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Exploring the Role of Process–based Instruction in Improving Young EFL Learners' Metacognitive Awareness and Listening Comprehension: A Sociocultural Perspective

Mahmood Reza Moradian[1]
Department of English Language and Literature, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran

Parisa Kogani Baharvand
Department of English Language and Literature, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran

Abstract

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing interest in the use of metacognitive instruction to promote learners' second language (L2) listening comprehension. Rooted in Sociocultural Theory (SCT), this study aimed at investigating the effect of process-based instruction on improving metacognitive awareness and listening comprehension of young English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners at an English language institute in Khorramabad, Iran. In so doing, 60 young EFL learners, ranging from 11 to 13 years old, were randomly assigned into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group (n = 30) received the strategy training following the model proposed by Vandergrift (2004). The same teacher taught listening to the participants in the control group (n = 30) without any strategy instruction. Furthermore, metacognitive awareness of participants was assessed by the administration of the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) both at the beginning and end of the study. The results of listening comprehension tests of both groups unveiled that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on the listening comprehension posttest. In addition, the results of the MALQ revealed a significant promotion of the experimental group's metacognitive awareness. The findings are explained in the light of sociocultural theory and collaborative interactions; finally, some pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research are offered.

Keywords: Process-Based Approach, Listening Comprehension, Metacognitive Instruction, Metacognitive Awareness, Sociocultural Theory

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[1] Corresponding author: Moradian.m@lu.ac.ir

1. Introduction

Listening comprehension has always presented itself as a challenging skill to second and foreign language students. In order to ameliorate the complex process of L2 listening learning, strategy instruction has been highlighted during the last two decades (Mendelsohn & Rubin, 1995) to equip listeners with the ability and awareness to use strategies to control the comprehension process over time and contexts (Goh & Hu, 2014). Goh (1997, 2005, 2008) asserts that learners should be supported to develop metacognitive knowledge and strategies because they need to learn *how* to listen and not just what to listen for. In other words, listening lessons should include activities that teach learners explicitly how to listen effectively as part of their ongoing language development. Every lesson can be an opportunity for them to develop greater awareness of themselves as second language listeners, the nature and demands of listening, and strategies for facilitating comprehension and progress in listening. Goh (2008) refers to this type of process-based approach as *metacognitive instruction* (p. 192). It enables listeners to simultaneously increase their awareness of the process and employ effective strategies in listening comprehension. Such an approach puts more emphasis on the process rather than product of instruction to develop learners' metacognitive ability and the proficiency level so that they will have self-control over the process of listening comprehension by orchestrating appropriate strategies as well as practicing skills.

Furthermore, a host of studies has suggested that strategic-based instruction and the process-based approach deepen learners' awareness of metacognitive processes underlying second language (L2) listening (Cross, 2011; Graham & Macaro, 2008; Liu & Goh, 2006; Vandergrift, 2003; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). In the above-mentioned studies, learners were engaged in a pedagogical sequence. These researches drew the conclusion that dialogic interactions between learners enhance the metacognitive awareness of learners in L2 listening.

According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), "the lack of guidance on how learners can self-direct and evaluate their efforts to improve their listening" (p. 5) has made listening a challenging process and a great source of anxiety for EFL learners. Yet, the listening skill has been overlooked in EFL teaching contexts (Bozorgian & Pillay, 2013). Moreover, it is a demanding skill for beginning and intermediate language learners, who cannot often process

information rapidly enough to understand the aural texts (Goh & Taib, 2006). In line with the same arguments, this study intends to make a meager contribution to the literature on metacognitive instruction through raising young EFL learners' awareness of the listening process via a cognitive model of process-based instruction proposed by Vandergrift (2004) under the sociocultural theory perspective.

2. Theoretical Background

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) identified three types of listening instruction in second language acquisition research: *Text-oriented*, *communication-oriented*, and *learner-oriented*. Text-oriented and communication-oriented instruction focuses mainly on the product of comprehension but learners are taught how to listen in learner-oriented instruction. It was developed as a response to the issue of *testing camouflages as testing* in listening classes (Mendelsohn, 1998). Through this process-based approach, as Mendelsohn (1998) asserts, instructors will have sufficient opportunities to provide learners with effective listening strategies and instruct them how to listen more effectively and efficiently by making them aware of the mental processes that are engaged in the process of listening.

