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A Prospective Study for Exploring Saudi EFL Learners' Strategic Listening Skills through Netflix from Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

The future of technology use in EFL classrooms is an important subject to investigate in future study because Saudi Vision 2030 is a shift toward modernity and openness to the rest of the world; as English is a global language, the effective use of English is essential to achieving this purpose, and it is by developing its skills with a significant emphasis on listening proficiency. The study aimed to explore how Netflix will impact Saudi EFL learners' strategic listening skills in the future from the teachers' perspectives. This research's significance lies in its alignment with the evolving educational paradigms and the increasing reliance on technology for language instruction; the study specifically sought to understand how the incorporation of Netflix might influence learners' SLS in the future. To achieve this aim, the study involved ninety-six male and female faculty members from Saudi EFL university departments, selected based on their experience in teaching English and familiarity with digital educational tools. A mixed-methods questionnaire was designed and applied to collect the participants' views on how Netflix will enhance the students' SLS in the future. The study revealed high expectations about the role of Netflix in promoting learners' SLS in the future.

Keywords: Netflix, prospective study, Saudi EFL learners, strategic listening, teachers' perspectives

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Introduction

The Saudi Vision 2030 is a move toward modernity and openness to the rest of the world. There are no plans to enhance English education or incorporate technology into the Vision. Nevertheless, Saudi Vision 2030 reflects the development of English education. In addition, among the interpretations of the Vision's aims are greater exploitation of the digital curriculum and the development of online learning/training platforms (Alzhrani & Alkubaidi, 2020). As a result of the Saudi government's efforts to prepare the younger generation for the changing economy and increasing labor market demands, English is being increasingly used as a medium of communication and instruction (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017). As English is a universal language, its practical use is crucial for accomplishing this aim. Therefore, teachers and students are expected to develop language skills, primarily listening skills.

This study explored how Netflix will impact learners' Strategic Listening Skills (SLS) in the future from the teachers' perspective. Promoting students' SLS is a challenge in teaching. In our experience as faculty members, students are passive and feel bored while listening in their classes. They tend to listen to the audio several times and then answer simple tasks. Furthermore, there are few opportunities for students to implement their repertoire of strategies.

Consequently, they need to be able to use their repertoire of listening strategies to become strategic learners. The significance of this research lies in its potential to enhance the integration of modern technology in English language instruction, aligning with the evolving educational requirements in the digital era. The research objectives include understanding teachers' perceptions of using Netflix for language instruction and identifying the anticipated impact of this method on learners' SLS development. The primary research question is: What are EFL learners' future expectations regarding using Netflix to enhance their strategic listening skills?

Literature Review

According to Ellis (1997), listening is one of the four fundamental language-learning skills and plays a significant role in daily communication. In comprehending spoken language, listeners absorb it and interpret it based on prior knowledge and experiences (Maharani, 2021). In addition, successful listening requires a range of skills, such as activating prior knowledge (Ghahri & Zarei, 2022), adjusting to changing speech speeds and accents, processing various text forms (Serrano & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2022), listening to main ideas and specific details (Huy, 2015; Low & Aryadoust, 2023), and predicting and guessing the content of audible text (Alutaybi & Alsowat, 2020; Ghahri & Zarei, 2022). Hence, students should use listening strategies to facilitate their listening process.

Vandergrift (2007) maintained that listening strategies are strategies that listeners use consciously or subconsciously to comprehend, evaluate, and interpret texts. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) identified metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective listening strategies as common student strategies. Using metacognitive strategies, students must devise a strategy for listening, analyze the listening process dynamically, and evaluate the results through listening exercises.

With a metacognitive strategy, students may know specific techniques and when and how they are applied (Daskalovska et al., 2023; Nguyen, 2020). Cognitive strategies facilitate acquiring and integrating new knowledge within a linguistic framework (Müller & Višić, 2023). According to Vandergrift (1997), socio-affective strategies assist students in interacting with their peers and gaining attention and explanations from their instructors. When students understand these strategies, how and when to use them, and how to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness, they become strategic listeners (Alutaybi & Alsowat, 2020).

