

Review Article

A REVIEW ON THE IMPACT OF TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION WITH METACOGNITIVE ACTIVITIES ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension skill is a challenging skill to master for all second or foreign language learners; however, in preceding years, several research studies have highlighted that promoting learners' awareness of listening metacognition could strongly support this issue. Accordingly, this research reviewed the studies conducted on the impact of incorporating metacognitive strategies in task-based instruction on the listening comprehension ability of EFL learners. During this research study, the large online databases were investigated from 1975 to 2023, and related articles were reviewed thoroughly. The findings demonstrated that listening tasks and metacognitive activities expanded ESL/EFL learners' capability to self-direct or self-reflect over the listening processes. Moreover, results highlighted the effectiveness of metacognitive pedagogy over the other approaches to teaching listening skills to learners in English classrooms. Eventually, this present investigation is indispensable for all language practitioners, instructors, English language teachers, and material designers in higher educational contexts.

Keywords: EFL learner, Listening comprehension, Metacognitive activities, Task-based instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is crucial since it helps language learners actively engage in the language and facilitates the emergence of other language skills. It is central to L2 academic excellence to broaden L2 listening (Vandergrift, 2007). However, listening enjoys the minimum urgent scholarly attention from all educators and teaching materials rather than the other three skills, writing, reading, or speaking (Goh, 2000; Vandergrift, 2004). Adopting a metacognitive approach for L2 listening instruction causes individuals' development inside and outside the classroom (Goh and Vandergrift, 2012). Hence, the center of instruction has been relocated from the product-oriented listening type (listening to learn) to the process-oriented listening type (learning to listen). Process-oriented listening helps learners master listening skills via strategy knowledge and strategy use. The primary objective is to make learners self-regulated individuals cognizant of their learning processes, allow them access to several requisite listening skills, follow a range of critical strategies, and change gradually to satisfy their needs in diverse contexts (Darmawan *et al.*, 2020; Robillos and Phantharakphong, 2020).

Accordingly, students should follow critical steps in learning to listen. EFL/ESL students notify that the complications with listening consist of linguistic ones, such as misunderstandings over how to listen when receiving feedback while listening and how to expand their listening level and direct themselves when encountering the lack of feedback (Goh, 2002). Listening is an initial stage in foreign language pedagogy, going hand in hand with language input as the most critical factor. Employing strategies is essential in pedagogic listening lessons (Vandergrift, 1999). Three relevant strategy types, cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective, are necessary to develop the skill (Azmi, Celik, Tugrul, and Yidliz, 2014).

The process of listening comprehension skill can be facilitated by employing various metacognitive strategies – planning, monitoring, or evaluating, which could be used before, during, or after the listening comprehension to give learners a hand to succeed and understand better what they heard (Mekhoukh, 2022). Several researchers (Chamot and O'Malley, 1990; Ellis, 1994; Oxford, 1990) have described metacognitive strategies. Metacognition refers to the "high-order cognition about cognition" (Veenman *et al.*, 2006, p. 5) and is "thinking of thinking" (Flavell, 1979, p. 907), and explained readily by Vandergrift *et al.*, (2006) as "the human ability to be conscious of one's mental processes" (p. 433).

It is essential to introduce two corresponding methods into the curriculum to foster metacognitive awareness. First, task-based metacognitive instruction (e.g., combining one-way (non-participatory) and two-way (participatory) communicative listening tasks with metacognitive development activities) should be implemented to motivate learners to listen attentively and reply brightly to authentic texts (Goh, 2008; Robillos and Bustos, 2022; Vandergrift, 2004). Second, metacognitive pedagogical sequence (e.g., integrating factors of strategy-oriented instructions) should be employed to train more skillful students familiar with metacognitive listening processes while listening to a text. The vital step of a listening syllabus (pre-listening, post-listening, and while listening) can be helpful. The result may be a rapid progression in the learning ability to listen actively (Goh, 2008; Robillos and Bustos, 2022).