One effective way, deeply rooted in learner-oriented listening instruction, to help listeners with the complexity of listening comprehension is metacognitive instruction (Goh, 2008; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Metacognitive instruction is a process-based approach that aims to deepen learners' knowledge of themselves as listeners in a second language context and their understanding of the inherent challenges of L2 listening as well as teaching them about ways to control their listening comprehension (Goh, 2008). He also promoted a process-based approach to listening instruction in order to demystify the skills involved in listening comprehension. She referred to this type of process-based listening instruction as *metacognitive instruction in listening*, which is related to the metacognition and is now regarded as a vital part of human learning. Metacognition is defined by Flavell (1976) as "one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them. Metacognition refers, among other things, to active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes" (p. 232). It can be simplified as thinking about thinking or cognition about cognition. According to Flavell (1976), metacognition is composed of two dimensions: Metacognitive knowledge (or awareness) and

metacognitive regulation (or control). Metacognitive knowledge is that part of one's knowledge that refers to cognitive matters, namely, one's knowledge about how one's cognition operates, which consists of knowledge of person, task, and strategy variables. Any development in these three aspects of metacognitive knowledge as Goh and Taib (2006) assert, will qualify learners to evaluate themselves and help them choose appropriate strategies in order to improve their listening performance. On the other hand, metacognitive regulation allows learners to have a conscious control over their listening process with active planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating.

2.1 Metacognitive Instruction in Listening Comprehension

Prior studies (e.g., Bozorgian, 2012; Cross, 2011; Goh, 2010; Vandergrift & Tafaghodari, 2010) have addressed the impact of metacognitive instruction on the listening skill. For example, Goh (2010) points out that metacognitive instruction in listening can be beneficial to learners in at least three ways. First, it improves listening, helping learners to be more confident, more motivated, and less anxious. Second, it increases learners' knowledge about the listening process and about themselves as second language listeners. Third, it has a positive effect on listening performance and the strategy use for facilitating comprehension. The purpose of metacognitive instruction in listening, as proposed by Goh (2008, 2010), is to help learners to develop a greater awareness of factors that influence their own listening and learning processes and strategies from their teachers and fellow-learners for self-directing these processes. It inherently strengthens learners' awareness of their listening processes, which helps them use appropriate strategies. The demand for such metacognitive instruction is that learners need a long-term direct explanation, modeling strategies, and strategies with guided practice (Pressley, 2002). The pedagogical evidence shows that metacognitive instruction assists learners in what successful learners choose to select for processing learning and improving successful language learning through acquiring metacognitive strategies. One such way is to take the process of listening that involves learners with a listening lesson consisting of *planning*, *monitoring*, and *evaluation* which is known as 'pedagogical cycle' (Vandergrift, 2004). The pedagogical cycle Vandergrift (2007) presents is a pedagogical cycle that encourages learners to actively create and check predictions, establish and address gaps in their understanding, and monitor

and reflect on their performance. It also provides for plentiful listening practice and can be used with any level of learners.

2.2 Sociocultural Theory

With the arrival of sociocultural theory (SCT) on the scene in 1986, learning was conceptualized as an enterprise shaped and reshaped through social interactions on the premise that the human mind is always mediated by virtue of interaction with the self or others (Lantolf, 2000). In other words, development takes place in the social encounters as a result of the mediation of more capable others and its transmission to the individual level (Vygotsky, 1978). Mediation refers to the use of higher-level cultural tools for gaining control over some mental activities such as problem solving, planning, and attention to establish a relationship between individuals and their external socio-cultural world (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Two main features of this higher mental functioning/mediation are deliberate control and conscious awareness (Cross, 2010). The term metacognition has not been used in Vygotsky's works, but it was subsequently adapted by scholars within the SCT paradigm as a superordinate term for awareness and self-regulation (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Frawley & Lantolf, 1985). Regarding the importance of such interactions as a meditational tool and occurrence of L2 learning in general and listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness in particular in the social context of the classroom through interactions and classroom discussions which are good examples of dialogic interaction, the study aimed at supporting learners' attention to the process of listening and their cognition about cognition from the sociocultural view point.

