# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF METACOGNITIVE LISTENING INSTRUCTION IN DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS AMONG A2-LEVEL LEARNERS TO ACHIEVE B1-LEVEL PROFICIENCY

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**Abstract.** Listening comprehension is a critical advance in second language acquisition. However, some learners, particularly those lacking proper vocabulary knowledge, are struggling with understanding spoken language as they cannot identify connected speech and lack knowledge about listening strategies. The current paper analyzes the possibilities of the use of metacognitive listening instruction in teaching A2-level learners the skills required for B1-level proficiency. In particular, the article refers to researching the issues of second language listening, metacognition, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The paper highlights the role of the planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating techniques in listening instruction. It also deals with various theoretical and practical research papers and offers an instructional model focusing on prediction, guided listening, repeated listening, error analysis, and reflection processes. According to the studies conducted, metacognitive listening instruction can help achieve better levels of comprehension and develop self-sufficiency among learners. But the advancement to the B1 level of competency also requires knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation familiarity, and regular contact with spoken English, as well as proper assessment. The article summarizes that metacognitive listening instruction is a helpful part of the holistic approach of listening skill

development instead of being a decisive factor leading to the particular level of proficiency.

**Keywords:** Metacognitive Listening Instruction, Listening Comprehension, A2-level learners, B1 proficiency, Listening Strategies, Learner Autonomy

**Introduction.** Listening is seen as one of the most basic skills when learning a second language since it helps learners process spoken information, participate in conversations, and make relevant contributions during daily activities. But listening comprehension is difficult for learners whose language proficiency is limited as compared to reading comprehension. Listening differs from reading in that information must be processed virtually on the spot, leaving little time for contemplation after message encoding. Many factors may negatively influence the listening process, such as unknown words, pronunciation, and fast speech. Learners who possess A2 level of English knowledge may experience challenges in understanding speeches during conversations, announcements, interviews, and other verbalized texts. Some learners tend to concentrate on the particular words and end up losing the main meaning of the message since they do not get familiar with the phrases used by the speaker. Some learners cannot differentiate between important points and minor details or recognize their vocabulary in the spoken speech. This means that listening skill development needs more than passive exposure to audio and visual materials. Learners also need to be equipped with some tips on how to respond to the listening task and solve understanding difficulties. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages gives a basis for evaluating progression from A2 to B1 level. At A2 level, a learner can recognize common expressions and short messages on some familiar topics. At B1 level, the learner should be able to understand the general idea of an ordinary speech on familiar subjects (Council of Europe, 2020). In other words, development towards B1 level means achieving more skills in noticing and working with spoken messages.

One of the techniques to support this process is a type of metacognitive instruction. Metacognitive processes involve understanding your own thinking and learning processes and controlling them. In listening, this means not only knowing how to accomplish a specific task but also being able to monitor the understanding of information, applying different methods of solving problems, and evaluating the results of the approach you choose. Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari (2010) conducted research showing that guided instruction improves listening understanding in a foreign language. The objective of this article is to explore the expected effectiveness of the metacognitive listening instruction provided to learners of A2 level towards achieving B1 level listening proficiency. Additionally, it introduces a teaching model that integrates metacognitive strategies into listening classes. The main point is that explicit instruction in the use of listening strategies in combination with relevant language input and structured practice can lead to teaching strategic and independent listening.

## 2.Literature Review

### 2.1. The Nature of Second Language Listening

The process of listening comprehension is complicated and requires different cognitive abilities like recognizing speech sounds and words, interpreting grammatical forms, using background knowledge, and making meaning. Learners must combine all these abilities while perceiving a spoken message. For those who know little of the second language, all this may impose significant cognitive load. Goh (2008) stresses the importance of teaching learners how to listen. Instead of treating listening as a mere test of comprehension, teachers could explain to students how listening happens and what to do when difficulties arise.

