Education and Social Work
ISSN Print: 3079-515X
ISSN Online: 3079-5168
https://doi.org/10.63313/ESW.9141

The Use of Metacognitive Strategy in Listening Teaching

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How to cite this paper: Li, A. (2026). The use of metacognitive strategy in listening teaching. Education and Social Work, 4(3), 50–55. ISSN Print: 3079-515X, ISSN Online: 3079-5168.
https://doi.org/10.63313/ESW.9141
Published: 2026-06-25

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Abstract

This paper explores the application of metacognitive strategies in listening teaching, aiming to enhance students' listening comprehension and self-learning abilities. The study investigates the theoretical foundations of metacognitive strategies, their implementation in listening instruction, and the effectiveness of this approach. Through literature review, the research demonstrates that incorporating metacognitive strategies in listening teaching significantly improves students' listening performance, learning effectiveness and autonomous learning skills. The findings suggest that educators should integrate metacognitive strategy into listening training to foster more effective and independent learning.

Keywords

Metacognitive Strategy; Listening Teaching; Effective Learning; Listening Comprehension; Self-Learning Abilities

1. Introduction

In the field of language education, listening comprehension has been recognized as a crucial skill for effective communication for a long time. In particular, English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 edition) proposed the core qualities to make new requirements for the cultivation of English language ability in middle schools(Ministry of Education,2022). However, as an input skill in language abilities, listening is often neglected because of the lack of language environment. Nowadays, many learners struggle with developing proficient listening abilities, often due to inadequate teaching methods and lack of strategic approaches.

Metacognitive strategies, which involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own learning processes, empower learners to take control of their learning, enhancing both comprehension and retention. Studies have shown that learners who use metacognitive strategies are usually able to understand listening materials more effectively and continuously improve their listening skills in subsequent learning (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

The primary objectives of this paper are to: 1) explore the theoretical foundations of

metacognitive strategies in language learning; 2) integrate the implementation of these strategies and listening teaching; and 3) improve the effectiveness of metacognitive strategy-based instruction in improving listening comprehension.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The overview of metacognitive strategies

The concept of Metacognition was first proposed by American developmental psychologist John H. Flavell(1976). He defined metacognition as "cognition about cognition", that is, a re-understanding of their own perception, memory, thinking and other activities(Wei Wang, 2024). Based on the theoretical basis of metacognition, the subsequent research develops into metacognition strategies, which are divided into three categories:

Planning Strategy, which involves setting goals, selecting strategies, and allocating resources before learning or tasks begin.

Monitoring Strategy, it refers to the continual monitor of cognitive activities during task execution to ensure that tasks are carried out as planned.

Evaluating Strategy, which addresses the reflects on the results and process after the task is completed to improve future performance.

2.2. The dilemma of listening teaching

In recent years, with the popularization of various innovative teaching concepts and the implementation of major educational reforms, the misunderstanding of "Deaf English" education has been greatly reduced, and the stubborn understanding, that is "emphasis on knowledge, light on ability; emphasis on written tests, light on listening and speaking" (Feng He, 2020), in English teaching has been changed to some extent. However, there are still some deficiencies in today's English education:

Firstly, the teaching method is backward. Although with the implementation of the new curriculum reform, the education concept has changed, but the long-used "listen-question-answer" listening mode has been solidified, and for a while, it is difficult for teachers to quickly find an innovative and effective listening teaching method. Therefore, some English listening teaching classes are still teacher-centered in practice.

Secondly, the teaching of listening session has the wrong focus. Under the long-term exam-oriented education, many English teachers will adopt the "word-functional sentences-paragraph-article" bottom-up teaching mode in listening teaching, expecting students to better recognize the presented words and sentences in the listening passages, while ignoring the training of listening skills. As a result, the textual skill obtained by students is basically the sum of meanings obtained by adding the meanings of each sentence (Xiancheng Zhang, 2009), rather than actually improving listening skills. At the end of listening, teachers did not design special

evaluation standards and activities to evaluate students' learning process and learning results, so that students could not get timely learning feedback and guidance(Yinyi Jin, 2019).

Thirdly, most of the students lack the language environment and pragmatic accumulation, so they cannot grasp the key words in the listening text quickly. Their listening skills need to be proficient and learning strategies have not yet been formed, which affects students' initiative in learning English.

2.3. The feasibility and effectiveness of the combination of metacognitive strategies and listening teaching

The General High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 edition, 2020 revision) has made clear instructions on listening teaching, requiring "to understand the meaning, intention and emotional attitude expressed by the speaker", that is to say, to help students "understand" has become the primary standard of listening teaching. Based on this standard line, the "three-stage cognitive model" of listening comprehension proposed by John Anderson can summarize the process of students acquiring information and building cognition in daily listening lesson. He believes that listening consists of three stages: perception, analysis and application(1983). Perception is the encoding of incoming sound information. Parsing refers to the process of understanding and representing words and sentences in materials into psychological meanings. Application is a kind of free detection after learners have their own representation of the material to solve the problem. At this point, the commonly used listening teaching methods(Qiang Wang, 2024) can be divided into "three-stage model", and metacognitive strategies can also perfectly fit and maintain the process. The function of three stages can be quite different, in the first stage pre-thinking is suggested, learners analyze tasks and make plans; in the second stage, learners adopt specific strategies to guide and monitor the learning process; in the last phase, learners assess the effectiveness of their learning behavior(Qiu & Lee, 2020).