3. Empirical Studies

Until recently, in most of the listening strategy studies, the focus of attention has been on exploring the types of strategies used by learners or the pattern of the strategy in successful versus less successful learners. However, the focus has shifted to research into ways to teach effective strategy use. To illustrate, Vandergrift (2002) conducted a study on beginning-level French students on listening tasks by making use of instruments that engage the students in prediction, evaluation, and other processes involved in listening. He argues that reflection on the processes of listening can help students develop metacognitive knowledge and achieve success in listening tasks. Vandergrift (2003) also made use of tasks designed to develop effective listening

strategies to raise awareness of university students about the listening process.

Vandergrift (2004) and Goh (2008) began to discuss the rationale for integrating metacognitive instruction into teaching listening comprehension based on the assumption that metacognitive instruction can potentially promote learners' awareness of their listening and learning processes and develop their ability to use appropriate strategies in various contexts (Goh, 2008), although the mixed findings of the empirical studies on the efficacy of metacognitive instruction in listening performance have challenged the accuracy of this assumption. Vandergrift (2004) introduces a metacognitive cycle in which learners employ strategies to regulate listening and achieve good comprehension. This cycle is best featured by typical metacognitive elements: verification, evaluation, and reflection. These are aimed to raise learners' awareness about strategy use and offer necessary scaffolding in the process of listening.

Vandergrift and Tafagodtari (2010) measured the listening comprehension of 106 tertiary-level high-beginner and lower-intermediate learners of French as an L2 over a semester. 59 students from the experimental group listened to texts using a methodology that led learners through the metacognitive processes, (prediction/planning, monitoring, evaluating, and problem solving) underlying successful L2 listening. The same teacher taught 47 students in the control group. They listened to the same texts the same number of times without any guided attention to process. The results of the pretest and posttest scores showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the listening comprehension measure, and the less-skilled learners participating in the guided methodology (strategy-based) benefited more significantly than more-skilled learners.

More specifically, concerning the role of metacognitive instruction in young EFL learners' L2 listening development, Goh and Taib (2006) conducted a study on ten primary school pupils who participated in eight designed listening lessons that included traditional listening exercises, individual postlistening reflections on their listening experience, and teacher-facilitated discussions that focused on specific aspects of metacognitive knowledge about listening. Results showed that, after the eight lessons, all the students reported a deeper understanding of the nature and demands of

listening while their confidence increased in completing listening tasks. Also, they developed a better strategic knowledge for coping with comprehension difficulties. Finally, it was concluded that the less skilled learners benefited more from such a process-based approach to listening instruction.

Cross (2010) made an investigation of six pairs of advanced adult Japanese learning English as a Foreign Language from a sociocultural perspective. He examined the development of learners' metacognitive awareness during the process of second language listening comprehension under the peer-peer dialogic condition. The result showed that through dialogic interactions, learners exploited opportunities to improve their metacognitive awareness of L2 listening. All in all, prior studies (e.g., Bozorgian, 2012; Cross, 2011; Goh, 2008; Vandergrift, 2004) have focused on metacognitive instruction to adult learners. To our knowledge, no study has investigated the role of metacognitive instruction in raising young EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and listening comprehension from a sociocultural perspective. In order to explore the role of process-based instruction in improving *young EFL learners'* metacognitive awareness and listening comprehension from a sociocultural perspective, the following research questions were addressed.

1. Does process-based instruction significantly affect young EFL learners' listening comprehension?
2. Does process-based instruction significantly affect young EFL learners' metacognitive awareness?
3. Does the performance of the process-based group significantly differ from that of the control group in listening comprehension posttest?
4. How can process-based instruction of listening strategies affect young EFL learners' listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness?

