

## Chinese-Speaking Students' Use of Metacognitive Listening Strategies to Understand English Video Materials

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### Abstract

*Metacognitive awareness plays an essential role in listening comprehension. Little research has been conducted on metacognitive strategy use when second language learners listen to authentic oral input. The purpose of the study was first to investigate what metacognitive listening strategies are used by English learners most and least frequently. Second, the study examined whether there are significant intrapersonal differences in strategy use in terms of the learner variables of gender, academic background, and grade. In total, 160 students taking English courses in a Taiwanese university joined the study. Each participant viewed two online video clips and immediately completed the metacognitive awareness survey. The descriptive statistics results show that most participants utilized their experience and knowledge to help them understand the oral input. The independent-sample t-test results revealed that there were some significant differences between the groups in terms of the three variables. Finally, instructional recommendations are presented to enhance L2 listening instruction*

**Keywords:** listening comprehension, metacognitive strategies, second language learning, video materials,

### 1. Introduction

Listening plays an essential role in influencing effective communication. In daily communication situations, adults spend an average of 45% of the time listening, about 30% speaking, 16% reading, and 9% writing (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2001). Among the four language skills, listening can be regarded as an important communicative skill. Most language educators in Taiwan agree that listening plays an essential role in English education (Chen, Lee, & Lin, 2010; Chou, 2015; Lee & Teng, 2016; Teng, 2006). The Ministry of Education in Taiwan guides elementary schools to prioritize English listening, followed by the training of reading and writing skills (Hsu, Hwang, Chang, & Chang, 2013). This reform attempts to change the context in which students may learn a second language in an interactive and communicative situation.

To foster listening comprehension, learners may learn to be aware of and monitor their comprehension process. Such awareness and monitoring processes in the cognitive psychology area are often considered as metacognition (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). Paris and Winograd (1990) defined metacognition as the “knowledge about cognitive states and abilities that can be shared among individuals while at the same time expanding the construct to include affective and motivational characteristics of thinking” (p. 15). As indicated by Paris and Winograd (1990), metacognition can enhance academic learning and motivation. They also viewed metacognition as an opportunity “to provide students with knowledge and confidence that enables them to manage their own learning and empowers them to be inquisitive and zealous in their pursuits” (Paris & Winograd, 1990, p. 22).

Some studies in the field of cognitive psychology have documented that metacognition enhances learning (Paris & Winograd, 1990; Pintrich, 1999; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Metacognition also plays an essential role in second language learning (Bolitho, Carter, Hughes, Ivanic, Masyhara, & Tomlison, 2003; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; Chamot, Barnghardt, EI-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Bacon and Finnemann (1990) indicated that learner variables also play an essential role in second language (L2) learning. For example, researchers investigating metacognitive listening strategy usage found that there was a significant difference between skilled and unskilled L2 learners (Bacon, 1992; Goh, 2000; O'Malley & Chmot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1998, 1999), and that male and females used different listening strategies (Bacon, 1992a, 1992b; Vandergrift, 1997).

Successful English listening performance relies on learners' metacognitive awareness (Vandergrift, 1997; Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, & Tafaghodtari, 2006). The results of the empirical studies supported the perspective that metacognitive strategy instruction assisted L2 listeners to reflect on their listening process and also fostered L2 learners' listening comprehension ability (Bozorgian, 2012; Teng, 2006). In the twenty-first century, there is an astonishing advancement in technological devices. The learner's mental information processing is likely changeable. The present study therefore aimed to examine how L2 learners apply metacognitive strategies to comprehend a spoken text in terms of learner variables. In the field of L2 learning, listening is, without a doubt, the most important skill, but perhaps the most difficult skill to master (Lin, 2016). The results of the present study may contribute to helping the second language educators to design L2 pedagogy to foster the learners' metacognitive listening strategy use.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 English Listening Curriculum**

Listening can be described as an on-going series of processes that occur within the listener. An English listening curriculum can be viewed as a learner-centered curriculum in which the learner is taught to actively learn the knowledge and skills. Constructivists have been interpreted in various ways; however, what these interpretations have in common is that the learner actively constructs knowledge base and does not just passively record it. In line with the constructivist-learning theory, this study assumes that the focal part of English listening curriculum is the learner. The instructor may understand how the learner learns a second language and how the learner's mind works during learning through the analysis of the learner's metacognitive strategy use.

