analyze arguments, evaluate evidence, identify bias, infer speaker intentions, and make reasoned judgments about spoken information (Khallaf et al., 2024). From the perspective of Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), critical listening involves higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating, rather than merely remembering or understanding information. Consequently, effective critical listening instruction should not only focus on comprehension but also encourage learners to engage reflectively and critically with oral texts. This is particularly important in higher education contexts, where students are expected to assess the credibility and relevance of information encountered in academic and professional settings.

Research on listening comprehension has frequently emphasized the importance of bottom-up and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing involves constructing meaning from smaller linguistic units such as phonemes, words, and grammatical structures toward larger discourse units. This approach is particularly beneficial for learners with limited vocabulary or insufficient familiarity with spoken English because it strengthens their ability to decode language accurately (Tsang, 2021; Tran et al., 2025). In contrast, top-down processing relies on learners' background knowledge, prior experiences, contextual clues, and expectations to interpret meaning. Through schema activation, prediction, and inferencing, learners can compensate for incomplete linguistic understanding and focus on overall message comprehension (Rukthong, 2021; Rababah et al., 2023).

While these two approaches are often discussed separately, contemporary listening theories argue that effective comprehension results from the interaction of both processes. The Interactive Processing Theory proposed by Rumelhart (1977) and further developed in second language listening research suggests that listeners simultaneously utilize linguistic decoding and background knowledge to construct meaning. This interactive perspective is especially relevant in critical listening because learners must move flexibly between detailed linguistic analysis and broader contextual interpretation. Therefore, listening instruction that combines bottom-up and top-down processes is generally considered more effective than relying on a single processing model.

Another influential framework is Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI), which emphasizes the explicit teaching of cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies to help learners regulate their listening processes (Fathi et al., 2020; Payaprom, 2022). Cognitive strategies support information processing, whereas metacognitive strategies enable learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their comprehension. The role of self-regulation is particularly important because successful listeners actively monitor understanding, identify comprehension breakdowns, and adjust strategies accordingly. Research has consistently shown that learners who employ metacognitive listening strategies demonstrate greater comprehension, higher self-efficacy, and lower listening anxiety than those who rely solely on linguistic processing (Milliner & Dimoski, 2021; Robillos & Bustos, 2022).

Despite the growing body of research on listening instruction, several challenges continue to hinder the development of critical listening skills in EFL classrooms. Limited instructional time, insufficient vocabulary knowledge, inadequate technological resources, and low learner motivation frequently reduce the effectiveness of listening activities (Aldukhayel, 2023; Yaacob et al., 2021). Furthermore, listening anxiety has been identified as a significant affective factor that negatively influences learners' ability to process spoken input and engage actively in listening tasks (Almanea, 2023; Zhang & Wu, 2024). These challenges become even more pronounced when students are expected to perform higher-order critical listening tasks that require evaluation and interpretation beyond basic comprehension (Li and Liu, 2008)

Although previous studies have examined individual listening strategies and their effects on listening performance, limited research has investigated how multiple instructional strategies are integrated and implemented within authentic Critical Listening classrooms in higher education contexts. Most studies focus on experimental interventions or strategy effectiveness, providing less attention to how lecturers combine, adapt, and sequence different approaches in response to classroom realities and learner needs. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring the implementation of bottom-up, top-down, and direct instructional strategies in a university-level Critical Listening course, as well as the challenges encountered and adaptive solutions employed by the lecturer in practice.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a case study design. The qualitative case study is selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the instructional strategies employed by an EFL lecturer in teaching Critical Listening, the challenges encountered, and the adaptive solutions applied within an authentic classroom setting. This design aligns with Duman et al. (2021), who emphasize the value of qualitative exploration in understanding pedagogical complexities in EFL listening instruction. The case study focuses on a single class, enabling the researcher to holistically examine the unique instructional context. This method is particularly suitable for exploring phenomena within their real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2018).

### ***Data Sources and Participants***

The primary data source in this study is one EFL lecturer responsible for the Critical Listening course for third-semester students in the English Language Education Program at a private university in Indonesia. Supplementary data are gathered from student participants to provide contextual insights into the learning environment. The demographic and contextual details of the participants are summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. The Demographic of the Participants**

Data Component	Description
Primary Participant	1 EFL lecturer
Student Level	Third-semester undergraduate students
Course Observed	Critical Listening
Number of Class Observations	2 sessions
Course Credit Weight	2 credits (SKS)
Duration per Session	Approximately 45 minutes

This configuration provides sufficient scope for observing teaching strategies and contextualizing challenges in a real instructional setting.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

Data were collected using three primary techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the instructional process. The researcher attended two classroom sessions of the Critical Listening course to document the teaching strategies in use. Field notes captured specific instructional behaviors, media use, student engagement, and interaction patterns. A face-to-face semi-structured interview then was conducted with the lecturer to explore their instructional objectives, perceived challenges, and rationale behind the selected strategies. Interview questions were open-ended, allowing for elaboration and probing as needed (Ficzere et al., 2024). Supporting materials, such as the course syllabus, course agreements, instructional media (audio/video), and e-books used in the course, were reviewed. This triangulation provided contextual data to corroborate observation and interview findings (Taherkhani et al., 2022).