A typical struggle faced by learners at the A2 level is distinguishing between identification of words in writing and their identification when they are spoken. One reason for this difficulty has to do with the variance between spoken and written language including connected speech, reduced forms, pronunciation, and foreign

accents which might obstruct the recognition of known words by the listeners. Furthermore, the listeners may find themselves distracted by an unknown word and therefore miss the following pieces of information related to it. The above-mentioned challenges refer to the significance of the effective instruction in listening which combines both the knowledge as well as strategies of listening. As far as vocabulary and pronunciation practice is concerned, these strategies can play a role in assisting learners in recognizing the spoken language.

### 2.2. Metacognition in Listening Instruction

Metacognition pertains to the act of self-reflection about one's learning processes and control over the processes needed to reach one's learning objectives. Metacognition in listening instruction allows learners to think critically throughout the process of listening as opposed to completely relying on the teacher and the recording. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), metacognition is essential in the process of listening in a second language learning. They also explain how it can be implemented in teaching process.

For classroom purposes, metacognitive listening instruction can be organized around four interconnected processes.

**Planning** takes place before listening. Learners identify the purpose of the task, activate relevant background knowledge, examine available clues, and predict possible content. For example, before listening to a conversation about travel, learners may anticipate information about destinations, transport, departure times, or accommodation.

**Monitoring** occurs during listening. Learners check whether the information they hear matches their predictions, identify the main message, and recognize points they do not understand. They are encouraged to continue following the recording rather than becoming distracted by every unfamiliar word.

**Problem-solving** involves responding to comprehension difficulties. Learners may use contextual clues, recognize familiar expressions, reconsider their predictions, and listen for information that clarifies an uncertain point.

**Evaluation** takes place after listening. Learners check their answers, identify the causes of their mistakes, and consider which strategies were helpful. They then decide how to approach similar tasks in the future.

These processes are interconnected rather than strictly separate. Learners may revise predictions during listening, use problem-solving strategies more than once, and evaluate their understanding while a recording is still playing.

### 2.3. Empirical Evidence for Metacognitive and Strategy Instruction

Vandergrift in collaboration with Tafaghodtari conducted a study on a metacognitive process-oriented method of teaching listening in a foreign language over a period of one semester (2010). The study involved 106 students in French as a second language courses. The experimental group received special instruction in prediction and preparation, monitoring, evaluation and solving problems, while the control group listened to the same material without special teaching regarding listening process. The experimental group performed better than the control group at the comprehension test after adjusting for baseline differences. The study establishes the effectiveness of guiding learners through listening processes; however, it involved learners of French and cannot be directly interpreted as evidence of learning benefits for A2 English learners.

Graham and Macaro in their turn examined the effectiveness of strategy teaching among 68 lower-intermediate learners of French in England (2008). Their research was aimed at studying the influence of strategy teaching on the listening performance and self-efficacy of the learners. The results proved the significance of strategy instruction for listening development and self-confidence of learners. According to Goh (2008), metacognitive teaching methods in listening are discussed within theoretical and instructional frameworks that emphasize building the

students' awareness of listening processes and their responses in case of difficulties experienced. In the work of Vandergrift and Goh (2012), the authors present the idea of applying metacognitive principles in teaching listening. The two publications together present the foundation of the notion of teaching listening carefully and effectively. However, they cannot formulate a universal timeline for the transition from A2 to B1 due to the variety of conditions involved in this process.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Approach

The article utilizes a literature-based analytical approach in order to investigate the role of metacognitive listening instruction for the A2-level language learners aiming for B1- level proficiency. Academic sources on second language listening, metacognition, and teaching strategies are incorporated into the work as well as CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020). The literature was chosen for its relevance concerning listening in a second language, and instruction of metacognitive strategies, comprehension of listening, and development as a learner. Publications discussing either educational principles or findings regarding listening performance and awareness of listening strategies were prioritized. The analysis of the chosen literature focused on identification of themes in the articles with regard to the various instructional principles used, which can help in establishing the classroom model suggested later.

