

Metacognitive Strategy Awareness and Listening Anxiety: The role of gender and proficiency level among Iranian EFL learners

Narjes Golzadeh, M.A., Department of English Language, Sirjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sirjan, Iran
Golzadeh.2105@gmail.com

Marjan Moiinvasiri*, Assistant Professor, Department of English Language, Sirjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sirjan, Iran
moiinvasiri@iausirjan.ac.ir

Abstract

While listening plays an important role in the process of foreign/second language learning, different factors can affect this process. This study was designed to assess the relationship between listening anxiety and metacognitive strategy awareness with a special interest in the role of gender and proficiency level. In order to conduct this survey, two instruments including the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) as well as Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) questionnaire were utilized and distributed among 105 upper-intermediate and advanced level Iranian EFL learners. The analysis of data indicated that there was a negative correlation between the participants' listening anxiety and their use of metacognitive strategies, indicating as the use of metacognitive strategies increased, lesser degrees of listening anxiety were observed and vice versa. Moreover, the findings showed that there was no difference between males and females in this regard. Regarding learners' level, it was revealed that upper-intermediate learners were more anxious than advanced level ones. However, no difference was detected between these two levels in their strategy use. It is hoped that this study can help teachers to consider their learners' characteristics in the instruction of suitable strategies and learners to become more autonomous and self-regulated in their listening performance.

Keywords: Listening anxiety, metacognitive strategy awareness, gender, proficiency level

Introduction

Listening is a basic skill in language learning and is considered as one of the most essential skills for communication. According to Holden (2004), listening comprehension plays a vital facilitative role in language learning because it is the most widely used language skill in the normal daily life (Rost, 2002). Furthermore, many factors can have an effect on listening performance of L2 learners. Young (1992) believes that poor listening ability results from a series of factors including the insufficient emphasis on listening, immature teaching methodologies, ineffective listening strategies, students' lack of vocabulary, and finally anxiety among which anxiety is considered the most important. Problems in listening will increase anxiety among learners and affect their performance. Horwitz (2001) concluded that there is a clear relationship between anxiety and poor language learning. Moreover, learners' awareness is related to choosing appropriate strategies in learning a foreign language.

Furthermore, learners' awareness of learning strategies and choosing appropriate strategies has a crucial role in learning a foreign language. Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986) have noted, learners' perceptions of learning strategies will influence the kind of strategy they choose. Some researchers have pointed out the presence of a close correlation between metacognitive strategy use and performance (Purpura, 1997) and that these strategies could help students in controlling their anxiety (Philips, 1991). Metacognition refers to a level of thinking that involves

active control over the process of thinking that is used in learning situations. Planning the way to approach a learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating the progress towards the completion of a task are some examples of the skills that are metacognitive in their nature (Jacobs & Paris, 1987).

Considering the importance of listening skill in the advancement of language learners' proficiency, this study has decided to investigate the relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and listening anxiety among Iranian language learners in Neyriz, Iran with a closer look at the role of their gender and proficiency level.

Review of Literature

Language as a medium of communication helps the members of a community to communicate and interact with one another. Among the many skills required to use a language, listening skill is considered as one of the important ones. However, as Anderson and Lynch (2003) state, listening can be problematic for some language learners. Different factors during the listening process may cause uneasiness, tension, and anxiety for language learners and affect their performance resulting in poor listening. Foreign language anxiety is the feeling of unease, worry, nervousness and apprehension experienced when learning or using a second or foreign language. These feelings may stem from any second language context whether associated with the productive skills of speaking and writing, or the receptive skills of reading and listening (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). In recent years, a great number of studies were conducted to show the effect of anxiety on students' performance in learning a language and listening comprehension. Many researchers like Alpert and Haber (1960), Chastain (1975), and Kleinmann (1977), found a positive relation between anxiety and language learners' performance. They stated that anxiety could have a facilitative effect on students' performance. On the other hand, some other researchers like Horwitz (2001) mentioned that there is a negative correlation between anxiety and students' performance in language learning. Although the results from different studies are not consistent, it is a common belief that high levels of anxiety can result in language learners' poor performance.

