NHẬN THỨC CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ HAI, CHUYÊN NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH VỀ KỸ NĂNG TỐC KÝ KHI NGHE BÀI GIẢNG NGẮN

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Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu nhận thức của sinh viên năm thứ hai chuyên ngành tiếng Anh về những lợi ích và khó khăn trong hoạt động tốc ký khi nghe các bài giảng ngắn. Nhóm tác giả thu thập dữ liệu định tính qua 05 cuộc phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc với sinh viên năm thứ hai chuyên ngành tiếng Anh ở một trường đại học công lập tại Hà Nội. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các sinh viên được phỏng vấn nhận thức được lợi ích của tốc ký đối với các hoạt động trong và sau khi nghe cũng như đối với việc học lâu dài trong tương lai. Mặt khác, sinh viên cũng gặp phải nhiều khó khăn khi tốc ký như chủ đề lạ, từ vựng, thuật ngữ lạ, giọng diễn giả không quen thuộc, phân biệt ý chính và chi tiết, số liệu và tiếng ồn xung quanh lớp học. Dựa vào những kết quả chính, nghiên cứu đưa ra những khuyến nghị nhằm hỗ trợ cho giảng viên và sinh viên tăng cường kỹ năng tốc ký khi nghe giảng.

Từ khóa: *tốc ký, kĩ năng nghe, các bài giảng ngắn, nhận thức của người học.*

This study investigated second-year English majors' perceived benefits and challenges of note-taking when they practiced listening to English mini-lectures. Qualitative data were collected from five semi-structured interviews with English-major sophomores at a public university in Hanoi. It was found that the students were aware of the benefits of note-taking to while-and-post-listening activities and their long-term learning. The students also reported the challenges they faced while taking notes, including unfamiliar lecture topics, unfamiliar vocabulary/terminology, speaker's accent, identifying main ideas and details, statistics, and background noise. Based on the main findings, a number of recommendations are given to assist teachers and students in enhancing their note taking skills.

Keywords: *note-taking, listening, mini-lectures, learner's perceptions.*

SECOND-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS' PERCEPTIONS OF NOTE-TAKING IN MINI-LECTURES

INTRODUCTION

The academic success of high-achieving university students usually stems from having multiple academic skills, including effective note-taking. In higher education contexts, regardless of the language utilized as the medium of instruction, note-

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taking skills are crucial to learners' success (Siegel, 2022). Second language (L2) note-taking skills, particularly note-taking in English, are gaining importance because more students study abroad in English-speaking nations, enroll in courses with English as the medium of instruction (EMI), or become candidates of standardized English language examinations (Ipek, 2018; Siegel, 2015; Siegel, 2022).

At Hanoi University, second-year English-majors learn note-taking skills in a course called 'Academic Listening and Note-taking' in preparation for their future EMI courses related to translation and linguistics. The researchers' observation indicated that while most students were aware that note-taking could aid their comprehension of academic lectures in English, they reportedly underwent many challenges as novice note-takers. These challenges interfered with the students' note-taking process and even discouraged them from sustaining it. This unsolved problem presents a gap in the teaching context. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate students' perceptions of note-taking, thereby identifying the difficulties they experienced and proposing related recommendations.

A significant strand of research into L2 note-taking is experimental or quasi-experimental (Carrell et al., 2002; Maudilia et al., 2021; Tsai & Wu, 2010;). These studies examined the effects of employing note-taking strategies, note-taking instruction, and/or note-taking language on learners' listening test performance. Although such studies provide insights into learners' note-taking behavior and related influential factors, they have not yet studied their perceptions of note-taking extensively. Similarly, little scholarly attention has been drawn to Vietnamese EFL learners' perceptions of note-taking in English.

Recognizing the aforementioned gaps, this present study attempted to investigate second-year English-majors' perceptions of note-taking when they listen to coursebook mini-lectures. Particularly, the study aimed to explore how the students perceived the benefits and challenges of listening and note-taking of the lectures. This aim was specified with one research question and two sub-research questions below.

What are the learners' perceptions of note-taking when listening to coursebook mini-lectures in English?

Sub-research questions:

1. What are the learners' perceived benefits of note-taking when listening to coursebook mini-lectures in English?

2. What are the learners' perceived challenges of note-taking when listening to coursebook mini-lectures in English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part refers to five major issues. The first four concern the definitions and functions of note-taking, and benefits and

challenges of note-taking. The last section summarizes previous studies relating to note-taking and then identifies the gap that the study attempted to fill.

The definitions of note-taking

There are different ways to define note-taking. Bao (2020) viewed note-taking as a cognitive strategy which entails noting down main ideas and details. In contrast, note-taking is perceived by others as a process. For Siegel (2022), note-taking is a process in which notetakers comprehend spoken stimuli, convert them to information units to recall later. Similarly, Ipek (2018) believed that as a process, note-taking comprises five steps, namely decoding the input, comprehending it, identifying the main ideas, deciding when to note, then noting down information.

Some other researchers explain note-taking as a skillset comprising different sub-skills. For instance, according to Tsai and Wu (2010) and Siegel (2015), note-taking involves a number of cognitive activities such as paying attention to the spoken input, making sense of it, noticing main ideas, and recording necessary information. Meanwhile, for Ipek (2018), note-taking consists of outlining skills (i.e., having an organization to record information), writing skills (i.e., using symbols and abbreviations to note quickly), and note-reviewing skills.

