Egyptian EFL Students Attitudes and Perceptions as Precursors of the Success/Failure of Using Podcasts as a Means of Aural Input in a Metacognitive Awareness Raising Strategy Training Programme, with Particular Reference to Listening

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Abstract

Listening plays a quintessential role in learning and communicating in a second language. Nevertheless, Egyptian English as Foreign (EFL) learners, due to several challenges that constrain the teaching of listening in Egypt, perceive listening as a difficult skill to be learnt. Hence, the current study has aimed to investigate the impact of metacognitive strategy training on raising Egyptian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness while listening to podcasts. Data were collected through the participation of eighty-three undergraduate students at a private university in Egypt who filled out the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006) over three points of time. Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the metacognitive strategy training were explored through their writing of listening journals and their participating in focus group interviews. The findings of this research provide evidence that the metacognitive strategy training via the implementation of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence enabled participants to evaluate the metacognitive knowledge they employed while listening, assess its effectiveness, and modify it accordingly if it was impeding their listening abilities and their potential to become autonomous learners. Furthermore, the metacognitive awareness raising training had a positive effect on raising learners' metacognitive awareness though this improvement has been minimal. The paper discusses the results of the analysis of the MALQ as well as the grouping of the factors such as the metacognitive pedagogical sequence, characteristics of the podcasts, collaboration with peers, writing reflections and practising out-of-classroom activities that contributed to the positive perceptions of the learners of the metacognitive awareness raising training. Pedagogical implications for teaching are discussed, along with limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

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Dedication

To my mother and father … thank you

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AR	Action Research
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CA	Communicative Approach
CALLA	The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EL	Extensive Listening
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
MALQ	Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAQAAE	The National Authority of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEM	The Social Educational Model
SI	Strategy Instruction
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
STM	Short-term Memory

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

Listening plays a quintessential role in the acquisition of a first language (L1). This process occurs automatically and effortlessly and irrespective of the first language, the acquisition process for all L1 listeners is completed in about the same amount of time in all languages (Rost, 2011, p.118). Listening is the medium through which an infant gets to explore the world, learn to talk and interact with others. It is at the heart of all verbal communication that occurs in our daily life. Listening is often used in all aspects of life whether formal or informal, academic and in both transactional and interactional contexts. A recent study by Janusik and Wolvin (2009) showed that students spend 48% of their time communicating with friends, followed by time in school, at work and with families. Students spend 24 % of their time listening, 20% speaking, 13% using the Internet, 9% writing and 8 % reading.

In addition to its crucial role in first language acquisition (Rost, 2011; Vandergrift, 1997, 2004; Dunkel, 1991; Feyten, 1991), the significance of listening in language learning has been widely recognised (Vandergrift, 2007; Rubin, 1994). Good listening skills also play a significant role in academic success (Wolvin and Coakley, 2012, p.143). There is a need for foreign language learners to understand target language speakers and access the copious amounts of aural information, in addition to the visual information, that they are bound to encounter in everyday situations. Furthermore, because listening comprehension internalises the rules of language, it also "facilitates the emergence of other language skills" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.4).

Despite the importance of listening comprehension, many foreign language learners perceive it as the most difficult skill to be learnt (Hasan, 2000). This could be attributed to the various factors that could have an impact on listening processes (Rubin, 1994). These factors could compound processing difficulties such as speaker's accent, speech rate, multiple speakers, unfamiliar language, working memory, noise interference and hearing problems (see 2.2.3). Accordingly, listeners use steps strategies in order to cope with these difficulties and to facilitate their comprehension of the spoken text. Among the strategies learners employ are metacognitive strategies. Simply defined, metacognition refers to knowledge about learning (Wenden, 1998). It is as literature has shown the most reliable predictor of language learning (Wang et al., 1990). The benefits of metacognitive instruction have also been well established in other disciplines such as mathematics (Carr, 2010) and in the development of other language skills like reading (Dabarera et al., 2014; Shoery and Mokhtari, 2001), and writing (Harris, K.R et al., 2010). Learners use metacognitive strategies to predict, monitor and evaluate their own learning (Wenden, 1998). The use of these strategies would develop metacognitive knowledge which in turn would lead to the development of self-regulated learning (Goh and Taib, 2006; Vandergrift, 2002a, 2003b).

Therefore, awareness and employment of successful listening strategies (Vandergrift, 1996) can foster autonomous learners.

1.2 Context of the Study

The Basic Education phase in Egypt is compulsory and starts from Grade 1 until Grade 9. Upon the completion of the ninth year, students are awarded a *Basic Education Certificate*. Based on the scores on this certificate, students either join Secondary education, which lasts for 3 years, or if the grades are not satisfactory on the *Basic Education Certificate*, students are forced to join either the technical secondary education track or the vocational secondary education track. These, in turn, feed into different types of secondary schools where the study varies from 2 years to 5 years (see Figure 1.1). Moreover, those students who join the General secondary school would have to sit the General Secondary School Certificate or *Thanaweya Amma* after 3 years of schooling.

Parallel to *Thanaweya Amma*, there are other types of secondary certificates upon completion of which students are allowed to join college. These are Azhar Secondary Certificate where students study Islamic subjects in addition to the subjects of the General Secondary Certificate (Thanweya Amma). Furthermore, there are the international certificates such as the IGCSE, the American SAT, the French Baccalaureate and the German Abitur.

The scores of these exams dictate which college the students will get enrolled in according to the percentages set by the Supreme Council of Higher Education. This council meets each year by the end of the academic year, after the results of the above mentioned exams have been announced to students, and determines the percentages students should get in order to join the college of their choice.

Age of learner	Years of study at level
23	6
22	5
21	4
20	3
19	2
18	1
17	3
16	2
15	1
14	3
13	2
12	1
11	6
10	5
9	4
8	3
7	2
6	1

Tertiary level

General secondary education

Technical secondary education 3 yrs

Technical secondary education 5 yrs

Vocational schools or centers 3 yrs

Vocational training 2 yrs

Preparatory level

Vocational prep.

Primary level

Basic education
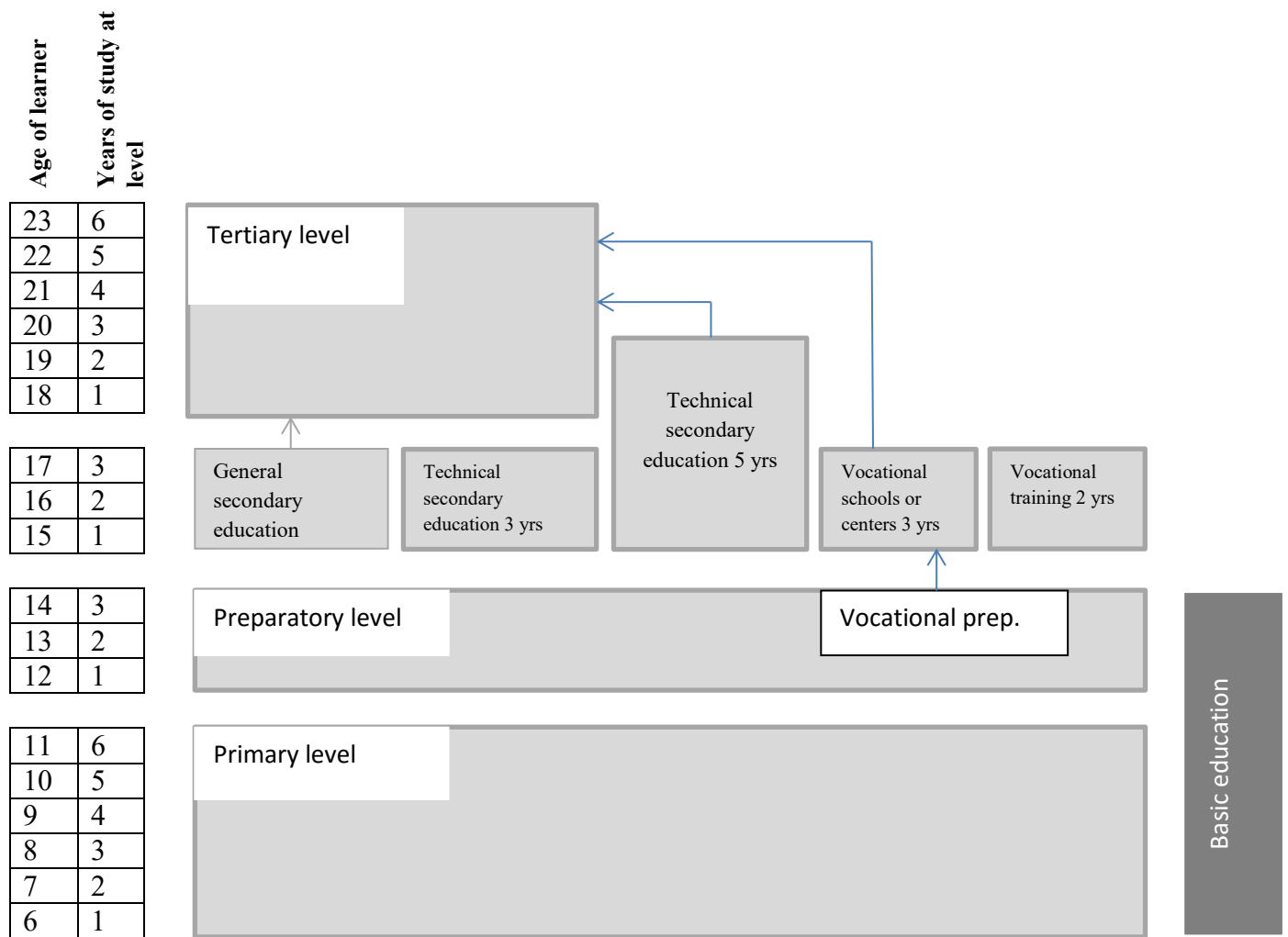
Figure 1.1: Structure and Organisation of the Education System (Adapted from Mcllwraith and Fortune, 2016, p. 22).

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1.2.1 The Status of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Egypt

The teaching of English as a foreign language is mandatory from Grade 1 until Grade 12. The Ministry of Education (MOE) National Framework for English as a Foreign Language acknowledges the importance of teaching English:

> English is the principal international language of diplomacy, knowledge, business and tourism. Thus, it has a dominant position in international media, in science, and in modern technology. A high percentage of world publications in science, technology and commerce is published in English. That is why learning English as a foreign language is assuming an increasing importance worldwide as well as in Egypt both within and outside the school system. Through learning English, learners will develop the confidence to communicate effectively in speaking, listening, reading and writing English that will enable them to participate actively in a global society.
>
> (El-Araby *et al*., 2012, p.4)

Accordingly, the overall aim of teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt is stated as follows:

> The overall aim of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum is to equip learners linguistically and to enhance their ability to communicate successfully in a global society. The EFL curriculum is designed to equip learners with the necessary English language skills to pursue their higher studies or to enter the labour market. It is essential that those completing Grade 12 achieve the expected level of competence in the four language skills in English according to the standards developed by The National Authority of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE).
>
> (El -Araby *et al*., 2012, p.5)

Although the above mentioned quotations attest the MOE's realisation of the importance of teaching ELT and the methods and approaches needed to achieve the overall aim, there are a number of factors that constrain the teaching of ELT in Egypt. Some of these

factors are related to the constraints related to the educational system and force teachers to follow a certain approach of teaching, whereas the other factors pertain to the teacher preparation and training. These factors are closely interrelated (Abdel Aal, 2002, p.8).

Constraints related to the educational system are illustrated by low pay, crowded classes, private tutoring, poor teaching culture, and lack of resources. These factors hamper any attempts on the part of the teacher to move to a learner-centred approach. For instance, the class size in some classes could mount up to 100 or even 120 students per class (Mcllwraith and Fortune, 2016, p.4). This would not give the teachers the chance to conduct any pair or group work. Rather they would adopt a traditional approach of teaching that is teacher-dominated as teachers do not have space to move around the class or to implement any communicative activities. Lack of time is another constraint that impacts teaching of English negatively. In secondary schools, for example, the teaching of English is allotted five 40 - 45 sessions per week (Mcllwraith and Fortune, 2016, p.5). Consequently, teachers have to be selective of the teaching of grammar, vocabulary and reading at the expense of overlooking the teaching of listening, speaking and sometimes writing.

One of the problems of the Egyptian educational system is that it is exam-oriented. In public schools, end-of-year exams are the indicators of the success of students and based on which students can be promoted from one educational stage to the other (Gebril and Brown, 2014, p.19). This led Hargreaves (1997, 2001) to label the General Secondary Certificate or *Thanaweya Amma* which was mentioned above as the "Diploma Disease". It is the "prize at the end" (Hargreaves, 1997) and in order to win it, the parents, the students and the teachers are expending their utmost efforts since getting high scores

could determine the future of the learners. However, such an exam-governed approach would encourage the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing and overlook the enhancement of the listening and speaking skills which contradicts the above discussed overall aim of English that targets competence in the four language skills.

Other factors that challenge the teaching of ELT pertain to the training and preparation of teachers. Teachers are not adequately prepared. They study English language or literature at either the faculties of education or the faculties of arts. There is also another class of teachers, who are called "non-specialists" as their speciality is different from English, still they can join a special programme at the faculties of education and after studying a diploma for a year become English language teachers. "Non-specialists represent 41% of the total of teachers of English" (Abdel Aal, 2002, p. 9). Thus, this accounts for the low proficiency level of the teachers which in turn affects the conduct of communicative activities such as listening and speaking in class since teachers themselves do not have good command of the language at their disposal. Related to the preparation of teachers is their training and the teaching culture as some trainees commented that senior teachers advised them to forget about what they had learned at college "it's just theoretical. This is the real world" (Mcllwraith and Fortune, 2016, p. 5).

1.2.1.1. The Nature of Teaching Listening

Based on the overall aim of teaching English that was discussed in the previous section, a number of standards for the teaching listening from grades 1 -12 have been set by the National Curriculum Framework for English as a Foreign Language (2012):

Standard 1: Learners identify and discriminate sounds, stress, and intonation patterns.
Standard 2: Learners listen and responds to spoken discourse from a variety of sources.
Standard 3: Learners use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to help achieve the learning outcomes of listening
Standard 4: Learners gain knowledge and understanding of target cultures through listening.
Standard 5: Learners practise higher level thinking skills while listening.