Enhancing learners' strategic listening skills could be an EFL objective in the future, and educators need to update their methods of instruction to align with the times. According to Burner (2018), there are three reasons for the importance of change and development in education: growing globalization, technological innovations, and research into teaching and learning approaches. Classroom EFL learners are not exposed to adequate hearing input and must find other exposure possibilities, such as incorporating technology (Coşkun & Marlowe, 2020). One of the goals of incorporating new technologies into English language classrooms is to improve student learning by providing more effective means of instruction and communication (Al-Shehri, 2020). Multimedia can be utilized as a technology-based educational tools. According to the theory of multimedia learning, dual channels (verbal for text and visual for images and video) best help students understand information. English learning is promoted by the simultaneous use of these two channels, which permits both verbal and visual input processing (Brünken et al., 2002). Thus, EFL teachers must use tools like Netflix to promote English language skills. Netflix contains several unending movies and series that can be used for advanced language learning and extensive listening (Maharani, 2021). The role of movies and platforms like Netflix in enhancing listening skills in language learning has been extensively studied, revealing a complex and multifaceted impact. Research by Alm (2019, 2021) and Ananda et al. (2021) highlights the positive effects of informal exposure to Netflix series, showing improvements in students' willingness to listen extensively and their listening comprehension abilities. Türkmen (2020) further emphasizes the contribution of controlled usage of Netflix to second language competence, echoing the structured approach to subtitle usage studied by Dizon & Thanyawatpokin (2021). The Innovative Language Learning with Netflix Chrome extension, discussed by Alm (2021), represents another dimension of how technology can aid language learning. However, Metruk (2019) offers a crucial perspective by noting no significant improvement in listening skills among EFL learners despite extensive exposure to English movies and TV programs. These findings collectively indicate that while platforms like Netflix can be instrumental in language education, the effectiveness largely depends on factors such as the type of exposure, learner engagement, and the structured application of these digital resources in language learning contexts. Therefore, this study aims to explore the future impact of Netflix on learners' strategic listening skills (SLS) from teachers' perspective, addressing a gap in the current research regarding Saudi EFL students' expectations and experiences with using Netflix for language learning enhancement.

Methods

This prospective study adopted a mixed-methods design, utilizing a questionnaire to explore the strategic listening skills of Saudi EFL learners as influenced by Netflix from the teachers' perspective. The questionnaire combined quantitative elements, a 16-item Likert scale, with qualitative aspects through open-ended questions. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of teachers' perspectives on using Netflix to enhance SLS in EFL learners. Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the quantitative data from the Likert-scale items, while thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data derived from the open-ended question.

Participants

The study involved ninety-six male and female faculty members from various educational institutions in Saudi Arabia. These participants were selected based on their experience teaching English and familiarity with digital educational tools, including platforms like Netflix. The selection aimed to encompass a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives in utilizing digital resources for EFL teaching. This diverse group of faculty members provided a representative sample to explore the use of Netflix in enhancing strategic listening skills among Saudi EFL learners. All participants were ensured anonymity and confidentiality, and their involvement was voluntary, with informed consent obtained before the commencement of the study.

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of participants (n=96)*

Variable		n	%
Gender	Male	47	49
	Female	49	51
Years of experience	0-5	27	28.1
	6-10	34	35.4
	11-15	15	15.6
	More than 15	20	20.8

Table One showed that 49% of the instructors were male, and 51% were female. The participants' experience varied: the majority had between six and ten years (35.4%), and the fewest number had between 11 and 15 years of experience teaching (15.6%).

Research Instrument

The principal instrument employed in this study was a mixed-methods questionnaire meticulously designed to capture a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding the use of Netflix in developing strategic listening skills among Saudi EFL learners. This questionnaire included a 16-item Likert-scale section that quantitatively assessed teachers' perceptions of Netflix's effectiveness in developing strategic listening skills, such as planning, monitoring, inferencing, and evaluating. Additionally, the second section of the questionnaire contained an open-ended question to identify participants' views on how Netflix will enhance students' Strategic Listening Skills (SLS) in the future. The questionnaire was developed based on

related studies in strategic listening (e.g., Amin et al., 2011; Alutaybi & Alsowat, 2020; Nguyen, 2020). Experts in the field checked the validity of the questionnaire by examining the correlation between the items and dimensions, and its reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a score of .80.

Procedures

After obtaining ethical approval and permission from the EFL instructors at all Saudi universities, an electronic version of the questionnaire was sent to them. They completed the questionnaire, providing quantitative and qualitative data on their perceptions. The quantitative responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify teacher perspective trends and patterns. In contrast, the qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to extract deeper insights and understandings from the open-ended answers. This mixed-methods analysis offered a well-rounded view of the role Netflix plays in enhancing EFL learners' strategic listening skills in the future from the teachers' perspective.

Results and Discussion

The three dimensions of the strategic listening questionnaire were used to explore the EFL instructors' perceptions of how Netflix as a technological tool will impact learners' SLS in the future. Instructors' perspectives on planning, organizing, monitoring, inferencing, analyzing, and evaluating skills varied. The responses were arranged in decreasing order using descriptive statistics.