Metacognitive skills have been included as part of classroom instruction and a number of studies has reported significant improvement in learning as a result (Coskun, 2010; Cross & Paris, 1988; Cross, 2010; Goh & Taib, 2006; Vandergrif, 2003; Zarrabi, 2016). For example, Vandergrift (2003) used a teaching technique that integrated text-focused and metacognitive awareness-raising activities; the results revealed that the learners increased their metacognitive knowledge, and that the technique fostered their engagement in class. There is a significant relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension (Sen, 2009) and writing (Ahmadi, Ketabi, & Rabiee, 2012). The researchers suggested that metacognitive skills can be taught in class.

To cultivate the learners' metacognitive strategies, the instructor may raise learners' metacognitive awareness, which means being aware of how the learners themselves think. With regard to L2 instruction, metacognition may refer to being aware of how the learners themselves learn. If the learners are conscious of how they learn, they may then be able to identify the most effective ways of learning and also automatically manage their own learning.

### **2.2 Promoting Metacognition Development**

Since the 1970s, some second language learning strategy researchers have proposed the strategy category of metacognition, indicating that it consists of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (Flavell, 1976; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Macaro, 2006; Dornyei, 2006). Metacognition is a term used in cognitive psychology, described as cognition about cognition, or knowing about knowing. This higher-level cognition was given the label "metacognition" by the American developmental psychologist John Flavell (1976). His definition is as follows:

One's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them. . . active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective (Flavell, 1976, p. 232).

O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanas, Russo and Kupper (1985) classified second language learning strategies into three categories: (1) Metacognitive strategies: planning for learning, thinking about the learning process, and monitoring one's comprehension and evaluating the learning process; (2) Cognitive strategies: direct manipulation of the learning materials; and (3) Socio affective strategies: social-mediating activities and interacting with others (cited from Brown, 2007, p.134). After twenty years, Dornyei (2006) defined four types of strategies, namely Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social, and Affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies are defined as "higher-level strategies mainly used in planning, monitoring, organizing, analyzing, and evaluating ones' learning process" (p. 169).

Vandergrift's taxonomy of metacognitive listening strategies has been widely used in the field of L2 listening comprehension. This is because Vandergrift developed a comprehensive questionnaire by synthesizing previous essential studies on second language learning strategies, and further verified the items. Drawing on the versions designed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990, pp. 137-139) and Oxford (1990, p. 21), Vandergrift (1996) proposed a basic framework of listening strategies, and further examined his taxonomy in 1997. Vandergrift (1997) defined metacognitive strategies as representing mental activities for directing language learning, and indicated that metacognitive strategies included the planning, monitoring, and evaluation stages. Furthermore, Vandergrift et al. (2006) identified five factors of metacognitive awareness and developed the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). The MALQ items were validated with 966 respondents. The results revealed that there was a moderate significant correlation between listening comprehension ability and the overall MALQ scores.

### 2.3 Previous Listening Research on Metacognitive Strategy Use

Since the 1990s, learner variables have been assumed to have a significant impact on strategy use (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990). For example, Bacon (1992a and 1992b) indicated that when learning Spanish, female university students used a significantly higher proportion of metacognitive strategies than the males. Vandergrift (1996) used a structured interview to identify the high school students' strategy usage during different listening tasks to understand French. He reported that females tended to use a greater number of metacognitive strategies than males. Vandergrift (1997) applied 10 metacognitive strategy items, divided into four types, to conduct a survey. The four types were planning, comprehension monitoring, self-evaluation, and problem identification. Vandergrift (1997) reported that there were very few differences when reporting strategy use for all males and females.

