

ENHANCING STUDENTS' LISTENING PROFICIENCY THROUGH THE INSTRUCTION OF (META)-COGNITIVE LISTENING STRATEGY

Dodi Mulyadi
Muhammadiyah University of Semarang
Email: dodidi@unimus.ac.id

Abstract

Metacognitive listening strategy instruction is fruitful to enhance students' autonomy by planning and deciding what the best strategy in mastering listening skills is. Meanwhile, the cognitive strategy instruction facilitates students to find out the solution to their listening problems. The study aimed to find out the effectiveness of (Meta)-cognitive listening strategy (M-CLS) instruction by administering the integrated listening strategy instruction between metacognitive and cognitive strategies on students' listening proficiency. The participants were 38 EFL students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang that consist of 20 for the experimental group and 18 for the control one. The M-CLS instruction that utilized the three stages including planning, monitoring, and evaluating stage was administered in experimental group for ten meetings. The quasi-experimental design was conducted to investigate quantitative data. The data were gathered by using a listening proficiency test adopted from TOEFL listening section. The descriptive statistics, Generalized Linear Model, and Paired Sample t-test reveal that the students in the experimental group achieve a higher score of listening proficiency with a significant achievement than those in the control group.

Keywords: *(Meta)-Cognitive Listening Strategy (M-CLS), Listening Proficiency, Experimental Design, TOEFL, EFL Student Teachers*

INTRODUCTION

The problems of students' listening comprehension are related to the unfamiliar word sounds, limitation of listening strategy use, a shortage of their prior knowledge, the major concern of acknowledging content words, a reduction of memorizing and superficial processing for remembering. Those problems also occur for college students. Most EFL students at university, especially for student teachers, ignore the importance of listening practices when they are studying English.

Such problems occur from year to year in the world of education, especially among EFL students at the university (Lotfi, 2012). Not only do the students who ignore the importance of listening practices, but most lecturers also perceive that teaching listening is a passive process in EFL learning process (Serri, Boroujeni,

& Hesabi, 2012). As a result, in the teaching process, the lecturers only focus solely on testing the students' listening comprehension without considering the importance of being good listening learners.

Considering the fact that listening is one of the essential skills for mastering English, it is paramount for the lecturers to teach them how to master listening skills instead of testing their listening comprehension. Consequently, the lecturers should be an active inquirer into their pedagogical ability. Listening in English mastery is an active process that demands students to deal with various tasks, such as distinguishing sounds, interpreting stress, and understanding intonation (Coskun, 2010). Therefore, the lecturers or the teachers of listening subjects are responsible for making sure that their

students get involved in the process of constructing their understanding.

Considering the importance of listening skill for mastering English for the EFL learners, the problems dealing with listening skill mastery should be solved by using effective strategy instruction in the teaching and learning process of listening course. The lecturers or teachers should be able to adjust students' listening strategy use to deal with various situations, types of input, and listening purposes. Consequently, the lecturers should give students listening strategy instruction so that students can develop a set of listening strategies and match the appropriate strategies for each listening situation and their listening purposes as the strategy poses preeminent role for supporting the language mastery.

Strategies are the thoughts and behaviors that are employed by the learners to help them comprehend, learn, or retain information (O'Malley & Chamot, 1995). Furthermore, they declare that the ability to utilize the strategy effectively are particularly important in foreign language listening in the EFL classroom setting.

Researchers who investigated metacognitive strategy awareness believed that the instruction of metacognitive strategy could enhance student' listening proficiency. For instances, Selamat & Sidhu (2011) found that metacognitive strategy could improve their lecture of listening skills and make students more effective in following and comprehending knowledge conveyed in English. Furthermore, metacognitive strategies particularly a directed-knowledge strategy is beneficial to improve students' concentration and focus on overcoming the difficulties in listening activities (Bidabadi & Yamat, 2014).