(El - Araby *et al*., 2012)

Given the constraints of teaching ELT mentioned above, the teaching of listening will not be an exception. Both the teachers and the learners have their concerns regarding the teaching of listening. As for the teachers, the teaching of the listening skills itself is a daunting task and they depreciate teaching it for a number of reasons. Unlike the teaching of both reading and speaking that reflect both the effort the teacher exerted and the performance of the learners, the listening skill is an unobservable skill and irrespective of the effort expended and the extensive practice carried out, the listening skill is not measurable and the outcome might be unsatisfactory (Field, 2008, p.1). In addition, as mentioned above, education is Egypt is exam-oriented. Consequently, teachers neglect teaching listening to the teaching of other tangible skills such as speaking, reading and writing or in favour of the teaching of vocabulary and grammar. In most cases, teachers would justify the neglect of the teaching of listening on the pretexts that as long as the learners could pick up the mother tongue without any effort, the acquisition of an L2 will follow the same path without any intervention from the teacher and that by extensive exposure learners will get used to the language and will transfer L1 listening skills to the target language (Field, 2008, p.2).

In Eltawila's (2009) study ten teachers were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the causes that led them to neglect teaching listening in the Egyptian preparatory schools. The researcher summarises the reasons as follows:

1. There is a shortage of professional training in the teacher education/training programmes.
2. The supervisors do not give sufficient support for the EFL teachers in teaching listening.
3. The teaching aids for the listening exercises are not sufficient or available.
4. The listening skill is not included in the examination system.

(Eltawila, 2009, p. 29)

From the learners' perspective, listening in a target language is a difficult skill (Graham, 2003; Hasan, 2000) since the nature of the spoken text takes place in real time, learners do not have the chance of repeating what they might have missed or slow it down (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Field, 2008) . This could result in loss of confidence and consequently listening could become a source of anxiety (Elkhafaifi, 2005).

1.3 Identification of the Problem

The above mentioned status of the teaching of listening within the Egyptian context motivated me to carry out the current study. In September 2012, the college of language and media, where I work, was launched. I was then assigned the teaching of the Listening course, an academic course. I kept thinking then about how I could help these learners especially as I had experience in teaching different English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses such as English for Marine Engineering, English for Engineering and English for Business Administration but it was the first time for me to teach an academic course. Hence, in the first semester, I designed a course that was aimed mainly at enhancing

learners' listening and communicative skills. However, casual discussions with the students about their pre-tertiary experience with the teaching of listening revealed how some of them did not have any kind of listening throughout the years of their school education and how even some of them were "afraid" to listen in English. Even those who did have a form of prior teaching of listening were not satisfied. All this made me question the benefit of what I was teaching and I started to ask myself whether the approach of "listen, answer, check" would be of any benefit to these students, most of whom will be prospective translators/ interpreters or the manpower of the field of media with all its specialisations. This is a course that students study in their first year of undergraduate studies but the listening skill is very crucial and they will definitely need to be good at it throughout their lives, if not master it. What could I do to make the effects of this course be transferred to other skills and materials later on? The prospective career of these learners would necessitate a lot of listening. Given the fact that speech takes place in real time (Buck, 2001) where there is no repetition of what is said or what the interlocutor utters, how would these learners be able to catch up with what they listen to? How can I help learners change their attitude or perspective towards listening in the English language? Trying to find an answer to these questions motivated me to design a metacognitive strategy training with special reference to listening.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

There is a great need for learners of language and media after graduation and working in their fields of specialisation to have a good repertoire of listening strategies at their disposal. Field (2008, p.5) observes that learners can choose from among two channels "to extend their knowledge of the target language" once they leave the classroom. The

first channel pertains to reading in order to get exposed to the written word. In the

second channel, learners will get exposed to the spoken word through listening to

different forms of aural media such as "videos, radio broadcasts, podcasts, talks,

announcements or to an interlocutor" (Field, 2008, p.5). According to Field, listening is

the channel that "enriches the spoken competence" of the learners through providing

them with "new syntactic, lexical, phonological and pragmatic information" (Field, 2008,

p.5). However, this wealth of material is only accessible to those who can "crack the code

of speech with a fair degree of confidence" (Field, 2008, p.5). Accordingly, it is of

paramount importance to train learners in listening with the aim of fostering their

autonomous learning (Field, 2008, p.5).

Taking all the above mentioned factors and the need to help my students become

autonomous learners into account, I thought of adopting a metacognitive approach in

teaching the listening course.

According to Vandergrift and Goh, the goal of a metacognitive approach to listening is to

develop learners who:

- understand the challenge of listening in a second language;
- think about their learning development individually and collaboratively with others;
- habitually make plans to self-direct and manage their progress in listening;
- use listening strategies appropriately;
- have greater self-efficacy and motivation; and, last but not least,
- can improve their listening proficiency to process aural input and engage effectively in oral interaction.

(Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.83)

By achieving these goals, the aim of the strategy training would be to foster an autonomous learner. Moreover, in the field of listening, different interventions have been carried out which yielded positive results (see Goh and Hu, 2014; Cross, 2011; Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010; Graham and Macaro, 2008; Mareschal, 2007; Goh and Taib, 2006).

Hence, Goh (2008, p.196) enumerates the benefits of metacognitive strategy instruction which could be summarised as follows:

1) it enhances learners' motivation which, in turn, taps their motivation and alleviates anxiety;
2) it affects listening performance positively,
3) it is beneficial to a greatest extent for weak students.

1.5 Aim of the Study and Research Questions

Given the above mentioned benefits of listening metacognitive instruction, the aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of using podcasts as a medium of aural input to raise Egyptian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness. The investigation attempted to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are EFL learners aware of their listening metacognitive strategies?

2. What impact does metacognitive strategy training have on raising Egyptian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness?

3. What is the relationship between metacognitive awareness and listening strategy use?

4. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the metacognitive strategy awareness training?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It was hoped by the conduct of the present study that it would contribute to the fields of language learning, listening instruction, and listening strategy resarch.

As for the field of language learning, with particular reference to the Egyptian context, the study would allow English language educators to unravel the intricacies and complexities that constrain teaching English in Egypt. It would give them the opportunity to view the learners as deemed responsible for their own learning and agents of it. As Socrates states "Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel." Furthermore, by adopting metacognitive instruction, teachers would raise learners' awareness of how they could plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.

In terms of the significance of the present study to the teaching of the listening skill within the Egyptian context, the focus of teaching the skill should not be teaching for exams or that the learners answer questions correctly regardless whether they comprehend what they are listening to or not. Rather listening instruction should target the teaching of the process of listening and listen to learners' voices by giving them the chance to reflect on their listening processes and express their thoughts and perceptions regarding the teaching of listening.

Finally, with regard to the contribution of the present study to the field of listening strategy research, it adds to the very small database of research carried out on the skill of listening in the Egyptian context. It also gives insight into the effect of implementing a metacognitive pedagogical cycle and how this approach could be imparted to the teaching of other skills, thus, giving learners the chance to think and reflect on their learning processes. It is also hoped, although this study is relatively

small-scaled, that it would add to the field of strategy instuction in general since research into the filed of metacognitive awareness in relatively new (Goh, 2008, p.196). By implementing a new approach to teaching listening and listening to students' voices and perceptions, this could have an impact on the view of listening instruction and how it should not be based on the communicative approach. Rather there should be a paradigm shift where the learners' perceptions and attitudes are the focus of control of listening strategy instruction.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of the terms and constructs that are going to be dealt with in the study and which need to be clarified.

- **Placement Test vs Proficiency Test**

There is a difference between the American use of the word placement test and the British use of the word. For the Americans, it means a proficiency test that learnres sit for and based on the scores they obtain, they are placed in language courses. Placement test in UK, on the other hand, denotes placing people in jobs. Hence, there is a difference between the two cultures in using the term "placement". In addition, given that the term proficiency refers to "the facility with which an individual can cope with the communication needs of a given task, or a given situation" (Spolsky, 1968, cited in Aitken, 1977, p.62), the present study will use the British term "proficiency" to reduce any ambiguty the term "placement" might cause.

- **EFL vs ESL**

Gass and Selinker (2008) differentiate between the terms of *Foreign Language* and *Second Language Acquisition*. The former refers to the learning of a "nonnative language in the environment of one's native language" and that usually takes place in the classroom setting (Gass and Selinker, 2008, p.7). Conversely, in *Second Langauge Aqcuisition*, students learn " a nonnative language in the environment in which that language is spoken" (Gass and Selinker, 2008, p.7). This learning does not necessarily take place in the classroom. Given that the setting in which the study takes place is one of the Egyptian colleges, where the exposure to the target language, English, normally takes place in the language classroom, the term teaching English as a Foreign Language (henceforth, EFL) will be used throughout the study.

1.8 Overview of Thesis Chapters

Chapter 1 sets the scence for the the thesis. First, a general background of listening is presented. Then, it sheds the light on the context of teaching English in Egypt in general and the teaching of listening within the Egyptian context in particular. The rationale for carrying out the study is also discussed and the significance of the study to the teaching of listening within the Egyptian context is stressed. Finally, the chapter ends with an overview of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the construct of listening in addition to theories involved in the listening process. It also focuses on the factors that could impact listening negatively. This is followed by a historical account of the attempts of listening instruction until strategy research is reached. Criticism levelled at strategy research with regard to

definition, classification, teachability, research methodology and analysis is reviewed. Models of strategy instruction in general including listening strategy instruction are scrutinised. Particular reference is made to the metacognitive pedagogical sequence and the studies that pertain to the current study. The chapter also sheds light on language motivation and how it could have an impact on listening strategy instruction. Finally, a brief review of the podcasts with particular reference to the field of listening is provided.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the explanation of the research methodology implemented in the present study. First, the ontological and epistemological views adopted in the study are presented. This is followed by shedding the light on the research methodology, context, selection of participants and the rationale for material selection. This chapter also reports on the pilot study. The advantages and disadvantages of each research instrument used in the present study are also highlighted. Finally, the chapter ends with the discussion of the data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 presents first the data collected via the qualitative instruments implemented in the study – namely, listening journals, final reflection papers, and focus group interviews. Results yielded through the quantitative instrument, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) are also dispalyed.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings of the present study and their pertinence to answering the research questions. Both limitations and delimitations of the present study are also discussed. Moreover, the contribution of the study to the field of listening strategy research is highlighted . The chapter also presents recommendations for future

research in addition to pedagogical implications. The final section offers a proposed

framework for constructing an academic listening proficiency test.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Before reviewing literature and the related studies, it would be helpful to put the motivation for writing this dissertation in a personal context. As a child, my parents sent me to a German language school in Alexandria, where I live. The German language, which was the first foreign language (L1) that I learnt, was divided into many components and listening was one of them. We used to have monthly exams in addition to those that were held in the middle and at the end of the school year. Exams of the German language included testing our listening comprehension which was a daunting task for a six-year-old child. We listened once to the audio without reading any questions and then we were required to answer questions based on our memory. Normally, the listening audio was an anecdote that was full of events and incidents and that were required to recall. That was very frustrating and made me anxious as I did not know how to respond to questions. As time progressed and I became older, I got used to such types of questions and I learnt on my own - no teacher taught me any techniques - to concentrate well and to try to commit to memory that I was listening to and to anticipate the important incidents that I might be asked to remember. I have always wondered why the listening comprehension part has always been that demanding.

After I started working as a college teacher, I observed that my students started to feel anxious whenever they had a listening task. Since I taught a variety of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses, I have always heard the same complaint "listening is difficult", "I do not know how to answer the listening comprehension questions".

Moreover, casual conversations with students revealed that the majority of them did not have any kind of listening instruction throughout their school years. Even those who carried out listening activities were only required either to fill in gaps or decide whether a statement was true or false but they were not taught how to manage a listening activity.

Learners' frustration and anxiety reminded me of mine when I was a child. Consequently, I thought of trying to find ways to help them. My first attempt was in writing my MA thesis by identifying Arab learners' listening strategies. The participants were seafarers, who were bound to communicate with crew members of different nationalities. That contact could be in the context of formal and informal situations and students needed to be able to understand spoken English (Ghoneim, 2009). Any kind of miscommunication or communication breakdown could lead to dire consequences. Though it was an exploratory study, it showed that the participants, who were of an intermediate and an advanced level of proficiency of English, employed different types of strategies while listening.

This research study seeks to help my students by trying to teach them strategies instead of just exploring their use of these strategies. Moreover, since September 2012, I started teaching the Listening course at one of the colleges at the university where I work that is specialised in media and translation. Upon graduation, learners will either work as translators/ interpreters or some of them will join the media field. Hence, they need to have a good command of the listening skill. Unfortunately, the course that I teach is only offered in the first semester of college; consequently, my thoughts were focused on finding a way that would enable these students to practise listening beyond the classroom and, in turn, become autonomous learners.

It would be useful to return to the research questions identified in the previous section:

1. To what extent are EFL learners aware of their listening metacognitive strategies?
2. What impact does metacognitive strategy training have on raising EFL learners' metacognitive awareness?
3. What is the relationship between high metacognitive awareness and listening strategy use?
4. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the metacognitive strategy awareness training?

Accordingly, the current literature review will be organised under the following headings:

- Listening comprehension
- Language learning strategies (LLS)
- L2 motivation
- Podcasting

2.2 Listening Comprehension

Despite the vital role listening plays in communication and how any breakdown in communication could compromise understanding, many teachers and educators think of listening as a process where an oral message is converted into a meaning in the mind of the listener. Hence, this meaning could be assessed simply through a "listen, answer, check" approach. This view of listening has existed for decades. Nevertheless, the listening comprehension process is very "complex" and "opaque" and not much has been revealed about it and as Dunkel (1991, p. 434) comments "it is remarkable that there is so little understanding of a process that is so vitally important for an individual's survival and prosperity in interpersonal relationships, and in the academic and corporate environments .

In an attempt to shed light on listening comprehension, this section is an overview of listening comprehension. The lack of a consensus regarding the definition of the term *listening comprehension* will be addressed. Furthermore, this section will highlight the role listening comprehension plays in second language acquisition (SLA). The processes that govern listening comprehension in addition to the basic terms pertinent to listening comprehension will be discussed. Finally, the section concludes by shedding light on the traditional approaches of teaching listening and moving towards a strategy-based approach.

2.2.1 Definition of Listening

We spend more than forty-five percent of our total communication time listening (Feyten, 1991). Hence, it would seem incontrovertible to provide a definition of listening; however, the issue of reaching a watertight definition has long been recognised as debatable in literature (Dunkel, 1991; Feyten, 1991; Rost, 1990). This lack of a unanimous definition could be attributed partly to the "covert nature" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.270) of the listening skill and partly to the fact that throughout the years, researchers tended to define listening in accordance with their personal and theoretical interests in the topic (Rost, 2011, p.1). Rost states that:

> Because listening is essentially a transient and invisible process that cannot be observed directly, we need indirect descriptions – analogies and metaphors to describe it. Here again, we find our descriptions consistent with our current perspective. A common metaphor from many people maybe in terms of getting something: listening means catching what the speaker says. Among others, there is the familiar transaction allusion: listening is a type of negotiation for information or some desirable outcome.