One solution to this problem could be regulating one's own learning through the use of metacognitive strategies which have been widely considered as the most elaborated form of learning (Paris, 2001; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). In educational research, it is typically hypothesized that students' self-regulatory efforts towards their learning goals would have a direct impact on their performance and achievement, and furthermore, can mediate linkages between dispositional factors such as cognitive abilities or contextual characteristics such as the classroom environment and achievement (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005). MacIntyre and Noels (1996) believe that there is a significant relationship among learning strategies and variables such as motivation, anxiety, and attitudes towards the learning situation and that these relationships with metacognitive strategies are more robust.

As the result of such ideas, different scholars have tried to investigate the relationship between use of learning strategies, the level of anxiety and students' achievements in learning a language which would include studies on metacognitive strategy use, anxiety, and listening comprehension as well.

In one study, Vandergrift (2003) investigated the relationship between listening proficiency and listening strategy use. The study showed that the more proficient listeners employed meta-cognitive strategies more frequently than the less proficient listeners, and the variations in this type of strategy use had a statistically significant relation to the listening ability. In Hsueh-Jui's (2008) investigation, which aimed to examine the interrelationship between

learners' listening strategy use across listening ability, and learning style, a sample of 101 Taiwanese university EFL students was surveyed with two structured pencil and paper questionnaires of listening strategy use and learning style. The results suggested that there was a statistically significant difference between the strategy use and the attainment levels and also suggested that listening strategy use was significantly associated with learning styles.

In another study, Birjandi and Rahimi (2012) worked on the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on the listening performance of EFL students. The outcome of this statistical analysis indicated that once students are made aware of successful strategies and more importantly discover the learning strategies that suit them best, they will be better motivated and thus able to become more effective learners. Ghasemi, Mohammadkhani, and Hosseini (2014) also stated that learners' listening strategy use is negatively correlated with their listening anxiety. In other words, any increase in the students' anxiety is followed by decreases in their employment of listening strategy use and vice versa. Mowlaie and Einy Samarein (2014) conducted a research on 150 language learners to find the relationship among gender, critical thinking and meta-cognitive awareness listening strategies. They found no significance difference between males and females critical abilities but there was a significance difference between their awareness and selection of meta-cognitive listening strategies. In other words, women had more awareness of meta-cognitive listening strategies than men. In Tabeei, Nemat Tabrizi and Ahmadi's (2013) study, it was detected that instruction of metacognitive strategy had a positive effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners and instruction of metacognitive strategy had no differential effect on listening comprehension of female and male learners.

Although there have been many national and international studies considering the role of strategy use and listening anxiety, there has not been an overall consensus over the obtained results. This might be an indication that these subjects are context-dependent and there is a need for their exclusive investigation in different contexts. Consequently, this study tried to take a new look towards the relationship between metacognitive strategy use and listening anxiety considering the role of gender and proficiency level among the Iranian EFL learners living in Neyriz through the following research questions:

- Q1. Is there any relationship between the level of listening anxiety and use of metacognitive listening strategies among the Iranian EFL learners?
- Q2. Are there any differences in the level of listening anxiety across gender and proficiency level of the Iranian EFL learners?
- Q3. Are there any differences in the use of metacognitive strategies across gender and proficiency level of the Iranian EFL learners?

Methodology

Participants

Among the six language learning institutes in Neyriz, two institutes were randomly selected and all their advanced and upper-intermediate learners participated in the study. Among the total number of 105 participants, there were 55 males and 50 females and their age ranged from 16 to 26. Each institute had two upper-intermediate classes. The numbers of language learners in upper-intermediate classes were 13 and 17 in the first institute, but in second institute there were 10 and 20 learners in each class. The first institute also had two advanced classes with 15 and 10 students. In the second institute, there was only one advanced class with 20 students. Therefore, the upper-intermediate level contained 60 students while 45 students were in the advanced level.