Table 2. *Descriptives of instructors' perceptions of how Netflix will impact learners' planning and organizing skills (n=96)*

Item No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Value
2	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners connect prior knowledge to existing knowledge.	3.68	1.03	High
4	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners record key events.	3.66	1.07	High
1	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners guess the main idea through suitable tools.	3.63	.90	High
5	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners focus on key events.	3.59	1.06	High
3	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners set steps for how they are going to listen.	3.31	1.09	Moderate
	Overall	3.57	.82	High

As shown in Table Two, the overall mean of the instructors' perceptions of how Netflix will impact learners' planning and organizing skills in the future was 3.57 (.82). Item 2 indicated that watching Netflix allows learners to activate their prior knowledge and connect it to existing knowledge, with the highest mean at 3.68 (1.03). It is consistent with the findings of (Alm, 2021;

Alm, 2019), which indicated that engaging in Netflix can serve as a beneficial instrument for language acquisition, enabling learners to stimulate their preexisting knowledge and establish connections with their current information. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that simply passive viewing of videos is insufficient; learners must actively interact with the material to augment their learning (Zhang, 2022). Items 4 (*M*=3.66, *SD*=1.07), 1 (*M*=3.63, *SD*=.90), and 5 (*M*=3.59, *SD*=1.06) were among the highest perceptions, indicating that EFL learners can take notes and focus on key events as well as guess the main idea of the movies or series. The third item was found to be at a moderate level with a mean of 3.31 (1.09), which indicates that watching Netflix movies/series might not help learners set plans on how they are going to listen. Existing research on the application of Netflix and YouTube in the context of language learning indicates that although these platforms have the potential to enhance learners' motivation and engagement (Alm, 2019; Zhang, 2022), their potential to increase listening skills is not substantial (Metruk, 2019).

On the contrary, Fadillah (2023) revealed that students can enhance their listening comprehension by observing YouTube videos. Although these results suggest that these platforms may need explicit assistance in organizing listening plans, they remain beneficial resources for language acquisition. These findings confirm that EFL learners' planning strategies will be enhanced over time through Netflix tools, such as dual subtitles and controlling playback speed.

Table 3. *Descriptives of instructors' perceptions of how Netflix will impact learners' skills related to monitoring, inferencing, and analyzing(n=96)*

Item No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Value
1	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners connect the words with the characters' gestures.	3.94	.95	High
4	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners infer the relationships among characters/events.	3.76	1.00	High
5	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners infer the meaning of situations/events.	3.76	1.00	High
6	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners check their guesses about characters/events.	3.72	1.01	High
2	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners summarize the plot.	3.65	1.09	High
3	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners find out specific details.	3.57	1.08	High
	Overall	3.73	.85	High

Table Three shows that all items related to monitoring, inferencing, and analyzing skills were found to be at a high level, with an overall mean score of 3.73 (.85). The first item indicated that while watching Netflix movies/series, students could make connections between the characters' gestures and the words they heard; this item obtained the highest score (*M=3*.94,

SD=.95). This result goes in line with the studies of Shabani and Zanussi (2015), and Tajgozari (2019), in which that the combination of audio and visual cues, including physical actions and facial expressions, enhances comprehension and vocabulary acquisition for EFL learners. Items 4 and 5 had the same mean of 3.76 (1.00), indicating that movies and series enabled students to use inferencing strategies to identify the relationships among characters/events and the meaning of events. Similarly, Item 6, "Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners check their guesses about characters/events," obtained a high mean score of 3.72 (1.01). Conversely, Items 2 (*M*=3.65, *SD*=1.09) and 3 (*M*=3.57, *SD*=1.08) had the lowest scores, indicating that watching Netflix might not enable EFL learners to discover specific details and summarize the plot of a movie/series. This result is consistent with the result of Rodgers (2016), who indicated that engaging in Netflix may not inherently empower EFL learners to discover specific details and summarize the plot of a movie or series. One potential explanation for this finding is that some instructors believe that the English language on Netflix is complex for learners to grasp, even with dual subtitles. However, they generally thought watching Netflix movies/series would help promote learners' monitoring, inferencing, and analyzing skills.

Table 4. *Descriptives of instructors' perceptions of how Netflix will impact learners' evaluating skills (n=96)*

Item No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Value
4	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners judge the appropriateness of the strategies they have used (e.g., guessing the main idea, recording the key events, summarizing the plot, finding out specific details, etc.).	3.51	1.10	High
5	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners determine if their listening plans work or not.	3.45	1.18	High
2	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners predict what the end of the movie will be.	3.45	1.09	High
3	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners criticize conversations in light of their previous experiences.	3.42	1.08	High
1	Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners distinguish the movies/series' strengths and weaknesses.	3.27	1.14	Moderate
	Overall	3.42	.86	High

Based on Table Four, the findings reveal that the overall mean of teachers' perceptions of how Netflix will impact learners' evaluation skills in the future was 3.42 (.86). Item 4 indicated that watching Netflix movies/series will help students evaluate the effectiveness of the planning, organizing, inferencing, monitoring, and analyzing strategies they have used; this item obtained the highest mean at 3.51 (1.10). Items 5 (*M*=3.45, *SD*=1.18) and 2 (*M*=3.45, *SD*=1.09) indicated that Netflix will enable students to evaluate whether their plans developed before watching the movies/series will work and guess the end of the movies/series. Similarly, Item 3 refers to the idea that watching Netflix movies/series will enable learners to criticize conversations in light of their

prior experiences and had a high mean score of 3.42 (1.08). On the other hand, Item 1, "Watching Netflix movies/series helps learners distinguish the movie's/series' strengths and weaknesses," was found to be moderate, with the lowest mean score at 3.27 (1.14). This result may indicate that some instructors consider this skill to be more advanced and believe only students with a high level of proficiency possess it.