(Rost, 2011, p.2)

Though it has been difficult to establish a meaning for listening and despite the fact that early definitions focused on stages and constructs of the process (Glenn, 1989, cited in Wolvin, 2015; Witkin and Trochim, 1997), a contingent of authors have agreed on the fundamental components of listening. Listening is viewed as an active, "constructive process in which the participant is an active participant" (Nunan, 1998, p.5). It is a process that involves four interrelated processes: receiving, attending to and constructing meaning, responding to aural and/ or nonverbal message and creating meaning that is based on a number of complex and on-going cognitive processes (Wolvin, 2015; Rost, 1990, 2011;Buck, 2001; Rubin, 1994). These processes involve a number of different types of knowledge: linguistic knowledge (phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics and discourse), and non-linguistic knowledge (knowledge about the topic, knowledge about the context, world knowledge) (Buck, 2001, pp.1-2). Furthermore, there are other components such as "phoneme recognition, morpheme chunking, lexical recognition, and referential procedures" (Siegel, 2015, p.26) that could have an impact on the process of comprehension.

Despite concerted efforts over the years and recent definitions that recognise listening as both "active and complex" (Siegel, 2015, p.26; Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2010, p.180), there is still no acceptable definition of listening (Janusik, 2010, p. 204). Accordingly, for the purpose of this study, Buck's operational definition of listening will be adopted. The definition states that listening is:

> The ability to 1) process extended samples of realistic spoken language,
> automatically and in real-time; 2) understand the linguistic information that is

unequivocally included in the text; and, 3) to make whatever inferences are unambiguously implicated by the content of the passage.

(Buck, 2001, p.114)

This definition is "flexible" and "broad" to be suitable for most contexts and give learners the chance to "demonstrate their comprehension ability in real-life listening contexts" (Vandergrift and Baker, 2015, p.392).

From a physiological point of view, the hearing process starts with the reception and conversion of sound waves. "These electrical pulses are transmitted from the outer ear through the inner ear to the auditory cortex of the brain" (Rost, 2011, p.11). Frequently, these auditory stimuli are accompanied by non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, body language, eye contact and appearance (Wolvin, 2010, p.11). Listening is based on hearing, which functions only as a precursor of listening and the difference between hearing and listening is the degree of intention (Rost, 2011, p.12).

Beyond the physiological nature, listening extends to psychological functions. After the message has been received through the auditory and visual modalities, attention has to be given to the message through the short term-memory. Short term-memory holds and operates within limited number of units. It is also called working memory with a very limited capacity (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Field, 2008). In addition to the impact of the working memory on the attention assigned to the message, perceptual filters also affect it. These filters comprise the listener's background, experience, roles and mental and physical states and "shape the listener's expectations for the message being presented" (Wolvin, 2010, p.12).

Once the message has been received through the auditory, visual channels and through the perceptual filters, meaning has to be constructed. The listener taps different sources of knowledge. These sources include the linguistic knowledge (phonology, lexical, morphology, discourse features), the knowledge of co-text (knowledge of what has been said already), knowledge about the context of the situation and general world knowledge) (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Imhof, 2010; Buck, 2001; Vandergrift, 1992, 1999; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

The process of meaning building does not stop at the level of extracting the literal meaning of the utterance. Rather, it is an "inferential process" where the listener, based on perception of cues, must make "relevant links" between what he/she hears (or sees) and the context that motivates the speaker to make "a particular utterance at a particular time" (Rost, 1990, p.33).

Therefore, it is necessary that the listener assigns both pragmatic and semantic meanings in order to grasp the "intent" of the speaker's utterance and act accordingly (Wolvin, 2010, p. 13).

2.2.2. Theories of Comprehension Processing

Two theories of comprehension processing have dominated the field of listening comprehension: namely, bottom-up and top-down processes. *Bottom-up processing* refers to how the listener attends first to the smallest unit of the acoustic input, whether it is a sound or a phoneme. Then, these phonemes are grouped together to identify words which, in turn, make up phrases, clauses and sentences. Finally, these individual sentences are grouped together in accordance with the communicative situation until the

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listener understands the meaning of the speaker's message (Siegel, 2015; Graham and Macaro, 2008; Flowerdew and Miller, 2005, 2010; Vandergrift, 2004; Buck, 2001; Field, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008; Nunan, 1998; Rost, 1990, 2011; Tsui and Fullilove, 1998).

According to the bottom-up view, listening occurs in a sequential linear order or levels, where listeners move through one step at a time until they reach the highest level and perceive the speaker's message (Buck, 2001, p.2; Field, 1999, p.338). However, this view is flawed for two reasons. Firstly, listening is an "online" process; hence, it cannot be assumed that the comprehension processing passes through levels starting from sounds and ending up with phrases (Field, 2008, p.132). It could be that different kinds of processing might have "occurred simultaneously" (Buck, 2001, p.2) and it is possible that these processes have gone in a parallel fashion (Field, 1999, p.338).

Secondly, it might happen that the listener forms hypotheses and starts to understand the message before the speaker finishes the utterance. This could be attributed to the listener's falling back on the context or his/ her background knowledge of the topic or his/her expectations of what is going to be said (Buck, 2001, p.3; Field, 1999, p.338).

Top-down processing, on the other hand, refers to the listener's reliance on context and prior knowledge to construct ("or more accurately, reconstruct") meaning (Nunan, 1998, p.2). Listeners make use of different types of knowledge, such as, "prior (world or experiential) knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, cultural knowledge about the target language, and discourse of texts (types of texts and how information is organised in these texts)" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.18). These sources of knowledge are stored in the

long-term memory (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012.,p.18) in the form of schema "a complex knowledge structure in the mind which groups all that an individual knows about, or associates with, a particular concept" (Field, 2008, p.216).

Like bottom-up processing, overreliance on top-down processing is not adequate as listeners might not have enough prior knowledge of the topic or they might not agree with the speaker's point of view which could compound the accurate interpretation of the speaker's message (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.18).

Hence, caution should be exercised when discussing both the *bottom-up* and the *top-down* views since the term "view" or "model" could give the impression that these views are contrasting (Field, 2008, p.133). Rather, both views can complement each other (Graham and Macaro, 2008, p.749) and a balance can be drawn between both as a listener cannot depend solely on either "individual linguistic characteristics" or on "broad situational features" (Siegel, 2015, p.31). It is what Lynch (2006, p.91) calls "marrying top and bottom". Hence, in this parallel processing, there is interaction between the phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic information (Flowerdew and Miller, 2010, p.168). Furthermore, the degree of reliance on either type depends on "the purpose for listening, learner characteristics (e.g., language proficiency, working memory capacity, age) and the context of the listening event" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.19).

2.2.3 Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension

An extensive body of research investigated the factors that could have an impact on listening comprehension. Among the factors that have been identified are speech rate, lexis, phonological features and background knowledge (Goh, 2000, p.56). Other factors

that pertain to listener difficulties have also been examined (Goh, 2000, p.56). This section reviews some of these studies that investigated factors that could aid/hinder listening comprehension.

In one of the most comprehensive reviews of the factors that could compound listening, Rubin (1994) identified five factors that could have an impact on listening comprehension: text, interlocutor, task, listener and process characteristics.

Text characteristics can be further divided into four broad categories – namely, acoustic-temporal variables, acoustic-other variables, morphological and syntactic modifications, and text type. The category of acoustic – temporal variables includes speech rate and hesitation and pause phenomena which are "usually grouped together" (Rubin, 1994, p.201). According to research, factors such as level of perception and Sandhi which refers to the "grammatical modification of forms" and which is exemplified by "assimilation, mutation, contraction, liaison and elision" could affect listening comprehension (Rubin, 1994, p.201). In addition, both morphological and syntactic modifications could play a role in facilitating input and in making it comprehensible using Krashen's (1982) terms (Rubin, 1994, p.202). The final subcategory of text characteristics which is text type pertains to the effect of the inherent characteristics of the text on facilitating/hindering listening comprehension. Moreover, visual support accompanying the text has been researched and according to studies this support could have a positive impact on enhancing listening comprehension (Rubin, 1994, p.204).

With regard to the interlocutor characteristics, these could be attributed to the personal traits of the listener.

Furthermore, the variation and diversity of the objective of both the listening text and the tasks pertinent to it are examples of task characteristics.

Listener's characteristics are thought to affect the learner's listening comprehension considerably. These could be summed up as: "language proficiency level, memory, affect, gender, learning disabilities in L1, and background knowledge as well as aptitude, processing skills, background biases, motivation, and confidence level" (Rubin, 1994, p.206).

The final factor process characteristics refers to the processes learners use in order to decode and comprehend the aural input such as top-down and bottom-up processes and listening strategies.

The above mentioned factors were reported by researches as they thought that they could have a considerable impact on listening comprehension, hence, they were worth investigating. However, there are other studies that scrutinised the problems learners reported to have faced during the listening process. Three of these studies will be examined in this section.

With the dual purpose of investigating factors that affected listening comprehension and learners' awareness of these factors, forty students participated in Goh's (1999) study where they undertook small group interviews and wrote listening journals. Based on the analysis of the verbal reports, Goh could identify twenty factors which could be further classified under five characteristics: text, speaker, listener, task and environment.

Text characteristics include phonological features exemplified by stress and linking which could make a stream of speech difficult to be divided; familiar/unfamiliar lexical

items; the speech rate of the spoken utterance; type of text; visual support; presence of micro-and macro- discourse markers and abstract and non-abstract topics (Goh, 1999, p.22).

Speaker characteristics refer to speaker's accent and the competence in speaking the target language which in turn could facilitate/ hinder listening comprehension.

A number of factors comprise listeners' characteristics such as listener's interest/ lack of interest in the topic, prior knowledge of the topic, the physical and psychological states of the listener; for instance, fatigue, nervousness, anxiety, impatience, and feeling relaxed and calm, knowledge of the content of the aural message, the listeners accuracy of pronunciation as this competence could influence how listeners decode and comprehend the spoken input, grammar ability, ability to retain what is being heard or processed, and the ability to self-direct attention and monitor comprehension (Goh, 1999, p.23)

Task characteristics refer to the time available between processing one part of the listening text before undertaking the next one or responding to the task at hand (Goh, 1999, p.23)

Environment characteristics refer to the physical factors that surround the listener and could have an impact on comprehension such as noise, the acoustics in the classroom, and the loudness of the input (Goh, 1999, p.23)

It was noted that learners could identify more with text and listener characteristics since they were more accessible to introspection (Goh, 1999, p.21).

It could also be argued that these factors are similar to those identified by Rubin (1994). However, Goh added to them other factors such as listener and environment. In other words, factors reported by the participants in Goh's (1999) study could complement those of Rubin's (1994).

Two-thirds of the participants classified five factors in an order that they thought mostly affected their comprehension: vocabulary, prior knowledge, speech rate, type of input and speaker's accent. In addition, in order to probe more deeply into the relationship between listening awareness and listening proficiency level, Goh compared the factors rated by eight of the high-achievers to those of their beginner-level counterparts. Results revealed that the two groups differed significantly with regard to their awareness of the factors that had an impact on their listening comprehension. Advanced- level listeners were more aware of the factors that influenced their comprehension such as the speaker and the environment, whereas the degree of awareness was limited for the low-ability learners since they could only identify text and listener characteristics as the factors that had a significant impact on their comprehension.

In the same vein, Hasan (2000) examined the listening problems encountered by eighty-one native speakers of Arabic EFL Syrian learners studying English as a foreign language for academic purposes in the ESP Centre at Damascus University. The study sought to confirm two hypotheses: the ineffective deployment of strategies may have a negative impact on listening comprehension, and the problems learners encounter while listening might stem from the inappropriateness of either the message or the listening tasks and activities or it could have arisen from other factors related to either the speaker's speech rate or the learners' listening ability. In order to examine these hypotheses, participants

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responded to a five-point Likert scale questionnaire that aimed at investigating the problems learners encountered while listening and the listening strategies they employed. The study revealed a number of findings. Firstly, learners used a considerably large number of ineffective strategies. Furthermore, according to the students, the main source of their problems was the listening text itself as exemplified by unfamiliar lexical items, difficult grammatical structures and the length of the spoken text. Hence, Hasan ascribed learners' high rating of unfamiliar lexis to have hindered their comprehension to their inability to use bottom-up processes and use their prior knowledge of both words and structures to decode and comprehend the spoken text. This, in turn, caused students' frustration and made them give up on listening. As a solution for this problem, Hasan suggested training learners to use both top-down and bottom-up processes while listening. In addition, students rated the length of the text to be problematic. Long utterances with complicated structures imposed a high demand on the short term-memory of the learners given that these learners have a "short memory span for the target language" (Hasan, 2000, p.143).

Moreover, participants in Hasan's study perceived some of the tasks that accompanied the listening text, particularly the prediction tasks, to be problematic. This might have stemmed from the fact that learners may suffer from a lack of contextual knowledge and vocabulary which, in turn, might have posed an obstacle to both their prediction and comprehension. Conversely, those tasks that depended on interaction with peers either in the form of pair or group work were not thought to cause problems. The supportive environment through interaction might have sustained both listening and speaking. Finally, Hasan's study showed that learners were not trained to carry out post-listening

activities such as holding discussions and writing summaries of the text and they considered these tasks to be difficult. Accordingly, Hasan suggested integrating listening with other skills in an attempt to reinforce students' comprehension of the spoken text.

Another problem that the learners reported to have encountered while listening was related to the speaker. Among these problems were natural speech, pronunciation, listening to a variety of accents, and listening without seeing either the setting or the body language of the speaker.

There were also other problems that pertained to the learners' attitudes and perceptions toward the degree of motivation or lack of interest in listening to the spoken text, answering long questions and the mode of listening as exemplified by listening to their teachers rather than listening to tape-recorded audios.

In addition to the listening comprehension problems learners were asked to rate, they were required to identify the factors that they thought facilitated their comprehension of spoken texts. Among the factors that learners had reported to have aid their comprehension were pre-listening tasks, good quality tape recorders, familiar vocabulary, reading the text before the listening and interesting topics. In a final note of his study, Hasan proposed to raise the learners' awareness of the problems that could influence their listening comprehension.