In addition, Altuwairesh (2016) disclosed that many students perceived that listening is difficult, and he suggested that the learners' strategy instruction should be implemented in the classroom. Similarly, Coskun, (2010) highlighted that metacognitive strategy instruction should be incorporated into the regular listening teaching program to help students become more effective listeners. All the aforementioned studies have employed the metacognitive strategies, but the researchers did not implement the metacognitive strategies in their teaching and learning process. They only observed the students' awareness of the strategy used in which the data of awareness observations were gathered via questionnaires. Those postulates resulted from the previous research are considered bias.

Furthermore, studies that implemented the metacognitive strategy instruction in listening classrooms confirm the insignificant results (Rahimi & M. Katal, 2013; Mulyadi, 2015). In Rahimi's and Katal's study, for instance, sixteen weeks of implementing metacognitive listening strategy instruction for students in upper-intermediate English courses did not influence significantly on students' listening comprehension with mean post-test score 20.64 for the experimental group and 22.40 for control one.

In the other side, Mulyadi's work dealing with the effect of metacognitive listening strategy training on English students' listening comprehension of the second-semester students of English department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang shows that the differences of students' listening comprehension between pre-test (57.87) and post-test (64.40) are insignificant. Therefore, considering the results of the previous research, it can be

concluded that metacognitive strategy instruction should be developed to make listening strategy instruction more effective on enhancing students' listening skills.

In developing the metacognitive strategy, a cognitive strategy is considered as the proper strategy to be integrated with the metacognitive strategy to make students not only have autonomy by planning and deciding what the best strategy in mastering listening skills is but also find out the solution of their listening problems. Serri, Boroujeni, & Hesabi (2012) reported that cognitive focus on the process of understanding the linguistic input and getting the knowledge to find the solution of students' listening difficulties. As cognitive and metacognitive are considered being inseparable methods, metacognitive strategies in one context are possible to be cognitive in another.

Therefore, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies will run simultaneously. For example, when the lecturer plans to listen out for stressed words in an utterance as the strategy qualifies as metacognitive, students do it as cognitive strategies (Field, 2008). However, many researchers investigated metacognitive strategy instruction separately for implementing cognitive strategy instructions. The cognitive strategy instruction was taken into account because it helped students to find out the solution to their listening problems.

Moreover, (Kim & Phillips, 2014) and Kim & Phillips (2014) suggested that cognitive instructional implications is important to be implemented to help students in mastering listening comprehension. However, no studies explored the integration between metacognitive and cognitive strategies. To fill the gap and find the solution to the

problems above, the present study implemented metacognitive listening strategy instruction integrated with cognitive strategy instruction. Thus, in this work, M-CLS instruction as the integration between metacognitive and cognitive strategy instruction was the novel listening strategy instruction that was developed to find the effective listening strategy instruction on students' listening proficiency.

METHOD

The study was conducted by using a quasi-experimental design as it was not feasible to use random selection since the population does not consist of the individual but the groups that were intact (Nunan, 1994; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The experimental and control group are not selected randomly, but both classes have already assembled groups were assigned to receive teaching method (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2009). The participants of the study were 38 EFL students of English Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang in the Academic Year 2017-2018. There were, specifically, 20 students in the experimental group from second-year students and 18 students in the control group from third-year students. Also, two lecturers were voluntarily willing to get involved in this research. One of them taught the students in the experimental group by applying the treatment of M-CLS instruction, and another taught listening comprehension for control group without strategy instruction as a usual method in teaching listening there.

The implementation of M-CLS instruction was conducted in three stages. Firstly, planning stage comprises setting purposes, activating background

knowledge, and predicting. Secondly, monitoring stage consists of listening to keywords and making inferences, taking notes, verifying predictions, checking predictions, and re-listening. Finally, evaluation stage involves evaluating overall progress, asking strategy use, and summarizing.

The implementation of M-CLS instruction was the independent variable. Meanwhile, the students' listening proficiency was the dependent variable. The treatment of M-CLS instruction was conducted ten meetings with the various topics of an extensive listening class. They were comprehending listening materials of the interview, evaluating the specific information from listening long talks, making an inference based on listening to the news, listening and review the gist based on listening to speech, listening comprehension and review the story based on short movies.