In this study, note-taking is defined as a process that chronologically involves listening, outlining, writing, and note-

reviewing skills, which is relatively similar to Ipek's (2018) definition as above. As a process, note-taking is composed of several stages in which multiple mental and physical abilities (e.g., using short-term memory and writing, respectively) are operated near-simultaneously. This working definition is chosen because the participants in the study underwent a similar note-taking process in their class. In a typical weekly session, they often listened to a mini-lecture in English twice and took notes simultaneously. After that, each of them individually reviewed their notes and wrote a paragraph that summarized the lecture. Therefore, before writing the summaries, the subjects may have employed listening, outlining, writing, and note-reviewing skills during the note-taking process, which explains the relevance of the working definition of note-taking in this study.

Functions of note-taking

The two main functions of note-taking are encoding function and external storage function (Bao, 2020; Siegel, 2015). During the note-taking process, the encoding function enables notetakers to process information and convert the spoken input into meaningful information. In contrast, with the external storage function, note-taking allows learners to access and review a lecture's information in form of notes for follow-up tasks. The former function is concerned with the process of note-taking whereas the latter is related to using notes, the product of note-taking (Bao, 2020).

These two functions are interrelated, so it is necessary that teachers focus students' attention on both functions (Siegel, 2015).

Benefits of note-taking in EFL classrooms

L2 learners' taking notes while listening to lectures provide them with several benefits. By taking notes, learners may comprehend a speaker's message and identify essential ideas (Maulidia et al., 2021; Tsai & Wu, 2010). Compared with non-notetakers, notetakers in the EFL classroom comprehend a lecture's message to a higher extent (Maulidia et al., 2021). Also, when taking notes, listeners may sustain their concentration on the spoken text, with which they are actively engaged (Siegel, 2015). The aforementioned benefits seem to concern the encoding function of note-taking.

Additionally, note-taking can support learners as they carry out post-listening activities. Learners' notes, the product of their note-taking (i.e., the external storage function), allow them to recall the content of the aural input (Maudilia et al., 2021; Tsai & Wu, 2010). Likewise, in terms of the storage effect of note-taking, students' notes can facilitate the review and later use of noted information for related follow-up tasks (Siegel, 2015). In spite of reaping the benefits of note-taking, sometimes learners have to deal with some challenges, which are discussed in the next section.

Challenges of note-taking that EFL learners face

Listening to a lecture and taking notes simultaneously present some challenges to EFL learners. The first challenge could be the simultaneous operation of listening and note-taking skills in the process, meaning that learners must complete a dual-task (Ellis, 2003, cited in Ahour & Bargool, 2015). Indeed, according to Siegel (2022), note-takers need to coordinate cognitive, linguistic, and physical abilities near-simultaneously.

Challenges of EFL note-taking can also stem from students' poor listening comprehension. The first and fundamental step of note-taking process is learners' making sense of meaningful sounds, without which the following steps of the note-taking process may not occur.

Besides, notetakers might also experience other difficulties relating to high speech rate of a lecture, unfamiliar concepts and terminology, or sustaining attention during a lecture (Ipek, 2018), or some difficulties may originate from learner's individual factors, namely students' attitudes, mood, capacity of working memory, and background knowledge (Siegel, 2015).

Previous studies on L2 note-taking and identification of research gaps

A large number of studies on L2 note-taking (e.g., Ahour & Bargool, 2015; Bao, 2020; Carrell et al., 2002; Maulidia et al., 2021; Siegel, 2015; Tsai & Wu, 2010) are largely experimental or quasi-experimental. These studies aimed to investigate how

note-taking instruction, the application of a note-taking technique, or language used for recording information affects learners' comprehension. Using tests to measure participants' listening comprehension, the studies revealed positive while-listening effects of note-taking.

Of the limited amount of research on learners' perceptions, Carrell et al.'s (2002) studied notetakers' perceptions of note-taking, on TOEFL candidates' test performances. Collecting data from questionnaires completed by 234 ESL students at universities in the United States, the study found that the students believed note-taking allowed them to process information of mini-lectures and recall their content during the listening test. However, the students reportedly experienced difficulties in sustaining their concentration while taking notes and in using their notes after listening.

Likewise, with regard to L2 notetaker's perceptions, Teng's (2011) study has several findings similar to the study mentioned above. Teng (2011) basically wanted to investigate note-taking strategies employed by 80 Taiwanese students and their views on note-taking. The study found that organization is the note-taking strategy that the participants used the most frequently. Also, note-taking was viewed as positive to the learners because it allowed them to retain the main ideas of a lecture and feel more secure. Unlike the present study, Teng's (2011) study

concerned note-taking in actual lectures in EMI courses.

One study that placed learner's perceptions of L2 note-taking as the focus was conducted by Ipek (2018). Ipek's (2018) study explored the perceptions of 61 first-year EFL undergraduates of their learning progress in listening and note-taking skills after they received training of effective note-taking. The participants were asked to complete a survey to express their views on the impact of multiple aspects of note-taking (e.g., using symbols, abbreviating, organizing ideas) on their improvement. Ipek (2018) revealed that the students opined that after the training, they had made considerable progress in distinguishing between main ideas and details, noting keywords or important phrases, abbreviating, and using symbols.