Instruments

The first questionnaire used in this study was the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) developed by Vandergrift (2006). The format of the items was on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, however, in this study this format was changed into a 5-point scale as it was believed that the students could not distinguish the differences between the two middle options. Therefore, slightly disagree and partly agree were changed into the option 'no idea/to some extent'. This questionnaire included 21 items and five underlying factors including 'planning-evaluation', 'directed attention', 'person knowledge', 'mental translation', and 'problem-solving'. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, it was piloted among 30 participants similar to the main participants of the study. In this study, the internal consistency estimated for the reliability of the questionnaire was estimated as $\alpha = 0.75$.

The second instrument used in this study was a questionnaire on Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) developed by Kim (2000, cited in Serraj & Noordin, 2013) which consisted of 33 items and three underlying factors including 'tension and worry over English listening', 'lack of confidence in English listening' and 'concern about insufficient prior knowledge'. The participants had to answer the questions by indicating their degree of agreement or disagreement with the items of the questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. Kim (2000) calculated the internal consistency and test-retest reliability for this instrument. The result of internal consistency estimated for the reliability was 0.93 and test-retest reliability was 0.84 (Kılıç, 2007; Kimura, 2008). In this study, the internal consistency estimated for the reliability of these 33 items was calculated as $\alpha = 0.70$.

Procedure

Considering the analytical purposes, two questionnaires were printed in one paper and given to each participant. After obtaining the permission from institute authorities and teachers, the questionnaires were distributed among the EFL students during their class time. First, the researcher explained the format of the questionnaires and the students were informed that it was not an exam with right or wrong answers. It was not necessarily for the participants to write their names, and the students were encouraged to write forthright and honest answers. It took about 15 to 20 minutes for the students to complete the questionnaire. The data collection procedure continued for three weeks.

After data collection, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 21) was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics for the MALQ and FLLA questionnaires including Min, Max, Mean and Standard deviation were calculated. In order to assess the relationship between students' use of metacognitive strategies and the listening anxiety, Spearman correlation coefficient was estimated. To see the difference between males' and females' level of listening anxiety as well as metacognitive strategy use, independent samples *t*-tests were used. Furthermore, the independent samples *t*-test was utilized to investigate the role of students' level of proficiency in relation to their metacognitive strategy use and listening anxiety.

Results

In this part, the results are shown around the three mentioned research questions. First, the results about the relation between students' level of listening anxiety and their use of metacognitive listening strategies are described. The second part mentions any differences in participants' listening anxiety in relation to their gender and level of proficiency, and the last part

examines any differences between males' and females' and upper-intermediate and advanced levels' use of metacognitive strategies.

Metacognitive Strategy Use and Listening Anxiety

A Spearman correlation was conducted to find out the relationship between the participants' level of listening anxiety and their use of metacognitive strategies. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Correlation between Metacognitive Strategy Use and Anxiety*

			Anxiety	Metacognitive
Spearman's rho	Anxiety	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.213*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.029
		N	105	105
	Metacognitive	Correlation Coefficient	-.213*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.
		N	105	105

As Table 1 shows, the correlation coefficient is -.213 which is close to 0 and the p-value from this statistic is .029 which is smaller than 0.05 ($p = .029$). Therefore, there seems to be a weak, negative, but significant correlation between listening anxiety and metacognitive strategy use of the participants.

Listening Anxiety across Gender and Level

The following table displays the descriptive results of the EFL learners' listening anxiety across gender.

Table 2. *Listening Anxiety in Males and Females*

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	55	2.6738	.42938	.05790
Female	50	2.7947	.38997	.05515

As it is displayed in the descriptive statistics of the data, the mean scores in male and female groups are 2.67 and 2.79, respectively. That is, the mean score in the male group is smaller than the female group. Therefore, an independent samples *t*-test was used to see if this difference is significant.