The data were gathered by using a listening proficiency test in order to find out the students' listening comprehension that has been influenced by ten-week intervention program. The test was adopted from listening section of Longman TOEFL Test. The test was chosen due to the fact that it is the most widely used in recent researches of listening skill (Attarzade & Farahani, 2014; Hariri, 2014; Harputlu, 2014; Hmoudova, 2013; Lynch, 2011; Moradi, 2013; Rahimirad, 2014; Selamat & Sidhu, 2013).

In addition, this test is a standardized test in English mastery in the world as it is used by more than colleges, universities, and agencies around the world and it includes a section on real-life lecture listening. The students did the pre-test before conducting treatment of applying the strategy instruction to find out homogeneity

and reliability. After the 10-weeks listening strategy instruction, they did a similar test as a post-test. The test was given in either experimental group or control group. The results of the test were analyzed quantitatively using Descriptive Statistics, Generalized Linear Model and Pair Sample t-test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Implementation of M-CLS instruction

Practically, M-CLS instruction was administered in three stages. In pre-listening activities, some activities were integrated into planning of listening tasks such as students were taught how to set purposes of listening class, they were asked to activate their background knowledge. Setting purposes of listening class involved listening to specific information and getting the main idea from speech, long conversation, news, and short movies.

Activating background knowledge was conducted by conveying students' opinion about the topic and speakers of speech, discussing related vocabulary, and predicting the possible answers and response related to pre-listening questions (Mulyadi, Rukmini, & Yuliasri, 2017). In the while-listening activities, monitoring comprehension was conducted by asking students to listen to keywords from the audio or video they were listening, make inferences based on the keywords, do note-taking for listening details, verify predictions and check for inaccurate guesses based on their answers and prediction, and listen again to check their comprehension.

In the post-listening activities, evaluating comprehension was conducted in three stages. First, students were evaluating overall progress in listening and

in particular types of listening tasks, such as they discuss with their partners either agree or disagree with the speakers' statements, students were asked to retell what they had heard, and so on. Secondly, students were asked to give their opinion if the strategies used were appropriate for improving their listening comprehension, such as students were asked to reflect about strategy that has been done to understand the dialogue of interview, the speeches, the news, short movies. Thirdly, students were asked to summarize content and messages based on listening activities.

The Analysis of the Effectiveness of M-CLS instruction on Students' Listening Proficiency

The mean scores of students' pre-test between an experimental group and a control group are slightly different with the distinction 1.036. The statistical significance analyzed by using paired sample t-test shows that there is no significant difference with p value=0.213 which is bigger than the standard error (p>0.05). It can be concluded that both groups were homogenous of the listening proficiency before having the treatment.

The effects of the treatments on students' listening proficiency can be seen from the post-test score and the delta score that were analysed using the Descriptive Statistics in Table 1. The results show that the means of the post-test score in the experimental group is higher than the control group with the difference score 4.119. In addition, Delta score for the experimental group is 4.000, but the control one is just 0.917. It means that the students taught with M-CLS instruction have a better listening proficiency than those who were taught without it.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics based on the Post-Test Score and Delta Score between Experimental Class and Control Class

| Dependent Variable | Group | Mean | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|--------------------|-------|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Post-test | Exp. | 46.786 | .664 | 45.451 | 48.120 |
| | Cont. | 42.667 | .718 | 41.225 | 44.108 |
| Delta | Exp. | 4.000 | .542 | 2.911 | 5.089 |
| | Cont. | .917 | .586 | -.260 | 2.093 |

Further analysis of GLM presented in Table 2 shows the effect of M-CLS instruction on students' listening proficiency has a significant difference on students' listening comprehension with a significance value of post-test score is below 5%.