The three research questions examined in this analysis of the literature are the following: how metacognitive strategies assist in listening comprehension, how to teach metacognitive strategies to A2 learners, and how to structure classroom activities in line with listening expectations of students with B1 level of proficiency. This is a focused analysis of literature, rather than a systematic review. The instructional model introduced below proposes application at the classroom level; however, it is not considered as the result of any practice conducted recently, as no data is presented.

### 3.2. Proposed Instructional Model

The proposed model follows four stages: planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation. Teachers initially demonstrate these processes and provide structured guidance before encouraging learners to apply them more independently.

**Stage 1: Planning before listening**

The teacher introduces a familiar topic, such as education, shopping, travel, or daily routines. Learners examine a title, picture, or short description and predict what they may hear. They identify the purpose of the task, such as understanding the main idea, identifying specific details, or recognizing a speaker's opinion.

Learners may write two predictions and identify several potentially useful words. The aim is not to teach every word in the recording but to activate relevant knowledge and establish a clear listening objective.

**Stage 2: Monitoring during listening**

Learners listen to a short recording and concentrate on the task objective. They identify information they understand and note uncertain points without abandoning the overall message. For example, a learner listening to a conversation about a journey may understand the destination but miss the departure time. Instead of becoming mentally stuck on the missed detail, the learner continues listening for contextual clues and information that may clarify it. The teacher encourages learners to distinguish between essential information and minor details. This can help reduce the tendency to become distracted by unfamiliar vocabulary.

**Stage 3: Problem-solving through repeated listening**

When appropriate, the recording is played again. Learners reconsider their predictions, compare interpretations with a partner, and identify why an answer was incorrect. The teacher may guide them to notice word boundaries, linking, stress, familiar expressions, or contextual clues.

A transcript can be introduced after learners have attempted the task without textual support. They compare the written text with what they heard and identify

expressions that were difficult to recognize. This sequence allows learners to diagnose specific difficulties without relying on the transcript during their initial listening attempt.

**Stage 4: Evaluation after listening**

After checking their answers, learners complete a brief reflection. They identify which strategies helped them understand the recording, which difficulties remained, and what they intend to do differently next time.

A reflection checklist may include the following questions:

Did I identify the purpose of the listening task?

Did I make useful predictions before listening?

Did I continue listening when I encountered an unfamiliar word?

Did I use contextual clues to understand the message?

What caused my main comprehension difficulty?

Which strategy will I use in the next listening task?

These questions encourage learners to consider both their answers and the processes they used to reach them.

### 3.3. Instructional Material and Assessment

When selecting listening materials for learners, the level of difficulty should match their abilities, and it should increase gradually. From the very beginning, teachers have the opportunity to use brief dialogues and well-articulated audio files featuring topics which are familiar for the students. With the improvement of the students' listening skills, recording materials can become longer and more complex in their nature. Evaluation of listening skills must be based on comprehension tasks as well as tasks concerning strategic development of learners. Starting listening task can give insight into learners' baseline performance and comparative tasks can show their progress over time. Reflective journals, error diagnosing exercises, and learner's own explanations of their strategies are also good sources of information about learning process. In the CEFR Companion Volume there are descriptors that

can be used for selecting appropriate listening tasks and interpreting their success in relation to B1 (Council of Europe, 2020), but one task can never show that the student has reached B1 since his/her progress is based on multiple tasks performed in various communication situations.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The studies reviewed in this paper provide evidence for the positive effects of metacognition and strategy-based listening instruction. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) found that the final listening scores of the students taught with the help of a guided metacognitive approach were much better than the scores in the other group. According to Graham and Macaro (2008), there is also evidence that listening strategy instruction positively affects performance and self-efficacy in the lower-intermediate students of French. What these studies indicate is that listening lessons should focus on the processes in listening comprehension, rather than simply the experience of arriving at the right answers. Teachers in listening classes can focus not only on what students managed to accomplish, but also on how they got ready for the task, how they followed their comprehension process, and how they coped with the problems.