The focus of Goh's (2000) study was to present real-time processing problems forty Chinese ESL learners encountered while listening. Data were elicited through the use of three forms of verbal reports: listening journals, semi-structured interviews and immediate retrospective protocols. These self-reports were analysed in light of

Anderson's three-phase language comprehension framework (Ghoneim, 2009, p.23).

Based on Anderson (1995, cited in Goh, 2000, p.56), the three-phase language model

comprehension consists of perception, parsing and utilisation. During the perceptual

phase, the listener attends to the input and tries to segment input and words from the

continuous speech. These, in turn, are kept in the short-term memory (STM). In the

parsing phase, when an utterance has been segmented either based on syntactic structures

or cues to meaning, these "segments are recombined to generate a mental representation

of the original sequence" (Goh, 2000, p.57). These mental representations are related to

existing schemata and are kept as propositions in the long-term memory during the

utilisation phase. Upon reaching the third stage, the listener has become capable of

drawing inferences or completing interpretations or using the mental representations to

interact with the speaker (Goh, 2000, p.57). These three phases may overlap and they

represent different levels of processing, with perception being the lowest (Goh, 2000,

p.57).

Goh identified ten problems that occurred during the comprehension phases of

perception, parsing and utilisation. Five of these problems were related to the learners'

inability to recognise words and failure in focusing and directing attention during the

perceptual phase. Other problems pertained to insufficient parsing and failure to use the

mental representations generated during the parsing phase. Goh further drew a

comparison between the problems reported by two groups of different proficiency levels

and found that these were almost the same in both groups except that the low-ability

listeners had more problems with low-level processing. Goh concluded her study by

suggesting two teaching strategies, a direct and an indirect strategy that aim at better

improving learners' listening skills and addressing the problems reported. The purpose of the first strategy is to improve learners' perception by providing them with direct training of using particular comprehension tactics. The indirect strategy aimed at raising learners' metacognitive awareness with regard to L2 listening.

In summary, the review of these studies gave insight of the problems that learners encounter while listening. Furthermore, it also revealed that learners are aware of the problems. Nevertheless, they need guidance to be able to deal with them. Thereof, it would be best to follow Berne's (2004, p.528) recommendation that listening instruction should first target addressing low-level processes before learners are expected to use higher levels of processes. In addition, Berne suggests it would be advisable for teachers and curricula designers to consult learners in devising activities, thereby giving the students the chance to evaluate their own learning. This, in turn, would meet the real needs of learners (Berne, 2004, p.528).

2.2.4 Teaching Listening

There has always been an assumption that foreign language listening will develop on its own right without any kind of instruction. Hence, little attention has been dedicated to the teaching of listening and this view still prevails in a lot of educational systems until the present time (Siegel, 2015; Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Field, 2008).

According to Rost, listening instruction can be defined as:

> A pedagogic plan than focuses on any of four goals: 1) improving learners' comprehension of spoken language, 2) increasing the quality of learners' intake from spoken input, 3) developing learners' strategies for better understanding of spoken discourse, or 4) engendering a more active participation in face-to face

communication.

<div style="text-align: right">(Rost, 2006, p.47)</div>

Over the past fifty years, many trends and approaches tended to shape the view of how listening was taught (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005, p.3). The following section will review the impact of pedagogical approaches such as audio-lingualism, intensive discrete-item focus in addition to sub-skills and strategy taxonomies on the teaching of listening.

2.2.4.1 The "Osmosis" Approach

The "osmosis" approach, a non-teaching approach (Mendelsohn, 1998, p.81), is based on the audiolingual pedagogical view of language learning. Rooted in behaviourism, the audiolingual approach views the learning process as formation of habits (Klapper, 2006, p.107). According to the behaviourist psychologists (Bloomfield, 1933 and Skinner, 1957, cited in Klapper, 2006, p.107), human behaviour is seen as a "process of stimulus and response". The correct response is reinforced. By the repetition of the stimulus and the same correct response, habits are formed (Klapper, 2006, p.107). Applied to the teaching of listening, learners listen to input several times and repeat it until they form a good habit (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005, p. 8). Teachers devote no attention to the teaching of listening and through repetition and drills, students "pick it up" (Mendelsohn, 1998, p.81). This practice or repetition can, however, lead to the fossilisation of bad or inefficient techniques (Field, 2008, p. 80).

2.2.4.2 Text-oriented Instruction

The phase of text-oriented instruction followed the "osmosis" approach. This phase is characterised by the dominance of text-oriented passages that were primarily written for the purpose of "being read, not spoken aloud" (Siegel, 2015, p. 43). The emphasis was on the recognition of linguistic and prosodic features of input and meaning was built gradually starting from the sound and ending with the listener's understanding of the message. Hence, it was postulated that understanding would develop with each stage (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.7).

However, some of the distinctive features of the spoken language are absent from the written language such as hesitations, false starts, assimilation, and the presence of rich prosody (stress, intonation, rhythm and loudness) which require the listener to process them to build meaning (Siegel, 2015; Vandergrift and Baker, 2015; Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2010). Furthermore, the "ephemeral" nature of listening renders it difficult to just merely teach an auditory version of reading (Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2010, p.180). Written language is also "formal" (Mendelsohn, 2006, p.76) and "lexically dense and grammatically complex" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.8) which is incomparable to the "ephemeral" on-line nature of spoken language.

Taking into account the lack of written language of the unique characteristics of spoken language, it would be clear that such texts would add a cognitive demand on the listener's working memory (Vandergrift and Baker, 2015, p.393) and show how these texts were not suitable to be used in listening classrooms (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.8).

2.2.4.3 The Communicative Approach (CA)

In a typical communicative approach (CA) classroom, students listen to an authentic listening excerpt extracted from a song, movie or recorded conversations for listening (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.8) and then they are required to answer comprehension questions on the content of the excerpt. Multiple –choice questions, gap filling and matching questions are examples of these activities. These types of questions are still prevalent in a lot of classrooms today. This could be due to the fact that teachers feel more comfortable when implementing these questions since the "gross assumption" is that getting the right answer would show a high level of competence and wrong answers are indicative of a weaker level at listening (Field, 2008, p.30).

Listening taught using the communicative approach is preceded by pre-listening activities. The purpose of these activities was to activate the learners' schemata (background knowledge) and prepare them for the topic they were to listen to in the excerpt (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Goh, 2008). Once again, listening was not taught for its own right but was relegated to a secondary position for the favour of the teaching of other skills such as speaking and writing (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.9).

A session traditionally follows a recursive cycle where learners listen to an audio, answer questions and then the teacher would check the correctness of these answers by merely indicating whether it was right or wrong or true or false without asking the learners to explain how they have reached these answers. It is like testing the listeners without showing them how to go about the listening (Siegel, 2014; Mendelsohn, 2006).

This "testing and not teaching" (Graham, 2017, p.107) has been one of the criticisms aimed at CA. A skill needs first to be taught before its being tested (Sheerin, 1987, cited in Field, 2003, p.326). The response to such a claim would be that listening, like reading, is an internalised skill that cannot be observed directly. Hence, learners need to answer questions to show their understanding of the input. It could be argued that the idea of using questions is not the problem. Rather the type of questions to check understanding, particularly, multiple-choice and true/false are cognitively demanding since the learner has first to be able to read them in order to answer the questions. The teacher can accordingly adopt other types of questions that test comprehension (Field, 2008, p.80).

Another flaw of the communicative approach is that it focuses on the product of listening (getting the right answer) rather than the process that would mean discussing with students their problems and the cause behind these difficulties (White, 2006, p.118) since learners will not be able to get it correctly the next time if the cause of the error is not explained to them (Field, 2008, p.81). Thus, the learners would feel anxious because they have not "done well" and when they face problems, they do not know how to go about them other than "listen harder" (Goh, 2008, p.191).

Finally, although CA aimed at promoting oral communication, it does not equip learners with skills and strategies that they could transfer to other real-life situations (Siegel, 2014; Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Field, 2008).

2.2.4.4 Sub-skills Approach

The sub-skills approach is based on taxonomies of listening skills. It divides the final goal of reaching expert use of a listening skill into smaller manageable components that

can be practised in class. The learner is trained on the use of each of these skills

separately before they can be combined together (Siegel, 2015, p.44; Field, 2008, p.97).

According to Field (2008, p.98), this could be viewed as a move from declarative

knowledge to procedural knowledge, where the learners perform a skill automatically

without thinking of the steps followed.

Furthermore, Field (2008, p.99) comments that the sub-skills approach would make up

for one of the weaknesses of CA since the sub-skills approach provides no real

development. An instructor would devise a structured programme based on the sub-skills

the learner needs to master.

Rost (1990) provided a practical hierarchy of global skills that are in line with the above

mentioned phases of perception, parsing and utilisation. Activities are divided into

categories such as perception, interpretation and the formulation of conceptual

frameworks (pp. 152-153). Buck (1997, cited in Buck, 2001, p.58) examined 30 listening

items of Part Three TOEIC exam and came up with 14 abilities that were the most

salient.

However, one problem with the sub-skills approach would suggest that sub-skills are

taught individually. Rather, language learning is a "psycho - motor" skill that is learnt in

"clusters" rather than in "minimal units" (Welford, 1968, cited in Rost, 1990, p.150).

Moreover, dividing sub-skills into categories would suggest that there is a hierarchy of

skills, where the most "basic" skills are learnt first before the rest of the skills or that

skills follow a linear sequence (White, 2006, p. 126). The last problem underlies the

hypothetical concept of sub-skills. Sub-skills are the "abilities that the (learners) need to

possess in order to carry out the ability". Nevertheless, there is no evidence that reveals the processes that occur in the mind of the skilled listener (Field, 2008, p.108).

Accordingly, a framework encompassing all the listening abilities, in terms of competencies learners are required to achieve in listening would be satisfactory. These competencies involve "linguistic, discoursal, pragmatic and sociolinguistic/intercultural knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge in specific listening contexts" (White, 2006, p.126).

2.2.4.5 Extensive Listening (EL)

The concept of extensive listening (EL) has been advocated by Renanyda and Farrell (2011, p.56), who state that "listening is best learnt through listening". Learners are exposed to all types of "comprehensible, enjoyable input" inside and outside the classroom. (Renanyda and Farrell, 2011, p.56). The main principle in EL is that learners should have a lot of practice in an attempt to help students deal with their listening problems (Renanyda and Farrell, 2011, p.56). However, this approach is flawed. Firstly, EL undermines the role of the teachers who are viewed as material providers, who would have to select material from any available source, such as the internet or recording the materials themselves (Siegel, 2015, p.46). This approach also echoes the osmosis approach where learners are just exposed to as much material as possible without paying attention to the time commitment needed on the part of the learner to listen. In addition, learners get no guidance with regard to dealing with problems and hence could repeat the same mistakes (Siegel, 2011, p.318). Despite the drawbacks of EL, it could be combined

with in-class guided practice and listening strategy instruction, where "the former teach students 'how to listen' and the latter provide ample practice" (Siegel, 2011, 2015).

2.2.4.6 Learner-oriented Instruction

In an attempt to answer the problem of "testing camouflages as testing" in listening classes emerged the learner-oriented approach (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.11). This approach is closer to the idea of teaching learners how to listen. However, since the emphasis is on cognitive strategies, there is no opportunity to help learners develop the metacognitive aspects of learning. These make students aware of the different uses of strategies in addition to the development of "habits of mind" which, in turn, helps in the enhancement of self-regulated learning both inside and outside the classroom (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.11).

Moreover, in an attempt to cater for learner needs, and to teach learners *how* to listen, Vandergrift (2004, 2007) and Goh (1997, 2008) promoted a metacognitive approach to teaching listening (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Goh, 2008). In simple terms, metacognition means "thinking about thinking or in this case, listening" (Vandergrift, 2012).

Studies about the metacognitive approach and strategy-based instruction with special reference to listening can be subsumed under learners-oriented and process- based approaches see section 2.2.2.3.

2.3 Language Learning Strategies (LLS)
More than forty years have passed since the term of learning strategies has been introduced to the field of language learning. This section will review the literature on

language learning strategies (henceforth; LLS) by shedding light on the early studies of the "good" language learners. Furthermore, the criticism levelled at the field of language learning strategies will be examined by addressing the following points: strategy definitions, classification of strategies, teachability, and research methodology.

2.3.1 Language Learning Strategy Research

The early attempts to investigate language learning strategy research were rooted in the work of Rubin (1975, cited in Chamot *et al*., 1999; Griffiths and Oxford, 2014; Griffiths, 2015), and Stern (1975). These attempts aimed at identifying the characteristics of the "good language learner" so that the poor learner could imitate them in order to become successful. Rubin (1975) came up with a list of seven characteristics which she believed to be typical of the good language learner:

- Guessing/inferencing;
- Communicating;
- Managing inhibitions;
- Attending to form;
- Practising;
- Monitoring one's speech and the speech of others; and
- Attending to meaning

(Griffiths, 2015, p.425)

Stern's (1975, cited in Grenfell, 2007) list included factors such as:

- Being active;
- Having technical know-how and developing language as a system;
- Being willing to practise and use the language;
- Having a personal learning agenda;
- Being self-evaluative; and
- Being sociable and constantly looking for meaning

(Grenfell, 2007, p.9)

However, the early notion that the mere teaching of the characteristics of the "good" language learner to the less competent learner would render success in language learning proved to be over simplistic (Griffiths, 2015, p.426). This simplicity is due to the overlooking of other "confounding variables" such as learner identity, which is "constructed from a number of factors which contribute to individual uniqueness, such as age, gender, personality, motivation, style, beliefs and so on (Griffiths, 2008, Griffiths *et al*., 2014). This learner identity is related to the degree of the learner's willingness to invest "for instance, time, energy, attention, money" for the sake of learning a new language (Norton Pierce, 1995, cited in Griffiths *et al*., 2014, p.50). In addition, over the years that ensued the first attempts to define strategy, there have been debates regarding the strategy concept on both the theoretical level (definition, theoretical underpinnings, classification, context, research methodology and analysis and also on the practical level (the teachability of strategies) (Griffiths, 2015, p.426; Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p.1).

2.3.2 Criticism Levelled at the Concept of Language Learning Strategies

2.3.2.1 Definition of Strategies

The first contentious issue regarding learning strategies is reaching a unanimous definition of the term "strategy". According to Griffiths (2008, p.83), the concept of a language learning strategy has been "notoriously" difficult to define and it has been dubbed as "elusive" (Wenden and Rubin, 1987, cited in Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p.1) and "fuzzy" (Ellis, 1994). Rubin (1975, p.43) made the first attempt to define learning strategies as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". A decade later, O'Malley *et al*. (1985a, p.22) commented that is incontrovertible to either

define the components of a learning strategy in second language or show how it differs from other types of learning activities. According to the researchers, learning, teaching and communication are interwoven in discussions of language learning and "are often applied to the same behaviour" (O'Malley *et al.*, 1985, p.22). Even within the same group of listening strategies, there is confusion with regard to both the definition of specific strategies and the hierarchical relationship among these strategies (O'Malley *et al.*, 1985a, p.22).