Table 2. GLM Analysis based on Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|---------------------|
| Pre_ | 13.863 | 1 | 13.863 | .729 | .397 | .014 |
| Post | 219.260 | 1 | 219.260 | 17.738 | .000 | .262 |

The paired sample t-test also reveals that there was a statistically significant difference in students' listening proficiency after teaching listening using M-CLS with p-value is less than the critical value of 0.05. Meanwhile, the comparison between pre-test and post-test is not statistically different p-value is higher than the critical value of 0.05 after teaching listening without M-CLS.

Discussion

The statistical analyses show that there is a big influence on students' listening proficiency after conducting the treatments with the 10-weeks listening strategy instruction using the M-CLS. The students in the experimental group have a better achievement of listening proficiency than those in the control group. It proves that the integration of two listening strategy instructions between metacognitive strategy instruction and cognitive strategy instruction is very beneficial in enhancing students' listening proficiency.

Thus, the EFL student teachers were not only taught with the instruction of metacognitive strategies by realizing their learning process in mastering listening but also they got the instruction of cognitive strategies to find out the solution of their listening challenges. Having cognitive strategies were able to understand their listening difficulties by tracing the problems, and they will know to overcome them (Goh, 2000). Practically, EFL student teachers got an instruction about the four stages of metacognitive strategies including planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Furthermore, during the process of listening class the cognitive strategies were also communicated and explained explicitly to them. It is also relevant to Field's (2008) statement between metacognitive and cognitive strategy instruction cannot be separated in teaching listening comprehension.

Most researchers such as Hariri, (2014); Coskun, (2010); Birjandi & Rahimi, (2012); Selamat & Sidhu, (2013); Rahimi & Katal, (2013); Dodi, (2015) concern only the instruction of metacognitive strategy instruction without considering the cognitive strategy

instruction. Some of them reported that the treatment of Metacognitive strategy instruction had no significant influence on students' listening proficiency. However, there is no data can be explored related to the implementation of M-CLS.

Therefore, this instruction can be the alternative solution in applying listening strategy instruction in order to increase students' listening proficiency. Likewise, the studies reported that listening strategy instruction has significant effects on students' listening proficiency (Amin, 2011; Selamat & Sidhu, 2013, Birjandi & Rahimi, 2012; Hariri, 2014; Guan, 2014). Thus, the M-CLS instruction is useful for teaching listening strategy instruction by considering metacognitive and cognitive strategies in order to make students better in mastering the spoken language.

The findings also reveal that M-CLS instruction is successful to find the better listening strategy instruction compared with teaching listening course by using metacognitive strategy instruction only. Thus, M-CLS also can be the alternative of applying the listening strategy instruction to improve the previous studies such as the research findings conducted by Rahimi & Katal (2013), there was not a significant difference of listening proficiency after performing sixteen weeks of metacognitive strategy instruction to Iranian EFL learners.

Moreover, in this M-CLS facilitates students in identifying their problems in mastering listening because cognitive strategy instruction integrated with metacognitive strategy instruction can help students not only to be autonomous learners but also to be solvers of their listening problems. It is in line with Kim & Phillips's (2014) and Goh's (2000) studies that the intervention with cognitive skills can help

students to find out the solution with their difficulties in listening comprehension by identifying the learners' listening problems at an early age and could help students to become better listeners.

Besides, the findings of this study have also contributed to improving skilled students' listening proficiency by giving them the listening instruction both metacognitive and cognitive one. It is supported with the studies that the skilled students had no more benefits by applying the metacognitive strategy instruction because they tend to consider the cognitive strategy instruction (Hosseini, 2015; Cross, 2010 as cited in Rahimi & Katal, 2013).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the effect of the M-CLS instruction as an integration strategy between metacognitive and cognitive strategy instructions clearly improve the students' listening proficiency. As the evidence, the experimental group who got the treatment benefited significantly on students' listening proficiency based on statistical analysis. In other words, the M-CLS instruction is a fruitful listening strategy instruction to enhance the students' mastery of the spoken language.

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