Learners' perceptions were also explored in Siegel's (2022) work. Siegel (2022) investigated learners' viewpoints to explore the influence of personal, speaker, and contextual aspects on their note-taking in English for academic purposes programs. Drawing from the online survey completed by 711 participants from five countries, Siegel (2022) found that speech rate, student's personal interests in the topic, and personal note-taking skills were regarded to affect learners' note-taking performance most frequently. In addition, the study revealed that while the respondents tended to view personal interests in the topic as frequent influential factor in their note-taking performance, opinions of students from different

contexts on the impact of speaker's accent varied greatly.

In the Vietnamese context, relevant research to date (e.g., Ly & Nguyen (2021); Ngo (2015); Tran & Duong (2020)) investigated EFL learners and teachers' perceptions in relation to listening strategies, listening comprehension problems, and the teaching of listening skills. However, while-listening note-taking was not the focal point of these studies.

Ly and Nguyen's (2021) study investigated Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions toward the importance of teaching listening skills at the tertiary level and their related practice of. The study involved the participation of six teachers who delivered listening courses to English-major students. Employing a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews and observations, Ly and Nguyen (2021) found that the teachers were highly aware of the significance of teaching listening skills in developing students' language proficiency. Also, the teachers tended to see listening contents as an input for language teaching, but they did not seem to view listening as a macro-skill. The observation indicated that their listening-related classroom activities revolved around vocabulary, topical knowledge, and listening strategies. As for note-taking, although it was stated by some teachers as an in-class activity, it was absent in their classroom practice, which might suggest that note-taking was rarely used in their classroom practice.

Ngo's (2015) study aimed to explore listening strategies employed by thirty EFL at the tertiary level. With a mixed-methods approach (i.e., questionnaires followed by individual interviews), the study found that the learners tended to use social/affective strategies more often than cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Also, the students reported difficulties in using a combination of strategies flexibly. Also, Ngo (2015) found that compared with lower-level learners, high-level learners often used more strategies, with more effectiveness and flexibility. Is this study, note-taking is one of the three cognitive strategies that learners in Ngo's (2015) used to complete their listening comprehension exercises.

Tran and Duong (2020) conducted a study to identify problems related to English listening comprehension problems from the perspectives of high school students and their teachers. To achieve the aim, the study surveyed 368 11th-grade and interviewed eight EFL teachers and yielded descriptive statistical data and texts. According to the participants (i.e., students and teachers), the students' perceived difficulties comprise three categories: (1) phonological and lexical problems, (2) semantic and syntactic problems, and (3) discoursal problems.

It can be seen from the review of the studies that little research in international contexts has considered learners' perceptions of L2 note-taking when listening to course-book mini-lectures, which demonstrates a gap for this study to

address. In addition, note-taking in English among Vietnamese EFL learners as well as their related perceptions were under-researched. As the review above has shown, these studies tended to focus on learners' comprehension problems or the pedagogical practice of listening skills. Therefore, note-taking among Vietnamese EFL learners was only referred to as a cognitive strategy or an occasional type of in-class practice for listening skills.

Given the gaps identified above, more investigation is needed to better understand English note-taking of Vietnamese EFL learners, particularly their perceptions of note-taking of mini lectures. Therefore, to fill the gaps in previous studies, this study was conducted with the aims of investigating learners' perceived benefits and challenges of note-taking when listening to coursebook mini-lectures to fill in the gaps in previous studies.

METHODOLOGY

Research context and participants

The present study involved five second-year English-major undergraduates at a public university in Hanoi: Han, Len, Nhan, Ong, and Thanh (pseudonyms). At the time when the data was collected, four participants were 19 years old, and one participant was 18 years of age. They were studying a full-time Bachelor's degree of English Studies at the university. The first two academic years of their program concerned the foundational training of the four English macro-skills, whereas the two

following school years focused on profession-oriented studies in language translation/interpreting or TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

In the first semester of the second academic year, the participating students were trained to attain the B2 level of English in a 17-week course. The course included a component called 'Academic Listening and Note-taking', in which the students were instructed with a coursebook entitled 'Listening and Note-taking level 2' compiled by Lim and Smalzer (2014). The book contains five topic-related units, each of which comprises three chapters. Every week, the students studied each chapter in a face-to-face learning session of three sections: (1) pre-listening activities, (2) listening and note-taking, and (3) post-listening: writing a paragraph summarizing the content of a mini-lecture. Pre-listening activities usually involved a topic-related discussion, a vocabulary preview, and an instruction of a focal note-taking skill. Then the students listen to mini-lectures of eight-to-ten-minute duration and take notes to complete a suggested outline for with several cues and visual aids. The final step involved the learners' writing a summary paragraph of 12 to 15 sentences for 15 minutes.

Listening and note-taking were part of the course's assessment. The mid-course listening test required the students to follow the steps in typical weekly lessons and submit their handwritten summary

paragraph. At the end of the course, they had to answer 20 listening comprehension questions after one-time listening, which means that note-taking might be considered by the students for successful completion of the final test.

