

The role of metacognitive awareness in reducing listening anxiety among EFL learners

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ABSTRACT

Listening anxiety has been acknowledged as one of the important affective variables that negatively affect the listening comprehension of students and their EFL learning in general. Considering the increasing role of metacognitive awareness in helping students regulate their cognitive and affective processes in listening, this study attempts to examine the extent to which metacognitive awareness leads to lower levels of listening anxiety among intermediate EFL learners. The quasi-experimental design was used in this research. The population of the study comprised sixty intermediate EFL learners at a private language institute who were randomly divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was exposed to eight sessions of explicit teaching of metacognitive listening strategies including planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation, while the control group underwent traditional listening instruction. Data were gathered through the use of Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) and a Listening Anxiety Questionnaire and analyzed by means of descriptive statistics and paired-samples t-test and independent-samples t-test in SPSS. The results showed that the metacognitive awareness significantly improved after the intervention and the participants felt less anxiety when listening. Both changes were highly significant ($p < 0.001$). The results thus offer empirical support for incorporating metacognitive strategies in listening courses in EFL settings. This approach may help promote learner autonomy and improve emotional regulation, resulting in better learning environment, with practical implications for EFL teachers and researchers who would like to find efficient ways to enhance EFL listening skills.

Keywords: *EFL learners, Foreign language learning, Listening anxiety, Listening comprehension, Metacognitive awareness, Metacognitive strategies.*

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Highlights of this paper

- This research work investigated the impact of metacognitive awareness training on listening anxiety among intermediate EFL learners.
- It was found that explicit metacognitive strategy training decreased listening anxiety and increased metacognitive awareness.
- The paper offers an insight into how metacognitive strategy training can be used in EFL listening classes.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and is the main language used for intercultural communication, trade, and education. Learning English can help people grow personally and professionally, among other things (Solidjonov, 2023).

Therefore, English language teaching has become an important field of educational research and practice with special attention paid to the language skills development.

The development of language skills is one of the main tasks of instruction in the process of language learning.

Listening is a language skill. It is one of four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Individuals must actively participate. Listening involves a sender, a message, and a receiver. It is the psychological process of receiving, generating meaning from, and responding to spoken or nonverbal communications (Tyagi, 2013).

Due to the significance of listening both in communication and language learning, much attention has been paid to teaching listening skills.

Listening comprehension is enhanced by a number of instructional techniques and classroom activities that teachers employ.

It's no surprise that in recent years, the language teaching industry has placed a strong emphasis on listening, which is seen as a critical component in language learning and teaching. "The teacher can assist the development of listening skills by providing listening lessons that take the student through three stages.

Pre-listening, listening task, and post-listening activities should be used to establish the aim of the listening activity and activate the schemata by encouraging learners to think about and share what they already know about the listening text's content. This activity can also give the necessary context for them to grasp the text and focus their attention on what to listen for Hayrapetyan (2016).

In - while listening, where learners complete the assignments or seek solutions."

Post-listening is the time when students can check their answers to the questions they've been listening to, provide comments, and consolidate what they've learned. It is useful for teachers since it allows them to assess specific challenges that children may have with listening activities (Hayrapetyan, 2016).

Even while listening comprehension is crucial, there are still a lot of obstacles that prevent pupils from mastering it. Students often struggle to understand the listening in EFL classes. They will experience hearing anxiety as a result of these issues. The issue that prevents children from attaining the highest level of listening comprehension is known as "listening anxiety." When a student has listening anxiety, they often react to a task in an unexpected way, including not being able to finish or even hear the audio correctly (Adnan, Marlina, & Annisa, 2020).

Tahsildar and Yusoff (2014) define listening anxiety as "the psychological response of a person to listening task, which is determined by effect of feelings, believes, and behaviors" (Adnan et al., 2020).

Despite these instructional practices, many learners still face challenges in listening Comprehension.

So, listening anxiety has become a significant problem in the research of second and foreign language learning.