Furthermore, when O'Malley *et al.* (1985b) conducted research, they based their work on Rigney's (1978, cited in O'Malley *et al*., 1985b, p.557) definition that "learning strategies are operations or steps used by a learner to facilitate the acquisition, storage, or retrieval of information. Hence, they viewed strategies as "operations or steps" unlike Rubin who considered strategies to be techniques or devices. Oxford (1990, p.8) presented another straightforward, functional definition of language learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, and more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations". The definition of learning strategies provided by O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p.1) as "special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information", unlike that of Oxford, highlighted the "cognitive aspects of strategy use" and was an attempt to base language learning research on Anderson's (1983, 1985) ACT psychological model (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p. 146 – see 2.2.3 above). Nevertheless, the issue of defining learning strategies continued to be contentious. In 1993, Rees-Miller conceded that there was no clarity in the definition of

strategies. Ellis (1994, p.533) further commented that the "definitions of learning strategies have tended to be *ad hoc* and atheoretical".

As a result of the ambiguity of reaching a watertight definition of learning strategies, educational psychologists abandoned the term "strategy" and adopted the term "self-regulation" by focusing on the learner's "conscious and proactive contribution to the enhancement of her or his learning process" (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003, p. 611). Moreover, other psychologists, such as Riding and Rayner (1998, cited in Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015) differentiated between normal learning activities and learning strategy use. According to the researchers, an activity becomes strategic when it is "particularly appropriate for the individual learner, in contrast to general learning activities which a student may find less helpful". Hence, learners will engage in a strategic learning if they exert purposeful effort and to choose and then continue the learning procedures which they believe will "increase learning effectiveness" (Dörnyei, 2005, p.165). This idea has been echoed technically in the field of information-processing and especially in the work of Winne (2001, cited in Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015) who distinguished between tactics and strategies. According to Winne, a *tactic* is "a particular form of schema that is represented as a rule in IF-THEN form, sometimes called a condition-action rule, whereas a *strategy* is a broader design or plan for approaching a high-level goal and it coordinates a set of tactics. The actual student's response becomes strategic if it matches the IF condition in the pursuit of a goal, that is if it is appropriate for the particular purpose" (Winne, cited in Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p.144). This definition raises two problems. First, the term "appropriate" is rather "fluid" and is difficult to be operationalised in actual research. Second, if the IF-THE formula is

followed, then what appears to be strategic to one learner will be non-strategic for another based on the "person's IF condition" (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). Other researchers used "conflicting terminologies" in place of "strategy" such as *learning behaviours* (Politzer and McGroatry, 1985), *tactics* (Seliger, 1984, cited in Griffiths and Oxford, 2014) and *techniques* (Stern, 1992, cited in Griffiths, 2004).

This lack of a consensus regarding the definition of a strategy led Macaro (2006) to try instead to come up with an "all-encompassing" definition of strategy to identify the characteristics of strategies according to: location, size, abstractness and relationship to other strategies, explicitness of goal orientation and transferability (Macaro, 2006; Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). According to Macaro's (2006) proposed framework, strategies are conscious and are located in the working memory. With regard to size, abstractness and relationship to other strategies, Macaro (2006, p.327) argued that a strategy should be described at the lowest level of "articulation within the boundaries of conscious cognition" and that it "should not be possible to describe a strategy by referring to a number of relevant subordinate strategies". The third characteristic is pertinent to goals. Strategies are mental actions that incorporate a specific, explicit learning goal. The final feature in Macaro's (2006, p.328) framework is that strategies must be both "specific" to a certain situation and transferable to other learning tasks.

Cohen (2011, p.7) provided a working definition of language learners strategies as "thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalised by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very onset of learning to the most advanced levels of target-language performance". Hence, he proposed that the element of "choice" is what gives a strategy "its special character". Cohen (2011, p.7)

further commented that the element of "consciousness is what distinguishes *strategies* from those processes that are not strategic".

A clear and unchallenged definition remains controversial and as Cohen and Macaro (2007, cited in Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015) postualted that even though endeavours should be continued to reach a "definitive model of strategy within a cognitive framework", a complete consensus regarding "the unit of analysis (a strategy)" will never be reached. Hence, in the absence of such a consensus, researchers are required to state clearly their theoretical framework of their research and the rationale for the need of a different methodology instead of building on well-established terminology (Cohen and Macaro, 2007, cited in Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p.147)

Griffiths (2008), however, maintained that *strategy* will continue to be a useful concept since it "refers to how learners go about learning". After carrying out an exhaustive scrutiny of literature, she defined language learning strategies as "activities consciously chosen by learners (either deliberately or automatically) for the purpose of regulating their own learning" (Griffiths, 2015; Griffiths and Oxford, 2014; Griffiths, 2008). In the current study, I will adopt this definition as it focuses on the "active nature of strategies" that the learners select to achieve a learning goal (Griffiths, 2015) in addition to the learners' orchestration of strategies since "successful learning is no longer linked to the individual learner's frequency of strategy use, but to his or her orchestration of strategies available to him or her" (Macaro, 2006, p.332).

2.3.2.2 Classification of Strategies

Classifying learning strategies has also been highly debatable. There have been several attempts to categorise strategies. Rubin (1981) divided strategies into two categories, namely, direct and indirect strategies. The direct strategies contributed directly to learning such as clarifying, monitoring, memorisation, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice. The indirect strategies, on the other hand, contribute indirectly to learning and include just two strategies: creating opportunities for practice and production tricks for maintaining communication. Although Rubin's classification was based on cognitive (direct) strategies, other researchers drew the attention to the importance of metacognition in regulating language learning (Griffiths, 2015, p.426) as O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p.8) put it, "students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction". Accordingly, they divided learning strategies into three broad categories – namely, metacognitive, cognitive and socio - affective. Metacognitive strategies such as planning, selective attention and self-evaluation are related to different learning tasks. These strategies enable students to plan, monitor and evaluate their strategy use. Cognitive strategies "operate directly on incoming information" which allows learners to use them in a way that would enhance learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.44). Organisation, inferencing, deduction and elaboration are examples of some of the subcategories of cognitive strategies. Finally, interaction with others or using control of affect to aid learning fall under the category of socio-affective strategies. This includes subcategories such as cooperation, questioning for clarification and self-talk.

Following Rubin's direct/indirect dichotomy, Oxford (1990) classified learning strategies into two broad categories: direct and indirect strategies. Each of these broad categories embraced other subcategories. The first major category of direct strategies pertains to the direct use of the target language in a variety of tasks and situations. Examples of direct strategies are memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, aim at managing the learning process generally. They include other sub-strategies such as metacognitive, affective and social strategies. As learners become more involved in the learning, both the direct and indirect strategies become a part of them (Oxford, 1990, p.16).

It is worth mentioning that there is a kind of overlap between these two broad classifications of learning strategies. For example, O'Malley and Chamot divided learning strategies into only three major categories, while Oxford classified them into two main groups. These, in turn, were subcategorised into three minor classes. Nevertheless, some of the sub-classes in O'Malley and Chamot's classification were subsumed in Oxford's groupings and vice versa (Ghoneim, 2009, p.13). For instance, Oxford's memory strategies were fell under O'Malley and Chamot's categorisation of cognitive strategies (Ghoneim, 2009, p.13). However, a comparative study conducted by Hsiao and Oxford (2002) of three classification taxonomies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981) found that Oxford's (1990) system encompassing six basic strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive memory, compensation, social, and affective, was "superior in accounting for the variety of strategies reported by language learners" (Chamot, 2004, p.17) and the most exhaustive hierarchy of language learning strategies (Rivera-Mills and Plonsky, 2007). Hence, it "overshadowed" the work of

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and remains "the most widely applied classification system of strategic learning research" (Rose, 2012, p.93).

Furthermore, Cohen (2011, 2012) classified strategies based on the differentiation between language learning strategies and language use strategies, skill area, and in terms of function. Language learning strategies include strategies "for identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material if need be, grouping it for easier learning (e.g., grouping vocabulary by category), having repeated contact with the material, and formally committing to memory whatever material is not acquired naturally through exposure" (Cohen, 2011, p.12). Language use strategies, on the other hand, are pertinent to the use of the material that has been already learned at whatever level of mastery. They involve at least four subsets of strategies: retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, coping strategies and communication strategies (Cohen, 2012, p.139). Retrieval strategies are deployed to "call up language material from storage by means of whatever memory searching strategies the learner can muster" (Cohen, 2011, p.13). Rehearsal strategies are these strategies that are used to prepare the learner for language use. Coping strategies fall into two types: compensatory strategies which learners use to make for a specific knowledge lack (e.g., lexical avoidance, simplification, and approximation through paraphrasing or word invention and cover strategies which involve creating an "appearance of language ability" in order not to look "unprepared, foolish or even stupid" (Cohen, 2012, p.139). Communication strategies have been viewed as the "verbal (or nonverbal) first-aid devices" that are employed in dealing with problems or in communication breakdowns. They can also be used to "steer conversation away from problematic areas" by "expressing meaning in a creative way, creating more

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time to talk and negotiating the difficult parts with the conversation partner" until everything has been clarified (Cohen, 2011, p.15). Communication strategies also include conversation strategies like "asking for help, seeking clarification or confirmation, and using fillers when pausing while speaking, along with other hesitation devices such as word repetition" (Cohen, 2012, p.139).

A second way of classifying strategies would be by skill area. Taking into account that a skill "constitutes the ability to do something", strategies would be the "means" used to perform a task involving this skill. Hence, strategies could be viewed in terms of the role they play while being engaged in the receptive skills of listening and reading or the productive skills of speaking and writing. Strategies are also used in the learning and use of vocabulary and grammar, which crosscut these basic skill areas. Another area where strategies crosscut the four skills is translation (Cohen, 2012, p.140; Cohen, 2011, pp.17-18).

A third way to categorise strategies is according to function, namely, metacognitive, cognitive, affective or social. Metacognitive strategies pertain to pre-assessment and preplanning, online planning and monitoring, and post-evaluation of language learning activities and of language use events. Such strategies allow learners to "control their own cognition by coordinating the planning and organisation of strategy use, the monitoring of their use, and the evaluation of how the use went in the learning process (Cohen, 2011, p.19). Awareness, perception, reasoning, and the conceptualising processes that learners deal with in both learning the target language and in activating their knowledge are the issues that comprise the cognitive strategies. Social strategies involve the means learners deploy in order to interact with other learners and native speakers, such as through

"asking questions to clarify social roles and relationships, asking for an explanation or verification, and cooperating with others in order to complete tasks" (Cohen, 2012, p. 141). Finally, affective strategies aid learners in regulating their emotions, motivation, and attitudes (Cohen, 2012, p.141).

Cohen (2011) proposed other ways to classify strategies such as by age, proficiency level, gender and a specific language or culture.

Oxford (2011, cited in Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p.3) refined her previously mentioned classification of strategies and proposed a new taxonomy which comprised four categories: cognitive, affective, sociocultural, and the "master category of 'metastrategies', which includes but is not limited to metacognitive strategies". She further broke those strategies down into three "domains" related to language learning – metacognitive (eight strategies), meta-affective (eight strategies) and meta - sociocultural - interactive strategies (Graham, 2012, p.161). This idea of "domains" led McDonough (2012, p.254) to question the nature of meta-affective strategies as being metacognitive. He conceded that this strategy would be rather a cognitive operation such as "recognising an emotional or motivational problem with the language or the process of learning and coming to terms with it somehow, or rethinking an attitude and devising a plan of action". The same worry applies to the socio-affective domain.

Other researchers conceded that the classification of strategies is "fraught with contradictions" (Woodrow, 2005, cited in Griffiths and Oxford, 2014) and as Rivera-Mills and Plonsky (2007, p.536) put it "there is no consensus" with regard to the categorisation of strategies.

Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) proposed three justifiable modifications of the taxonomies of both O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990). The first would be to exclude communication strategies in O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification, add Oxford's (1990) memory and cognitive strategies and the separation of O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) social/affective strategies. Accordingly, the end result would be two identical taxonomies, each consisting of four main classes of learning strategies:

a) Cognitive strategies, involving the manipulation or transformation of learning materials/input (e.g., repetition, summarizing, using images).

b) Metacognitive strategies, involving higher order strategies aimed at analysing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing one's own learning process.

c) Social strategies, involving interpersonal behaviours aimed at increasing the amount of L2 communication and practice the learner undertakes (e.g., initiating interaction with native speakers, cooperating with peers).

d) Affective strategies, involving taking control of the emotional (affective) conditions and experiences that shape one's subjective involvement in learning.

(Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p.149)

The above mentioned framework will be adopted in the current study in the broadest sense of the main strategies in the classification of the strategies required for the qualitative analysis of the instruments of listening journals, final reflection papers and focus group interviews.

2.3.2.3 Teachability of Strategies

Another point of controversy among language learning methodologies has been the teachability of strategies. Strategy instruction (SI) can be defined as the explicit teaching of how, when and why a learner should employ learning strategies autonomously to

improve one's L2 learning/use (Plonsky, 2011; Chen, 2007). Chamot (1998, p.5) enumerated a number of reasons for carrying out strategy training in the second language classroom. These could be summed up as follows:

- Differences in strategy use based on proficiency level have been well acknowledged in both first and second language contexts. High proficiency learners have high metacognitive awareness which enables them to choose the strategy suitable to a particular task.
- The majority of students have the capability of learning how to use strategies effectively.
- Students need to be guided in transferring familiar strategies to new problems.
- Learning strategy instruction has a dual positive impact on enhancing learners' motivation: it increases their confidence in their own learning abilities and it equips learners with "specific techniques needed for successful language learning".
- When students learn how and when to use strategies effectively, they become independent learners, which in turn, fosters their autonomous learning.

The shift of the focus of the traditional classroom from teacher-centred to learner-centred initiated the first steps towards "learning to learn". Among the first scholars who aimed at helping learners take control of their learning were Ellis and Sinclair (1989, cited in Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). In their book *Learning to Learn English*, Ellis and Sinclair state that the aim of the book is to help learners " become … more effective learner[s] and take on more responsibility for their own learning" (Ho, 1993, p.122).

