



## THE USE OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES BY ESL TERTIARY LEARNERS IN LEARNING IELTS LISTENING COURSE



**Daljeet Singh Sedhu**<sup>1+</sup>  
**Suraini Mohd Ali**<sup>2</sup>  
**Haliza Harun**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tunku Abdul Rahman University College, Malaysia*

<sup>2,3</sup>*Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Malaysia*



(+ Corresponding author)

### ABSTRACT

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Listening, in general, is a challenging language skill for many learners in which they usually face frustration (Arnold, 2000; Goh, 2000). The emphasis of this study is to identify the experiences of ESL learners when learning the listening skill for IELTS while applying metacognitive strategies in learning. The research instrument used in the present study is the semi-structured interviews with the aim of gaining foundational understanding from the selected respondents regarding their use of metacognitive strategies in learning the listening skills for the IELTS examination. The qualitative results of this study were based on interviews conducted among 10 participants who are undergraduate students, underwent an intervention programme which was designed for them to acquire the listening skills using the metacognitive strategies. The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis by using the coding method. Findings of this study suggest that metacognitive strategies presents a viable solution for acquiring appropriate skills in the listening component because although most individuals of normal intelligence engage in metacognitive regulation when confronted with an effortful cognitive task, some are more metacognitive than others. Those with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful in their cognitive endeavours. Additionally, it was also found to have positively impacted learning behaviours with the learners being receptive to the changes and gaining more confidence with independently learning. There is a vast potential that can still be evaluated for the application of metacognitive strategies with other level of learners for acquiring appropriate listening skills in the English language.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Listening, in general, is a challenging language skill for many learners in which they usually face frustration (Arnold, 2000; Goh, 2000). Graham (2006) in his study concluded that listening is recognized by his students as an area in which they felt the least success compared with other skills. He argued that the learners during listening experienced difficulties about perception, especially regarding the speed of delivery in which they usually encounter problems due to mishearing or missing supposedly vital words (Graham, 2006). As a multilingual country, Malaysia would naturally face certain issues in learning English as a second language most especially since Malaysian learners were honed from varying vernacular backgrounds during their formative period and early education. Hiew (2012) on

her study of teaching English language and learning issues of Malaysian learners from secondary school to college and university levels, indicated that majority of the issues encountered in listening were mostly relative to the learners' difficulty in comprehending teachers and lecturers due to being unable to keep pace with the teachers and being unsure of the meaning of the word. It was also mentioned that one of the contributing factors for the learning challenges of learners were the "learner's learning method, teacher's teaching method and/or approach and syllabus and lesson plan" (Hiew, 2012). Furthermore, it was also noted that teaching strategies in English language lacking in meaningful lessons in the current practices of most Malaysian learning institutions. This was also observed by Lim (2013) in her analysis of Malaysian English classrooms where the author proposes that an in-depth approach to teaching English was needed rather than the surface level method of teaching through memorization and repetition (Lim, 2013).

It is, therefore, essential that further evaluation of the current methodologies for learning ESL among Malaysian learners is undertaken and other alternative methods of learning are explored. This study attempts to provide insight on the feasibility and applicability of metacognitive knowledge and strategies among ESL learners specifically on acquiring the appropriate listening skills.

Additional consideration was also given to prevalent findings by previous studies on Malaysian ESL learners struggle in learning the language (Azmi, 2015) with issues of learners specifically on listening skills (Hiew, 2012).

### 1.1 Purpose of the Research

The emphasis of this study is to identify the experiences of ESL learners when learning the listening skill for IELTS while applying metacognitive strategies in learning. This allows an in depth insight of its effects on the performance of learners in the listening component of IELTS that could assist in obtaining appropriate listening skills that could improve comprehension of the language but also improve their proficiency in the language as listening to oral text provides authentic input of the language in communication.