According to [Li and Xu \(2019\)](#) research, students who were more aware of their emotions could be better able to control their fear and have more fun when learning a second language, which could boost their confidence and improve their performance.

Learners can monitor their mental processes while listening, assess their listening performance to create future goals, and prepare for listening tasks by being aware of their own emotions.

However, L2 teachers can support students' good emotions and help them understand their sentiments better ([Solidjonov, 2023](#)).

Because listening comprehension is difficult and listening anxiety negatively affects language learning, researchers have been increasingly searching for factors which can help learners manage their listening processes better. One of the constructs that has attracted considerable attention in this regard is metacognitive awareness. Learners with a high level of metacognitive awareness are believed to be better able to plan, monitor and evaluate their listening processes which may ultimately lead to a reduction in listening anxiety. One important idea that has received a lot of attention in this area is metacognitive awareness.

[Flavell \(1979\)](#) coined the word "metacognition," which was defined as continuously observing, controlling, and assessing the methods used to accomplish a goal ([Durmaz & Seçkin Karaca, 2020](#)).

Metacognitive techniques are negatively correlated with listening anxiety. Metacognitive listening techniques can be helpful in at least three ways, according to [Goh \(2008\)](#): (1) they enhance affect in listening, making students more self-assured, motivated, and less nervous; (2) they improve listening performance; and (3) they may be especially helpful for weak listeners. These results suggest that learners can enhance their grasp of self-regulation during listening comprehension by employing metacognitive methods ([Goh & Vandergrift, 2021](#)).

Their performance in listening comprehension will improve as a result, and they will experience less listening anxiety.

Additionally, the results demonstrated that learners with low levels of anxiety employed metacognitive techniques more frequently than those with high levels of anxiety ([Goh & Vandergrift, 2021](#)).

1.1. Definition of Listening

Listening is the cornerstone of comprehension, engagement, and language development among all the abilities that form effective communication. Listening is an active activity of deciphering meaning, emotion, and intent rather than just hearing words. Because listening aids in the internalization of pronunciation, rhythm, and natural phrases, it is sometimes stated in the field of English language learning that "good listeners become good speakers."

Strong listening skills are now necessary to engage with people, ideas, and cultures around the world in our contemporary global society, where digital communication and international cooperation are commonplace ([Omonova Gulsevar Tavakkal qizi, 2025](#)).

1.1.1. Listening Teaching

According to the results of the interviews, teachers generally followed a few procedures when teaching listening to EFL students. They gave the pupils an overview of the subject they would be studying at the beginning of the class. After teaching the students the listening material, they let them participate in a discussion and offer their thoughts on the subject based on what they already knew.

Two out of three teachers mostly employed the top-down technique in their classrooms, according to the interview results about the employment of top-down and bottom-up processing strategies while teaching listening

skills to EFL students. All educators, however, concurred that a mix of top-down and bottom-up processing was feasible and advantageous since it might aid students in gaining a deeper understanding of the subject and enable teachers to discover what the students already knew about it. [Richards \(2008\)](#) idea that both top-down and bottom-up processing techniques typically operate concurrently during the process of learning a foreign language, particularly in real-life listening, lends credence to this study.

The roles of bottom-up and top-down processing in listening comprehension were further discussed by [Brown \(2007\)](#) in *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. He explained that top-down processing uses contextual cues and prior knowledge to understand meaning, whereas bottom-up processing decodes sounds, words, and syntax ([Mado, Machmud, & Husain, 2026](#)).

1.1.2. Enhancement of Listening Skill

The listening skills of ESL and EFL students have been improved by a number of ways. Regular practice, the use of non-interactive listening resources, background and contextual listening, and the utilization of digital technologies are some of these techniques. Improving listening abilities requires continuous and frequent practice. It can make a big difference to set aside specified times each day, such 15 minutes before breakfast and 15 minutes at lunch. Maintaining motivation requires listening to engaging and entertaining content. Practice with audio-only materials is crucial because visual clues are sometimes missing from language proficiency exams. For this kind of exercise, brief audio news items are available via podcasts, internet radio stations, and foreign news websites.