Considering the gender variable, the results of the above reviewed studies conducted in the 1990s are mixed. This is because the researchers used different groups of participants to collect the strategy usage. The studies were also dictated by different cultural and educational backgrounds. Moreover, the target language manipulated in each study is different. The reviewed research on strategy use asked the participants to report the strategies. With the researcher's limited knowledge, few empirical studies investigated the metacognitive listening strategy use by employing the gender variable more recently. Both male and female students mostly account for the population in the classroom. There is a need to examine the actual use of metacognitive listening strategies between males and females in term of the verified questionnaire.

In addition, listening research on metacognitive strategies was conducted with other learner variables. For example, Zarrabi(2016) investigated the effectiveness of listening strategy instruction on the awareness of metacognitive listening strategies in terms of EFL learners' visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile characteristics and found that explicit instruction of listening strategies has statistically significant influence on the metacognitive listening strategies awareness of different EFL learner types. In general, the previous studies did not report the differences in academic background and grade. Since metacognitive strategies are important for improving listening comprehension, the survey of metacognitive strategy use incorporating other variables, such as academic background and grade, should be made to provide sufficient knowledge of the L2 learners' incorporation of metacognitive strategies into their listening process. The present study used Chinese-speaking university students as participants to conduct a survey and analyzed the strategy use from the perspectives of the learner factors (gender, academic and grade). Language educators may draw on the results concluded from the present survey to conduct strategy-based instruction.

With the advancements in computing technology, the Internet has been widely applied to a variety of educational setting. Videos, an authentic oral input available online, can be easily accessed. Moreover, the learners can shoot and edit video by themselves and upload it to websites such as *YouTube*. Featuring multimedia digital technology, video-based materials can be a powerful addition to second language acquisition (Lin, 2011, 2014). Differing from previous studies which adopted listening materials without video; the present study discusses the use of metacognitive listening strategies integrating authentic video-based materials from the Internet.

The purpose of the study was therefore to explore Chinese students' metacognitive strategy use when listening to authentic English oral text on the Internet. Two research questions are addressed:

- (1) What are the English learners' most and least frequently used metacognitive listening strategies?
- (2) Are there significant differences in metacognitive strategy use in terms of the learner variables of gender, academic background, and grade?

### 3 Method

#### 3.1 Participants

In this study, 160 students from six English classes in a university were recruited. In the university, English courses are offered for undergraduate students and focus on training the students' English reading, and listening skills. The participants' mother language was Mandarin, and they were from the College of Maritime Science and Management, the College of Engineering, the College of Ocean Law and Policy, and the College of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

The students who did not fill out the questionnaire were excluded from the sampling. Furthermore, the data from students who did not answer all the items on the questionnaire were omitted from the final sampling. As a result, 160 participants comprised the sample. Table 1 summarizes their demographic data. All 160 were undergraduate students; of whom 75 were freshmen, grouped as Grade 1, and 85 were sophomores, juniors, and seniors, grouped as non-Grade 1. Regarding the academic background variable, there were 87 participants who studied in the College of Maritime Science and Management, grouped as MSM, and the 73 participants from other colleges were coded as non-MSM.

**Table 1: Participants' demographic data**

Variables		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	110	68.75
	Female	50	31.25
Academic background	MSM	87	54.38
	Non-MSM	73	45.62
Grade	Grade 1	75	46.88
	Non-Grade 1	85	53.12

#### 3.2 The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)

This questionnaire was used to measure the extent to which the participants were aware of and could regulate the process of their listening comprehension. The questionnaire consists of five dimensions and 21 items in total. The questionnaire was tested with a large sample of respondents in different countries as a consciousness-raising tool to raise students' awareness of the process of listening, and to foster students' self-regulation in using comprehension strategies (Vandergrift et al., 2006). Each item is designed with a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (Vandergrift et al., 2006, p. 462). In this inquiry, the 21 items were regarded as metacognitive listening strategies.