Furthermore, Rubin (1990, cited in Harris, V, 2003) pointed out that "often poor learners do not have a clue as how good learners arrive at their answers and feel they can never perform as good language learners do. By revealing this process, this myth can be exposed". Hence, the need for teaching learning strategies arises. However, the learning strategies methodologists have never reached a consensus regarding whether strategies should be taught explicitly or implicitly and whether the training should be direct or

embedded. Consequently, a number of frameworks or models for explicit strategy instruction have been proposed. Some of these will be summarised in the following section. First, the theoretical underpinnings of these models will be discussed. Then light will be shed on the practical guidelines for the implementation of these models. Finally, some examples of the studies where listening strategy instruction was carried out will be presented.

2.3.2.3.1 Models of Strategy-based Instruction

In a comparison of L1 and L2 frameworks for learning strategies instruction, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) identified that the learning strategy instruction is

> [A] basic structure, in which the teacher first identifies or shows students how to identify their current learning strategies, explains the rationale and application for using learning strategies, provides opportunities and materials for practice and evaluates or assists students to evaluate their degree of success with the new learning strategies.

> (Chamot, 1990, pp.157-160)

The two prolific contributors to the area of strategy learning, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) developed an ESL instructional model, the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) grounded in cognitive theory and their own research with second language learning strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.190). The model is designed to develop the academic skills of "limited English proficient" (LEP) students in upper elementary and secondary schools (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.191). The CALLA model consists of three components and instructional objectives: topics from the major content subjects, the development of academic language skills, and *explicit* instruction of learning strategies (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994, p.10). The content topics

that the model deals with are science, mathematics, social studies, and literature and composition. The introduction of these content courses is gradual in order not to overwhelm learners with both language and content (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994, p.10). The second component pertains to the academic development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Language is used functionally to learn academic subject matter. The last component in the CALLA is the learning strategy instruction. Learners are taught learning strategies to help in their comprehension, retention and use of the declarative and the procedural knowledge underlying the academic school curriculum (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.203). The three components of the CALLA are integrated in an instructional sequence with five recursive phases: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and expansion (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.203). The purpose of the preparation phase is to activate learners' prior knowledge and give the teacher the opportunity to identify any gaps in this knowledge. Furthermore, during this phase, the teacher encourages metacognitive knowledge or the awareness of activities which help in language learning. In the presentation phase, the teacher uses explicit teaching by explicitly naming the strategy to be learnt, explaining how it is used and explicating its importance. "This kind of instruction increases learners' metacognitive awareness of the task requirements and of the connection between strategy use and learning" (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994, p.68). In the practice phase, the teacher's roles vary according to the students' experience with strategy use. At the beginning, learners need to be guided by the teacher who provides scaffolding. As students become more adept at using the strategies, the teacher withdraws the extensive instructional support. Nevertheless, the teacher should provide sufficient instruction to make sure learners have

gained experience in using the strategies (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994, p.69). Cooperative learning with peers is effective in gaining experience in strategy use and transfer of strategies to other materials as it gives the learners the chance to discuss their strategies and applications with their peers (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994, p.70; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.202). In the evaluation phase, students' reflect on their strategy use, their success of their strategy use and how this use has had an impact on their learning. In the expansion phase, teachers encourage learners to use strategies in different contexts other than the ones they are familiar with. Teachers might provide scaffolding prompts when needed. Students can also be encouraged to try different strategies and compare their effectiveness. The five phases of CALLA will differ in duration based on the topic of the lesson and the students' extended prior knowledge (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Chamot and O'Malley, 1994).

Oxford (1990, p.201) too advocated *explicit* training of strategies. She recommends that the main goals of this training are to make language learning meaningful and to "encourage a collaborative spirit between the teacher and the learner … Strategy training should not be abstract but should be highly practical and useful for students". In addition, Oxford distinguished three types of training: awareness training, one-time strategy training and long-term strategy training. Awareness training also known as consciousness-raising and familiarisation training aims at making learners aware of and familiar with the learning strategies and how these can help them in accomplishing tasks. The actual use of strategies is not a necessity in awareness training. According to Oxford, awareness training is important as it introduces the learner to the concept of learning

strategies. Hence, it has to be fun and motivating so that learners expand their knowledge of strategies later on (Oxford, 1990, pp.202-203). One-time strategy training involves the learning and practising of one or more strategies with actual tasks. The learner is given information about the "value of the strategy, when it can be used, how to use it, and how to evaluate the success of the strategy". However, this type of training is appropriate only for learning or practising strategies needed for a certain situation and it is not integrated in a long-term strategy training approach. All in all, one-time strategy training is not suitable for prolonged training (Oxford, 1990, p.203). Similar to one-strategy training, long-term strategy training involves the learning and practising of several strategies with actual tasks. Students get too introduced to the idea of the "significance" of strategies, when to use them, how to monitor their use and evaluate their performance. Unlike the one-time strategy training, long-term strategy training is effective and can be incorporated in prolonged training, where they are tied to the tasks and objectives of a language programme (Oxford, 1990, p.203).

Oxford (1990) proposed an eight-step model for the teaching of the language learning strategies themselves. This training could be tweaked to fit one-time strategy training and the steps should not necessarily be followed in a certain sequence. The first five steps pertain to preparation and planning while the last three relate to the conducting, evaluating and revising of the training (Oxford, 1990, pp.203 -204).

The model could be summarised as follows:

Step 1: Determine the Learners' Needs and the Time Available: The teacher should take into consideration the needs of the learners and the time available for both the completion of the task and the completion of the strategy training.

Step 2: Select Strategies Well: First, strategies pertinent to both the learners' needs and characteristics should be chosen. Second, more than one type of strategies should be selected. Third, strategies that are useful and can be transferred to other skills are chosen. Finally, both easy and difficult strategies are mixed together.

Step 3: Consider Integration of Strategy Training: It is helpful to integrate the training in the objectives and goals of a language programme rather than conducting a detached, content-dependent training.

Step 4: Consider Motivational Issues: The type of motivation to be incorporated in the programme should be considered whether to award learners grades for the participation or whether merely taking their pure taking part in the training is enough. "Possibly the combination of both will work". Another motivational issue pertains to pre-existing cultural or (other) or preferences of certain strategies. If learners are familiar with the use of certain strategies, it would be advisable not to take away suddenly learners' "security blankets". Rather, strategies should be introduced gently and gradually.

Step 5: Prepare Materials and Activities: The teacher can prepare these materials or she or he can prepare a handbook for students to use. It would be

better if learners could prepare the handbook themselves. In any case, the activities and strategies have to be interesting and motivating to the learners.

Step 6: Conduct "Completely Informed" Training: The importance of strategies and how they can be used in new situations have to be explained to students. These strategies have to be tied to a variety of tasks. Furthermore, students have to see how these strategies can be transferred to other situations. Students have also to evaluate the success of the strategies and explore the reasons why they have been helpful.

Step 7: Evaluate the Strategy Training: Learners' feedback while engaged in the training can function as practice of both self-monitoring and self-evaluation. The teacher can use his/her observations during and after the implementation of the training to evaluate it. Other possible criteria for evaluation could be: "task improvement, general skill improvement, maintenance of the new strategy over time, transfer of strategy to other relevant tasks, and improvement in learners' attitudes" (Oxford, 1990, p.208).

Step 8: Revise the Strategy Training: Based on the results of the evaluation step (Step 7), some materials could be revised. This might require going back to Step 1 and making substantial changes. Steps pass quickly after the first cycle. However, that does not necessitate starting from scratch from each step after the completion of a cycle.

(Oxford, 1990, pp.203 -208)

Oxford *et al*. (1990) presented the practical ground rules for the implementation of their model of strategy training. The guidelines of the model could be summarised as follows:

1. Learners undertake the task without getting any strategy instruction.

2. Learners discuss the strategies they have used with the teacher, who lets them reflect on these strategies and how that specific strategy use has facilitated their learning.

3. Teacher demonstrates other helpful strategies, stressing their possible expected benefit. Learners are asked to think of other strategies they like to learn and how they would add them to their strategy repertoire.

4. Learners are allowed time to practise the newly learned strategies.

5. Teacher demonstrates to learners how to transfer strategies to other tasks.

6. Learners are provided with opportunities to practise using the strategies in other tasks and to select the strategies they will use in accomplishing these tasks.

7. Learners are helped to understand the success of their strategy use and evaluate their progress towards becoming more self-directed learners.

(Cohen, 2011; Oxford *et al*., 1990, cited in Harris, V, 2003)

Moreover, after the strategies have been introduced and practised, the teacher can foster learners' autonomous learning by giving them the chance to choose, use and evaluate the different strategies that they have learnt (Cohen, 2011, p.123).

In 1991, Wenden developed another model or set of guidelines for strategy training. It could be summarised as follows:

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1. **Strategy training should be informed:** The purpose of the training has to be explained explicitly to the students and they have to be informed of the value of strategy.

2. **Strategy training should include training in self-regulation:** Students should be trained in managing their learning, that is to say, plan, monitor and check the outcome of their learning. This training increases the possibility (likelihood original) of the maintenance and transfer of strategies.

3. **Strategy training should be contextualised:** A taught strategy should be integrated in a language skill and related to a problem students reported to have in this skill. The contextualisation of the strategy emphasises the relevance of the strategy.

4. **Strategy training should be interactive:** Learners are not informed of what they have to do and left to practise on their own. Nevertheless, the teacher is observing and providing feedback. This type of interaction allows teachers to be close to the learner and to provide guidance and support whenever necessary.

5. **Effective training should be based on diagnosis of learners' entering proficiency:** There are two reasons for identifying the strategies that the learners already use and how well they use them. First, the number of strategies is infinite. Hence, it will not be feasible to provide training of all these strategies. Rather, the diagnosis aids in excluding the unnecessary strategies and focusing on the ones that are relevant to the learners' needs.

The second reason is that skilled learners might not benefit from such training; consequently, it is necessary to identify the strategies needed to meet the learners' needs.

(Wenden, 1991, pp.105 – 108)

The above-mentioned principles underlie the objectives of the following action plan:

1. Introduce the concept 'strategy'.
2. Determine the strategies learners use.
3. Demonstrate and name the strategy.
4. Provide in-class practice.
5. Explore the significance of the strategy.
6. Practise in authentic settings.
7. Evaluate the outcome of practice sessions.
8. Provide cyclical review.

(Wenden, 1991, p.104)

Although both Oxford's et al. (1990) and Wenden's (1991) models seem to differ with regard to the explicit explanation of the purpose of the strategy training which Oxford's et al. model lacks, the underlying principles are similar. The teacher plays a significant role in both models in providing learners with the needed scaffolding until they learn and practise using strategies. This scaffolding represented by demonstration, guidance and feedback paves the way for strategies to be generated, become automatised and subsequently aid learners in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, Grenfell and Harris, V (1999) proposed their model of strategy instruction. The following is a summary of the main theoretical tenets of the model.

1. **Strategy instruction should be integrated into every day lessons**.

2. **The purpose of strategy instruction should be made explicit to learners:** Learners are informed of the purpose of the training and the learning process is explained *explicitly* to them; thus, giving them the chance to direct their own learning.

3. **Strategy instruction should involve collaborative learning:** Learners collaborate with their peers and share their reflections on the strategies they have learnt and how they have learnt them.

4. **Strategy instruction should be taught in target language as far as possible:** If the strategy training is aimed at developing communicative competence, and if it involves collaborative negotiation and reflection, then the use of the target language would be appropriate if communicative competence is to become a routine.

5. **Strategy instruction should be geared towards the level and needs of the learner:** Before embarking on the strategy instruction, the teacher should identify strategies learners are familiar with, then selects the strategies that he/she wants the students to learn.

Based on these theoretical considerations, Grenfell and Harris's (1999) model consists of steps that cover a range of areas: reading strategies, listening strategies, memorisation strategies, strategies for checking written work, and communication strategies. A cycle following this model could be summarised as follows:

Step 1: Consciousness raising: Learners do a task "cold" and then in a class brainstorm, they are asked to share their strategies and explain how they have gone about the task.

Step 2: Modelling: Teacher demonstrates new unfamiliar strategies.

Step 3: General practice: Learners are given a number of tasks to employ newly learnt strategies.

Step 4: Action planning; goal setting and monitoring: Learners are guided with their selection of strategies appropriate to both their goals and level.

Step 5: Focused practice and fading out of the reminders: After learners have drawn up their strategies in the action plan, they are given the chance to pursue them. This will be achieved by withdrawing explicit directions of strategy use since learners should reach a stage where they have internalised the strategies and use them automatically without the teacher's scaffolding.

Step 6: Evaluating strategy acquisition and recommencing the cycle: Teacher guides learners in the evaluation of their progress and their strategy use. Learners can also be helped to set new goals.