Learners can gain a great deal from participating in listening exercises while performing daily tasks like driving or working out. Learners can become more used to the sounds and rhythm of the language by listening to English songs, podcasts, or radio broadcasts in these settings. Listening skills can also be improved by playing English-language TV or radio shows in the background while doing housework. Gradual exposure will eventually improve comprehension, even if not every word is initially grasped. Language learning has also changed as a result of the development of digital technology. Smartphones and tablets are examples of mobile technologies that provide flexible and affordable learning options. One big benefit for students is the abundance of second language (L2) resources available online ([Mukhtorova & Ilxomov, 2024](#)).

1.2. Listening Anxiety

The phrase "listening anxiety" first appeared in the 1970s. [Wheless \(1975\)](#) in Dalman, 2012, p. 28, defined it as "a receiver's anxiety—the anxiety that they are not able to interpret the messages from the other people adequately."

The term "listening anxiety" refers to students' fears of misinterpreting what they have heard and other factors that contribute to their uneasiness. Anxiety related to listening is extremely detrimental to students. "The students experience anxiety, which is defined as tension, nervousness, and worry associated with the human nervous system ([Rahimi & Soleymani, 2015](#)). This definition makes it clear that students' anxiousness is connected to their neural systems. For instance, some experienced nervousness even before they arrived for class. They already believed that listening in class would cause them discomfort.

There are two different kinds of anxiousness. One is debilitating, while the other is facilitating. Facilitating can serve as a motivation for students, but detrimental is the worry that makes them avoid studying activities like listening. Both hearing comprehension and listening skills are impacted by listening anxiety. Additionally, poor comprehension of the text will lead to poor listening comprehension ([Rahimi & Soleymani, 2015](#)).

Students' listening anxiety in class is increased by a number of variables. Four factors are associated with it, according to [Pan \(2016\)](#). The lecturer's factor is the first. Students may become anxious if their professor is overly serious or lacks humor. For instance, even though the lesson hasn't started yet, the pupils are already experiencing fear because of the lecturer's actions throughout class. When the lecturer asks them in such a way, the pupils simply experience stress and worry. The students' factor is the second factor.

The students' lack of interest in hearing is the most significant element associated with their listening anxiety. Due to their lack of interest in listening, individuals already experienced uneasiness when they arrived to class. For instance, if they immediately take notes while listening or consult their friends, they may experience anxiousness as a result of missing crucial details from the audio. The listening content is the third factor. They experience anxiousness since they are unfamiliar with the listening material. Because they are unable to discern the speaker's speed, words, and other details, they are anxious and tense ([Adnan et al., 2020](#)).

1.2.1. Reducing EFL Listening Anxiety

One major cause of worry in the LC classroom, according to many participants, is the subpar equipment. Students become anxious when outdated listening equipment is employed and there is echo or other noise on the recording. Additionally, it has been noted that equipment unreliability and frequent power outages are major causes of anxiety in LC classrooms. According to some participants, students in large classes have LC anxiety because they find it difficult to pay attention. Additionally, the physical environment of students, such as an excessively hot or cold room, is significant and frequently contributes to LC anxiety. Anxiety is also increased in the LC classroom when a space is small and claustrophobic, overly noisy, or devoid of oxygen.

Additionally, students experience anxiety when they don't have enough time or equipment, particularly for LC practice, which makes them feel "competent and unprepared." According to the pupils, when "they don't know what's being talked about," they experience LC anxiety. Some neuroscientists claim that "concrete, vivid images exert the most powerful influences on learners' behavior" ([Crocker, Fiske, & Taylor, 1984](#); [Ross & Nisbett, 2011](#)).