The questionnaire and direction statements were reproduced from Vandergrift and Goh's book (2012, pp. 286-287). The instructor used Mandarin to interpret the direction statements and questionnaire items. The participants were asked to fill out their responses on the questionnaire. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) suggested that the questionnaire be used "to help learners appraise their own listening, identify their level of metacognitive awareness and strategy use" (p. 139). In order to explore the participants' metacognitive awareness, the questionnaire was used at the start of the course. The reliability of the questionnaire was satisfactory at  $\alpha = .82$ .

#### 3.3 Listening Materials

The listening materials were videotext, selected from the website *Voice Tube* (2017). The text on the screen is captioned with English and Chinese subtitles. The viewer's can choose whether or not to read the subtitles. The audio text is narrated in English with speakers from different English-speaking countries. The video segments on the *Voice Tube* are collected from different channels, such as TED Talks, CNN Student News, and the top 250 films from IMDB.

Before the formal study, three students who did not participate chose two videos based on their interest. The selected videos were characterized by an American accent and were graded at the beginning level. The study was administered in a computer language laboratory. Each participant sat in front of a computer and screen, and individually viewed the assigned videos on the website.

The topics and their URLs are listed as follows:

- (1) Study in Taiwan - Learning plus adventure

<https://tw.voicetube.com/videos/20129?ref=translated> (retrieved Oct. 16, 2016)

## (2) What Is Love?

<https://tw.voicetube.com/videos/8283?ref=translated> (retrieved Oct. 16, 2016)

### 3.4 Research Procedure

The survey was conducted over a period of two semesters in 2015. The survey was administered at the beginning of each semester. In each semester, there were two sections: the practice section and the formal survey. In the practice section, the researcher used Mandarin to interpret the questionnaire items. In the formal survey, the instructor displayed the material twice. In the language lab, there was a computer teaching desk; each screen of the student computer could be connected with the teaching desk. To focus on the listening task itself and to maintain the same acoustic process for all participants, the researcher displayed the video on the screen of the teaching desk, and the participants viewed the video on each individual screen linked with the teaching desk. The audio text was delivered through the loudspeakers installed in the corner of the lab. After watching the video, the participants were asked to write a summary. The summary writing was designed to help the listeners establish a general picture of the video content. The participants could use Mandarin or English to write the summary. When they completed the listening task of the two video clips, they filled out the questionnaire.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data from the five classes included 160 responses to the MALQ. The collected data were analyzed from quantitative viewpoints to examine whether there were significant intrapersonal differences in terms of the learner gender, academic background, and grade. Following the rules of data coding and scoring defined by Vandergrift et al. (2006), three items (Items 3, 8, 16) were reverse coded before the mean score was calculated. The remaining items were coded as their scores for the items. Descriptive statistics of mean scores were first used to describe the participants' responses to the MALQ. The collected data were classified dichotomously, such as male vs. female, MSM vs. non-MSM, and Grade 1 vs. non-Grade 1. The collected data were analyzed using independent-sample *t*-tests to examine the between-group differences.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Most Frequently Used Metacognitive Strategies

Table 2 provides a list of the top five metacognitive strategies used by the 160 participants. The mean scores above 4.5 were ranked as the top five items in Table 2. Item 9 was ranked with the highest mean score ( $Mean = 5.03$ ,  $SD = 0.907$ ), showing that most of the participants utilized their experience and knowledge to help them understand the content. Item 11 was ranked with the second highest mean score ( $Mean = 4.85$ ,  $SD = 1.089$ ), showing that the participants liked to translate key words when listening to the text, which can help them learn new vocabulary and retrieve the words they had learned before. Item 5 was ranked with the third highest mean score ( $Mean = 4.74$ ,  $SD = 1.011$ ), indicating that the participants used the words they understood to guess the meaning of the words they did not understand. Item 16 was ranked with the fourth highest mean score ( $Mean = 4.55$ ,  $SD = .89$ ), indicating that most participants would stop listening when they had difficulty understanding. Item 17 was ranked with the fifth highest mean score ( $Mean = 4.49$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ), indicating that the participants tended to use the general idea of the text to help them guess the meaning of the words that they did not understand. Among the five items, three (Items 9, 5, and 17) belong to the problem-solving category (see Table 2 for the percentages of each scale).