In teaching their first language learners, success in A2 can be also achieved through planning, which establishes learning aims,awareness on background knowledge of the learners. Monitoring helps learners keep attention on listening when they skipped some word. Problem solving enables them to rely on contextual clues and previously-known lexical units to interpret the message. Evaluation helps students notice their ongoing difficulties and make wiser choices in their further tasks. After having examined existing research in the area of strategy instruction, it was concluded that it can also help learners become more confident. Graham and Macaro (2008) conducted a study looking at the relationship between self-efficacy and listening performance. It appears that the emotional aspect of listening

development demands further investigation. However, it is important to look at confidence in connection with mastery of comprehension.

This model suggests that the principles should be applied in a number of classroom activities. Good intentions to amount to the purpose before listening, full attention to listening, the possibility of coming back to tricky parts afterwards as well the reflection process may assist teachers in facilitating listening acquisition in a more efficient manner. Moreover, these exercises may help teachers to find out what specific problems students face: those related to vocabulary recognition, features of connected speech, comprehension of a main idea or choosing techniques to solve problems during listening. At the same time, employing metacognitive learning strategies does not substitute linguistic knowledge. Even though learners may know how to forecast and control their understanding while listening, they may fail not being able to hear certain words or sounds. Due to this reason, metacognitive training should always be integrated with vocabulary teaching, practicing pronunciation and listening to a lot of English speech.

Teacher support should also vary with the level of learners' expertise. In the beginning, learners require the help of teachers in demonstrations, leading questions, and reflection checklists. As the processes are gradually unravelled to learners, teachers may lead them toward independent decision-making. The gradual decrease of support can foster learner independence in the future. In conclusion, the examined sources provide justification to integrate metacognitive training for listening within a wider listening skill programme. Nonetheless, the mentioned studies prove nothing about the automatic shift of all A2 students to the B1 level. The efficacy of the suggested model in a certain classroom should be determined with the help of proper evaluation of students' progress.

## 5. Pedagogical Implications

The findings lead to four concrete recommendations for the teaching of English.

First of all, teachers should demonstrate listening strategies explicitly. Instead of just telling students to pay attention to what they hear, they could show how to guess what the message will be, recognize key points, deal with uncertainty, and check understanding. Under time, all of this strategy should be performed by students without help from the teacher. Second, listening materials should be chosen according to the level of proficiency of the students and become increasingly challenging. Well-known subjects as well as clear acoustics can be used as easy points of departure before moving to longer texts, different speakers, and unexpected information.

The third point is that one should combine metacognitive instruction with a purposeful language work. The teacher may start by revising the difficult vocabulary and phrases learned after listening, as well as the stress patterns and examples of speech connectedness. The aim of this activity is to solve linguistic obstacles together with strategic ones. One more important point is that teachers need to keep tabs on the improvement of skills of the listening process over time. The information can be collected from listening tasks, self-reflections of the learners, and error analysis which will give the teacher clues about the dynamics.

**Conclusion.** The structure of metacognitive listening instruction gives A2 learners a path toward B1 listening competency. By helping students make planning decisions before the listening task, being aware of their comprehension, solving the task-related problems thoughtfully, and evaluating their performance, teachers contribute to making learners more independent and confident in their approach to spoken text. The studies mentioned above give the impression of the effectiveness of listening strategy instruction for boosting comprehension abilities; however, it should be noted that the studies cited in this article are generally based on research conducted with the learners of French rather than with A2 English learners becoming B1 ones. The proposed teaching model offers a useful method for the integration of metacognitive processes into listening lesson. Its effectiveness should be assessed in

practice in a proper classroom by using listening assessments and systematic observation. It is likely to be more efficient if it is combined with vocabulary teaching, pronunciation awareness, exposure to spoken English, and materials of different levels of difficulty. Thus, it should be considered as a useful part of a wide listening course rather than a way to achieve the level B1.

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