Because visual accompaniment "makes the topic more accessible to listeners who are more spatial learners but also helps all learners to relate personally with the topic," using pictures in LC activities will help students feel less anxious. In addition to providing listeners with an alternative to the LC input, peripheral inputs, such as posters and models, can have an as powerful effect as centrally located visual input ([Caine & Caine, 1994](#)).

Make use of the pupils' prior knowledge. [Ausubel \(1968\)](#) stated that "the learner's prior knowledge is the most significant single factor influencing learning." Determine this and instruct him appropriately (VI). Give learners' initial language proficiency a lot of weight. The ability to create meaning during the absorption process and subsequently match that intake with "existing linguistic and world knowledge" is crucial, according to [Long \(1989\)](#).

Recognize and empathize with students' anxiety around FL instruction and [McKeachie \(1994\)](#) states that "a sympathetic attitude towards the problems and fear of the students is an important instructor characteristic that can go a long way in relieving personal anxiety." [Crocker et al. \(1984\)](#) offer a variety of exercises to identify and address the anxiety that students encounter in the Florida classroom.

As a pre-listening exercise to expedite comprehension, provide students a synopsis of the listening content that includes the new vocabulary. Provide additional listening sections. Have a little success. Use anxiety-reduction strategies and modest victories to help the learners gain confidence in the target language. To lessen LC anxiety, practice breathing techniques, meditation, or self-affirmations. Tell pupils that it was helpful to "think about something less stressful." Students should be encouraged to watch English-language networks.

Turn the listening lesson into a training session by allowing the students to hear a piece multiple times in short bursts with pauses or in any other method that works for them. Give the students a sense of accomplishment both during and after the listening lesson. Avoid leaving them feeling incapacitated by anxiety or a sense of failure.

"Use well-known, significant subjects and vocabulary to make input or information understandable. In the EFL classroom, use a range of resources, including games and other enjoyable activities, to facilitate listening exercises. "Practice with listening with visual support" is recommended for novice students, while "practice with listening without watching" is recommended for experienced students. If at all possible, repeat the text to reduce LC worry. As you listen, make notes. The instructor would teach students how to employ LC techniques in order to reduce LC anxiety (Sharif & Ferdous, 2012). Assess the students' understanding abilities using their mother tongue rather than the target language. Make use of organized, succinct, and unambiguous tasks. Concentrate on one issue at a time as you lead the students through the LC readings. Change up the kinds of tasks. Don't overdo any kind of workout (Sharif & Ferdous, 2012).

1.3. Metacognitive Awareness

Flavell (1979) coined the word "metacognition," which was defined as continuously observing, controlling, and assessing the methods used to accomplish a goal. In this context, Goh and Vandergrift (2021) discuss two aspects of metacognition: understanding one's own cognitive processes during a particular task and applying this understanding to control it. Accordingly, among language acquisition strategies, metacognition has been recognized as one of the determinants of listening ability (Dimassi, 2017; Goh, 2008; Goh & Vandergrift, 2021; Vandergrift & Baker, 2015).

The term "metacognitive awareness" was coined by Vandergrift and Baker (2015) to describe all of the metacognition-related listening skills indicators. Vandergrift and Baker (2015) created an assessment tool to assess foreign language learners' metacognitive awareness in their L2 listening abilities (Durmaz & Seçkin Karaca, 2020).

1.3.1. Metacognitive Awareness in Listening Comprehension

Vandergrift and Baker (2015) suggests a metacognitive cycle to help students combine the application of several listening comprehension techniques. Learners are advised to use certain tactics at specific levels in order to maximize their performance and increase their comprehension. The level illustrates certain essential metacognitive functions that skilled listeners engage in, such as monitoring and verification. In addition to raising students' knowledge of the usage of strategies, these procedures provide much-needed scaffolding when they work with listening texts (Goh, 2008). Students will perform better and be more motivated when they are able to use the listening comprehension skills correctly. It is because learners learn how to listen through metacognitive methods (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015).

Through the use of metacognitive techniques, students will participate in the planning, observation, and assessment phases of the listening comprehension process. The students will be able to handle various listening activities and develop into more self-regulated listeners (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015).