4. Method

4.1 Participants

Four intact classes of female and male Iranian young EFL learners (n = 60) were selected based on a combination of convenience and purposive sampling from a private language institute in *Khorramabad*, Iran. They were

at the beginning level of language proficiency, ranged from 11 to 13 years old. They had attended English language classes in the same institute for 6 consecutive terms. Based on a pretest, participants were deemed homogenized in their level of listening proficiency. In addition, the teacher instructed these four classes for the last two terms. The teacher's appraisal also testified the result of the homogeneity of the participants under study. Finally, the participants were not aware of the purpose of the study, and they did not know in which group they would be placed.

4.2 Tasks and Tests

The MALQ and Movers listening test were employed as instruments of this study. The MALQ was designed for researchers and instructors to assess the extent to which language learners were aware of and can regulate the process of L2 listening comprehension (Goh, Mareschal, Tafaghodtari, & Vandergrift, 2006). It was also intended to serve as a self-assessment instrument that learners can use to appraise their awareness of the listening process and to reflect on their strategy use when listening in the L2. It contains 21 items, rated on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The instrument comprised the five components of metacognitive awareness: (a) problem-solving, (b) planning and evaluation, (c) mental translation, (d) person knowledge, and (e) directed attention. Since the participants of the current study were young EFL learners at their beginning level of English language proficiency, the researchers strived to prepare a simplified translated version of the MALQ. Furthermore, the teacher read it to the L2 listeners to make sure all of them had understood the items. To increase the parallelism of the two English and Persian versions, the researchers shared the Persian version with specialist experts holding Ph.D. degrees in TEFL. The Persian version of the MALQ was also proved to be reliable. Its reliability was calculated to be .83. Moreover, in a pilot study, the translated version was administered to a small group of ten young EFL learners in order to ensure the comprehensibility of the items. Accordingly, participants filled the questionnaire twice, once as a pre-test and then as a posttest.

Furthermore, to investigate listening comprehension of the experimental and control groups, both prior to and after the instruction, the researchers utilized the Movers listening comprehension test as a reliable listening test for young listeners. The parallel version of this test was used in all the three

phases of the study. In short, four different versions of this test were employed as tasks and pre- and posttests. Each Movers test consisted of 5 parts (25 questions) and took about 30 minutes to be answered. For each part, learners had to listen to a recorded text or texts and answer the questions following the text. In the current study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the four versions of the test were calculated to be .89, .83, .77, and .81. Finally, the materials selected for classroom practices included a number of listening tasks with high quality audios.

4.3 Data Analysis

The study enjoys a mixed method design in the sense that the data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data obtained in the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using a paired-sample t-test and comparisons between groups through SPSS software version 18. Additionally, to answer the forth research question, qualitative data were collected and analyzed through microgenetic analysis. In what follows, microgenetic analysis as the major qualitative technique to track the origins of learner development is presented.

4.4 Microgenetic Analysis

Microgenetic analysis is one of the four genetics of the genetic model proposed by Vygotsky (1978). The microgenetic method seeks to uncover the stages through which a learner passes en route to achieving self-regulation . Gutiérrez (2008) defines it as "the moment-to-moment coconstruction of language and language learning" (p. 2) which has been used by SLA scholars to track learners' origins of development. The genetic model is premised on the fact that the comprehensive understanding of the higher, culturally organized levels of human mental functioning is only achieved through the study of the processes rather than the products of development (Vygotsky, 1978). In line with the previous argument, most sociocultural researches employ the microgenetic method since focusing merely on the products may lead us to neglecting the genetic relationship between the elementary and higher levels of the mental activity and may not provide the researcher with the internal nature of mental development (Vygotsky, 1978).

On such an account, the microgenetic method was employed by the study (i.e., to track the young EFL learners' metacognitive development over ten treatment sessions). In other words, to trace how young EFL learners under investigation participated in instructional sessions and how their listening

comprehension and awareness were affected by their participation, treatment sessions of the experimental group were transcribed verbatim and microgenetically analyzed.