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

The data analysis process followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. First, observation notes, interview transcripts, and instructional documents were reviewed and coded to identify recurring themes related to instructional strategies, implementation procedures, classroom challenges, and adaptive solutions. During data reduction, irrelevant information was removed, while meaningful units were categorized according to the study objectives. The categorized data were subsequently organized into thematic matrices and narrative displays to facilitate pattern identification and interpretation.

As this study was conducted by a single researcher and used a qualitative case study design, formal inter-rater reliability was not applied. To ensure the quality of the analysis, the researcher repeatedly reviewed, coded, and recoded the data throughout the study. The emerging categories and themes were continuously compared

across observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents to maintain consistency and accuracy in the interpretation. This ongoing process helped reduce personal bias and increased the dependability of the findings.

The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying interpretations by examining relationships among instructional strategies, implementation practices, challenges, and solutions. Findings were continuously compared against the original data sources to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected participants' experiences and classroom practices.

### ***Data Trustworthiness and Research Ethics***

Several strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. First, methodological triangulation was conducted by collecting data from multiple sources, including classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observation data provided evidence of actual classroom practices, interview data offered insights into the lecturer's perspectives and decision-making processes, while instructional documents such as syllabi, teaching materials, and learning resources served to corroborate the findings. The convergence of evidence from these different sources strengthened the credibility of the study.

Second, member checking was employed by providing the lecturer with interview transcripts and summaries of preliminary findings for verification. This process allowed participants to clarify statements and confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Third, thick description was used to provide detailed contextual information regarding the instructional setting, participant characteristics, and classroom activities, thereby supporting the transferability of the findings. Finally, the researcher maintained a reflective journal throughout data collection and analysis to identify potential biases and enhance reflexivity.

Regarding research ethics, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were used, and all collected data were utilized solely for academic and research purposes.

**Table 2. The Methodological Components**

Component	Description
Research Design	Qualitative Case Study
Participant	1 EFL lecturer
Context	Critical Listening class, 3rd-semester English Education students
Data Collection	Observation, semi-structured interview, document analysis
Data Analysis	Miles & Huberman Model (Reduction, Display, Verification)
Trustworthiness	Triangulation, Member Checking, Thick Description, Reflexivity
Ethical Considerations	Informed consent, anonymity, academic use of data

This methodological framework is expected to yield comprehensive insights into how Critical Listening is taught in the observed context, contributing empirical evidence for future pedagogical practices and research in EFL listening instruction.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***Teaching Strategies Used by the Lecturer***

This study identified three primary strategies employed by the EFL lecturer in teaching Critical Listening; bottom-up processing, top-down processing, and direct strategy. These strategies were applied synergistically to enhance students' comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical analysis skills in processing auditory materials.

#### **1. Bottom-Up Processing Strategy**

The bottom-up strategy focused on developing students' linguistic knowledge. The lecturer guided students in identifying keywords, recognizing grammatical functions, and resolving lexical ambiguities. During listening activities, students were trained to parse utterances word by word, recognizing syntax and semantics of sentence structures. For example, during listening to academic dialogues, the lecturer paused audio segments to prompt students to identify prepositions, connectors, and verb tenses.

#### **2. Top-Down Processing Strategy**

The top-down strategy emphasized global comprehension using contextual clues and students' background knowledge. Before listening tasks, the lecturer activated schema through brainstorming, visuals, and topic previews. This strategy allowed students to predict content, infer meaning, and grasp the main ideas without decoding every word. One task, for instance, involved interpreting argumentative discourse based on the theme of environmental sustainability supported by thematic vocabulary lists and visuals.

### 3. Direct Strategy

The direct strategy included spontaneous exposure to audio and immediate responses. Students listened to audio excerpts (e.g., interviews or commentaries) and were required to answer questions on the spot. This method promoted focus, accountability, and confidence in critical articulation. Students were frequently challenged to provide analytical insights into the speakers' tone, bias, or rhetorical strategies.