### 1.2. Research Questions

- a) What are the ESL learners' perception when using metacognitive strategies for IELTS listening course?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Metacognitive Strategies in Listening ESL Skills

It has been suggested, "Students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishments, and future learning directions" (O'malley *et al.*, 1985). The use of metacognitive strategies in the listening process has been generally supported as a valuable aid for its cognitive, social, linguistic benefits. Many studies (Wenden, 2001; Chamot, 2005) have addressed the positive effects of utilizing metacognitive strategies in the listening process. Metacognitive strategies also assist learners in becoming more effective learners by allowing them to individualize the language learning experience. Metacognitive instruction, as described by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) refers to "pedagogical procedures that enable learners to increase awareness of listening process by developing richer metacognitive knowledge about themselves as listeners, the nature, and demands of listening, and strategies for listening" Vandergrift and Goh (2012).

There has been a growing tendency for almost two decades for the use of metacognitive instruction to facilitate the process and outcome of listening. The pedagogical evidence supports the notion that metacognitive instruction can not only assist learners in what they choose to process learning, but also improve successful language learning through acquiring metacognitive strategies. In the same vein, Goh (2008) maintains that metacognitive instruction can inherently strengthen learners' awareness and their listening process, which can assist learners in using appropriate strategies. Commenting on the demand for such metacognitive instruction, Pressley (2002) asserts that learners need a long-term direct explanation, modelling strategies, and strategies with guided practice in order to use appropriate

strategies in different contexts (Pressley, 2002). Metacognitive instruction in listening can be presented to language learners in different forms. One such form, according to Mendelsohn (1998) is to go through a series of activities that encourage the use of planning, monitoring, and evaluating strategies for a given listening text (Mendelsohn, 1998).

Among language learning strategies, metacognitive strategies are regarded as high order executive skills that make use of knowledge of cognitive processes and constitute an attempt to regulate ones' own learning by means of planning, monitoring and evaluating. When applied to listening, metacognitive strategies are self-monitoring and self-regulating activities, focusing on both the process and the product of listening. They include the listeners' perception of whether or not they can comprehend what they listen; their ability to judge the cognitive demands of listening task; and their knowledge of when and how to employ a specific cognitive listening strategy according to text difficulty, situational constraints, and the listener's own cognitive abilities (Baker and Brown, 1984).

## 2.2. Metacognitive Strategies: Means to Control and Regulate Knowledge

Educational researchers differ on the number and names of the metacognitive processes. Metacognitive control is described as "metacognitive monitoring" (Nelson *et al.*, 1994) "executive control" (Kluwe, 1987) or "encoding" (Davidson and Sternberg, 1998) but the processes involved have similar functions. In line with Flavell (1979); Kluwe (1987) and Nelson and Narens (1990) metacognitive monitoring involves identifying the features of an ongoing cognitive and affective state or activity. That is, the process provides knowledge about the present state of cognitive endeavour and the transformation or maintenance or termination of one's own cognitive activities and states (Flavell, 1979; Kluwe, 1987; Nelson and Narens, 1990). Monitoring is divided into a "meta level" or where encoding is controlled and an "object level" where retrieval is controlled (Son and Schwartz, 2002). The object level is concerned with reflecting and assessing the external situation and storing these features in working memory. The mental level, initially proposed by Nelson *et al.* (1994) involves self-monitoring and self-regulation which covers planning, directing and evaluating one's behaviours (Nelson *et al.*, 1994). Davidson and Sternberg (1998) take a different angle and refer to the internal state as the retrieval of information stored in long term memory (Davidson and Sternberg, 1998). It is a process of searching information relevant to that gained from current/working contexts (Son and Schwartz, 2002).

The process of metacognitive control involves monitoring and evaluation to retrieve information. Otero (1998) and Hacker (1998) both agree that we use monitoring or evaluation as a means to observe, reflect on or experience our own cognitive and affective states and activities. They describe monitoring as assessing ongoing thoughts and evaluation as searching and examining relevant knowledge stored in long term memory.

Cooper and Boyd (1996) refer to monitoring as executive monitoring. It involves four processes of recognising, analysing and synthesizing, and making connections and articulating learning. The first process involves recognising reasons and patterns to explain designs, data and problems. The second process involves asking questions that help to analyse and synthesise information or that help with probing, mapping, thinking and researching if the information is new. The third process makes connections, for instance, by comparing and contrasting (Cooper and Boyd, 1996).

This means not taking things at face value, but considering different points of view, looking at things systematically, seeing interdependence, generalizing, personalizing and integrating new data into current understanding and practice. The last process concerns articulating one's learning in a precise and often concise way. It includes summarizing, paraphrasing, grasping the essence of an issue, illustrating and mapping ideas, putting a complex idea in lay terms, and being conscious of one's actions and how they reflect one's thinking at any given moment.

