

A STUDY ON METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS IN ENGLISH LISTENING OF ADVANCED PROGRAM STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY- THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY

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SUMMARY

This paper reports on the findings of an investigation into metacognitive awareness in listening held by the students from two classes of the Advanced program (AP) at University of Technology - Thai Nguyen University. The results indicate that the students' metacognitive awareness of "planning and evaluation, directed attention, person knowledge" and "problem solving" strategies are relatively positive, while their metacognitive awareness of "mental translation" is negative. Specifically, a number of listening strategies are not applied appropriately. Surprisingly, it was found that there have been almost no statistically significant differences between the students' metacognitive awareness of the two classes. To enhance students' listening, some suggestions have been reported such as raising students' metacognitive awareness and teaching them how to use metacognitive strategies effectively in listening.

Keywords: *listening, metacognitive awareness, listening comprehension, listening strategies, metacognitive strategies*

INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that listening has a crucial importance in language learning. According to [4], listening is the most important skill for language learning because it can be mostly used in normal daily life [4]. According to [2], listening plays an important role in communication, of the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing, about 9%. However, listening has not been paid much attention. Listening skills are "least researched of all four language skills" [8]. It is undeniable that listening has still been one of the most difficult skills for both learning and teaching.

Language learning strategies

Goh [4] said that it is very important to teach listening strategies to students. O'Malley and Chamot [6] claimed two main types of strategies: metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Social strategies are mentioned as the one less often used by language learners. Metacognitive strategies involve knowing about learning and controlling learning

through planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning activity. Cognitive strategies manipulate the material to be learned or apply a specific technique to the learning task.

Metacognitive listening strategies

Metacognition

Metacognition is defined as the learners' "knowledge about learning" [9]. Metacognitive knowledge has been classified by Flavell and Wellman (1977) into three categories as person, task and strategic knowledge [9].

Metacognitive listening strategies

Metacognitive strategies are general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, and guide their learning, i.e. planning, monitoring and evaluating [9]. According to [5] meta-cognitive strategies involve knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning activity.

Metacognitive awareness

Vandergrift defines metacognitive awareness of listening as learners' cognitive appraisal or the metacognitive knowledge of their perceptions about themselves, their

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understanding of listening demands, their cognitive goals, and their approach to the task and their strategies [7]. In addition, Vandergrift states that learners with high degrees of metacognitive awareness are able to handle and store new information better, and to find the best ways to practice and reinforce what they have learned. Thus it is imperative for teachers to teach students how to listen and it is essential to develop students' metacognitive awareness of listening strategies.

So far, there have not been studies on metacognitive awareness at Thai Nguyen University of Technology. This paper, thus, focuses on identifying AP students' metacognitive awareness of listening strategies. Hopefully, the findings of the study will help the teachers in developing students' metacognitive knowledge to enhance their listening comprehension. The research question was formulated as follows:

- To what extent are the students aware of metacognitive listening strategies?

STUDY

Participants

The participants were 36 first-year AP students from two classes, 19 in one class and 17 in the other. These two classes were instructed by the researcher. They had finished pre-intermediate course so their level of English was assumed at pre-intermediate level.

Instrument(s)

In this study, the researcher conducted Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) developed and validated by Vandergrift et al. [7]. The questionnaire contains 21 items and each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale rating from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the the MALQ was translated into Vietnamese to avoid possible misunderstanding.

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was administered with all the 36 students and it was returned within one day. The data were analyzed through the descriptive statistical procedures of SPSS Version 20.

RESULTS

The findings gathered from the questionnaire are presented and discussed in five categories: planning and evaluation, problem-solving, mental translation, person knowledge, and directed attention.