1.3.2. Role of Metacognitive Awareness in Reducing Listening Anxiety

While reasons, processes, and outcomes in language acquisition might become unpredictable and uncontrollable due to listening anxiety, metacognitive techniques like planning, monitoring, and evaluation can assist overcome these kinds of issues. Metacognitive techniques and listening anxiety are separate yet connected since they both play a part in the listening process and interact with one another. To put it another way, listening is

facilitated by low anxiety. Students are easily distracted from listening while they are experiencing high levels of worry. Many students are anxious and afraid of failing when they enter a Florida classroom.

They frequently focus more on their own shortcomings and the unfavorable opinions of their instructors and peers than on the act of listening. Students with minimal anxiety, on the other hand, focus more intently and devote more energy to the work at hand. As a result, they frequently employ more metacognitive techniques when listening (Golzadeh & Moivaziri, 2017; Han, 2014).

2. RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the extent of metacognitive awareness's contribution to alleviating listening anxiety in EFL learners?

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Metacognitive awareness does not substantially alleviate listening anxiety in EFL learners.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the impact of metacognitive awareness in lowering listening anxiety among EFL learners utilizing a quantitative quasi-experimental research design with a pre-test and post-test methodology. A control group and an experimental group participated in the investigation. Before the treatment, a listening anxiety questionnaire was completed by both groups. While the control group continued to receive traditional listening instruction, the experimental group was trained in metacognitive listening techniques. The same questionnaire was given to both groups as a post-test at the conclusion of the therapy period to see if their listening anxiety levels had significantly changed.

4.1. Participants

EFL students from an English language school were chosen for the study using convenience sampling. They were placed in the experimental or control groups. According to institutional placement procedures, all participants had comparatively equal levels of English ability.

4.2. Instrument

In this research, the following instruments were used.

The participants' degree of metacognitive awareness in listening comprehension was evaluated using the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). It assesses a number of aspects of metacognitive awareness, such as mental translation, problem-solving, planning and evaluation, focused attention, and person knowledge.

Questionnaire on Listening Anxiety: Before and after the treatment, the participants' degree of listening anxiety was assessed using this questionnaire. In order to assess any changes in listening anxiety levels after the intervention, it served as both a pre-test and a post-test.

Metacognitive Strategy Training Materials: During the treatment sessions, a collection of educational resources and listening exercises intended to improve students' metacognitive awareness were utilized. Planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation techniques for listening tasks were the main topics of these resources.

4.3. Data Collection

Over the course of eight educational sessions, data was gathered. The study's goals were explained to the participants before it started, and they gave their permission to take part. 60 intermediate EFL students from a private English language school were chosen by convenience sampling to participate in the study. The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group ($n = 30$) and the control group ($n = 30$) based on the current class arrangements. According to the institute's placement methods, the participants' levels of English proficiency were comparatively similar.

The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) and the Listening Anxiety Questionnaire were administered as pre-tests to both groups in the first phase. These tools were used to assess the participants' pre-intervention levels of listening anxiety and metacognitive awareness.

After the pre-test phase, the control group continued to receive traditional listening instruction, while the experimental group received instruction in metacognitive strategies integrated into listening exercises. Eight 60-minute sessions made up the intervention. Planning, directed attention, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation were among the metacognitive listening techniques that were specifically taught to the experimental group during these sessions. The control group received no formal training in metacognitive strategies, although they were given the identical curriculum and listening materials.

The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) and Listening Anxiety Questionnaire were administered as post-tests to both groups after the eight-session treatment program. The purpose of the post-test was to determine whether the participants' levels of listening anxiety and metacognitive awareness had changed following the intervention.

For analysis, all of the questionnaires were gathered, coded, and imported into SPSS. The data was initially summarized using descriptive statistics. The statistical significance of the changes between the pre-test and post-test scores was then assessed using paired-samples t-tests and independent-samples t-tests. The results were then used to assess how metacognitive awareness helps EFL learners with their listening anxiety.