The findings regarding the open question related to instructors' perspective of EFL learners' future expectations of using Netflix to enhance their SLS revealed that students' SLS would improve. Planning and inferencing strategies such as guessing main ideas or events and connecting events will be improved in the future. An example from P33 is as follows: "Students might be able to fine-tune their listening comprehension abilities to comprehend complex situations through following their dialogues using inferential and educated guesses and be conversant with the strategies of deducing meaning and overcome the foreign or alien aspects of the native language speakers."

Furthermore, some instructors have claimed that Netflix will help students practice cognitive strategies. P19 explained, "I think that Netflix can be developed in a way that helps the learners activate their minds because learning depends on what we call accelerated learning and differentiated instruction." P23 offers an alternative perspective: "Netflix has a good influence on the students' listening ability to listen and understand the main idea and events." Another instructor elaborated that by watching movies and series, students will practice strategies related to analyzing and organizing. As P27 commented, "Movies help analyze the events and improve their critical thinking. In addition, they help them recognize events and explain their occurrences." Thus, students need to be trained in how to use listening strategies and be aware of using them. P40 believed that "Netflix can be smartly used as a tool to enhance learners' awareness of these strategies. This needs to be planned well by the course book designer or teacher."

However, 9% of participants had moderate-to-low expectations. They believed that watching Netflix movies/series would be more distracting. One participant (P2) asserted that "it would be difficult to focus on improving strategic listening because many things get along the way. For example, music and scenes are distractions while listening." Other instructors elaborated that students have been watching movies for a long time, and their listening level still needs improvement. P15 remarked, "I don't think there will be any difference, change, or progress using the same method. Netflix and other similar platforms haven't been doing well for the last couple of years." P34 added, "Movies could help in a narrow circle but not as a tool for the learner. Students expect their listening to improve, but this is not always true." This is because some teachers think that the Netflix platform might help only advanced-level students and is unsuitable for beginners.

Building on these insights, the study recommends many courses of action for English language institutions and center administrators at Saudi universities, EFL instructors, and learners. Administrators should reduce the number of students in EFL courses, offer well-equipped language laboratories, and provide training sessions to promote students' strategic listening using

technological resources such as Netflix. English language teachers should ensure that students have a repertoire of listening skills and know when, how, and where to use them. In addition, instructors should stress the value of utilizing technological tools to enhance SLS using Netflix as educational material and control them by choosing specific movies/series and offering activities and projects to assess these skills. EFL learners should understand the importance of these skills and become strategic listeners to be effective listeners.

Future-oriented studies are essential to determine what improvements must be implemented now to avoid future issues. Consequently, the future of technology use in EFL classrooms is an important subject to investigate in future-oriented studies because Saudi Vision 2030 is a shift toward modernity and openness to the rest of the world; as English is a global language, its practical use is essential to achieving this purpose, and this requires developing English usage skills. Listening to English is a skill that requires more than just information comprehension; instead, it is complex and requires more than just information comprehension. Strategic listeners are effective listeners who can plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening processes, and technology will help them enhance these skills. Although we cannot determine how technology will be used in the future of EFL learning, a journey into the future may help identify the future of strategic listening for learners and overcoming issues related to EFL learning. These learners will be a part of the future and will have the opportunity to shape it. Prince Mohammad bin Salman said, "We will not look at what we have lost or what we lost yesterday or today, but we must constantly move forward."

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore Saudi EFL learners' strategic listening skills through using Netflix, as perceived by teachers. The findings revealed that EFL instructors showed high expectations regarding the role of Netflix in promoting learners' strategic listening, including planning, organizing, inferencing, monitoring, analyzing, and evaluating skills in the future. These outcomes highlight the growing significance of integrating technological tools like Netflix in English language education to foster effective listening strategies among Saudi EFL learners. Further studies should consider increasing the number of participants for greater generalization, examining the differences in participant characteristics such as years of experience, age, and level of education, and exploring the students' perspectives on how Netflix promotes SLS through interviews using mixed methods. It is preferable to employ pre-and post-tests to assess students' SLS and obtain a deeper understanding of their skills. Furthermore, a longitudinal design would allow for a better understanding of whether Netflix has a long-term impact on students' SLS.

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