#### *Strategy Implementation in the Learning Process*

The lecturer's strategy implementation occurred across three instructional phases:

- a. Pre-Teaching: Activities included schema activation, introduction of key terms, and previewing audio materials. For example, the lecturer initiated class with a warm-up question related to the audio theme.
- b. While-Teaching: Audio-visual tools were employed, paired with focused listening tasks and note-taking strategies. Instructions were scaffolded, and feedback was given interactively.
- c. Post-Teaching: Reflections and group discussions were used to reinforce comprehension and foster meta-cognitive awareness. Students collaborated to evaluate speaker intent and credibility.

This three-phase structure ensured that each listening activity was pedagogically framed and supported at each level.

#### *Challenges in Teaching Critical Listening*

Several significant challenges were encountered by the lecturer:

- a. Time Constraints: Limited classroom time ( $\pm 45$  minutes per session) reduced opportunities for in-depth exploration.
- b. Media Issues: Technical limitations in audio/video playback occasionally disrupted lesson flow.
- c. Vocabulary Deficiency: Students struggled with unfamiliar terms, affecting decoding and inferencing.
- d. Low Motivation: A lack of engagement and listening-related anxiety hindered performance and participation.

These obstacles reduced the efficacy of the instructional strategies and required adaptive teaching responses.

#### *Solutions Applied by the Lecturer*

To address the identified challenges, the lecturer implemented several solutions:

- a. Time Management Improvements: Lesson plans were streamlined with focused objectives and stricter time control during activities.
- b. Enhanced Media Use: Backup devices and offline resources were prepared to ensure continuity during technical disruptions.
- c. Vocabulary Enrichment: Pre-teaching vocabulary activities and word lists were integrated regularly.
- d. Varied Instructional Techniques: A rotation of listening tasks, such as role-plays, debates, and collaborative analysis, was adopted to increase engagement and address diverse learning preferences.

These adjustments reflect pedagogical responsiveness to classroom realities and contribute to strategy effectiveness.

**Table 3. Summary of Key Data Points**

Item	Quantity/Details
Number of teaching strategies	3 (Bottom-up, Top-down, Direct)
Observation sessions	2 meetings
Classes involved	1 Critical Listening class
Lecturer participants	1 individual
Course credit weight	2 SKS
Session duration	$\pm 45$ minutes per session

These findings demonstrate the nuanced pedagogical decisions involved in Critical Listening instruction and highlight the need for responsive, multimodal approaches in EFL contexts.

## DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the lecturer employed a combination of bottom-up, top-down, and direct instructional strategies throughout the Critical Listening course. These strategies were implemented across the pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages to support students' vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and critical engagement with spoken texts. The complementary use of these strategies suggests that effective Critical Listening instruction requires learners to process both linguistic information and contextual meaning simultaneously. This finding

aligns with Anderson's (1995) cognitive processing model, which views listening comprehension as a complex process involving perceptual processing, parsing, and utilization of information. Through bottom-up activities, students focused on decoding linguistic elements, while top-down activities enabled them to activate prior knowledge and construct broader meanings from the listening texts. The importance of combining linguistic support and contextual understanding is also consistent with findings in English language teaching that emphasize structured instructional support as a means of facilitating learner autonomy and language development (Sari et al., 2026).

The findings also support the Interactive Processing Theory proposed by Rumelhart (1977), which emphasizes that successful comprehension occurs through the interaction of linguistic decoding and background knowledge. The lecturer's integration of bottom-up and top-down strategies demonstrates how learners moved between detailed language analysis and global interpretation during listening activities. Such integration was particularly important in Critical Listening tasks, where students were expected not only to understand spoken information but also to evaluate speaker intentions, identify bias, and formulate critical responses. This suggests that Critical Listening development relies on both lower-level and higher-level cognitive processes operating simultaneously. Similar patterns have been reported in studies on AI-supported language learning, where active cognitive engagement and meaningful interaction contribute significantly to language proficiency development (Hastomo et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the lecturer's use of direct listening activities reflects principles of Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI), which encourages active learner engagement and strategic processing during listening tasks. Immediate responses to audio input required students to monitor comprehension, make inferences, and articulate their interpretations in real time. This finding resonates with previous studies showing that active participation and behavioral engagement are strong predictors of successful language learning outcomes (Hastomo et al., 2025). Moreover, the implementation of direct activities encouraged students to become more responsible for their learning processes, reflecting characteristics commonly associated with self-regulated learning and learner autonomy (Sari et al., 2026).