All metacognitive activities in the classroom may develop individuals' awareness of listening comprehension or learning processes and experience high motivation by employing different effective strategies or skills (Goh, 2008). All these activities go beyond a narrow concentration on strategies used and involve self-regulation, awareness raising, or flexibility of the strategies (Mekhoukh, 2022). According to Goh's (2008) claims of metacognitive instruction, a process-based approach opted for pedagogy about three sorts of basic knowledge (e.g., person, task, and strategy). Walking into the path of listening comprehension regulation and finally meeting with

remarkable accomplishment for succession in L2 listening could be the particular target in this field (Robillos, 2019). Thus, understanding how the process-based approach (e.g., metacognitive pedagogical cycle) works might contribute to listeners' cognition and self-regulation (Robillos and Bustos, 2022; Wang, 2016). The use of a metacognitive pedagogical cycle increases EFL learner's listening awareness (Bozorgian, 2014; Robillos, 2019; Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari, 2010) and enhances listening proficiency, control, and confidence (Gruba and Yeldham, 2016; Kouhpayezadeh *et al.*, 2022). Some other cognitive and metacognitive studies offered novel insights into EFL teachers' performances in the class room to "explain the skill" involved in listening comprehension (Goh, 2008, p.192). However, mounting evidence indicates that teachers do their best to promote learners' listening skills (Graham, 2017).

Therefore, the present review article tried to portray the impact of task-based instruction with metacognitive activities on the listening comprehension ability of EFL learners.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Different listening skills in EFL/ESL classes were dominated by a product-based approach – focusing on proper responses. Nonetheless, by employing a metacognitive approach, learners should be engaged in the listening processes to become active and effective listeners (Chero, 2023). Teachers should try to improve their listening comprehension levels and use strategy training techniques via discussions or practical applications of diverse strategies to make learners aware of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Through metacognitive strategies, learners can "extend the metacognitive knowledge regarding self-regulation listening enhancement" (Vandergrift *et al.*, 2006, p.437). It is necessary to concentrate on listening processes and on learners' engagement rather than on the output (Chero, 2023). The decisive factor is that they must have an original intention to learn listening to deal with the subject matter, advance their knowledge, and raise their metacognitive awareness. Metacognition will help EFL/ESL learners to be more autonomous, increase their desire to learn English, and acquire other sub-skills, such as grammar and vocabulary, via receiving comprehensible input (Daskalovska, Hadzi-Nikolova, and JankovaAlagjovska, 2023).

The metacognitive listening instruction recommended by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) is a methodological approach catering to the listening process and developing the strategy knowledge and strategy use. Involving EFL/ESL students in this approach (e.g., metacognitive pedagogical cycle) enhances their awareness of the metacognitive process and boosts their listening performance (Haghihi *et al.*, 2022; Mahdavi and Miri, 2019).

METHOD

In this review, the data were amassed using some keywords or phrases, such as EFL learners, listening comprehension, metacognitive activities, and Task-Based Instruction (TBI) by accessing online databases from 1979 to 2023. The results of these studied articles were summarized and paraphrased.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching L2 listening has undergone radical alterations throughout the last few decades. Nonetheless, they caused several related issues as learners struggled to develop listening skills. First, the skill garnered insufficient attention due to the lack of enthusiastic support to guide learners through the language learning processes, so they did not become successful active listeners in the classroom. Many of