The data collection instrument

The study employed a qualitative approach to answer the research questions because the process of conducting qualitative research enables a researcher to acquire a better understanding of a social or human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To collect qualitative data concerning the learners' perceptions, semi-structured interviews, which are suitable to explore personal views of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), were conducted

An interview guide (Appendix 1) was used as the instrument for data collection to investigate the participant's perceptions of note-taking when listening to course-book mini-lectures. The interview guide was written in English and translated into Vietnamese for the participants to express their ideas comfortably. The interview guide featured open-ended questions, which may ensure the focus of an interview and allow for unexpected insights (Dornyei, 2007).

Key questions in an interview guide should be closely based on the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the four key questions in the interview guide (i.e., questions 5, 12, 14,

and 18) were developed from the two sub-research questions. Each key question was then further developed into a component of several sub-questions to cover different aspects of L2 note-taking, such as encoding function, storage function, and related challenges, as reviewed in the literature review section.

Therefore, the interview protocol was composed of 25 questions, organized in five components. Component 1 (i.e., questions 1 – 4) aimed to clarify the learning context in which the participants learned 'Academic Listening and Note-taking' of coursebook mini-lectures. Component 2 (i.e., questions 5 – 11) attempted to investigate the students' perceived benefits of note-taking of the coursebook lectures, which related to the encoding function of L2 note-taking. By contrast, the learners' perceptions of the external storage function (i.e., having notes after listening) were featured in component 3 (i.e., questions 12 and 13). Next, component 4 (i.e., questions 14 – 17) was included to explore students' perceptions of long-term benefits of note-taking to the English-majors' future studies. Finally, component 5, consisting of questions 18 – 25, asked the students to identify and explain the difficulties associated with L2 note-taking.

Pilot interviews

Prior to the interviews with the five participants, the interview questions were piloted with a fellow English-major

sophomore via Zoom, an online meeting application. After the interview, several changes were made to the first version of the interview guide. The initial word choice 'taking notes after listening' was modified to 'having notes beside after listening' in questions 12 and 13 to elicit responses which would be more closely related to L2 note-taking's storage function.

Data collection procedures

The process of data collection began when the permission from the university's English Department was obtained. An information sheet and written consent form were sent to sophomores of a class in the department. Six students voluntarily agreed to be participants of the present study, and one of them was chosen for the pilot interviews, so the remaining 5 students became the respondents of the official interviews. Before the interviews, consent forms were signed by all of the participants.

The interviews were carried out in week 14 of the course, and each participant was interviewed once in an audio-recorded online session of 45 to 60 minutes. The participants could express their opinions in Vietnamese or English.

Data management and analysis

The audio-recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Two transcripts were in English, and the other three transcripts were in Vietnamese, which were then translated into English by one of the researchers. Colloquial word choice was retained in the Vietnamese-English translated transcripts, but minor mistakes concerning the use of pronouns (i.e., 'it' or 'they') as referents of action were corrected to ensure that the information in the transcripts was accurate. After that, the interviews' audio files and transcripts were kept in a password-protected computer.

The interviews' textual data were analyzed thematically. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is an approach which enables researchers to identify, examine, and report themes that emerge from a qualitative data set. Thematic analysis was viewed as useful for analyzing various participants' opinions and exploring common patterns, differences, and unexpected findings (Nowell et al., 2017).

In this study, the deductive thematic analysis technique was employed as a principal way to examine the data, followed by inductive thematic analysis. Also, according to Braun and Clarke (2020, as cited in Byrne, 2021), deductive thematic may focus a researcher's attention on particular aspects of the data and simultaneously help them keep in mind a theoretical framework. Prior to the analysis, an initial code book was used as a preliminary guide.

Six steps of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) were followed:

1. "Familiarizing yourself with your data

2. Generating initial codes

3. Searching for themes

4. Reviewing themes

5. Defining and naming themes

6. Producing the report"

In this study, the thematic analysis process started as the interview transcripts were printed out, then chunks of words relevant to the participants' perceptions of note-taking were highlighted. After that, codes and sub-codes were named and attached to the highlighted texts. Subsequently, themes that emerged from the data were identified and then reviewed by the researchers. The theme review showed that many initial codes and sub-codes became themes and subthemes, respectively. In addition, several new themes were found as the data were examined again in an inductive manner. Finally, all the themes were named and systematized into a table.

Number	Themes	Sub-themes
1	Benefits of note-taking while listening	1.1. Understanding the lecture's content
		1.2. Understanding the speaker's message
		1.3. Identifying main points of a lecture
		1.4. Organizing information
		1.5. Being focused
		1.6. Feeling more secure
2	Benefits of having notes after listening	2.1. Recalling the lecture's content
3	Long-term benefits of note-taking	3.1. Performing better in future listening tests
		3.2. Enhancing related college studies
		3.3. Supporting future professions
4.	Difficulties of note-taking while listening	4.1. Learner's multi-tasking
		4.2. Unfamiliar terms or concepts
		4.3. Speaker's high speech rate
		4.4. Learner's insufficient background knowledge
		4.5. Speaker's English accent
		4.6. Speaker's language use

Table 1: Themes and subthemes

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Main findings

Students' perceived benefits of note-taking of the coursebook's mini-lectures

From the participants' perspectives, while they were listening to the lectures, note-taking provided them with three major benefits: better understanding of a mini-lecture's content, increased processing of information, and enhanced working memory.