Nelson *et al.* (1994) suggest that thought processes at the meta level result in refining the object level of cognitive activities (Nelson and Narens, 1990). Son and Schwartz (2002) show their agreement by stating that: metacognitive control can be exercised to toggle study tactics on and off, or editing may be done to adapt the conditions, operations or standards in a cognitive structure that describe studying (Son and Schwartz, 2002).

Other experts agree that both monitoring and evaluation share a common function in receiving information retrieved from memory and external conditions (Flavell, 1979; Kluwe, 1987; Hacker *et al.*, 1998). They provide information for possible options for refinement of cognitive and affective states. The monitoring process informs the person of what is known, what is unknown, what is demanded by the task at hand, knowledge about the world, the standard for evaluation, and strategies relative to the current goal. Evaluation relies on “retrospection” and applying criteria (Kluwe, 1987) or standards for evaluation (Hacker *et al.*, 1998) to assess quality. According to Kluwe (1987) and (Cooper and Boyd, 1996) metacognitive processes also act as synthesisers, analysers and connectors (Kluwe, 1987) (Cooper and Boyd, 1996).

These scholars emphasise high and low level thought to process at the metacognitive level. Low-level processes search the cognitive and affective states and external situations, while high-level processes analyse, synthesise, generalise and integrate the internal cognitive and affective states and/or external information and experience. Information gained from monitoring and evaluating is a source for regulation processes.

Kluwe (1987); Davidson and Sternberg (1998) and Borkowski *et al.* (1990) elaborate further in that regulation processes help one make decisions based on the knowledge and strategies necessary for tackling a task or a problem. According to Kluwe (1987) there are four types of regulatory decisions: "processing capacity", "what is processed", "processing intensity" and the "speed of information processing". Decisions on "processing capacity" involve attention, effort, and capacity. The second type of decision, "what is processed", refers to the selection and analysis of a procedure.

Third, the "processing intensity" decision concerns "the frequency, the time allocation, and the strategy shift or the modification" when carrying out a task. The fourth type of decision involves speed such as deciding to add certain cognitive operations or skipping some processing steps to complete a task.

Metacognitive control involves conscious and non-conscious regulation or decisions that people make in response to the outcomes of monitoring processes. Reder and Schunn (1996) claim that metacognition directs strategies that people use to solve problems or answer questions. However, Kluwe (1987) argues against this, noting that decisions merely determine how to solve a problem, not actually solve it. Such decisions, therefore, may not lead to a regulatory activity.

### 2.3. Theoretical Framework of Metacognitive Strategies in ESL Context

The theoretical framework of this study incorporated the theory of Flavell's metacognition and that of Goh's specific metacognitive strategies to employ for instructing ESL learners in listening skills. The idea that merging metacognitive strategies into the learning process would allow students adapting appropriate listening skills if not improving it. According to Flavell (1976) metacognition refers to individuals' knowledge concerning their own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them, that is, the learning-relevant properties of information. Metacognitive strategies are sequential processes that individuals use to control cognitive activities and to ensure that a cognitive goal (e.g. understanding a text) has been met. These processes help to regulate and oversee learning, and consist of planning and monitoring cognitive activities, as well as checking the outcomes of those activities. From his research Flavell proposed a model of metacognitive monitoring to include four classes of phenomena and their relationships which included: (1) metacognitive knowledge; (2) metacognitive experiences; (3) tasks or goals and (4) strategies or activities. Goh on the other hand, emphasizes the constructive nature of learning and the important role that L2 learners play in the process of learning to listen. It takes into account learners' paths of development as they become more skilled at listening: beginning L2 listeners need to devote a lot of attentional resources to processing words in streams of speech, but the process of perceiving aural input and interpreting meaning gradually becomes more automatized as they develop in their competence (Goh, 2008).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Procedure**

In the present study, the convenience sampling method is used as the researcher needs the selected respondent to have particular characteristics or qualities.

The present research has used the population of ESL learners, and from that population, the researcher has selected a representative sample by using the non-probable sampling technique. Non-probable sampling technique has been applied in this research because researcher had to keep in mind the characteristics of the respondents.