Table 3. *T-test Results for Differences between Males' and Females' Listening Anxiety*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
Anxiety: Equal Variances assumed	.052	.821	-1.505	103	.135	-.12091	.08033	-.28022	.03841
Equal variances not assumed			-1.512	103.00	.134	-.12091	.07996	-.27949	.03768

By looking at the results of Levene's test for equality of variance, significant value is larger than .05 (i.e. .821) and equal variance is assumed. The significant value (2-tailed) is 0.135, having a value more than 0.05. Consequently, the difference between males and females is considered as insignificant.

Furthermore, the researchers were interested in examining the role of gender in relation to the underlying factors of listening anxiety. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the different underlying factors of the listening anxiety questionnaire in males.

Table 4. *Different Underlying Factors of Listening Anxiety in Males*

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Tension and worry over English listening	55	2.9812	.50868	.06859
Lack of confidence in English listening	55	3.0115	.67517	.05863
Concern about the insufficient prior knowledge	55	3.0580	.60073	.08134

As shown in the table, the lowest mean for males is related to tension and worry over English listening (2.98) while the highest mean is for concern about the insufficient prior knowledge (3.05).

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of different underlying factors of listening anxiety questionnaire in females.

	F	S	D	T	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Anxiety Equal variances assumed	.435	.511	4.295	103	.000	.36016	.08386	.19383	.52648
Equal variances not assumed			4.225	88.703	.000	.36016	.08524	.19078	.52953

In order to gain a more comprehensive view of the issue, the underlying factors of the listening anxiety were also examined in relation to the participants' level of proficiency.

Table 8. *Different Underlying Factors of Listening Anxiety in Different Levels*

Factors	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Tension and worry over English listening	upper	60	3.2796	.45277	.05845
	advanced	45	2.9011	.50924	.07591
Lack of confidence in English listening	upper	60	3.1383	.57207	.07385
	advanced	45	2.8444	.51143	.07624
Concern about the insufficient prior knowledge	upper	60	3.2394	.53473	.06903
	Advanced	45	2.8630	.58834	.08770

As Table 8 shows, in all the three mentioned underlying factors, upper-intermediate students have shown a higher level of anxiety. The maximum mean score (3.27) is related to the factor tension and worry in the upper-intermediate group and the minimum mean is for advanced level in lack of confidence in English listening (2.84). Descriptive analysis of data displays that tension and worry over English listening has the maximum in both levels. The minimum scores are also related to the same factor in both levels that is lack of confidence in English listening.

Metacognitive Strategy Use across Gender

To compare the use of metacognitive strategies in two groups of males and females, the mean score for each group was calculated as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. *Gender Differences in Metacognitive Strategy Use*

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	St. Error Mean
Male	55	3.6657	0.35758	0.05057
Female	50	3.5619	0.46579	0.06281

The results demonstrate that the mean score for the female group is 3.56 which is smaller than the mean score for the male group (3.66). To see whether this difference of mean is significant, an independent samples *t*-test was performed.

Table 10. *T Ttest Results for Differences between Males' and Females' Metacognitive Strategy Use*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
Metacognitive Equal Variances assumed	.935	.336	-1.271	103	.206	-.10381	.08164	-.26573	.05811
Equal Variances not Assumed			-1.287	100	.201	-.10381	.08064	-.26378	.05616

Assuming an equal variance ($Sig=.336$), the given amount for the level of significance is $.206$ ($p>.05$) which shows no difference between males and females regarding this subject. To further investigate the role of gender in relation to the use of metacognitive strategies, the underlying factors of metacognitive awareness questionnaire were also examined. Tables 11 and 12 provide the descriptive analyses of this investigation.

Table 11. *Different Underlying Factors of Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire for Males*

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Problem solving	55	3.8353	.43708	.06181
Planning	55	3.4233	.53355	.07545
Directed	55	3.4517	.48594	.06872

attention				
Mental translation	55	3.8067	.71298	.10083
Person knowledge	55	3.2833	.66004	.09334

The outcomes in Table 11 show that the mean score in male group ranges from 3.28 to 3.83. The highest score is related to problem-solving factor in MALQ questionnaire and the lowest one is for the person knowledge factor.