them, notably at the beginning and intermediate levels, have tried to learn this skill despite having complete direct control over it (Goh and Vandergrift, 2012). Besides, the pre-planned and instructed listening tasks may cause high degrees of anxiety and fright for them, with the result that a holistic approach to listening pedagogy is in demand. Incidentally, the desired response will be a metacognitive perspective (Goh and Vandergrift, 2012). The task-based metacognitive strategy combines task-based learning plus metacognitive instruction. It hinges upon the special privileges of communicative task-based learning, which motivates all learners to listen intentionally and answer correctly to authentic listening texts (Bozorgian, 2014; Goh, 2008; Robillos, 2019; Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari, 2010; Wang, 2016). Task-based learning for listening skills underlines the importance of communicative goals between speakers and listeners (Goh, 2010). Hence, to ensure close cooperation among all peers, learner-based teaching, high authenticity, and reflecting learners' experiences as principal elements of learning, TBI catches the attention of both teachers and students (Brown, 2014). By combining TBI and metacognitive activities, teachers promote learners' awareness of listening skills, encourage them to pursue sound strategies or skills, and streamline their cognitive processes (Goh, 2008).

Table 1. Progression of metacognitive studies all over the world

Authors	Year	Main Findings
Al-Alwan, Asassfeh, & Al-Shboul	2013	This study showed that EFL learners attained moderate levels of listening strategy metacognitive awareness.
Picard & Velautham	2016	The final results reflected the independent development of students' listening comprehension skills using the skills or strategies.
Altumairesh	2016	The study allowed insight into the metacognitive listening strategies used by successful L2 active listeners via applying verbal reports.
Ebedy	2017	The results illustrated that practicing listening along with TBI could be the right way to prepare all pupils for higher levels of comprehension.
Johari & Unin	2017	To foster special levels of awareness, the learners must conduct self-learning or become more capable in their listening tasks.
Savitri	2018	This study indicated that metacognitive awareness was the foundation for enhancing pupils' listening strategies.
Al-Nafisah	2019	This paper asserted that their listening competency was enhanced via concentrating on listening instructions integrating the other skills or fulfilling the learners' needs in the field of aural-oral input requirement.
Cao & Lin	2020	It was shown that the more frequently pupils employed the metacognitive listening strategies, the greater their listening comprehension ability would be.
Din, Latip, & Swanto	2020	The outcome demonstrated that listening scores were positively related to personal knowledge strategies and, inversely, to mental English translation skills.
Aesaert, Bourdeaud'hui, & van Braak	2021	The net results indicated that high-level listeners were more cognizant of metacognitive factors (i.e., person knowledge, problem-solving, or directed attention) and more internally motivated to listen intently than average or low-level listeners.

Table 2. Progression of metacognitive studies in the Iranian academic context

Authors	Year	Main Findings
Bozorgian	2012	The net results offered empirical support for the metacognitive pedagogy utilizing a strategy-based approach of advanced organization, directed attention, selective attention, and self-management might lead or aid less-skilled listeners in developing their listening ability.
Bozorgian & Padiav	2015	The findings confirmed that the experimental group that had received metacognitive listening instruction via the pedagogical cycle outperformed the control group.
Golshan & Maghsoudi	2017	The research study's outcome showed that the learners in the experimental group exposed to task-based listening activities outperformed in their posttest compared to their pretest.
Baharvand & Moradian	2017	Applying the MALQ, the listening test results demonstrated that the experimental group that used metacognitive awareness strategies outperformed the control group on listening activities.
Shokrzadeh & Zohrabi	2017	The findings reflected teachers' relative but insufficient utilization of the two process-oriented approaches.
Mohamadpour, Tabatabaei, & Talebinejad	2018	This comparative research study showed that using TBLT drew learners' attention, involved them in predicting or evaluating their learning processes, and instructed them to reflect on their performance in the mold of listening tasks.
Abbasi, Ostad, & Tarang	2018	The results showed that task-based listening activities positively impacted listening ability.
Ahmadi, Keshmirshakan, & Namaziandost	2019	The findings indicated a significant negative relationship between listening comprehension problems and strategy use. However, the metacognitive strategy was the key strategy used. Pupils suffered from a lack of input which affected their listening level.
Zarrabi	2020	The final results revealed a positive relationship between learner style and metacognitive listening strategy awareness.
Alamdari & Maftoon	2020	The overall results showed that metacognitive strategy instruction led to a substantial difference in listening ability and metacognitive awareness of active listeners.