The interviews were conducted with 10 respondents that were selected from the experimental group. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the interviews and were promised the highest level of confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used instead of their real names. Each respondent was required to sign a consent form and was informed that he or she was free to withdraw from the research at any time or any point and researcher has no authority to bind them to the completion of the research.

During the interview session, open ended was included in order to gain accurate and authentic results. Lastly, it is crucial to state here that the consent of the respondents was obtained before each interview began (Buchstaller and Khattab, 2013). After completing the interview session, the audio-recording of the respondents was transcribed verbatim and analysed.

#### **3.2. Semi-Structured Interviews**

The research instrument used in the present study is the semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the aim of gaining foundational understanding from the selected respondents regarding their use of metacognitive strategies in learning the listening skills for the IELTS examination. Thus, the construct of the interviews was flexible for the purpose of properly understanding the actual conception of the respondents.

The researcher conducted the interview on his own as it was necessary for the researcher to have an understanding of the use of related metacognitive strategies by the learners. It was necessary to know how the learners responded to the interview questions which were directed to the metacognitive strategies used.

The reason for implementing semi-structured questions was to learn the personal views of the respondents. stated that the primary purpose of a qualitative research is to find out and explore the insights, views, and thoughts of the respondents based on their personal experience and situations. Thus, it is significant to use semi-structured questions by involving the respondents of the research, as in this study the main purpose was to look into the experiences of the respondents and their thoughts while using metacognitive strategies in learning to listen.

#### **3.3. The Intervention**

The intervention was conducted in the form of instructions on metacognitive strategies. The instructions were given to the students and then a guided listening lesson using metacognitive strategies was conducted where the teacher thinks aloud the metacognitive strategies employed before, while and after the listening activities. The students were then taught step-by- step using the metacognitive strategies and encouraged to discuss and seek for clarification.

The exercises and lecture notes for the teaching and learning for listening were taken by the researcher from the syllabus of IELTS. The researcher used Achieve IELTS 2, 2nd edition, for the purpose of the intervention in this study. This book was chosen because it was written by qualified IELTS examiners, and this was to ensure that the reliability and validity of the chosen exercises are well observed. As the nature of the listening skills, the exercises were focused on daily conversation, public speech, academic discussion and academic lecture. Each given exercise took approximately between 2 to 6 minutes.

### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted during week 12 with 10 respondents. The purpose of these interviews was to find out the respondents' experiences while they learned listening skills using the metacognitive strategies taught to them. During the interviews, semi-structured questions were asked. The probing technique was used to obtain as much information as needed by the researcher. The consent of the respondents was obtained before each interview began and after completing the interview session, the audio-recording of the respondents was transcribed verbatim and then analysed according to each respective manner in order to obtain in-depth findings. For ethical considerations, the respondents of the semi-structured interviews were allowed to see and verify the content of the recorded responses.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Transcription is highly important in a qualitative inquiry. The transcriptions actually guided in the identification of the emerging themes. This makes it as a matter of first importance that before analysing qualitative data, making the audio recording into text is yet, another very crucial stage. The transcription process was indeed, tiring, time consuming, and require lots of patience and caution as the researcher needed to listen mindfully to the audio-records a little bit at a time to what the informants were articulating (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2011; Polio, 2012). Recurrently, the researcher had to click pause on the audio player, rewind and listened to the same conversation for many times before the researcher could grasp the accurate information transpired. In this case, the researcher was very receptive towards hearing thoughts and points concerning the use of metacognitive strategies in learning listening skills.

Coding in qualitative analysis is not only a phase or stage; but rather, it is a procedure that starts amid data collection as the researcher would constantly keep to his considerations the categories that would emerge (Saini and Shlonsky, 2012; Révész, 2014). In this study, the researcher utilised the transcribed texts to follow different approaches and procedures that mostly guide researchers in generating the emerging themes. By this, the procedures the researcher have utilised in generating the qualitative results in this study include working by the frames of thematic analysis in the medium of content approach to coding, and narrative discourse procedure while interpreting the results (Newby and Schwemmer, 2014). These are the key procedures that gave the researcher the mandate and permission as a researcher to involve in tapping valuable information entail there in the transcribed data for the accomplishment of this study.