3. English Listening Teaching Strategies in Middle School Combined with Metacognitive Strategies

3.1. The application of planning strategies in listening teaching

Before middle school listening teaching, teachers must consciously develop and cultivate students' listening goals, so that the work before listening can be better arranged and absorbed.

According to the specific content of the material, students are expected to be guided to understand the purpose of the listening teaching: first, the purpose of the listening text. The context in which situation to be carried out and the wish that the author wants to achieve. In order to make it easier for students to understand the listening text, teachers should choose materials that fit the life scenes of students as

much as possible, that is, to create real scenes, teachers should accurately capture students' life experience based on the theme of the discourse, so that students can relate to their own experience (Qiang Wang, 2016).

Second, the listening text may contains pragmatic and background knowledge, that is, the mentioned language knowledge should be fully considered and proceed from the cognitive and language level of students, so that students have experience to share, language to express, and interest to participate (Qiang Wang, 2016). However, because students' individual language reserve is different, teachers need to train and supplement studentss knowledge reserve intensively in the pre-listening stage. Taking the listening part of Unit2 of FLTRP(Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press) Grade 2 English textbook as an example, teacher firstly show her weekend life vlog to introduce the theme of this listening activity implicitly. In vlog, teacher use frequency adverbs to introduce her habits, such as "I always drink coffee at 8 A.M. on weekends" etc., to present unit key sentence patterns. Later, she asks students about their activity habits with "How often do you exercise?" and guides students to describe real situations according to their daily experience. This short video playing and question and answer discussion not only provide the scene for the development of listening teaching, but also can timely connect with the content students learned in the last lesson, and carry out sentence pattern expansion which is regarded as the key point in this lesson.

3.2. The application of planning strategies in listening teaching

3.2.1. Monitoring the target of the listening

The teacher guides the students to set specific and measurable listening goals according to the theme, difficulty and learning requirements of the listening materials in the prediction stage, and then supplies the background knowledge and presents the listening questions according to this. Clear goals help students focus on key information in the listening process and improve listening efficiency. For example, when the theme of listening context is "campus life", the goal might be to get accurate information about when, where, and who participated in campus activities mentioned in the conversation. Then, according to this, it is necessary to activate students' background knowledge, students are encouraged to recall the knowledge related to the "campus life" before listening, such as related vocabulary, cultural customs, common topics, etc. Through brainstorming and group discussion, students can activate their existing knowledge reserve and build a bridge for listening comprehension.

3.2.2. Monitoring the process of the listening

Attention monitoring is of great importance. The teacher need to remind students to maintain a high level of concentration during listening and avoid distractions. In daily class, teacher can help students improve their ability to maintain attention by

training students' concentration, such as time-limited listening exercises and concentration games. At the same time, students are taught how to quickly adjust their state and refocus their attention on the listening content when they encounter interference factors.

Students are required to monitor their understanding of the listening content in listening process. That is say when they encounter something they don't understand, they can mark it down first, continue to listen to the following content, and try to get clues from the context to understand. Teachers can guide students to pay attention to their understanding by pausing the listening sometimes to ask questions and set up comprehension exercises, such as pausing in the listening process and asking students "Do you understand this paragraph just now?" "What does it mainly talk about?" to gradually form students' monitor ability of comprehension.

The teacher are expected to encourage students' monitoring the use of strategies: examination of flexibly use various listening strategies in the listening process, and monitor the effect of the use of strategies. For example, when encountering new words, try to use the strategy of guessing the meaning according to the context, word formation, etc. For important information, emphasizing the use of note-taking strategies to record keywords, numbers, dates, etc. Teacher should explain and demonstrate various listening strategies in detail in normal teaching, and guide students to use and monitor the implementation of the strategies in listening practice.

3.3. The application of evaluating strategies in listening teaching

The teacher guide students to reflect on the listening process and analyze the problems and reasons they encounter in listening. For example, lack of vocabulary, lack of phonetic knowledge, or improper use of listening strategies lead to comprehension difficulties. Through reflection and summary, students can find their own weak links and provide direction for subsequent learning.

Adjusting the teaching and learning plan can be more important. According to the results of the evaluation and reflection, students adjust their listening learning plan. If it is found that the difficulty of listening materials at a certain stage is too high, or if students find that a listening strategy is very helpful, they can use it more in your subsequent learning. At the same time, according to their own progress, timely adjust the learning objectives, so that the learning plan more in line with their actual needs.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that the application of metacognitive strategies in English listening can significantly improve learners' listening comprehension. Through the application of planning, monitoring and evaluation strategies, learners can manage and adjust their listening learning process more effectively. Teachers can help

students effectively use metacognitive strategies through task-based teaching, situational teaching and other methods.

Although metacognitive strategies play a significant role in improving English listening effectness, students' metacognitive abilities differ greatly in actual teaching, and some students lack sufficient strategic awareness. In order to overcome these problems, teachers should help students gradually improve their metacognitive ability through diversified listening materials and personalized teaching methods.

At the same time, future research can further explore the differences in metacognitive strategy application, and how to improve students' metacognitive awareness and strategy application ability in practical learning and teaching.

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