Table 12 shows females' performance in five underlying factors of metacognitive awareness indicating that the average scores in the subscales of MALQ ranged from 3.20 to 3.75. In the female group the same as the male group, the highest score is for problem-solving, but the lowest score goes to the directed attention subscale. However, comparing the means of each factor shows that the male group, although to a limited extent, have outperformed the females in the use of metacognitive strategies.

Table 12. *Different Underlying Factors of Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire for Females*

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Problem solving	50	3.7509	.72279	.09746
Planning	50	3.4345	.70638	.09525
Directed attention	50	3.2091	.60707	.08186
Mental translation	50	3.3182	.95273	.12847
Person knowledge	50	3.2636	.81378	.10973

In order to investigate the role of participants' level of proficiency in the use of metacognitive strategies, the mean score of each group is presented in the following table. Based on the obtained results, the mean score in upper-intermediate level (3.47) is lower than the mean score in advanced level (3.57).

Table 13. *Metacognitive Strategy Use in Upper-intermediate and Advanced Levels*

Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	St. Error Mean
Upper	60	3.4777	.35728	.05326
Advanced	45	3.5747	.43716	.05644

Therefore, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the significance of this difference.

Table 14. *T-test Results for Differences between Upper-intermediate and Advanced Levels in their Metacognitive Strategy Use*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig	t					Lower	Upper
Metacognitive Equal variances assumed	.491	.485	1.216	103	.227	.09709	.07986	-.06137	.25547
Equal variances not assumed			1.251	102	.214	.09709	.07760	-.05683	.25100

Considering the Levene's test of equality, the data shows equal variance for two groups. The p -value is .227 which is larger than 0.05 ($p=.227$) indicating that the mean difference between the two levels is not significant.

In addition, descriptive analyses of upper-intermediate and advanced level participants regarding their differences in use of the underlying factors of Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) are illustrated in Table 15.

Table 15. *Different Underlying Factors of Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire in Different Levels*

Factors	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Problem solving	Upper	60	3.7678	.58535	.07557
	Advanced	45	3.8222	.63006	.09392
Planning	Upper	60	3.4111	.57547	.07429
	Advanced	45	3.4533	.69596	.10375
Directed attention	Upper	60	3.4292	.60810	.07850
	Advanced	45	3.1852	.46868	.06987

Advanced					
Mental	translation	60	3.6472	.79906	.10316
Upper		45	3.4222	.96766	.14425
Advanced					
Person	knowledge	60	3.3028	.75007	.09683
Upper		45	3.2333	.73547	.10964

Advanced

By comparison of the mean scores in two groups, it can be realized that for the advanced level, the highest mean is related to problem solving factor ($M= 3.82$) and the lowest mean to directed attention factor ($M= 3.18$). For the upper-intermediate level problem solving factor has also the maximum mean with the amount $M= 3.76$, while the minimum score is related to person knowledge factor with the mean of 3.30. Although there are minor differences between the two groups' means, both show an average awareness of metacognitive strategies.

Discussion

The first research question of this study deals with the relationship between the participants' level of listening anxiety and use of metacognitive listening strategies. As it was shown in Table 1, there was a weak but significance negative relationship between listening anxiety and metacognitive strategies use. There are several reasons that might explain the weakness of this correlation including the participants' lack of enough attention when answering the questionnaires, the number of participants as well as methods of sampling and gathering data. However, other studies like Mohammadi Golchi (2012), Sioson (2011) and Lu and Liu (2011), have shown that there is a strong negative correlation between strategy use and listening anxiety which means that increase or decrease in listening anxiety significantly relates to increases or decreases in metacognitive strategy use.