In applied linguistic studies, coding is one of the etymological connections utilised by variationists to explore the discourse-pragmatic features in either ESL/EFL learners writing or listening skills (Pichler and Hesson, 2016; Almor *et al.*, 2017). In line with the claim made, the researcher utilised the coding analysis in this study as it goes within the terrain of social constructivist and action-oriented approaches that provide an arena for evaluation of issues, factors or expressions of affective stances towards ESL learners. In this case, the coding analysis provided the researcher with the arena of evaluating the discursive resources found useful in this study from the transcribed data.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Learning IELTS through Metacognitive Strategies

The results of this study were based on the interview conducted among the 10 respondents. A majority of the respondents indicated the metacognitive strategies was a new concept for them and viewed it positively with specific points to motivating interest to learn, better learning experience and easier understanding. Additionally, it was also found that learners perceive that learning the English language was easier comparing to what they have previously experienced.

Most of the respondents indicated that they start by predicting the type of audio that will be played by looking at the questions. Table 1 (refer to the appendices) shows the identified themes and some of the responses received. They

also indicated that any missing parts of the stage posed difficulty in following through the succeeding tasks. It is viewed by many as a building block where every part is essential in order to reach the next stage of action for learning effectively. It was also the opinion of majority of the respondents that the stages provided them with some advantages which are usually associated with being able to independently learn without much reliance on others.

Majority of the respondents mentioned achieving an overall improvement in their listening skills, with many mentioning gaining confidence in learning the English language because of overcoming their own issues with learning. Likewise, the systematic approach also provided an independent learning structure which depends on the individual's own capacity which as mentioned by the respondents allowed them an organized understanding and therefore better comprehension of what was being taught. It was also found that respondents based on their positive experience with the method recommend it as a part of learning. The themes identified were students discuss and compare the answers with course mates, approaching teacher as a last resort and thinking on their own. Table 2 (refer to the appendices) shows the identified themes and some of the responses received.

Most of the respondents indicated that they start evaluating by analysing questions and sections for improvement, by evaluating on test or sections, some even tried skipping and some focused on the particular strategy in order to improve their results. They also indicated that they will look at all the questions and see which part they didn't do good so that they can improve that particular part. Table 3 (refer to the appendices) shows the identified themes and some of the responses received. Many believed that it is necessary to evaluate and to look at their work in order to do well. This practise is viewed by many as an important practice as every part is essential in order to reach the next stage, which is the problem-solving stage, for learning effectively.

Majority of the responses received also indicated improved listening skills through the use of questions as guides for the listening activities. On the other hand, some disadvantages were also highlighted, especially which is related to the time frame for learning and using metacognitive strategies. Many indicated that it was time consuming and needed practice in order to follow the sequence correctly. According to them, this, however, did not hinder the learning process as many of them were able to analyse the content of the audio as soon as it started playing.

Majority of the responses received indicated improved listening skills through the use of problem solving. The emerging themes include reflection and focus where the respondents indicated that it is:

*"Very good because it made me thinking on areas I should be more focus on for example section 4 the most complicated part of the listening section".*

Some of them felt that this particular skill is "very important" because it makes them "look into" or reflect on the whole process of listening.

Table 4 (refer to the appendices) shows the identified themes and some of the responses received. Many of the respondents identified teachers as a guide stating that they will look for their teachers in order to understand the reason for them not to do well in the listening skill. They will then use the advices given by their teachers to improve their listening skills.

For the question related to the implementation of the metacognitive strategies, most of the respondents indicated that they follow the precise sequence of the stages involved in metacognitive strategies. The themes identified include improving the results obtained, sometimes skipping the sequence or part of the steps involved and problem with focus or improvement. For the first theme; improve the results, the respondents stated that they face difficulty if they do not follow the sequence. Their responses include:

*"I will do them according to the sequence because it is difficult for me if I skip one process I normally will be lost and that's it my scores will drop"*

*"Because if I don't follow it by sequence I find it difficult to apply this strategy when listening...."*

Table 5 (refer to the appendices) shows the identified themes and some of the responses received. Many believed that it is necessary to follow the sequence of the stages involved in metacognitive strategies in order to improve their listening skill.