(Harris, V, 2003; Grenfell and Harris, V, 1999)

Macaro's (2001) learning strategies training cycle (Figure 2.1) consists of nine steps. The summary of these steps as follows:

Steps 1 and 2 Raising awareness and exploring the range of strategies
Teacher taps the strategies learners use in L1 and asks them to discuss in groups

to discuss their strategy use. Learners are then asked to compare between strategies in L1 and L2. Learners share with the teacher and the class what they have learnt about strategies. At this point, the significance of using strategies and how they can contribute to the effective learning of the students is discussed. Furthermore, students' problems could be discussed in addition to the students' proposed suggestions to overcome these problems. Another way of raising awareness would be to discuss the strategies deployed by other students. Finally, asking learners to keep journals where they record their reflections would be another method for raising learners' consciousness of the existence of strategies.
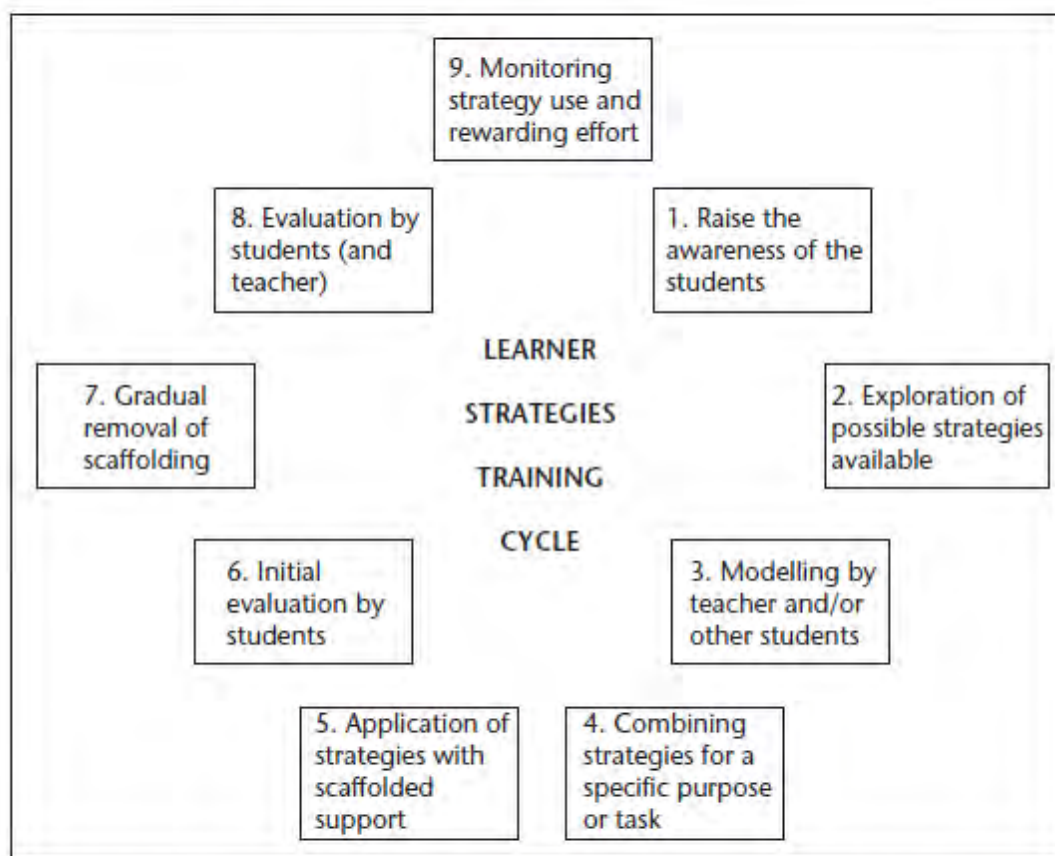
Figure 2.1: Macaro's (2001) Learning Strategies Training Cycle

Steps 3,4,5 Modelling, combining, and applying strategies: Teacher demonstrates how strategies can be used. Other students can also describe how they have used strategies. Through the demonstration of the teacher, students learn how strategies can be used and that they can vary based on the topics or situations they are learning about. Students also learn that strategy application can differ according to a particular skill or a language process. Combining strategies together is also what students learn in this step. Furthermore, the teacher provides scaffolding prompts until the students' use of strategies becomes automatic.

Step 6: Initial evaluation of strategy training: Learners reflect not only on the effectiveness of the strategy but also on how the impact it has had on their learning.

Step 7: Removing the scaffolding: Teacher chooses the appropriate time to stop reminding students of using strategies.

Step 8: Overview evaluation: Learners are asked of their overall impression of the strategy training programme.

Step 9: Monitoring strategy use and rewarding effort: Teachers, who have conducted a strategy training programme, monitor strategy use over the long term. During the monitoring stage, strategy use is rewarded and feedback is provided.

Cohen (2011, p.147) proposed a seven-step model for teaching strategies explicitly. This model is based on Oxford's (1990) suggestions for strategy instruction. According to Cohen, this approach is valuable as it is adaptable to learners' needs, resources available

at an institution and the shortness and the length of strategy instruction. The main tenets of the model could be summarised as follows:

1. Determine learners' needs in addition to the available resources.

2. Select the strategies: this is bound by a number of factors: learning style preferences, personality characteristics, cultural or educational background, age, gender, career orientation, previous language study, and levels and types of motivation. Other factors would be proficiency goals, kinds of tasks learners will have to engage in as well as transferability of strategies learnt to other skills and situations. The focus of the instruction - whether narrow or broad - has to be borne in mind.

3. Consider the benefits of integrated strategy instruction.

4. Consider motivational issues: how motivated students will be. Resistance to strategy instruction should also be taken into consideration.

5. Prepare the materials and the activities: Who will be in charge of the preparation and what type of activities will be incorporated in the instruction?

6. Conduct explicit strategy instruction: explaining to students the different types of strategies, when to use them and demonstrate the use of these strategies.

7. Evaluate and revise the strategy instruction: it would be advisable to carry out an ongoing evaluation. Learners themselves could conduct this evaluation.

(Cohen, 2011, pp.147-156)

The above-mentioned model is malleable and can be adapted based on both the teachers' and learners' reactions before it could be applied to another set of students (Cohen, 2011, p.156).

Table 2.1 compares the above-mentioned models with regard to skills and strategies addressed, level of learners, learners' needs, time and resources available, number of steps/phases, selection of strategies, informed strategy

training, awareness raising, scaffolding provided, collaboration, and post-training monitoring.

As can be seen from Table 2.1, all the above-mentioned models regardless of the variance in the number and order of steps/phases and that some points might not have been stated directly but could be inferred from the context, share the same tenets of strategy instruction, namely, explicitness, integration with other materials and skills, taking leaners' needs and levels into consideration, providing scaffolding until strategy use has become automatised, learners' collaboration to share strategy use, raising learners' awareness of the significance and value of strategy use and post-training polishing and fine-tuning of the strategy training programme. This view has been stated by Harris, V (2003) that "the various schemes share the same underlying principles".

It is worth mentioning that only the three models by Oxford (1990), Macaro (2001), and Cohen (2011) mentioned that the motivational reinforcement of learners' deployment of strategies. Furthermore, all models included an aspect of metacognitive strategies though not explicitly stated. It was only Wenden's (1991) that pointed to the importance of practising in authentic settings.

Table 2.1: Comparison between Strategy Training Models

Model	Skills/ Strategies addressed	Level of Learners	Number of Steps/ Phases	Selection Of Strategies	Awareness Raising	Informed Strategy Training	Scaffolding Provided	Collaboration With peers	Post-Training monitoring
O'Malley & Chamot (1990)	Content Subjects & Academic Language skills	Limited English Proficient (LEP) (intermediate and advanced levels)	Five	T identifies strategies Ss already know	T encourages awareness of activities, which facilitates learning	Ss are informed of the purpose of the training	T provides scaffolding prompts at the beginning. These are then diminished to give Ls the chance to use strategies independently	Cooperation with peers	T reflects on the success or failure of the training. Then, s/he polishes the programme and shares it with colleagues
Oxford (1990)	Language learning strategies	Any level	Eight	Strategies are chosen well	Ss do tasks without any strategy instruction	Ss are informed of the purpose of the training after they embark on tasks without any kind of training	Importance of strategies and how to transfer them to different situations are explained.	Ss cooperate together in the strategy training	The strategy training is revised

Wenden (1991)	Reading and listening	Any level	Eight	T identifies the existing strategies and how well Ss are at using them before the commencement of the training	The discussion if strategies and their appropriateness before the starting of the training could be an example of awareness raising	Ss are told of what they are going to learn explicitly at the beginning	T provides guidance	Ls work together	T provides cyclical review
Grenfell & Harris, V (1999)	Reading , listening , memorisation & communication strategies Strategies to check written work	Any level	Six	T and Ss when they draw up their action plan	Raising the awareness of Ss is the first phase of this model	Ss do the task "cold". Then, after they share their strategies with their peers, the T explains the purpose of the training	T provides scaffolding until strategy use becomes automatised	Ls cooperate together and share their reflections of their strategy use and how effective this strategy use has been	Training is evaluated and the cycle starts all over again
Macaro (2001)	Skills in language learning	Any level	Nine	T helps Ls in working their problems	Different methods for raising awareness are suggested	T discusses with Ls the strategies they use in L1 and ask them to compare between L1 and L2 strategies	T judges the appropriate time to stop reminding Ls of strategy use	Ls work together in groups and discuss their strategy use	Long-term evaluation of the training programme after it has finished

Cohen (2011)	L2	Any level	Seven	Strategies are selected based on a number of criteria	Ls awareness with regard to the importance of strategies, the purpose of using strategies and how to transfer them is raised.	This is an explicit training where T explains the significance of strategies with Ss and helps them in choosing the strategies they need to learn	T structures activities to help Ls insert their strategies spontaneously	Ls work together and share their strategy use	Strategy instruction is evaluated and revised

2.3.2.3.1.1 Explicit Strategy-based Instruction Studies

According to Mendelsohn (1995, cited in Mendelsohn, 1998, p.87) a strategy-based approach could be defined as being deeply-rooted methodology in strategy instruction. Hence, the main objective is to teach learners to listen. This is achieved through two ways. First, learners are made aware of the language functions and second, their awareness of the strategies they use is raised, that is to say, their "metastrategic awareness" is developed. Then, the role of the teacher is to teach students how to use additional strategies that would aid them in dealing with a listening task.

Nevertheless, the explicit teaching of listening strategies has been a contentious issue. Advocates of this view argue that teaching L2 learners the strategies used in L1 listening will aid the listening comprehension process (Ghoneim, 2009, p.32), which in turn, will allow learners to increase their strategy repertoire and accordingly foster their autonomy (Berne, 2004). In addition, some researchers carried out studies where the effective listening strategies of good language learners were identified and were taught to ineffective learners in intervention programmes.

McGruddy (1995) examined, through a quasi-experimental design, the effectiveness of training in three cognitively-motivated listening strategies, namely, prediction, inferring and selective attention. Three groups of advanced ESL learners participated in the study. One group formed the experimental group, whereas the other two groups functioned as control groups. Listening instruction for the three groups lasted for sixteen weeks. The experimental group was given the instruction on the three strategies (prediction, inferring and selective attention), while the two comparison groups received no treatment. Participants were required to respond to The Michigan Aural Proficiency Test and a Listening Comprehension Video Test, designed by the

researcher. These tests were used as pre-and post-tests. In addition, students had to complete a questionnaire that was administered at the pre-and post-stages of the research to probe more deeply into their strategy use. As results have showed there were no significant differences between the pre- and post- administrations of the Michigan Aural Test for the three groups. The only noted significant difference was in the Video Listening Test and this significance pertained to the selective attention strategy (Ghoneim, 2009, p.33). Hence, McGruddy concluded that explicit training in selective attention had a positive impact on enhancing comprehension of authentic input and suggested that allocating more time was needed in order to train learners on using the strategies of prediction and inferring.

With the aim of confirming the hypothesis that the use of strategies would result in improvement of listening comprehension, Thompson and Rubin (1996) examined the effect of listening strategy instruction. Learners of Russian took part in a longitudinal study and were assigned to two groups: an experimental group that was given strategy instruction in the form of authentic videos and a control group that was taught in a traditional way. An audio and a video comprehension tests were used as pre-and post-tests. Results confirmed the hypothesis since learners in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group. According to the researchers, this difference in results could be ascribed to a number of limitations. The first limitation could have stemmed from the fact that there was no congruence between the instruction given in the audio segment and that of the video segment. The visual support of the video segments could have given the experimental group participants the advantage of making use of the visual clues in the video and, hence facilitating comprehension. Nevertheless, the material presented to the control group lacked this characteristic. Another limitation pertained to the types of genres learners had training in as the genres

used in instruction did not parallel those presented on the test. The final limitation pertains to both the fact that the listening comprehension tests surpassed the proficiency level of the learners and the insufficiency of the time allocated in order to ensure improvement. Thompson and Rubin conclude their study by recommending that learners need to be given opportunities to practise listening inside and outside the classroom boundaries and that comprehensible input should not be visually supported.

Based on the results of these two studies, it could be argued that explicit strategy training was ineffective and that there were some "inherent difficulties" that impede classroom-based research (Chamot, 2005, p.116).

However, other researchers considered strategy instruction to be a success. Ozeki's (2000) study examined the listening strategies of female English undergraduates at a Japanese university. It consisted of two phases. In phase 1, participants did not receive any strategy instruction and the aim of this phase was to identify the strategies reported by both high and low-ability listeners. Questionnaires, interviews and a pre-test were used to collect data. Results showed that learners relied heavily on using translation strategies. Then, followed phase 2, where students received explicit training of the strategies they did not report to use in phase 1 and which were thought to be effective in enhancing their listening abilities. The aim of this phase was to develop the skills of autonomous learners who could "plan, execute and evaluate" (Ozeki, 2000, p.109) their learning. The experimental group received the strategy instruction, whereas the control group did not have any. Data were collected through a post-test, guided journals, a questionnaire and self-evaluation sheets. Results revealed the success of the instruction on listening with regard to the development of learners' strategies and abilities, the transfer of strategies to other contexts and the change of students' attitudes toward strategy training.

Moreover, researchers disagreed in their views regarding strategy instruction. Some researchers voiced their concerns about the teaching of strategies and considered the time and effort spent on strategies to be wasted (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015; Macaro and Erler, 2008; Rees-Miller, 1993). Macaro and Erler (2008, p.91) posit that "teachers would be better off spending time on teaching the language rather than waste time on strategy instruction" . Chamot (2004, p.19), on the other hand, recommends that strategies should be incorporated in courses rather than being taught separately.

2.3.2.3.2 Metacognitive Strategy Training

Prior to the explanation of metacognitive strategy training and the models that have emerged, it is worth mentioning the distinctions between three terms that have been used interchangeably, namely, metacognition, self-regulation and self-regulated learning. Flavell (1979) highlighted the role of metacognition in language learning. Metacognition is defined as "any knowledge or cognitive activity that takes as its object, or regulates, any aspect of any cognitive enterprise … its core meaning is 'cognition about cognition' " (Flavell, 1985, cited in Schunk, 2008, p.465). In simple terms, metacognition refers to knowledge about learning (Wenden, 1998). Furthermore, Flavell operationalised metacognition into four key areas: "metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, goals and the activation of strategies" (Dinsmore, Alexander and McLoughlin, 2008, p.393). For Flavell, the interaction between these areas and all the thinking occurs in the mind of the individual (Dinsmore, Alexander and McLoughlin, 2008, p.393). Though Flavell had laid the tenets of metacognition, there are other researchers who contributed to the field of metacognition. For example, Baker and Brown (1984, cited in Dinsmore, Alexander and McLoughlin, 2008, p.393)

further divided metacognition into two more elements: knowledge about cognition (monitoring) and self-regulatory knowledge where monitoring is at the centre of focus It was that self-regulatory element that led other researchers such as Bandura (1986) to integrate self-regulation with his cognitive theory of human behaviour. Self-regulation is viewed as the process of influencing the external environment "by engaging in the functions of self-observation, self-judgment and self-reaction" (Schunk, 2008, p.465). As a consequence of the increased interest in self-regulation in academic settings emanated self-regulated learning (Dinsmore, Alexander and McLoughlin, 2008, p.393). Unlike both metacognition and self-regulation which were taken to the classroom, self-regulated learning stemmed out of classrooms.