4.5 Procedure

At first, the pretest (i.e., a sample of the Cambridge Movers Listening Test) and the MALQ were administered to the learners of the two groups of the study to check their listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness, respectfully. It is worth mentioning that the participants took the pretest prior to the MALQ to reduce the practice effect of the MALQ on raising the participants' metacognitive awareness of the listening skill. To ensure understanding of this questionnaire by young EFL learners under investigation, a simplified Persian version was prepared, and the teacher also explained each item of the questionnaire clearly before learners started to fill it out. Next, the experimental group received instructional interventions. The metacognitive instruction lasted for ten sessions (each session was about fifty minutes) for each group, within a time span of five weeks**.** The class were divided into fifteen pairs to provide talking opportunities so that each can take a turn and participate in the class discussions. The EFL learners were informed of the topic and text type in general terms, and they were encouraged to predict the types of information and possible words they might hear. The teacher played the listening file (another parallel test of Movers listening test functioning as a task) for the first time, and the EFL learners listened to it to the end to fulfil the first verification stage. Then the teacher gave the EFL learners some time to verify their initial hypotheses, correct them if needed, and note additional information they understood from the audio file. The pairs performed the task separately at their own rate. This model of metacognitive strategies training was also proposed by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010). In the second verification stage, the EFL learners tested earlier points of disagreement, made corrections, and marked them. Also, they took part in dialogic interactions and class discussions in which all class members contributed to the reconstruction of the text's main points and most pertinent details, interspersed with reflections on how learners arrived at the meaning of certain words or parts of the text. In the ultimate verification stage, the learners listened specifically for the information revealed in the interactions and class discussions which they had difficulty understanding. In the last stage, which is called the reflection stage, the learners wrote their

ideas about the session and their aims for the next listening activity according to the earlier discussion of strategies to make up the points that were not found out.

In contrast, the participants in the control group just listened to the audio-file three times and answered the questions without receiving any awareness raising instruction. And, if the learners could not understand the text and were unable to answer the questions, the teacher supplied them with the correct answer directly. It should be noted that all dialogues in the experimental group were audio- and video-recorded and stored for the microgenetic analysis and qualitative part of the study. Finally, after the treatment sessions, the posttests (parallel to pretests) were administered to both experimental and control groups to examine the efficiency of the process-based and traditional approaches in raising the awareness of metacognitive listening strategies and enhancing listening comprehension of Iranian young EFL learners.

5. Results

5.1 Results of the Quantitative Analyses

Initially, to see whether the control and experimental (process-based) groups were homogenized before receiving any treatment, the descriptive data such as the mean scores and standard deviation of the two groups are presented.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for The Process-Based and Control Groups on Listening Comprehension Pretest

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error
Process-based	30	10.56	2.68	.490
Control	30	10.76	2.60	.476

The first research question sought to answer whether process-based instruction significantly affected young EFL learners' listening comprehension. To explore this research question, a paired-samples t-test was run. As shown in Table 2, the process-based group's post-test mean (M = 10.76) is higher than that of the pretest (M = 14.30).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for the Process-Based Group on Listening Comprehension Pre- and Posttests

	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**
Pretest	30	10.76	2.68	.490
Posttest	30	14.30	3.18	.581

Table 3
Inferential Statistics for the Process-Based Group on Listening Comprehension Pre- and Posttests

	Paired Differences			**t**	**df**	**Sig.(2-tailed)**
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pretest Posttest	3.53	1.90	.348	10.14	29	.000

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, there is a statistically significant increase in listening comprehension of the process-based group from the pre-test (M = 10.76, SD = 2.68) to posttest (M = 14.30, SD = 3.18), t (29) = 10.14, $p < .05$. The effect size showed that the magnitude of the difference turned out to be strong (eta squared = 0.78). Therefore, it can be pointed out that metacognitive instruction through the process-based instruction was significantly effective in enhancing listening comprehension.