Despite challenges related to time limitations, vocabulary deficiencies, and learner motivation, the lecturer adapted instructional practices through vocabulary support, varied learning activities, and flexible lesson planning. These adaptations reinforce previous research suggesting that listening success is influenced not only by instructional strategies but also by contextual and affective factors that shape learners' engagement and performance in EFL classrooms. The importance of learner motivation observed in this study is consistent with findings that both personal interest and external demands significantly influence learners' participation and persistence in language learning activities (Budiana et al., 2026). Likewise, creating engaging learning environments and employing varied instructional techniques may be particularly important for contemporary learners, especially Generation Z students who tend to respond positively to interactive and student-centered learning experiences (Hasbi et al., 2024).

### ***Interpretation of Findings***

The discussion focused on linking the data and the results of its analysis to the problem or purpose of the study and the broader theoretical context. It can also be discussed is the answer to the question why are facts found in the data. The discussion is written attached to the data discussed. The discussion is attempted not to be separated from the data discussed. Results and Discussion have proportion about 60-70% of the manuscript. This part is the main part of the research article. Results should summarize or highlight the findings rather than providing the detailed research results. The results also contain the results taken from the data analysis and/or the hypothesis test results and only provide the data that support discussion. This part includes table(s) and graph(s) taken from the research results data.

Discussion plays the important part in a scientific article. This part answers the problems, interprets the research results and the findings into the already known knowledge, confirms and/or contrasts with the research of other researchers, constructs the new theory, and/or modifies the previous theory. Discussion may also contain the implications of both theoretical and implementation results. Results and Discussion should answer what, why and what else questions. The research findings must be stated explicitly. After stating the research findings, the research findings and the relevant theory or hypothesis must be discussed comprehensively. The discussion section also must explain the comparison of the research finding with the relevant results. Therefore, a notable citation

must be found in the discussion section. In the last part, the implication of the research finding to sciences should be stated clearly..

### ***Comparison with Previous Literature***

These findings are aligned with prior research affirming the complementary roles of bottom-up and top-down strategies. Thompson et al. (2010) emphasized that a balanced integration of both approaches is crucial for effective listening comprehension. Moreover, the study confirms El-Henawy's (2025) assertion regarding the efficacy of direct strategies in enhancing learners' listening abilities through practice-based activities. The findings also echo Chorrojprasert (2020), who stress that contextual classroom factors and learner readiness critically influence the success of strategy implementation. Furthermore, the findings support recent evidence suggesting that strategic instructional scaffolding, reflection, and guided practice are central elements in developing autonomous language learners (Sari et al., 2026). However, this study further contributes by illustrating how these strategies are operationalized in a single university classroom setting, detailing their respective functions across instructional phases (pre-, while-, and post-listening).

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

Pedagogically, this study underscores the necessity for EFL lecturers to design adaptable and student-centered listening instruction. Integrating various strategies enables instructors to address different proficiency levels and learning styles. For instance, initiating lessons with vocabulary previews (bottom-up), activating schemata (top-down), and conducting direct listening-response tasks can collectively enhance listening outcomes. These strategies, when contextualized effectively, foster learner engagement, critical reflection, and self-confidence. Similar conclusions have been reported in studies highlighting the role of engagement and interactive instructional practices in improving language learning performance (Hastomo et al., 2025).

Moreover, findings advocate for a more deliberate time management approach in lesson planning, ensuring each instructional stage receives adequate attention. Classroom environments must also support multimodal learning through reliable audio-visual materials and interactive tasks. This recommendation is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the benefits of technology-enhanced learning resources and digital media in supporting language instruction and learner participation (Sari et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2025). These conditions are essential for maximizing student participation and comprehension in Critical Listening activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study explored the instructional strategies employed by an EFL lecturer in teaching Critical Listening to third-semester university students. The findings revealed that the lecturer integrated bottom-up, top-down, and direct instructional strategies throughout the pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages. These strategies complemented one another in supporting vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and students' critical engagement with spoken texts. The findings suggest that effective Critical Listening instruction requires a balanced combination of linguistic decoding, contextual interpretation, and active learner participation. Furthermore, the lecturer's adaptive responses to challenges such as limited instructional time, vocabulary deficiencies, technical issues, and learner motivation demonstrate the importance of flexibility and contextual responsiveness in EFL listening pedagogy.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on Critical Listening instruction by providing a context-specific account of how multiple listening strategies are integrated in an authentic university classroom. However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study involved only one lecturer and one Critical Listening class at a single private university, limiting the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. In addition, the study relied primarily on qualitative data and did not include quantitative measures of students' listening development. Future research may expand the participant pool across multiple institutions and adopt mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impact of instructional strategies on learners' listening performance. Further studies may also investigate the integration of metacognitive and self-regulated learning approaches in Critical Listening instruction, as well as the role of emerging technologies in supporting listening development in EFL contexts.

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