4.4. Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to examine the data that was gathered. To give a broad picture of the participants' performance on the study tools, descriptive statistics such as averages, standard deviations, minimum scores, and maximum scores were first computed.

The data were checked for quality and completeness before the primary analyses were carried out. To make sure the chosen statistical techniques were adequate, the assumptions of normality were also looked at.

Paired-samples t-tests were used to compare the pre-test and post-test results within each group in order to ascertain whether the metacognitive approach teaching had a meaningful impact on lowering listening anxiety. Additionally, the post-test results of the experimental and control groups were compared using independent-samples t-tests. After the intervention, these analyses were carried out to find any statistically significant differences between the groups.

In order to investigate changes in participants' levels of metacognitive awareness following the treatment, descriptive and inferential analyses were performed on the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) scores. For every analysis, $p < .05$ was chosen as the criterion of statistical significance.

The findings of these analyses were used to address the study's research question and assess how well metacognitive awareness training reduces listening anxiety in EFL students.

Table 1. Paired sample test.

		Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Listening anxiety pre test – Listening anxiety post test	13.533	10.624	1.372	10.789	16.278	9.867	59	<0.001
Pair 2	MALQpretest – MALQ posttest	-15.383	14.555	1.879	-19.143	-11.624	-8.187	59	<0.001

5. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the effect of metacognitive awareness training on the reduction of listening anxiety in EFL learners, a paired-samples t-test was run to compare participants' pre-test and post-test scores of the Listening Anxiety Questionnaire and the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ).

The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test listening anxiety scores. Table 1 shows that the mean difference between the two measurements was 13.53 (SD = 10.62). The 95% confidence interval was 10.79 to 16.28. This difference was highly significant as shown by a paired-samples t-test, $t(59) = 9.867$, $p < 0.001$. Since the scores were calculated as pre-test scores minus post-test scores, the positive mean difference means that the participants reported less listening anxiety after the intervention. This result shows that the metacognitive awareness training was effective in reducing the participants' listening anxiety.

The results showed also a significant improvement in the participants' metacognitive awareness after the intervention. The mean difference between the MALQ pre-test and post-test scores was -15.38 (SD = 14.56) indicating that the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI) of the mean difference was -19.14 to -11.62. A paired-samples t-test found that this increase was statistically significant, $t(59) = -8.187$, $p < .001$. Thus, the participants reported significantly more metacognitive awareness after the training program.

The results generally show that the metacognitive strategy training was effective in improving the metacognitive awareness and reducing listening anxiety of the EFL learners. Both analyses had very significant p-values, providing strong evidence that the changes observed were not due to chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that metacognitive awareness does not significantly reduce listening anxiety in EFL learners was rejected. The findings suggest that metacognitive awareness training can be a major factor in helping EFL learners to cope with and decrease listening anxiety, while at the same time, improve their metacognitive awareness in listening tasks.

Table 2. Paired samples statistics.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Listening anxiety pre test	75.15	60	1.388	0.179
	Listening anxiety posttest	61.62	60	11.114	1.435
Pair 2	MALQpretest	80.73	60	0.954	0.123
	MALQposttest	96.12	60	14.523	1.875

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of participants' listening anxiety and metacognitive awareness scores before and after the intervention. The study was done on sixty EFL learners who took the pre-test and post-test.

The mean score of the participants on listening anxiety in the pre-test was 75.15 (SD = 1.39). The mean score of listening anxiety dropped to 61.62 (SD = 11.11) on the post-test after the eight-session metacognitive awareness training program. The mean score decreased indicating that the participants experienced less listening anxiety after being taught metacognitive listening strategies. The pre-test scores were fairly similar, as shown by the low standard deviation. The post-test scores, on the other hand, varied more among participants, indicating that the amount of improvement varied from person to person.