The second research question asked whether process-based instruction significantly affected young EFL learners' metacognitive awareness. Another paired-samples t-test was run to answer the question. As displayed in Table 3, the process-based group's posttest mean (M = 97.06) is higher than that of the pretest (M = 77.80).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for the Process-based Group on Metacognitive Awareness Pre- and Posttests

	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**
Pretest	30	77.80	10.48	1.98
Posttest	30	97.06	8.39	1.53

Table 5
Inferential Statistics for the Process-based Group on Metacognitive Awareness Pre- and Posttests

	Paired Differences			**t**	**df**	**Sig.(2tailed)**
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pretest Posttest	19.26	9.07	1.65	11.63	29	.000

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, there is a statistically significant increase in metacognitive awareness of the process-based group from the pretest (M = 77.80, SD =10.48) to posttest (M = 97.06, SD =8.39), t (29) =11.630, $p < .05$. The obtained data evidenced that the magnitude of the effect size (eta squared = 0.82) turned out to be strong. Therefore, it can be pointed out that metacognitive instruction through the process-based instruction has been significantly effective in young EFL learners' enhancing metacognitive awareness.

The third research question addressed if the performance of the process-based group significantly differed from that of the control group on the listening comprehension posttest. To answer this question a comparison was made of the listening comprehension posttest scores of the process-based and control groups (Table 6). The descriptive statistics indicate that the process-based group had a higher level of comprehension (M = 14.30) than the control group (M = 11.26).

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics for the Process-based and Control Group's Listening Comprehension Posttests

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Process-based	30	14.30	3.18	.581
Control	30	11.26	2.79	.509

Table 7
A Comparison of the Process-based and Control Groups' Listening Comprehension Posttest Scores

F	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower	Upper
1.44	58	000.	3.03	.773	1.48	4.58
	57.01	000.	3.03	.773	1.48	4.58

As Table 6 and 7 show, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the process-based (M = 14.30, SD = 3.18) and control group (M = 11.26, SD = 2.79). The obtained data ($t_{(58)} = 3.923$, $p = 0.001$) show that the magnitude of the difference turned out to be strong (eta squared = 0.20). Therefore, it can be pointed out that metacognitive instruction through process-based instruction was effective in enhancing listening comprehension.

5.2 The Results of the Qualitative Analysis

To answer the forth question, microgenetic analysis, as a qualitative research technique was used to investigate how metacognitive strategies instruction can affect young EFL learners' listening comprehension. To this aim, the treatment sessions and interactions between the young EFL learners under investigation and their teacher were analyzed while they were undertaking process-based instruction. Through the following extracts, some of the transcribed interactions are represented and then discussed to indicate the different processes of the metacognitive instruction. However, because of space limitations, only three extracts from the first, sixth, and last treatment sessions between the pairs in the experimental group are presented. This was done intentionally since the first, sixth and last sessions of the treatment can signpost how and how much learning has been made through engaging in process-based instruction. It is worth mentioning that the EFL learners used their mother tongue during interactions. As Swain and Lapkin (2000) points out, interactions in L1 during the EFL learners' participation in L2 tasks result in their understanding and management of tasks requirements.

5.2.1 Metacognitive instruction with the experimental group

The participants received metacognitive instruction for about 50 minutes each session in a metacognitive pedagogical cycle as introduced by Vandergrift

(2004). The class participated in the planning, first, second, and third listening, and reflection stage in which they wrote their reflections about the session and strategies they used or learned and evaluated their performance in a diary-like format. Worthy of note here is teacher modeling through thinking aloud to facilitate the young EFL learners to figure out and employ strategies in different stages, since it was assumed that less skilled young EFL learners need more assistance in comprehending listening strategies. The learners in the process-based group showed development in listening comprehension and reflected this improvement as a result of both peer and teacher-led discussions. In this section, some examples from their reflections are presented. For the sake of space, the extracts related to the reflection stage are presented and then discussed.

5.2.1.1 First session of the reflection stage

In this extract, Pooneh (pseudonym) evaluates her performance in the past four stages of listening and demonstrates that, through peer collaboration and classroom discussions, she has come to this cognizance that the peer in her pair and the ones in other pairs had problems in comprehending the audio-file of listening which often leads to missing the audio-file.