Table 1. Planning and evaluation strategies

Item	Group 1 (N=19)		Group 2 (N=17)		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	3.53	.772	3.65	.606	.608
10.	2.58	.961	2.88	1.166	.398
14.	3.00	1.054	2.82	1.185	.639
20.	3.21	.976	3.06	1.298	.692
21.	3.42	1.017	3.41	.939	.978

As can be seen from Table 1, most of the students agree that they have a plan in mind before they start to listen (Items 1 and 21: $M=3.53$ and 3.42 , $SD = .772$ and 1.017 , respectively). However, the majority of the students from both groups do not recall similar texts (Item 10: $M=2.58$ and 2.88 , $SD=.961$ and 1.166). More surprisingly, only a minority agree they evaluate how they listen (Item 14: $M=3.00$ and 2.82). Also, in both groups, the students partly agree they assess their level of comprehension ($M=3.21$ and 3.06 , $SD=.976$ and 1.298). There is no significant difference between the opinions of the students in both groups. ($p > .05$).

Table 2. Directed attention strategies

Item	Group 1 (N=19)		Group 2 (N=17)		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
2.	3.53	.841	3.88	.993	.252
6.	3.32	1.108	3.12	1.111	.596
12.	3.63	.831	4.00	.866	.202
16.	2.42	.902	2.41	1.121	.978

It is reported from Table 2 that the majority of the students in both groups give more

concentration on the text when they have difficulty in understanding ($M=3.53$ and 3.88). Moreover, it is noticed that they try to maintain concentration during listening process ($M=3.32$ and 3.12 , and $M=3.63$ and 4.00).

However, a minority of the students are reported to give up when they have troubles with listening comprehension. There is no significant difference between two groups.

Table 3. Person knowledge and self awareness

Item	Group 1 (N=19)		Group 2 (N=17)		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
3.	3.00	1.054	3.59	.939	.088
8.	3.05	1.079	3.82	1.015	.035
15.	3.16	1.167	2.82	1.131	.390

It is recognized from Table 3 that the students generally believe listening in English is the most challenging skill in comparison with the others ($M=3.00$ and 3.59). Noticeably, the students from group 2 reveal higher agreement than those from group 1 ($M=3.82$, $SD=1.015$ vs $M=3.05$, $SD=1.079$). This leads to a significant difference ($p<.05$). Additionally, the majority of the students reported that they experience anxiety when they listen to English ($M=2.92$, $SD=.937$). However, the difference is not significant ($p>.05$).

Table 4. Mental translation

Item	Group 1 (N=19)		Group 2 (N=17)		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
4.	3.42	.838	3.59	1.064	.602
11.	3.53	.841	3.82	1.074	.359
18.	3.11	.875	3.29	1.047	.559

Regarding mental translation, it is reported from Table 4 that most of the students translate key words in their head when they listen ($M=3.53$ and 3.82 , $SD=.841$ and 1.074). Surprisingly, a minority of the students agree that they translate word by word ($M=3.29$ and 3.11). The difference between the groups is not significant.

It is noticed from Table 5 that the students reported using problem-solving strategies in

listening. The highest means belong to item 9 ($M=3.68$ and 3.53 , $SD=.820$ and $.874$), which report that the students in both groups understand the text with the help of their own experience and knowledge.

Table 5. Problem-solving strategies

Item	Group 1 (N=19)		Group 2 (N=17)		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
5.	3.37	1.165	3.18	1.425	.660
7.	3.32	.885	3.18	1.074	.673
9.	3.68	.820	3.53	.874	.587
13.	3.47	1.073	3.18	1.074	.413
17.	3.37	1.065	3.24	1.091	.714
19.	3.58	.961	3.53	.874	.873

Moreover, the other means ranging from 3.18 to 3.58 (items 13, 17 and 19) show that the students can adjust their interpretation if they know that it is incorrect or they guess meaning of the word based on the general idea of the text or the information they have heard from the listening. The students also use the words they understand to guess the meaning of the words they don't understand and compare what they understand with what they know about the topic. However, these are applied at quite low means ($M=3.37$ and 3.18 , and $M=3.32$ and 3.18).

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Planning and evaluation strategies

It is noticeable that before listening most of the students have a plan in mind but a minority of the students do not. In addition, remembering similar texts before listening is not chosen by the majority of the students from both groups. Unexpectedly, not many students assess how they listen. Moreover, the agreement degree of the students from group 2 on the assessment of the way they listen and their level of comprehension is lower than that from group 1.