**Table 2: The most frequently used metacognitive strategies**

Rank ( <i>Mean</i> )	Brief Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5	6
1 (5.03)	9. use my experience and knowledge	<i>f</i>	1	3	4	23	80	49
		<i>%</i>	0.6	1.9	2.5	14.4	50	30.6
2 (4.85)	11. translate key words	<i>f</i>	1	5	13	29	62	50
		<i>%</i>	0.6	3.1	8.1	18.1	38.8	31.3
3 (4.74)	5. use the words I understand to guess	<i>f</i>	1	4	12	37	70	36
		<i>%</i>	0.6	2.5	7.5	23.1	43.8	22.5
4 (4.67)	16. give up and stop listening	<i>f</i>	1	5	15	44	55	40
		<i>%</i>	0.6	3.1	9.4	27.5	34.4	25.0
5 (4.55)	17. use the general idea of the text	<i>f</i>	1	4	9	54	76	16
		<i>%</i>	0.6	2.5	5.6	33.8	47.5	10

## 4.2 Least Frequently Used Metacognitive Strategies

Table 3 presents the five least frequently used metacognitive strategies for this group of participants. Items 8 and 3 were reverse coded. Item 8 was ranked with the lowest mean score ( $Mean = 3.18, SD = 1.43$ ). By summing the frequencies of scales 1 and 2, 62 participants (38.8%) disagreed with the statement, "I feel that listening comprehension in English is a challenge for me." In addition, the same number of participants (38.8%) responded the scales of 3 and 4. There are also some participants held uncertain attitudes toward listening in English. To further understand whether the participants liked listening, another two items were discussed. Item 15 was ranked with the third lowest mean score ( $Mean = 3.6, SD = 1.48$ ). Up to 51.3% of the participants agreed that they did not feel nervous when listening to English. In addition, the statistical result of Item 3 shows that 58.7% of the participants had a feeling of certainty when listening. In general, this group of participants held positive attitudes toward listening.

In addition, Item 18, which had the second lowest mean score ( $Mean = 3.37, SD = 1.41$ ), pertained to examining whether the participants translated word by word while listening to English text. With the frequencies of scales 3 and 4, a rather high ratio of the participants (51.9%) demonstrated uncertainty about this item. Similarly, the added frequency of scales 3 and 4 for Item 20 is 91. Up to 57% of the participants did not have confidence in periodically asking themselves if they were satisfied with their level of comprehension during the online listening process.

**Table 3: The least frequently used metacognitive strategies**

Rank (Mean)	Brief Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5	6
1 (3.18)	8. Listening in English is a challenge	<i>f</i>	20	42	30	32	29	7
		<i>%</i>	12.5	26.3	18.8	20	18.1	4.4
2 (3.37)	18. Translate word by word as I listen.	<i>f</i>	16	26	51	32	20	15
		<i>%</i>	10	16.3	31.9	20	12.5	9.4
3 (3.60)	15. Don't feel nervous when I listen to English	<i>f</i>	10	36	32	31	32	19
		<i>%</i>	6.3	22.5	20	19.4	20	11.9
4 (3.66)	3. Listening is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing	<i>f</i>	19	27	20	33	44	17
		<i>%</i>	11.9	16.9	12.5	20.6	27.5	10.6
5 (3.72)	20. Periodically check my comprehension	<i>f</i>	7	21	30	61	34	7
		<i>%</i>	4.4	13.1	18.8	38.1	21.3	4.4