The results on the metacognitive awareness obtained using Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) showed some change in the means of the scores before and after the training program. The participants scored a mean value of 80.73 (SD = 0.95) prior to the intervention. However, after undergoing metacognitive training, their mean MALQ scores rose to 96.12 (SD = 14.52). The higher score shows the increase in metacognitive awareness that the participants had achieved as a result of the treatment. Just like with the listening anxiety findings, it was observed that the post-test scores were more varied compared to the pre-test scores.

In general, the descriptive statistics seem to offer preliminary proof that the intervention has been effective in fulfilling the purposes set out for it. Since there is a decline in listening anxiety scores while metacognitive awareness scores rise at the same time, one can conclude that metacognitive strategy instruction has had a positive impact on participants' experiences with listening. Such descriptive results were then analyzed using inferential statistics.

Table 3. Paired samples correlations.

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Listening anxiety pre test & listening anxiety posttest	60	0.408	0.001
Pair 2	MALQpretest & MALQposttest	60	0.000	0.999

Table 3 provides the correlations of scores on the pre- and post-listening tests for anxiety and metacognitive awareness (MALQ). Correlations show the level of association of scores obtained by the participants at the start and after completing the study.

The correlation coefficient of listening anxiety between the pre-test and post-test results was found to be moderate and positive ($r = .408$, $p = .001$). This implies that individuals who scored high on listening anxiety prior to the implementation of the intervention were likely to score comparatively high even after receiving the intervention, although it should be noted that there was an observed decrease in anxiety levels post-intervention due to metacognitive strategy training.

On the other hand, the correlation between pre- and post-test MALQ was close to zero ($r = .000$, $p = .999$). This implies that there is no meaningful association between participants' baseline level of metacognitive awareness and their level after the manipulation. That is, the level of metacognitive awareness among participants after the manipulation could not be predicted based on their pre-manipulation level. This may imply that metacognitive strategy training affected participants uniquely such that the resultant metacognitive awareness levels vary significantly despite their initial level.

In general, the results show that there is a statistically significant association between the listening anxiety pre-test and post-test scores, while there is no statistically significant association between the MALQ pre-test and post-test scores. The results will add to the information provided by the descriptive and inferential statistics from the previous tables.

6. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current research was to determine whether or not metacognitive awareness training would have a positive effect on the level of listening anxiety among EFL learners. It was found that there was a statistically significant reduction in the levels of listening anxiety experienced by the learners after the training, along with a statistically significant increase in the levels of their metacognitive awareness.

It can be clearly seen that the noticeable decrease in listening anxiety demonstrated in this study provides empirical support for the increasingly important trend in L2 acquisition research, which recognizes the association between metacognitive awareness and the learner's affective state. The students who undergo training in planning, monitoring, evaluation, and problem-solving develop a greater sense of control over their own listening processes and realize the process of comprehension better. Consequently, they feel much more confident in their skills and less anxious about listening exercises (Golzadeh & Moivaziri, 2017).

Indeed, the results obtained in this investigation are in line with the studies demonstrating an inverse correlation between listening anxiety and the use of metacognitive listening strategies. Indeed, earlier researchers

proved that those learners who use metacognitive strategies more often experience less listening anxiety. The same happened in the current study since the subjects involved in the study experienced a noticeable decline in anxiety after being explicitly taught how to apply metacognitive listening strategies (Adnan et al., 2020; Golzadeh & Moïinvaziri, 2017; Vandergrift & Baker, 2015).

The results obtained by current research can also be justified on the basis of theories formulated from the perspective of metacognitive learning theory. Awareness on how to plan for listening tasks, monitor one's comprehension, find out instances of comprehension problems, and judge the results seems to increase the level of control that learners have over the whole learning process. Apparently, this type of control tends to decrease uncertainty, which is frequently a cause of anxiety during listening tasks. This means that instead of being passivereceivers of input, learners become active comprehenders of information (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015).