First and foremost, the students stated that by taking notes, they were able to understand the content of a mini-lecture more thoroughly. For instance, Nhan believed that she could have a better understanding of a mini-lecture since she could "practice organizing a lecture's information in a logical way" when taking notes during the lecture. In comparison, Len and Thanh mentioned the while-listening benefit of note-taking in their doing listening practice tests. According to Len's self-reflection, she listened to a lecture more attentively and carefully when taking notes to "*understand the lecture thoroughly*". Similarly, Thanh felt that note-taking could draw learner's attention to details, which might facilitate their comprehension of the mini-lectures.

Secondly, for the learners, note-taking while listening to the mini-lectures may also enable them to process information. To Len, a benefit of note-taking is that it helps her make sense of spoken texts.

Supporting this opinion, Han believed that by taking notes, she was able to convert spoken input to "*visual cues*", which may contribute to notetaker's processing of information.

Assisting the students' working memory is another benefit of note-taking when they listen to the textbook mini-lectures. Ong, who considered herself to not have good memory, opined that note-taking enabled her to remember what had been said. Similarly, Len felt that as she completed activities in the note-taking process, her working memory was strengthened.

"If we are listening, taking notes, and writing the information, these activities help us remember with our brain, our eyes. Without note-taking, we can hold that information for maybe a dozen of seconds, but with note-taking, our short-term memory lasts longer." (Len)

Learners' perceived benefits of having notes after listening to coursebook mini-lectures

The participants reported that having notes had immediate benefits and long-term benefits. The immediate benefits of having notes could be reflected in two aspects. First, notes can facilitate learners' recalling about a lecture's content. This opinion was expressed by Len and Han, who stated that having notes enabled her to "remember the information more vividly" (Len), which agreed with Han when she referred to notes as "visual cues" as

mentioned earlier. Additionally, having notes may help the learners to construct an outline for summary writing. Len believed that the notes she generated provided with sufficient ideas for the summary writing. By contrast, Han, Nhan, and Thanh stressed that it is important for the notes to be well-organized. To be more specific, well-organized and incorrect notes could help Han yield a good summary of a mini-lecture, whereas for Nhan, well-organized notes often allowed her to visualize the overall structure of paragraph "with a topic sentence and supporting details".

As for the long-term benefits of having notes, notes could help several participants to review for future purposes. The notes could be put into use to Ong's future test preparation as she could review main points in each lecture. For Han, one long-term benefit of having notes is that she could use them as starting points to discuss related topics with her peers.

There were more long-term benefits concerned with completing listening comprehension tests, translation/interpreting, enriching personal background knowledge, and learning in EMI courses reported by the participants.

Four out of five participants agreed that note-taking could allow them to complete listening comprehension tests more effectively. Having notes was considered beneficial to answering multiple-choice questions as it enabled Ong and Nhan to identify "confusing" or "trapping"

distractors in each question. Additionally, Nhan stated that note-taking assisted her answering detail-related questions. In Han and Len's view, notes provided them with "evidence" that informed their answers.

Moreover, note-taking was perceived to help the participants to prepare for their future studies and jobs relating to interpreting. Intending to enroll in interpreting courses in the third academic year, Nhan, Len, and Thanh were aware that having note-taking skills would give them an advantage. The students believed that note-taking enabled them to understand a message in the source language more thoroughly and to express it accurately in the target language. Further, according to Nhan and Thanh, using abbreviations and symbols may support them as future student interpreters. Specifically, their view can be illustrated with Thanh's saying as follows.

"Note-taking can give me some foundational skills to become an interpreter. The skills here involve having their system of symbols, taking sufficient notes in a timely manner." (Thanh)

Besides, most of the participants felt that they had gained more background knowledge by taking notes of the coursebook mini-lectures. There are a variety of topics covered in the coursebook lecturers (e.g., education, health, social affairs), so when they revisited and reviewed the notes after listening or after class, they could have developed a slightly

clearer understanding of an issue. Take Han and Thanh's sharing as an example. Thanks to note-taking of coursebook mini-lectures, Han was able to gain more knowledge about cultural diversity while Thanh better understood dyslexia.

Finally, note-taking was believed to allow some participants to have good preparation for future EMI courses. According to Han and Len, second-year English majors will have to attend many lectures in English, which present theories and large amounts of information. Accordingly, Len stated that in these lectures, students who have strong note-taking skills will be able to record sufficient information in an effective way. For Han, note-taking skills are "tremendously helpful" for learning in EMI courses because having notes facilitate the recall of lectures' content.

Learners' perceived challenges of note-taking while listening to coursebook mini-lectures

While taking notes during the coursebook mini-lectures, the participants reportedly encountered various challenges, five of which were concerned with the topic of a lecture, unfamiliar vocabulary, speaker's pronunciation, identification of main points and details, statistics and background.

Firstly, some learners experienced difficulties relating to topics of the coursebook mini-lectures. For instance, when listening to lectures whose topics are

not of her personal interests (e.g., politics in the United States), Han struggled to sustain her attention. Meanwhile, Biology, a topic unfamiliar to Len, caused her to misunderstand the keyword in a mini-lecture.