Directed attention strategies

The majority of the students in both groups reported to give more concentration on the text when they have difficulty in

understanding. Generally, the students try to keep concentrating during listening process. However, a minority of the students give up when they have troubles with listening comprehension.

Person knowledge and self awareness

Most of the students consider listening the most challenging skill, which means that they have difficulty in learning listening, especially the students from group 2. Furthermore, the students from both groups experience anxiety, and the level of anxiety the students from group 2 undergo is higher.

Mental translation

The majority of the students reported to translate keywords in their head while listening. Noticeably, a minority of students do translate word by word. This should be taken into consideration by the teacher, as Chamot and El-Dinary [3] state that the less proficient learners tend to make inappropriate strategy choices.

Problem-solving strategies

As reported above, the majority of the students apply some of the problem-solving strategies in listening comprehension. They use their own experience and knowledge to support in understanding the text. Besides, it is shown that the majority of students change their interpretation when necessary or use the information or general idea of the text to guess meaning of the word. Surprisingly, only a small number of the students use the words they understand to guess the meaning of the words they don't understand. It is indicated that the students use problem-solving strategies at unsatisfactory degrees.

Teachers are recommended to encourage the students to use various strategies and give them more instructions in using strategies appropriately. Besides, the students revealed that they have difficulty in listening. The areas causing problems to the students in listening might be materials, cultural differences, accent, unfamiliar vocabulary,

length, and speed of listening, etc. It is important for teachers to be aware of students' difficulties in listening and try to solve those problems.

Furthermore, it is necessary for teachers to understand students' anxiety, help them to reduce it by various methods, for example, using or designing listening materials and tasks that are suitable for them in terms of level of difficulty and that can motivate them in learning.

More significantly, teachers need to develop students' metacognitive awareness, teaching and training them in metacognitive strategies as metacognition is the essential skill that teachers should develop both in themselves and their students [1]. Thus, further research on raising students' metacognitive awareness and teaching them how to use metacognitive strategies is recommended.

CONCLUSION

In the paper, the students' metacognitive awareness has been identified. It is reported that the majority of the students hold relatively positive metacognitive awareness of "planning and evaluation, directed attention, person knowledge" and "problem solving" strategies. However, metacognitive awareness of "mental translation" has been found negative. In addition, it has been shown that a number of the students experience listening anxiety. Also, many students reported to have difficulty in listening. To improve students' listening comprehension some suggestions have been reported.

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TÓM TẮT

NGHIÊN CỨU VỀ SIÊU NHẬN THỨC TRONG NGHE TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN CHƯƠNG TRÌNH TIỀN TIẾN TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC KỸ THUẬT CÔNG NGHIỆP – ĐẠI HỌC THÁI NGUYÊN

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Bài báo trình bày kết quả khảo sát về siêu nhận thức trong nghe tiếng Anh của sinh viên hai lớp Chương trình tiên tiến tại Trường Đại học Kỹ thuật Công nghiệp – ĐH Thái Nguyên. Kết quả cho thấy siêu nhận thức của sinh viên về các chiến thuật "lập kế hoạch và đánh giá, hướng sự chú ý, hiểu biết về con người" và "giải quyết vấn đề" khá tích cực, trong khi siêu nhận thức về chiến thuật "địch khi nghe" lại thiếu lạc quan. Cụ thể hơn, một số chiến lược nghe không được áp dụng phù hợp. Đáng ngạc nhiên là hầu như không có sự khác biệt có ý nghĩa thống kê giữa siêu nhận thức của sinh viên hai lớp. Để cải thiện kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh của sinh viên, một số gợi ý đã được đưa ra như nâng cao siêu nhận thức của sinh viên và dạy họ cách sử dụng các chiến lược siêu nhận thức một cách hiệu quả trong việc nghe tiếng Anh.

Từ khóa: *nghe, siêu nhận thức, nghe hiểu, chiến thuật nghe, chiến thuật siêu nhận thức*

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