## 4.3 Items with Significant Agreement vs. Disagreement

The frequencies of scales 1 and 2 represent the participants' disagreement; the frequencies of scales 3 and 4 represent their neutrality and uncertainty, while the frequencies of scales 5 and 6 represent their agreement (Vandergrift, et al., 2006). The analysis of the Independent-Samples *t*-tests showed that there were two significant differences between the agreement and disagreement groups. For Item 11, the mean score of the Agree group ( $Mean = 35.05, SD = 5.30$ ) is significantly higher than that of the Disagree group ( $Mean = 1.85, SD = 1.76$ ). The results show that the participants significantly agreed with the statement, "I translate key words as I listen" ( $t = 8.399, p < .05$ ). For Item 16, the mean score of the Agree group ( $Mean = 29.85, SD = 6.65$ ) is significantly higher than that of the Disagree group ( $Mean = 1.85, SD = 1.76$ ). That is, the participants significantly agreed with the statement, "When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I give up and stop listening" ( $t = 5.726, p < .05$ ).

## 4.4 Significant Differences in Metacognitive Strategy Use

To answer the second research question, the Independent-Samples *t*-test was administered to compare the responses to the questionnaire in terms of gender, academic background, and grade. In general, there are significant differences between the gender, academic background, and grade groups, respectively. Regarding the gender variable, the *t*-test results revealed a significant difference for Item 11 ( $t = -3.595, df = 133.101, p < .05$ ). The result shows that the mean score of the female sampling ( $Mean = 5.24, SD = .79$ ) is significantly higher than that of the males ( $Mean = 4.67, SD = 1.16$ ). That is, the female participants drew on translating key words more frequently than the male participants while listening. Out of 21 items, there was only one significant difference between the male and female participants in their metacognitive strategy use. This result indicates that differences for gender were minimal.

Regarding the academic background, the results showed that there were significant differences in five items (see Table 4 for the means and SDs). For these five items, the MSM participants' mean scores are consistently higher than those of the non-MSM participants with a significant difference (Item 2,  $t = 2.538$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Item 6,  $t = 2.575$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Item 10,  $t = 2.842$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Item 20,  $t = 3.067$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Item 21,  $t = 2.088$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Compared with the non-MSM participants, the MSM participants focused harder on the text when they had trouble understanding; moreover, they could recover their concentration right away when their minds wandered. Items 10, 20 and 21 were classified as the Planning and Evaluation category. Compared with the non-MSM participants, the MSM participants would think of similar texts that they had heard before, and they periodically asked themselves if they were satisfied with their level of comprehension. During the listening process, the MSM participants had a goal in mind more frequently than did their counterparts.

**Table 4: Means and SDs of the four items for the academic background variable**

Brief Item statement	Academic Background	Mean	SD
2. Focus harder on the text	MSM	4.54	1.09
	Non-MSM	4.04	1.38
6. Recover my concentration right away	MSM	4.15	1.01
	Non-MSM	3.73	1.07
10. Think of similar texts before listening	MSM	4.10	1.22
	Non-MSM	3.51	1.43
20. Periodically check my comprehension	MSM	3.98	1.13
	Non-MSM	3.41	1.19
21. Have a goal in mind as I listen	MSM	4.31	1.31
	Non-MSM	3.89	1.22

Regarding the grade variable, the  $t$ -test results showed that there were significant differences for four items (see Table 4 for the means and SDs). The Grade 1 participants' mean scores were consistently higher than those of the non-Grade 1 participants and differed significantly for Item 17 ( $t = 2.303$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Item 19 ( $t = 2.3$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ). On the other hand, the non-Grade 1 participants' mean scores were higher than those of the Grade 1 participants and differed significantly for Item 15 ( $t = -2.162$ ,  $df = 154.487$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Item 21 ( $t = -1.989$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5: Means and SDs of the four items for the grade variable**