"Recently I had a mid-term listening test and it was about some human's organs inside the body. So there are a few words I couldn't note. Then my teacher gave us feedback and said that the keyword in the lecture is 'cell'. It's 'our cells', but what I noted was 'our selves'. They are just messed up." (Len)

Secondly, unfamiliar vocabulary in the mini-lectures posed challenges to the learners. Unfamiliar vocabulary may consist of technical terms, words or phrases that sound strange to the learners. For instance, according to Nhan, the lack of topic-related vocabulary and little understanding of technical terms could hinder her general comprehension of a mini-lecture. She felt that note-taking became more challenging when a term was mentioned in the main points. Len also experienced the challenges relating to terminology. She felt that she was likely to miss out some information and had to slow down her note-taking as she heard terms. That discouraged her from taking more notes.

In addition, challenges may also stem from speaker's pronunciation of the mini-lectures. For Len and Han, some unfamiliar speaker's accents often hindered their

listening comprehension. Len, who frequently listened to British English and American English, found English accents spoken by the French or Indians *"difficult and quite unpredictable"*. Similarly, when listening to a mini-lecture probably delivered by an Australian speaker, Lan misheard 'green' for 'grain' as the enunciation of 'green' was lengthened and *"dramatic"*. In this case, Lan stated that mishearing the word distracted her from taking notes. Also, when sounds were destressed, or when the speaker's voice quality fluctuated (e.g., the change from a dramatic tone to a monotonous tone), the learners' processing of information was interfered.

Further, some students interviewed found it difficult to tell main points and details apart. In the first lessons of their course, Ong and Nhan encountered such a challenge. For instance, Ong failed to identify main ideas of a lecture and seemingly did not know which ideas to record because she was processing a lot of information. Likewise, Nhan was sometimes hesitant to take notes because she could not identify *"the thesis statement and main ideas"*.

Listening for statistics was further seen as challenging when the learners were taking notes. Difficult statistics (e.g., long statistics, a list of figures) may pose challenges to them. Han viewed listening for difficult statistics as "annoying" as she needed to use her "brainpower" more frequently to process the numbers and

remember what they described, thereby preventing her from focusing on the overall organization of a lecture. Quite similarly, long lists of statistics describing several categories confused Len as follows.

"There are some long statistics, with a year number or with a country's name, or with a phrase. They kind of blend together, which is confusing. Or when the lecturer says a number, another number, and then a phrase, we often feel confused with the two numbers" (Len)

Finally, the noise near the learner's classrooms bothered them when they took notes. As Thanh said, "somebody walking past by" her classroom or "vehicles passing by" often created background noise. In contrast, according to Len, loud music from the school's events was to blame for disrupting the process of listening and note-taking. Therefore, in Thanh and Len's view, background noise certainly distracted the notetakers, who said that the noise and the sound of recording seemed to "blend together".

Discussion

In this section, the findings presented in the previous section are discussed in relation to the sub-research questions.

Sub-research question 1: *What are the learners' perceived benefits of note-taking when listening to the coursebook mini-lectures?*

Overall, note-taking was perceived by the participants as beneficial to their

current studies and future professions. Their perceived benefits of note-taking when listening to the coursebook mini-lectures could be classified as: (1) while-listening benefits of note-taking, (2) benefits of having notes, and (3) long-term benefits of note-taking.

The while-listening benefits of note-taking concern the encoding function of note-taking, with which L2 notetakers perceive, process, and comprehend spoken texts (Siegel, 2015). While taking notes during the coursebook mini-lectures, the learners reported having better understanding of the lectures, processing the aural input more effectively, and strengthening their working memory. Likewise, Maulidia et al. (2021) made a similar statement concerning notetakers' higher levels of comprehension of lectures compared with that of non-notetakers. This study also confirms Carrell et al.'s (2002) conclusion that test takers who were permitted to take notes were able to process a lecture's content more effectively.

Secondly, having notes after the mini-lectures played paid dividends to the learners. According to Siegel (2015), notes, the product of the note-taking process, serve the second function of note-taking (i.e., helping notetakers to review and recall the content of a lecture). In this study, the participants stated that looking at well-organized notes enabled them to memorize the information of a lecture and to form an outline as the basis for their summary paragraphs. This finding is similar to one

of the conclusions made in Teng's (2011) study. The participants in that study said that by using the notes, they were able to recall the key points of a lecture and to organize them. Additionally, notes kept in student's notebooks helped several participants in this study to prepare for their upcoming school examinations or discussions with peers. This finding may illustrate Siegel's (2015) statement that noted information could be useful for other tasks that follow note-taking.

Finally, note-taking of the coursebook mini-lectures may provide the participants with long-term benefits. In listening comprehension tests, some learners used note-taking as a test strategy to answer multiple-choice questions because the notes were seen as pieces of evidence. This benefit exemplifies the external storage function of note-taking. Likewise, Carrell et al. (2002) noted that note-taking reportedly aided test takers' recall of information in lectures. Besides, note-taking, which involves using abbreviations and symbols, may help the participants of this study to prepare for their future interpreting courses. Note-taking skills (i.e., abbreviating and symbolizing information) can be strengthened if students are equipped with note-taking instruction (Ipek, 2018). Note-taking instruction was a component of a typical lesson that the participants of this study attended, so they were likely to develop the note-taking-related skills. Further, through note-taking and note reviewing, the learners were able

to increase their background knowledge from the topics of the coursebook mini-lectures. Finally, according to the participants, note-taking skills they acquired could be transferrable to their learning in the future EMI courses, which require students to record information effectively. Indeed, effective note-taking is a contributor to university students' academic success (Siegel, 2022).