The actual approach in applying the strategies describe in terms of planning, monitoring, evaluation and problem solving also yielded results which indicated overall better approach. Approaches for all components are more structured, with pre-emptive action prior to instructions as well as the review of completed tasks. The majority of the respondents mentions reviewing questions prior to listening to gain better anticipation of what they're about to listen. Similarly, Monitoring and Evaluation involves reviews and appraisal with the fellow learner to get a better understanding of tasks and lessons. Finally, for the problem solving stage, reflection after completion of the task is done by most of the respondents to see areas for improvement.

## 5. DISCUSSION

A highly diverse country rich in cultural heritage especially in terms of language communication could be a great challenge when it comes to finding the suitable approach in the English language. It entails not merely formulating or borrowing a foreign based curriculum but rather a method that could help students understand the language, which means using an approach that taps into their skills and potentials rather than based on traits relative to student profiling which could be local norms, practices and so on. This scenario is a prevalent practice in Malaysia because of the multiple languages, dialects and vernacular communication method used. In studying metacognitive strategies on its applicability to ELS learners for L2 level, many insights were found that points out the high potential to for using a metacognitive strategy approach in listening.

Findings of this study suggest that Metacognitive strategies present a viable solution for acquiring appropriate skills in the listening component because although most individuals of normal intelligence engage in metacognitive regulation when confronted with an effortful cognitive task, some are more metacognitive than others. Those with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful in their cognitive endeavors. The good news is that individuals can learn how to better regulate their cognitive activities. Most often, metacognitive instruction occurs when applied within instruction programs.

Metacognition enables students to benefit from instruction (Carr *et al.*, 1989; Al-Ghazo, 2016) and influences the use and maintenance of cognitive strategies. While there are several approaches to metacognitive instruction, the most effective involve providing the learner with both knowledges of cognitive processes and strategies (to be used as metacognitive knowledge), and experience or practice in using both cognitive and metacognitive strategies and evaluating the outcomes of their efforts (develops metacognitive regulation).

The findings from the interviews shows that Malaysian ESL learners have a low level of confidence and self-efficacy in listening skill as many agreed that after using the metacognitive strategies their confidence level and their motivation to learn listening skill improved. The respondents also stated that listening skill is always harder than other skills. Perhaps, it can be said that this is due to the fact that Malaysian learners consider listening as a difficult task and that they concentrate with difficulty to master this particular skill in order to do their best in listening practices and listening tests.

According to data from the interview, respondents perceived more metacognitive strategies as relevant to learning the listening comprehension. The majority of respondents reported incorporating a similar number of strategies of each process into their listening comprehension. For instance, Planning, Monitoring, Problem-solving and Evaluating strategies were frequently rated. The respondents were common in their inclusion of Evaluating Strategies and Monitoring strategies.

interviews showed that respondents were well informed with positive perceptions of the relevance of many strategies, they seemed to struggle when applying many strategies or were inclined to give up more quickly than. This supports previous research with high school and college students that suggest “less instructive guidance [in metacognition] is more effective for students” (Dominowski, 1998) to promote metacognitive strategy use. Some results of strategies incorporated implicitly in teaching, i.e., without mentioning their relevance or otherwise, suggests that the incorporation of metacognitive strategies was not always related to instructors’ perceptions of relevance.



The research confirms arguments proposed by Littlewood (1999;2000) and previous studies by Robbins (1996); Barnhardt *et al.* (1999) that metacognitive knowledge and experience in using strategies encourage learners' motivation and ability to learn independently. When learning the ESL, the learners used these four processes in an effective way and therefore were willing and had the confidence to take charge of their own learning. These positive learning experiences will help them see difficulties, obstacles, weaknesses or failure as challenges which can be overcome by the application of appropriate strategies.

## 6. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, as suggested by the findings in this research, explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies should be incorporated into the classroom practice of lecturers and particularly of those teaching English as a foreign language.

The study also suggests that some students can develop knowledge about and use of strategies independently of their instructors' advice. This should not be surprising given that previous research has suggested that metacognitive related skills can be taught to students as early as kindergarten which indicates that enhancing students' responsibility and ability to learn English independently should not be challenging at the tertiary level.