Brief Item statement	Academic Background	Mean	SD
15. Don't feel nervous when I listen to English	Grade 1	3.33	1.48
	Non-Grade 1	3.84	1.45
17. Use the general idea of the text	Grade 1	4.72	.71
	Non-Grade 1	4.40	1.00
19. Think back to everything else that I have heard	Grade 1	4.61	.98
	Non-Grade 1	4.21	1.19
21. Have a goal in mind as I listen	Grade 1	3.91	1.25
	Non-Grade 1	4.31	1.28

## 5. Conclusions

The present study conducted a survey of Chinese-speaking university students' use of metacognitive strategies when listening to English oral text. Of 21 metacognitive strategies, the most frequently used were (1) using personal experience and knowledge to understand oral text, (2) translating key words during the listening process, and (3) utilizing the familiar words to guess the meaning of the unknown words. More specifically, the learner variables, such as gender, academic background and grade, yielded some significant differences in terms of 21 individual items. From the significant results, it can be noted that a high ratio of female participants tended to translate key words while listening ( $Mean = 5.24$ ), and a high ratio of Grade 1 participants used the general idea of the text to help them guess the meaning of unknown words ( $Mean = 4.67$ ). Regarding the gender variable, the  $t$ -test results indicated that there was only one significant difference between the male and female participants in their metacognitive strategy use. This result suggests that differences for gender be minimal.

The results of the least frequently used items (Items 3, 15) demonstrate that this group of participants had confidence in English listening. This is probably because they felt interested in the topics, and the text difficulty of the videos was appropriate for their level of English proficiency.

The purpose of the present study was to conduct a survey of how Chinese-speaking university students use metacognitive listening strategies to comprehend English spoken text. Informed with such knowledge about L2 learners' utilization of metacognitive strategies, instructors may plan an effective English listening curriculum. Based on these significant results, instructional recommendations for English listening class are presented as follows:

First, the teacher should activate the students' experience and knowledge related to the listening material before listening. As Lin (2011) reported, reading the title of the video was ranked as the most frequently used verbal compensation strategy by Chinese-speaking learners when viewing videos in English. This is because most participants read the title to predict the content of the upcoming section of the text (Lin, 2011). Before the listening activity, the instructor may introduce the title and some key concepts related to it. In addition, the instructor may propose some general questions to attract the students' attention to the oral text itself. For example, these questions can include "Who is the speaker?" "Where is the story/ conversation taking place?" and "What is being discussed?"

Second, the teacher should teach the learners to grasp general ideas to guess the meaning of the unknown words while listening. Most oral text is invisible and spontaneous. The spoken messages can disappear from memory within seconds. It is quite difficult for listeners to pay attention to each word from the flow of speech. As Lin (2011) reported, catching the main ideas of video images was ranked as the most frequently used nonverbal cognition strategy by Chinese-speaking learners when viewing videos in English. Supported with video, students may practice grasping general ideas of what is being said and further use the main idea to guess the meaning of unknown words.

Third, the teacher should use listening material that is appropriate for the learners. For most English learners, linguistic difficulties of oral text may include unknown words, lexical density and complex grammatical structures, while non-linguistic characteristics include the familiarity of the topic, text type and cultural accessibility (Wilson, 2008, p. 13). The instructor should select the material by considering both the linguistic difficulties and the non-linguistic characteristics of the text (such as speech rate, the speaker's accent).

The administration of the MALQ to a large group of university students in the beginning of a listening class can help the students to plan their strategies. The items can be regarded as prompts which activate the students to plan, monitor and reflect on their listening process. After the survey, some participants expressed that they seldom undertook the listening monitoring process in such a conscious way.

The present study conducted a survey on how English listeners utilized metacognitive strategies. The results of the survey are helpful for language educators. The early reviewed studies on metacognitive strategies indicated that metacognitive strategies play a key role in what successful listeners choose to select for processing and further made a suggestion to cultivate the development of metacognitive awareness and facilitate the automatic acquisition process of listening materials. To improve L2 learners' listening comprehension ability, it would be better for the teacher to understand the listener's metacognitive awareness and their metacognitive strategy use.

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