Another significant outcome obtained from the research was the considerable rise in participants' MALQ scores post-intervention. This shows that metacognitive awareness is something that can be taught systematically. The rise in awareness means that the learners had more knowledge about the process of listening, and at the same time, they were more aware of the strategies that could help them in comprehending what they are hearing. This finding is consistent with the findings from past researches on metacognitive strategy instruction (Golzadeh & Moïinvaziri, 2017; Öztürk, 2021; Vandergrift & Baker, 2015).

The findings can also be explained using Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. This theory states that anxiety serves as an affective filter which blocks effective processing of language input. High anxiety hinders the ability of learners to concentrate on tasks, process information, and store the language input received. Listening anxiety was decreased in this study. Therefore, it can be concluded that metacognitive training may lead to decreased affective filters in learners, thus resulting in better processing of auditory language input (Adnan et al., 2020).

In addition, based on the research results, it is possible to state that teaching metacognitive listening strategies may play a role not only in learners' cognitive development but also in emotional control. If learners are aware of listening strategies that can be applied to the task, they will not have any feelings of helplessness when they encounter unknown vocabulary or fast speech. They will be able to apply learned strategies to fill in comprehension gaps and proceed with message comprehension (Golzadeh & Moïinvaziri, 2017; Vandergrift & Baker, 2015).

The findings from the present study are also relevant in a pedagogical sense. Given that listening anxiety constitutes an often encountered impediment in EFL classes, it is advisable for teachers to incorporate teaching strategies related to metacognition during listening classes. This would include the use of tasks requiring prediction, monitoring, self-assessment, reflection, and problem-solving, which could foster independence among learners as listeners and potentially make learning environments emotionally more conducive (Adnan et al., 2020).

Overall, the findings of this study provide strong evidence that metacognitive awareness training can effectively reduce listening anxiety while simultaneously enhancing learners' metacognitive awareness. The results contribute to the growing literature highlighting the importance of metacognitive instruction in EFL listening classrooms and support the view that improving learners' awareness of listening processes can lead to both cognitive and affective benefits. Therefore, metacognitive awareness should be regarded as a key component of listening instruction for EFL learners.

7. CONCLUSION

The current research was designed to examine whether there is an influence of metacognitive awareness instruction on decreasing listening anxiety in EFL learners. It turned out that explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies led to a decrease in listening anxiety on the part of EFL learners in question while, at the same time,

increasing their metacognitive awareness of listening process. The significant differences in the pre-test and post-test results clearly demonstrate this fact.

Based on the findings, it can be argued that metacognitive awareness is essential not just in the cognitive process of understanding listening activities but also in the emotions of the students toward their involvement in such activities.

As learners gained more awareness about the ways in which they could effectively manage the listening process, they seemed to have felt confident rather than anxious whenever presented with listening tasks.

In terms of teaching methodology, the research offers insights for using metacognitive strategy training as part of an English as a foreign language (EFL) listening course.

The explicit training of students on how to plan, monitor their understanding of listening tasks, detect problem areas, and evaluate their performance can help them become autonomous learners and better listeners. Such methodologies may create an enabling learning atmosphere where learners feel less anxious about listening tasks.

Also, the results of this study are important from the perspective of increasing the amount of literature that highlights the significance of learner-centered pedagogy in foreign languages instruction.

Developing metacognition in learners makes it possible to shift the focus onto their accountability regarding the process of learning and developing skills.

Although there have been some favorable outcomes, however, it is important that some limitations in relation to the study are also taken into consideration.

First, the research was carried out using a small sample of EFL learners from one particular setting, which means that it might not be very generalizable. Second, the training process did not last for too long, and questionnaires were used as the primary tool to collect data about learners' feelings and attitudes. It would be worthwhile for future researchers to investigate these issues further using interviews or classroom observations.

In conclusion, the results of the current study prove that the instruction of metacognitive awareness can function effectively as an educational approach in mitigating the feeling of listening anxiety and increasing the degree of metacognitive awareness in the listeners.

This study confirms the idea that improving the ability to control the process of listening will result in positive effects on the level of cognition and emotions of learners.

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