Sub-research question 2: *What are the learners' perceived challenges of note-taking when listening to the coursebook mini-lectures?*

When taking notes during the coursebook mini-lectures, the participants reportedly experienced six types of challenge which hindered their listening comprehension. Firstly, when the topic of a lecture was not familiar or appealing to the learners, they tended to have lapses of concentration or misunderstanding about the lecture's content. Indeed, background knowledge has an important role in learners' comprehension of the auditory input (Kotorowicz-Jasińska, 2020). Also, some participants felt that hearing unfamiliar vocabulary such technical terms caused their hesitation in note-taking and confusion about the lecture's information. Similarly, Ipek (2018) stated that during the process of note-taking, unfamiliar terms and concepts often pose challenges to students. Furthermore, challenges also stemmed from the pronunciation/accent of a speaker. Some participants felt that they misunderstood words or messages or felt

confused when listening to unfamiliar English accents. Regarding this type of challenge, Siegel (2015) noted that if notetakers fail to perceive and make sense of language sounds, they are often unable to proceed to other steps of the note-taking process (i.e., identifying main ideas, noting down information). Also, in the first few lessons in the 'Academic Listening and Note-taking' course, several students in this study struggled to identify main points during the mini-lectures and to decide when to record information. Similarly, Siegel and Kusumoto (2022) noted that while taking notes, students constantly have to decide on which information to prioritize and when and how to record information. In addition, long and complex statistics were perceived to confuse and distract some learners from comprehending the general idea of a mini-lecture. Supposedly, this type of difficulty was due to the fact that the learners needed to use their linguistic abilities, working memory, and hand movements nearly at once in a timely manner. Siegel (2022) explained that when taking notes, L2 learners simultaneously operate multiple skills: cognitive, linguistic, and physical abilities. Finally, unexpected noise near class settings created challenges to the students as notetakers. Sudden and loud noise might have interrupted the note-taking process while the learners were focused on recording information.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has found that the second year English-major undergraduates

believed that note-taking when listening to the coursebook mini-lectures was beneficial in multiple respects. Note-taking enabled them to comprehend the lectures to a greater extent, process information more effectively, and strengthen working memory. Besides, as the product of the note-taking, notes helped the students to recall and review a lecture's information and form the organization of the lecture. Another benefit is that the note-taking skills the undergraduates had gained could support them in future examinations, academic studies (e.g., interpreting and EMI courses), and in enriching background knowledge.

It is therefore necessary that EFL students should be aware of how L2 note-taking can be beneficial to them in several ways. It is essential that teachers conduct discussions among learners about the purpose or benefits of note-taking. The discussions may help students be aware of the applications of L2 note-taking to their current and future studies. The discussions can also concern the sharing of challenges facing learners while taking notes in class and at home. Creating a medium for students to voice their concerns about note-taking may inform teacher's pedagogical decisions related to note-taking and provide students with possible solutions.

On the other hand, the learners faced many challenges when they listened to and took notes of the coursebook mini-lectures. Unfamiliar topics and terminology were

frequently mentioned by the participants as a common source of challenge. Besides, speaker's pronunciation and the presence of complex statistics in the lectures also posed challenges to the learners. Some learners reportedly had difficulties identifying main points and details and deciding when to take notes. Finally, background noise was viewed as a source of distraction which disrupted the note-taking process.

As such, to help learners overcome these challenges, it is suggested that learners who are beginning note-takers must be instructed to be able to identify main ideas, supporting ideas, and details. Also, they should be exposed to a greater number of English accents in listening and note-taking lessons to prepare for real-life monologues. As for learners, they should make sufficient out-of-class preparation to familiarize themselves with background knowledge and topical vocabulary related to the mini-lectures.

LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The present study is not without its limitations. The first limitation is that all the qualitative data were extracted from the learner's reports, which may face the risk of information loss as the participants might have experienced forgetfulness when voicing their perceptions. Further, because there was only one interview with each respondent, the present study cannot

demonstrate the participant's perceptions over a time period. Finally, the data analysis may have involved some of the researcher's bias since the deductive approach was predominantly employed in the thematic analysis of data.

Despite the shortcomings, this present study may act as a preliminary study for future research to investigate English-majors' perceptions of note-taking on a larger scale by using surveys. Doing so may help generate more representative results about note-taking from the students' perspectives. Future research may also consider triangulating data sources. For example, collecting data may involve researcher's observing students as L2 notetakers in their class besides interviewing them. Also, future researchers in this research strand might find it useful to conduct multiple one-on-one interviews with a participant to track the possible changes in their perceptions of L2 note-taking. Another direction could concern the investigation into perceptions of students of different English proficiency levels of L2 note-taking.