Some respondents who experienced more instructive teaching and learning, opportunities need to be created for them to construct their own knowledge in their English class. Such knowledge is viewed by cognitive construction psychologists as more flexible, transferable, and useful than that transmitted to students by experts, teachers or other delivery agents (Stephens *et al.*, 2008). That is, learning is more effective when learners are actively involved in the learning process, assuming responsibility for their learning, and participating in the decisions which affect it.

It is frequently implied in the literature that metacognitive knowledge and control and regulatory strategies are the keys to learner autonomy. Therefore students need to use more strategies in their language learning, thus reinforcing their development of independence. This suggests that the current focus on assessing knowledge expertise should be expanded to include the evaluation of strategic expertise.

As mentioned earlier, relatively few metacognitive strategies were used among respondents and may be attributable to the fact that more instructive teaching and learning occurred in the listening comprehension, O'malley and Chamot (1990) emphasise the importance of cultural influence when describing successful learners who come from a rote learning focused education as these learners will have highly developed memory strategies and will be less likely to have developed problem-solving and comprehension strategies. This suggests therefore that students may need more explicit training in these metacognitive strategies in order to achieve learner autonomy.

This study contributes in the existing literature with the current changes in knowledge, learning and general demands of contemporary society, a new approach to learning ESL suitable to the needs of today's world must be considered. Metacognitive strategies is suggested in this study as an alternative option to existing methodologies in learning of the IELTS curriculum for listening through planning, monitoring, evaluation and problem solving merged into the learning process.

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Appendices

Table-1. Question 2.1

| Question 2.1                                       | Themes/Issues               | Responses   |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| How do you start planning when learning listening? | Predicting                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will start predicting on what type of audio will be played by looking at the questions.</li> <li>For this exercise, I will look at the questions in this section A and I will predict on what I am about to listen. Like this one it will be a conversation.</li> </ul>  |
|  | Analysing the type of audio | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normally before the audio is being played I will be given time to go through the questions and by looking at the questions I will be able to predict on what I am going to listen for example here is a conversation.</li> </ul>   |
|  | Questions as guides         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I firstly look at the questions and analyse them on what I am going to listen, like here it is a conversation audio. Therefore, it makes me feel prepared to listen to an audio before it is played.</li> <li>It's like setting my thoughts and mind on what I am about to listen like here it will be a conversation and it makes my listening process to the audio much better.</li> <li>Before the teacher play the audio, I will plan by looking at the questions for this section and then start thinking of the possible answers.</li> <li>Before the audio is played I will go through the questions quickly in order to know what I am about to listen for example here it am is a conversation.</li> <li>I start reading the questions here and then I will plan on what I am about to listen like here it is a conversation, so it is more like a head start for me.</li> <li>I go through all the questions in the first section to know what type of audio will be played like here it is a conversation. So in my mind I will set myself that I am prepared to hear the audio which is going to be played.</li> </ul> |

Table-2. Question 2.2

| Question 2.2  | Themes/Issues                                     | Responses   |
|---|---|---|
| How do you do monitoring after you have done with the planning stage? | Discuss and compare the answers with course mates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes I check the answers in a section on my own or with my friends and if I really don't understand then I will ask my teacher for explanation</li> <li>I will check and discuss the answers for the completed section and I normally discuss with my friends.</li> <li>Either I or my friends will discuss the answers we have done for one section and compare our answers but sometimes I will just monitor on my own.</li> </ul>  |
|   | Teacher as a last resort                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will discuss with my friends and we compare our answers for a section and then we try explain to each other.</li> <li>I will discuss with my friends the answers and get their feedbacks on the wrong answer and the reason for it is wrong.</li> </ul>  |
|   | Think on their own                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It depends, sometimes I can check the answers I did wrong in a section by myself or sometimes I check with my friends if I don't understand the reason my answers are wrong.</li> <li>I will check back the questions I did not get correct and focus whether I did it wrong because I misunderstood the question or didn't understand the speaker.</li> <li>I will look at the errors I have done in the section, and try to understand the reason for my answer is wrong.</li> <li>I will check the answers for the particular section and just write simple notes reason getting them wrong.</li> </ul> |