While listening anxiety can cause the unpredictability and uncontrollability of reasons, processes, and results in language learning; metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluation can help overcoming these kinds of problems. Listening anxiety and metacognitive strategies are independent but related because they both have got a role in listening process during which they interplay with each other. In other words, it can be said that low anxiety plays a facilitative role in the listening process. When there is a high level of anxiety, students are easily distracted from listening. Many students walk into an FL classroom feeling nervous and having fear of failure. They tend to think more about their failure and the negative evaluation of their teachers and classmates than the process of listening they are involved in. While low anxious students put more energy in the task itself and their concentration is not divided. Hence, they tend to use more metacognitive strategies while they are listening (Han, 2014).

The second research question considered the role of gender and proficiency level in participants' listening anxiety. As revealed in Tables 2 and 3, the outcomes indicated that there was no significant difference between males and females in listening anxiety which is consistent with the findings represented by Elkhafafi (2005) and Ko (2010). However, there was still a difference in the type of factor that produces the highest anxiety for each group which could be an indication of the presence of some differences between the two. Some previous research has

also shown that males typically score lower on measurements of test anxiety than females (E.g. Ferrando, Varea, & Lorenzo, 1999; Lashkaripour, 2006; Mehregan, Najjarian & Ahmadi, 2009). These studies have mentioned different reasons for their findings such as girls are essentially afraid to fail; males are more defensive about admitting anxiety because it might be seen as threatening to their masculinity, and males are trained to cope with anxiety by denying it or by finding ways to overcome it (Mousavi, Haghshenas, & Alishahi, 2008).

Examining the role of proficiency level in participants' listening anxiety, the results indicated that the learners having a higher level of proficiency were less anxious in their listening performance (See Tables 6 and 7). However, both upper-intermediate level and advanced level groups showed a similar performance in relation to the underlying factors of listening anxiety (See Table 8). These outcomes could be supported by a series of studies such as Elkhafaifi (2005) and Wang (2010) who have found a correlation between language learners' level of anxiety and proficiency level. The obtained results are also directly in line with the results of Soodmand Afshar and Hamzavi (2014) who found that Iranian advanced level EFL learners demonstrated a lower level of listening anxiety than their intermediate level counterparts. The reason for this might be because the students in higher levels of proficiency would probably possess greater expertise in listening comprehension which would result in their lower level of anxiety regarding the understanding of the spoken language in comparison to intermediate level students.

The last part of this study analyzed the role of gender and proficiency level in relation to the learners' use of metacognitive strategies. No difference was detected regarding males' and females' overall use of metacognitive strategies, but the outcomes showed a difference in the type of strategy used by different genders (See Tables 11 and 12). Although these results are consistent with a series of studies like Abu Shamis (2003) and Wharton (2000), they are not in line with Mowlaie, Einy, and Samarein's (2014) and Khalil's (2005) studies who suggest that women tend to use more meta-cognitive strategies than men. What can be concluded from these outcomes is that further research is required to investigate the reasons behind this inconsistency. Some of the anticipated reasons might be contextual and environmental factors, methods of study, and types of participants.

In addition, considering Tables 13 and 14, no difference was detected between the two levels of proficiency in using metacognitive strategies and both levels of proficiency revealed an average use of these strategies. These outcomes are not in line with what has been suggested by other scholars like Khalil (2005), Magogwe and Oliver (2007) and Shmais (2003) who have stated that more proficient learners usually use more strategies than less proficient ones. The reason for gaining such results suggests the need for further investigation into a series of factors such as type of different strategies used by learners, their learning environment, their age, their first language, method of research and sampling, etc.

Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between EFL learners' listening anxiety and their metacognitive strategy use. It also aimed at examining this relationship across learners' gender and proficiency level. Based on the findings, the relationship between listening anxiety and metacognitive strategy use showed a low negative correlation. In addition, the findings demonstrated no significant difference between males and females regarding their listening anxiety and use of metacognitive strategies. However, considering their proficiency level, the upper-intermediate level students showed more anxiety in comparison to their advanced level counterparts.