Extract 1

That was amazing. Maryam also said that she did not understand the second sentence even after the third listening. I thought it is only my problem and since I did not get this sentence, I was disappointed and did not listen to the rest of the audio-file. Many others said that when you don't understand a word, try to guess what it means. I should take more care the next time I listen.

Not being able to get a word, she missed the rest of the audio-file. This problem in her reflection shows some level of awareness about her weakness in the listening skill. Moreover, it demonstrates the need for listening comprehension awareness. This reflection on her problem and on the problems of other pairs in the classroom, and sharing their interpretations in group discussions have been beneficial to her since she feels more cautious now. Furthermore, being given the opportunity to discuss their interpretations, she came to know that a listening strategy for such a problematic situation can be guessing from the context. Eventually, in this short piece of entry, she sets a goal for the next session's listening activity.

In the next extract, Mary also expresses her lack of understanding the audio-file which is related to the mental translation strategy as one of the components of metacognitive awareness. Yet, the main problem she mentioned to her peer is trying to translate every single word which has made her disappointed and even led to her hatred of this skill. Listeners' endeavor to translate what they hear was one of the bewildering common problems among them. It is worthy of note that their later awareness of this weakness and learning how to be selective in listening assist them to be more successful listeners.

Extract 2

I want to fully understand the content of the audio-file but it is too difficult. Although I try to translate every single word for myself, the speed of the audio-file is too fast and I miss most of it. That's why I hate listening. Shirin says we should not translate all the words of the audio-file.

5.2.1.2 Sixth session of the reflection stage

The young EFL learners demonstrated more signs of development as the treatment sessions progressed. In the following extract, the students are asked to talk about the strategies they employed in the verification stages. Worthy of notice is young EFL learners' self-initiated collaborations and their expressing more cognitive statements. They showed signs of awareness of their listening comprehension process through their more cautious talks in the classroom. Subsequently, their reflections indicated their increased awareness of the different listening phases. Some steps such as setting the goal for the next listening activity, planning, more strategic listening and evaluating their performances were undertaken. In Extract 3, which was uttered by Reihaneh, some strategies of her metacognitive awareness can be evidently witnessed.

Extract 3

I know that I should focus more on what I hear while I am listening. There is no need to translate each sentence word by word, but I should try to understand the meaning of the text in general. I am not worried about the meaning of the words I am not sure of any more since I know that I can guess their meaning from the context or ask them from my teacher after listening to the audio-file. That is GREAT when my guesses come true.

5.2.1.3 Last session of the reflection stage

In the following extract which was taken from the last treatment session, Mohsen's reflection evidences a rise in his metacognitive knowledge.

Through planning, prediction, and goal setting strategies, he demonstrates an increased ability to self-regulate his comprehension.

Extract 4

I prepare myself to listen by looking at the sheet of paper in front of me and reviewing the text on it introducing the audio-file and questions about the content to get what it is about. Then, when the teacher plays the CD, I try to focus on what I hear and ignore everything around. I used to be distracted by my classmates or their voices.

Another student in the reflection stage writes that she is happy with her performance in the listening activity. This reveals that she is evaluating her performance by determining the success of her struggles at processing the audio-input, and satisfaction with her listening performance has led her to becoming more interested in the listening skill.

Extract 5

Now, I know that most of the words I did not understand while I was listening are the words I already knew them. I try to guess the unfamiliar words from the picture or rest of the sentence. I should study more to know a lot of words. By now, I am happy with my listening performance.

In sum, the listeners attest to a growing awareness of their weaknesses and the process of listening comprehension over noting their reflections. The notes also reflected an increased metacognitive awareness gained as a result of dialogic interactions to regulate their performance in the coming sessions. The analysis of instructional sessions revealed that young EFL learners developed and coconstructed listening metacognitive awareness in terms of text awareness, comprehension awareness, and strategy awareness (Cross, 2011). Moreover, metacognitive instruction has resulted in young EFL learners' more control over the difficulties during listening (Goh, 2002) as well as their awareness of listening strategies.