In conclusion, this study in spite of its small scale, could be a source of information for EFL instructors to consult when they design relevant in-class listening activities, especially note taking tasks. It is hoped that effective note-taking skills in English may help learners succeed in their future research and study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Interview guide

Project:

Second-year English-majors' perceptions of note-taking when listening to textbook mini-lectures

Time of interview: 45-60 minutes

1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Component 1: The learning context of note-taking in textbook mini-lectures

No	Questions
1	How long have you been learn listening and note-taking at the university?
2	What are some typical activities in your listening and note-taking class?

| 3 | Do you practice listening and note-taking at home? How do you practice listening and note-taking at home? |
| 4 | What learning materials do you use to practice listening and note-taking skills? |

Component 2: Learners' perceived <u>benefits</u> of note-taking <u>while</u> listening to textbook mini-lectures

Note: ***Questions 6 – 11*** *will be asked only when the interviewee mentions several related keywords in their answer to* ***question 5.***

No	Questions
5	**What do you think are the benefits of note-taking while you are listening to the lectures?**
6	How does taking notes help you to *understand the lectures' content*?
7	How does taking notes help you to *understand the speaker's message?*
8	How does taking notes help you to *identify main points of a lecture*?
9	How does taking notes help you to *organize the content of a lecture?*
10	How does taking notes help you to *focus on the content of the lectures*?
11	How does taking notes help you to *feel more confident/secure during the lectures?*

Component 3: Learners' perceived <u>benefits</u> of having notes <u>after</u> listening to textbook mini-lectures

Note: ***Question 13*** *will be asked only when the interviewee mentions several related keywords in their answer to* ***question 12.***

No	Questions
12	**What do you think are the benefits of having notes after you listen to a textbook mini-lecture?**
13	How does having notes help you to *recall the lecture's content?*

Component 4: Other <u>benefits</u> of listening and note-taking in English perceived by learners

No	Questions
14	**To what extent do you think listening and note-taking in English will be helpful for your future studies and career?**
15	How will note-taking be helpful for *your college studies in the future?*
16	How will note-taking be helpful for your *performance in the future university exams?*
17	How will note-taking be helpful for *your future professions?*

Component 5: Learners' perceived <u>challenges</u> of note-taking when listening to textbook mini-lectures

Note: ***Question 19 - 25*** *will be asked only when the interviewee mentions several related keywords in their answer to* **question 18.**

No	Questions
18	What challenges do you experience when listening and taking notes of the lectures?
19	How does *multi-tasking* make it difficult for you to take notes during the lectures?
20	How do *unfamiliar terms and concepts* in a lecture make difficult for you to take notes?
21	How does the *high speed of a lecture* make it difficult for you to take notes?
22	How does *poor listening comprehension* make it difficult for you to take notes of the lectures?
23	How does *insufficient background knowledge* make it difficult for you to take notes of the lectures?
24	How does *a speaker's accent* make it difficult for you to take notes of the lecture?
25	How does *a speaker's language use (i.e., use of vocabulary, grammar structures)* make it difficult for you take notes of the lecture?

Possible probes:

Are there any other benefits/challenges?

Could you specify why you think so? Why is that so?

Could you please tell me more about…? What do you mean by …?

APPENDIX 2

Sample interview transcript

Interviewer (I); Interviewee: Han (H)

Location: via Zoom - a video-conferencing application

1   I   Okay, now, let's talk about the benefits of note taking when you are listening to textbook mini lectures in classes. So, what do you think are the benefits of note taking when you are listening to the mini lectures in textbooks?

2   H   Oh, I think the first obvious benefit is that we have the chance to um brush up on note taking skills because, you know, it's the topic that we were assigned is not something that we already have a knowledge on. So, um we are more aware of having to take notes um efficiently so that we understand what was going on when we read it back. And also, the time limit on class is more, you know, serious than at home. So, even if you time yourself is still less pressure than on class. So, it you know, okay to practice the skills more efficiently. But also, I think another benefit in the long term is that we have something to look back on to gain background knowledge, because a lot of the mini-lectures in a textbook gives us a lot of very useful insights that maybe we know at that moment, but after the course maybe we forget, but when we reread the notes that we take during the learning progress, we will still be able to, you know, have something to recall those background information.

3 I Okay. So, you already talked about two main benefits right. Firstly, it's the how to take efficient notes. Second one is to help you gain more background knowledge. So that you can apply it to um longer applications, right?

4 H Yes

5 I Okay. So, could you clarify a little bit What do you mean by note-taking skills and what do you mean by efficient note-taking skills? What does it include?

6 H I will say that for me, efficiency in note-taking is know (1.0) the way you organize ideas, knowing which is the main idea or which one you need to put down because everyone can take notes, but to take good notes when listening, you have to know how to write down the most important information and how to organize them in a hierarchy and also learn how to, you know, visually present him so you understand the links between the information.

7 I Okay, um how does taking notes help you identify main points made by a speaker?

8 H Yeah (1.0). Can you rephrase the question?

9 I So you said notetaking helps you to organize right? And somehow identify the most important points. So, my question is, how does taking notes help you identify the main points of a lecture

10 H Yeah (1.0) I don't know about others, but for me, note-taking give me gives me some visual cues for me to like actually walk around. Because when we listen to other people talking, we (1.0), you know, we don't have enough memory capacity to remember everything that I've said before. So, we, maybe we don't really recognize the organization yet, but after we have taken note of everything down, we'll have something to read on. And that will be a reading task from on that on, we will be identify that, which one is, you know, just a minor detail that the speaker wants to um, you know, add to the main point, because it's more visual. And, you know, for me, reading, reading is, you know, (1.0) have, you know, you have more time when you read, so, you will be more time to process, you will have more time to process the information. And, you know, maybe take into consideration some of the aspects that you may not miss out when you focus on phrases and, you know, expression in the listening process.

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