Implications of the Study to the Educational Researchers

The present research had several theoretical and empirical implications for all the EFL/ESL learners in the field of listening pedagogy. Considering the theoretical implication, this study could drop many hints for other researchers intrigued with developing a comprehensive model for the L2 listening processes. Some empirical research has shown that metacognition is critical to learners' success in EFL/ESL listening learning (Latip *et al.*, 2020; Sok and Shin, 2021; Valizadeh and Farvardin, 2020). As for the empirical aspect, instructors and teachers can deploy collaborative techniques or metacognitive awareness activities in the classes. Besides, expertise in the listening capability relied on metacognitive strategies, which led to comprehension and task-oriented strategy use, which prompts learners to surmount their potential difficulties, exude self-confidence,

and increase their general language proficiency level (Bozorgian, 2014; Cao and Lin, 2020; Haghighi *et al.*, 2019; Robillos, 2020). Given the recorded findings of the present study, a high degree of expertise via applying metacognitive strategies plus task-based activities might be a reliable teaching method in this field. Fortunately, this study could also pique material designers' interest in regulating several specific task-based activities with a metacognitive perspective in listening parts of all the relevant textbooks. There might be more acceleration in listening comprehension with extra opportunities to perform diverse task-based activities in textbooks. Briefly, language teachers might advocate alternate approaches to improve students' listening comprehension.

Therefore, this study can be beneficial for language teachers and learners. In due course, language teachers would conduct action research on the efficacy of incorporated metacognitive tasks in listening courses. Language learners would also enjoy a friendly atmosphere established in the classrooms that motivate group work without the dominant position of the teacher. Other studies are targeted the fertile follow-up path for further research:

- Technology was not covered in this research study. Further academic research will be on the impact of mobile-assisted vocabulary and grammar applications by wiki-based learning context on EFL/ESL learners' listening skills.
- The study did not explore the influence of integrated CALL enhancement through person knowledge development on EFL/ESL learners' listening skill performance; this can be a related field for further scholarly research.
- The efficiency levels in incorporating metacognitive activities with TBI were examined during the present study; further research will focus on the impact of collaborative task implementation plus metacognitive knowledge awareness on EFL/ESL learners' listening skill achievement.
- This present research study was run with feminine students. It could be possible to conduct a comparative study with masculine participants to assess the effect of those metacognitive activities on their listening comprehension ability.
- Instructors' and teachers' attitudes or reactions to using those sorts of activities were not aimed to investigate in the current research; it will be a fertile ground for further study.

CONCLUSION

As highlighted in this review, metacognition (i.e., the manner of thinking about thinking) alludes to the learners' capability for directing their thoughts or learning levels. Also, it occupies an integral role in learning to listen the active listeners cope with the high levels of cognitive or metacognitive demand for the items of incoming oral-aural information (Goh and Hu, 2014; Payaprom, 2023; Vandergrift *et al.*, 2006).

Moreover, metacognitive activities head learners streamline social-cognitive processes in their minds and use vast scaffolding learning experiences wherein all novices or beginners obtain assistance and leadership from instructors. By drawing a cognitive plan, assisting them with monitoring, and gauging their progress, learners may be encouraged to strive toward a more attainable learning target (Goh, 2008). A review of research studies highlighted that all the metacognitive tasks might motivate self-appraisal or self-regulation per learning processes. While comprehending L2 listening text, they exercise their minds freely to become a self-directed/self-regulated person. With an acute metacognitive awareness, all the EFL/ESL learners will be more self-directed, self-regulated, and critical thinkers (Goh, 2008; Robillos, 2021). From the discussions above, we may

conclude that an integral part of the listening curriculum for metacognitive pedagogy should not be neglected. Several tasks suggested are plain or easy to accomplish. Metacognitive pedagogy will be continual per an English language course. As a matter of fact, via the repetition of the task, learners will be metacognitively cognizant of acquisition (Goh, 2008).

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