The results of the microgenetic analysis of the process-based group demonstrated effectiveness of this approach which reinforces the quantitative results of the present study. The findings of the study are in line with Fahim and Fakhri's (2014) findings which proposed that metacognitive instruction can be particularly helpful to guide and assist learners in developing their listening comprehension. Additionally, Goh and Taib (2006) demonstrated that young EFL learners' improvement in listening comprehension as well as

their metacognitive awareness was improved as a result of the processed-based approach, which are at one with the findings of the current study.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

A host of empirical studies have highlighted the facilitative role of metacognitive instruction in listening (Cross, 2011; Fahim & Fakhri, 2014; Goh, 2008; Vandergrift, 2004, 2007; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). Referring to the findings of these studies, one comes to understand that metacognitive awareness of second or foreign language learners is raised through metacognitive instruction, which positively affects their performance (Goh, 2008). It also assists them in gaining control over the difficulties during listening (Goh, 2002) and assists them in reaching an autonomous level in their learning (Wenden, 1998). By the same token, findings of the current study revealed that metacognitive instruction through the process-based approach can be beneficial to young EFL learners to enhance their listening comprehension ability. Moreover, the results showed a significant difference between the control and experimental groups in their listening performance, which was achieved through the implementation of the metacognitive instruction as treatment in this study. The results also reveal that young EFL learners who received metacognitive instruction through a pedagogical sequence and experienced metacognitive instruction by being engaged in collaborative interactions outperformed the control group who did not receive any metacognitive instruction. This result might not have been achieved without the collaborative interactions of young EFL learners to verbalize metacognitive strategies within the metacognitive pedagogical sequence.

All in all, both qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data showed that young EFL learners improved their listening comprehension through the process-based approach to teaching listening. This finding suggests the effectiveness of metacognitive instruction over the more traditional approaches to teaching the listening skill. In particular, instructing metacognitive listening strategies helped the young EFL learners in the process-based group to significantly outperform on the listening comprehension posttests. Hence, the study lent some support to the previous literature on the superiority of concentrating on the process rather than the product of listening which can result in greater gains in listening comprehension (e.g., Bozorgian, 2012; Cross, 2011; Goh, 2002; Goh & Taib,

2006; Vandergrift, 2002, 2003, 2004; Vandergrift & Tafaghodari, 2010). The control group, on the contrary, were deprived of receiving any metacognitive instruction and being involved in the collaborative dialogues to voice their thoughts and reflection, did not accomplish a significant development in their final listening performance.

Furthermore, the findings of this study which adopted the SCT perspective can motivate young EFL learners to gain promotion in listening in the social context by using collaborative techniques which require engaging in group work. According to Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), collaborative activities provide learners with an opportunity to correct themselves and move from other regulation to self-regulation. Additionally, the obtained findings from the qualitative analysis revealed that young EFL learners benefited from the collaboration in which they were engaged during the instructional sessions. In fact, the dialogic interaction afforded the young EFL learners the chance to present, discuss, and test their ideas and consequently enhance their awareness (Swain, 2000; 2006). In essence, young EFL learners first made use of the calibrated assistance, the checklist, and language to co-build knowledge with the help of their teacher, and gradually their dependence on the mediational tools decreased over time. In fact, they were better able to self-regulate their listening activities (Vygotsky, 1978).

Of particular note here is the analysis of the MALQ both prior to and after the treatment sessions. In principle, in pursuit of being involved in a metacognitive instructional program, young EFL learners' metacognitive awareness of the listening comprehension increased. This promotion in their awareness was reflected in their performances and answers to the MALQ questionnaire. To illustrate, through their answers to the questionnaire, young EFL learners demonstrated that their awareness of their listening abilities, weaknesses, and strategies could be used to tackle with their listening problems. Lastly, the findings of this study shed some light on listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness of young EFL learners from a sociocultural perspective and provided some evidence for other researchers, instructors, and learners about the potential of metacognitive instruction which is a type of process-based approach in which dialogic intractions occur in a pedagogical cycle leading to EFL learners' increased metacognitive awareness of L2 listening.

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