The outcomes of this study could remind teachers not to just focus on the instruction of a series of strategies, but to consider learners' characteristics and the type of strategies that can improve their listening performance. Chamot and Rubin (1994) emphasized this issue mentioning that "the good language learner cannot be described in terms of a single set of strategies but rather through the ability to understand and develop a personal set of effective strategies" (p. 372). Thus, teachers can acquaint EFL learners with the importance of listening strategies and the possible methods of their application with the aim of reducing their listening anxiety and enhancing their listening comprehension.

Another implication of this study is for teachers to consider helping their students in becoming self-regulated and gaining the ability to learn how to plan, monitor, and evaluate themselves in a listening task in order to improve their performance. Moreover, this study may have an implication for syllabus designers and EFL material developers to consider providing learners with techniques, strategies and helpful hints which can reduce their anxiety and becoming more proficient listeners. Furthermore, the results of the current study imply that MALQ questionnaire can help teachers identify the areas in which L2 learners are in need of strategic learning.

Nevertheless, there are some areas which require further research including the investigation of other variables such as age, belief, experience, and other levels of proficiency in relation to listening anxiety and use of metacognitive strategies in order to find more beneficial and applicable ways to improve the students' listening performance.

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Appendix

Dear students, here is a list of statements dealing with strategy use and listening skill. For each statement, please indicate whether you strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), No idea (3), agree (4) or strongly agree (5). Please read each statement carefully and based on your first reaction to each statement, mark an answer for every statement. Your careful answers would provide a great help in reaching the research goals. Be assured that your responses will remain confidential to the researcher. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Gender: male

female

Level: upper-intermediate

advanced

No	Questions	Strongly disagree	disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly
1	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.					
2	I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.					
3	I find that listening in French is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing in French.					
4	I translate in my head as I listen.					
5	I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.					
6	When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away.					
7	As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic.					
8	I feel that listening comprehension in French is a challenge for me.					
9	I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand.					
10	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.					
11	I translate key words as I listen.					
12	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.					
13	As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.					
14	After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.					
15	I don't feel nervous when I listen to French.					
16	When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I give up and stop listening.					
17	I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand.					
18	I translate word by word, as I listen.					
19	When I guess the meaning of a word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense.					
20	As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.					
21	I have a goal in mind as I listen.					
22	I get stuck with one or two unfamiliar words.					
22	I get stuck with one or two unfamiliar words.					
23	I get nervous if listening test passages are read just once.					
24	It is difficult to understand people with English					

	pronunciation that is different from mine.					
25	I worry that I might not be able to understand when people talk too fast.					
26	I am nervous when I'm not familiar with the topic.					
27	It is easy to make guesses about the parts I missed.					
28	I worry that I might have missed important information while I was distracted.					
29	I am worried when I cannot see the lips or facial expressions of the person.					
30	I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word in listening test situations.					
31	It is difficult to differentiate words.					
32	I feel uncomfortable listening without a chance to read the transcript of the speech.					
33	I have difficulty in understanding oral instructions.					
34	It is difficult to concentrate on and hear a speaker I do not know well.					
35	I feel confident in my listening skills.					
36	I often get so confused that I cannot remember what I have heard.					
37	I fear I might have an inadequate knowledge about the topic.					
38	My thoughts become jumbled and confused in listening for important information.					
39	I get worried when I have little time to think about what I have heard.					
40	I often end up translating word by word without understanding what I'm listening to.					
41	I would rather not listen to people talking in English.					
42	I get worried when I cannot listen at the pace I'm comfortable with.					
43	I tend to think that other people understand the content well enough.					
44	I get upset when I'm not sure whether I have understood well.					
45	I am worried I might not understand when the person lowers their voice while speaking in English.					
46	I have no fear of listening to public speeches in English.					
47	I am nervous when listening to English over the phone or when imagining myself listening over the phone.					
48	I feel tense when listening to, or imagining myself listening to, a lecture.					
49	I have difficulty when the environment around me is noisy.					

50	Listening to new information makes me uneasy.					
51	I get annoyed when I come across new words.					
52	English stress and intonation patterns are familiar to me.					
53	It often happens that I do not understand what English speakers say.					
54	The thought that I may be missing key words frightens me.					