Table-3. Question 2.3

| Question 2.3   | Themes/Issues                                    | Responses   |
|--|--|---|
| How do you do evaluation when you have completed the monitoring stage? | Checking on the scores                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will analyse all the questions for all the sections and see why I get wrong.</li> <li>I will look at the errors I have done in the section, and try to understand the reason for my answer is wrong.</li> </ul>  |
|  | Analysing questions and sections for improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will look at all the questions and see which part I didn't do good so that I can improve that part.</li> </ul>   |
|  | Evaluate on test or sections,                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will check the scores and compare with previous ones.</li> <li>I will see the whole exercises or tests I have done and compare my scores with the previous ones.</li> <li>I normally look back at all the forty questions on how well I have done.</li> </ul>  |
|  | Tried skipping                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will evaluate on how well I have done for a particular test and then keep track on sections which I have not done well.</li> </ul>   |
|  | Focus  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will look into how well I have done on all the sections and try to improve on the sections that I have not done well.</li> <li>A few times, I tried skipping one of the strategies but it did not work for me because at end I found out I have to follow it like a cycle then I am able to do well on my own.</li> <li>At first few test exercises I didn't do well but when I started focusing on this strategy I started improving my results because I can know how good I did in each section.</li> </ul> |

Table-4. Question 2.4

| Question 2.4  | Themes/Issues  | Responses  |
|---|--|--|
| How do you do problem solving as the final stage of learning listening? | reflect ion and focus  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is more like a reflect kind of thing for me to see which part I have done well in the process of using the strategy.</li> <li>This part is very good because it made me thinking on areas I should be more focus on for example section 4 the most complicated part of the listening section.</li> <li>I feel this part, it is very important because here I will look into the whole process of listening skills I have learn for a particular exercise or test.</li> </ul>   |
|   | Understand the reason of score Evaluate on test or sections, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It allows me to understand by giving me to think the reason why I didn't do well for a test. I normally will write down simple notes on each section so that I can reflect it and improve myself.</li> </ul>  |
|   | Teacher as a guide   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I normally will note down on the areas I need to improve on and after class I will redo the exercises or tests until I get a better score.</li> </ul>   |
|   | Reason for improvement needed                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will write on the test paper in points the parts I get wrong and go back home and improve the part in order to improve myself.</li> <li>I will look at the areas I didn't do well because at the beginning I will ask my teachers on how to overcome the problems on the area I didn't do well and now I use the guides given by my teacher to improvise the parts.</li> <li>I will analyse on which part of the strategy I didn't follow well and I will practice more on that area. Sometimes I will look for my teacher to understand better the reason I didn't do well.</li> </ul> |
|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It gives to reason myself without depending on others on areas which I have done well and not well. From here I will draw conclusions on what should I improve on for the next tests.</li> </ul>  |

Table-5. Question 3

| Question 3  | Themes/Issues                              | Responses  |
|---|--|--|
| Do you follow by sequence of the stages involved in metacognitive strategies or do you skip any of the stages? Why? | To improve results                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. I follow them in sequence and this has helped me to improve my results.</li> <li>• I will do them according to sequence because it is difficult for me if I skip one process I normally will be lost and that's it my scores will drop.</li> <li>• Yes I do. Because if I don't follow it by sequence I find it difficult to apply this strategy when listening skills for example when I skip monitoring and do evaluation I cannot compare the sections I did well or not by just looking at the overall results.</li> </ul>   |
|   | Skipping the sequence or part of the steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I sometimes skipped planning because there is no much time to plan on what I am about to listen depending on the number of questions in a section.</li> </ul>   |
|   | Problem with focus or improvement          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do skip monitoring because I find it time consuming and I need to focus on the next section for the given stipulated time. If there's time then I will go through the strategies sequent.</li> <li>• A few times, I tried skipping one of the strategies but it did not work for me because at end I found out I have to follow it like a cycle then I am able to do well on my own</li> <li>• Sometimes I skip monitoring because I want to focus on the other questions in the other sections.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. I will do it sequence as all the parts in the strategies are important and missing one part will put me in a situation of lost and I face problem to focus for the next section.</li> <li>• I will do everything in the process as sequence because I'll be able to improve my listening skills. Otherwise I find it difficult because of the language spoken by the speakers from the audio is difficult to understand.</li> </ul> |

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