Researchers differed in their views of the conceptualisation of both metacognition and self-regulation. This could have stemmed from the fact that there is no consistent definition of both the constructs of metacognition and self-regualtion so that they are either used interchangeably or hierarchically (Hofer and Sinatra, 2010, p.115). Brown and DeLoache (1978, cited in Veenman, Van-Hout Wolters and Afflerbach , 2006, p.4) and Kluwe (1987, cited in Veenman, Van-Hout Wolters and Afflerbach , 2006, p.4) consider self-regulation to be a subordinate of metacognition, whereas for Winne (1996) and Zimmerman (1995) self-regulation is a superordiante to metacognition (Muis and Franco, 2010, p.29).

Despite the divergences between the three constructs, there is a core that underlies the three of them, namely, that individuals expend effort to monitor their thoughts and consequently they gain control over them (Dinsmore, Alexander and McLoughlin, 2008, p.404). In fact, it is "a marriage between self-awareness and intention to act that aligns these bodies of work" (Dinsmore, Alexander and McLoughlin, 2008, p.404).

Due to the inconsistency of conceptualising metacognition, self-regulation and self-regulated learning, Schunk (2008, pp.464-465) recommends guidelines that researches should follow in conducting research in the realm of metacognition, self-regulation and self-regulated learning. First, clear definitions have to be provided. These, in turn, have to be linked to a theoretical framework. The research methods used and processes assessed have too to be in alignment with the definition. Finally, these processes have to linked with educational outcomes.

With the recommendations of Schunk in mind and given that the purpose of the present study was to raise learners' metacognitive awareness with special reference to listening, the metacognitive view of learning will be adopted. Hence, the definition of metacognition that will be used in the present study would be that metacognition "refers to knowledge of one's own cognitive processes, that is, knowledge of how one monitors cognitive processes and how one regulates those processes" (Flavell 1976, cited in Muis and Franco, 2010, p.29). Moreover, the methods that were used and the processes assessed reflected the definition since the purpose behind using them was to raise awareness and delve more deeply into the cognitive processes and how the learners monitor and evaluate these processes. The use of a mixed-method approach where qualitative methods are coupled with quantitative tools would allow for these processes to be examined carefully. Finally, the exploration of these processes aid in leading to a desirable outcome which is in this case the raising of learners' awareness of the metacognitive strategies used in reference to listening as would be manifested by their automatic employment of these strategies effectively and the subsequent result of students' satisfaction of the metacognitive training programme and how it had positively affected their listening comprehension.

Flavell (1979) classified metacognitive knowledge into three main categories: person knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge. Person knowledge could refer to the learners' judgments of their own ability and their knowledge of the external and internal factors that could have an impact on the success/failure of their learning (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006, p.433). Task knowledge denotes the learners' knowledge about a task including its purpose, demands and the inherent characteristics of the learning task itself. Strategic knowledge refers the learners' general knowledge about the effective ways for achieving their learning goals (Goh, 2008, p.197).

Wenden (1998, p.519) cautioned that both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies should not be used interchangeably since they are different. Both of them are sub-categories of metacognition, yet metacognitive knowledge refer the information learners acquire about their learning, whereas metacognitive strategies are general skills through which learners "manage, direct, regulate and guide their learning" (Wenden, 1998, p.519).

Despite the fact that the role of metacognition in language learning has long been documented, research in listening is still a nascent field (Goh, 2008, p.195). Nevertheless, there are some studies that probed into learners' perceptions about their own learning by reporting knowledge of the requirements and goals of a listening task and the strategies they use to accomplish this task (Siegel, 2013; Vandergrift, 2002a, 2003, 2005; Goh, 1997, 2002; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). These studies were conducted with the aim of raising learners' metacognitive awareness. Accordingly, a variety of data collection tools were used to elicit such knowledge such as questionnaires (Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010; Mareschal, 2007; Vandergrift, 2002a, 2005; Goh, 2002), listening journals (Goh, 1997) and interviews (Goh, 2002).

Results of these studies showed that learners were aware of the listening process and that this knowledge was linked to their listening ability (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006).

2.3.2.3.2.1 Metacognitive Models

There are several models and frameworks that focus on metacognition. Chamot and colleagues (1999) proposed the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning. The aim of this model is to organise strategies which, in turn, makes them "manageable and helpful" for both the students and the teachers. Furthermore, it defines the strategies of effective learners use to go about a "challenging" task and teaches learners ways to transfer strategies to other contexts or real-world situations (Chamot *et al*., 1999, p.11). This is a recursive model rather than sequential that consists of four stages: planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluating. This is also an explicit model of teaching strategies. Rubin's (2001, cited in Chamot, 2005) self-management model comprises five strategies, namely, plan, monitor, evaluate, problem solve, and implement. "The model is partly linear and partly recursive and interacts with learners' knowledge and beliefs" (Chamot, 2005, p.125). Anderson (2002) developed a five-stage model that includes: preparing and planning, selecting and using learning strategies, monitoring strategy use, orchestrating various strategies and evaluating strategy use and learning. Anderson advocates too the *explicit* teaching of strategies and comments that his model is not linear but rather an integrative one where metacognitive skills interact with each other.

2.3.2.3.2.1.1 Studies of Teaching Listening Strategies Using a Metacognitive Approach

Children aged between 11-12 years took part in Goh and Taib's (2006) study that aimed at identifying primary learners' metacognitive knowledge and investigating the

impact of a process-based training on listening comprehension. The training lasted for eight sessions and each session followed the sequence of traditional listening, immediate reflection on the processes that learners employed while listening and a teacher-led discussion of the children's metacognitive knowledge about listening. Despite the fact that this was a small-scale study and no statistical tests were carried out, learners reported improvement not only in their listening and strategic knowledge but also the weaker students reported greater confidence in listening (Graham and Santos, 2015, p.46).

Graham and Macaro (2008) conducted a longitudinal study that lasted for six months. The study had a two-fold purpose as it investigated the effect of strategy instruction on both the listening ability and self-efficacy of sixty-eight lower-intermediate learners of French. It also examined whether different levels of scaffolding yielded desired outcomes. Learners were assigned to two experimental groups: a high-scoring group (HSG) and a low- scoring group (LSG) and a control group. The control group did not undergo the intervention. The listening comprehension of all learners, whether those who belonged to the experimental or the control group, was assessed through a listening test at three occasions: Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3. Upon completion of the listening test at Times 1 and 2, participants were asked to fill a questionnaire out where they reported their perceptions of their listening abilities. After learners had sat for Time 3 test or a the "follow-up test", which was carried out six months after the conducting of the intervention, control group students were asked to assess the improvement of their listening abilities, while the experimental group participants were required to reflect on the strategy instruction. In addition, participants belonging to the HSG experimental group were required to hand in along with their work, ticked lists of strategy clusters and their evaluations of them and the listening journal entries they had

written. Furthermore, participants were provided with feedback on their listening journal entries. Results showed, like in previous studies, that the experimental groups outperformed the control one and this has also been noted by the learners themselves. The difference between both the HSG experimental and the LSG experimental groups was statistically significant as the HSG outperformed the LSG after Time 2; however, this has not been the case after six months have elapsed. Moreover, the HSG participants reported notable improvement in their listening performance after they have received strategy instruction combined with feedback which the training of the LSG lacked. Finally, the intervention had a satisfactory impact on enhancing learners' self-efficacy (Vandergrift and Cross, 2017, p.82).

2.3.2.3.2.1.2 The Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence

Many researchers (Field, 2007; Vandergrift, 2003; Goh, 2002) called for ample listening to authentic texts so that learners develop real-life listening skills. Such training could help learners develop awareness of the metacognitive processes inherent in the L2 listening and learn how to regulate them (Vandergrift, 2007, p.198).

Adopting a process-based approach, the metacognitive pedagogical sequence aims at developing learners' "1) knowledge about themselves as listeners (person knowledge); the inherent complexities of L2 listening in relationship to task demands (task knowledge); and 3) effective listening strategies (strategy knowledge)" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.108). Hence, the goal of this sequence is to enable listeners control their listening comprehension and eventually succeed in L2 listening (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.108).

Key Metacognitive Processes

Planning	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Planning	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Problem-solving	Monitoring and Problem-solving	Evaluation and Planning
Planning/ Predicting	First verification and plan with peers for second listen	Second verification and text reconstruction or other comprehension activity	Final verification	Reflection and goal-setting

| Contextualization | First Listen | Second Listen | Third Listen (with or without transcript) |

Figure 2.2: Stages in the Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence for Listening Instruction (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.109).

As can be seen from the figure, listeners acquire both knowledge to make up for any gaps in understanding and knowledge about the L2 listening processes through the orchestration of "hypothesis formation, verification and judicious application of prior knowledge" to make up for any gaps in understanding (Vandergrift, 2007, p.198). Moreover, the matching of the whole or parts of the aural text with the transcription of the text can help them become aware of "form-meaning relationships and word recognition skills" (Vandergrift, 2007, p.198). However, it is crucial that the text is introduced to the learners only after they have started to get engaged in cognitive processes that resemble real-life listening (Vandergrift, 2007, p.198).

2.3.2.3.2.1.2.1 Interventions Using the Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence

Mareschal (2007) found that the use of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence yielded salutary effects when implemented with a low-proficiency and a high-proficiency group of French learners in an intensive course of eight weeks. Participants were better able to regulate their listening processes. Triangulation of questionnaires, stimulated-recalls, think-aloud protocols, interviews, and listening journals revealed that the strategy training had a positive impact on raising the metacognitive awareness, strategy use, and confidence and interest in L2 listening in both groups of learners. Moreover, it showed that the training was particularly beneficial for the low-proficiency achievers. Nevertheless, the high-proficiency learners reported that peer interaction and the consultation of the text transcript influenced their listening comprehension skills positively.

In a study that lasted for 13 weeks, Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari (2010) implemented the metacognitive pedagogical sequence among 106 learners of variant proficiency levels (from high-beginner to low-intermediate) studying French as a second language. The experimental group (n=59) listened to texts using the metacognitive pedagogical cycle (prediction/planning, monitoring, evaluation, and problem-solving). The control group (n=47), on the other hand, were taught by the same teacher and listened to the same texts the same number of times as the experimental group but they did not discuss any processes pertinent to listening, just their comprehension of the listening. The listening performance of both groups was tested prior to and after the intervention. Moreover, in order to trace the development of metacognition about listening in a second language, the experimental group filled out the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (see Chapter 3) at three times, pre-, mid and post-intervention. The experimental group participants also took part in two stimulated-

recall sessions: one after the completion of the middle MALQ and the second recall followed the completion of the post-questionnaire. The purpose of conducting these interviews was to give the learners the chance to comment on any discrepancies between their responses in the beginning and middle MALQ. Students were asked to think of the reasons for the still occurring discrepancies between their responses on the final administered MALQ. Results confirmed the first hypothesis and showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. The second hypothesis was also verified and the less skilled listeners benefited from the metacognitive awareness raising training. This could be due to the guidance they got from both the teacher and their other skilled peers. However, the results for the third hypothesis, namely, that the less skilled listeners would show greater increase of awareness as revealed by their completion of the MALQ, were mixed. Despite the fact that the metacognitive strategy training was beneficial for the less skilled learners, any reported growth of metacognitive awareness "holds only for problem solving and mental translation". The researchers attribute this difference to the fact that the experimental group acquired "an implicit knowledge on an incremental basis over time" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.122).

Modifying Vandergrift's (2007) metacognitive pedagogical sequence, and with the lack of input from the teacher, Cross (2010) investigated the effect of dialogic interaction on raising the metacognitive awareness of six pairs of advanced Japanese learners. Participants shared and reflected on their listening strategies at their own pace. Pairs also completed journals after each lesson. Though the researcher did not establish a relationship between raising metacognitive awareness and improved listening comprehension, the peer – to – peer discussion had a positive impact on raising learners' metacognitive awareness.

With the aim of investigating the effect of a metacognitive training on less-skilled learners' listening comprehension, twenty Japanese students participated in Cross's (2011) study. The pedagogical metacognitive sequence was used in the teaching of five lessons that were based on BBC TV news. Students worked individually without getting any strategy instruction. Data were collected through a pre-and a post-test which was a listening test constructed by the researcher, where the researcher ensured that both the length and the nature of the BBC TV news listening texts resembled those incorporated in the training. Results showed that three out of the four less-skilled learners benefited from the training whereas the fourth student did not improve at all. The more-skilled listeners, on the other hand, did not show any improvement in their listening comprehension and even for some of them the listening comprehension became slightly worse. Accordingly, Cross argues that his study corroborates previous studies that metacognitive training would have a positive impact on improving less-skilled learners' listening comprehension. He further adds that there is a threshold for higher level skills beyond which training is ineffective.

Birjandi and Rahimi's (2012) study yielded similar results. The researchers investigated the effect of a metacognitive strategy training combining both Vandergrift's (2004) pedagogical cycle and that of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) on raising Iranian students' listening metacognitive awareness. Sixty-two Iranian learners were assigned to two groups: an experimental group (n=32) and a control group (n=30). Both groups were exposed to the same listening texts; however, the control group had no strategy instruction. As the studies of Goh and Taib (2006), Graham and Macaro (2008) and Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari (2010) showed the experimental group outperformed the control one.

2.3.2.4 Research Methodology

The final incontrovertible aspect of strategy research that received wide criticism is the research methodology adopted in strategy research. As Griffiths and Oxford (2014, p.3) purport given that questionnaires form the "backbone" of strategy research methodology, many researchers are following an approach of triangulating several qualitative and quantitative research methods. As Woodrow (2005, p.96) explains, "In the area of LLS research, there is a need for richer …descriptions of LLS use. This can be achieved by using more qualitative methods". These forms of methods can include observations, interviews, think-aloud protocols, and learning journals (see Cohen, 2011). In recent years, narratives as exemplified in journals, have gained popularity (Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p.4) since they give "richer insights" by "captur[ing] the essence of human experience and human learning and change" (Barcelos, 2008, cited in Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p.4). Taken this characteristic of learning journals, participants in the present study were asked to write listening journals where they reflected on the metacognitive strategies they employed while listening/watching podcasts.

2.4 Language Motivation

Motivation has been extensively studied in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. This could be attributed to the fact that it is "responsible for *why* people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity, and *how hard* they are going to pursue it" (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003, p.614). Hence, motivation plays a central role in the arduous learning process. If learners possess highest level abilities and lack motivation, no other factor whether the most proficient teachers or the best designed curriculum would make up

for such a lacuna (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p.72). Conversely, regardless of the high competences of the learners, without motivation, they will not be able to persist and sustain and learn a language successfully (Dörnyei, 2001, p.5). Consequently, the field of research of motivation in SLA has been very active for over five decades (Dörnyei, 2014, p.520) and many models have been proposed to study such a "complex" (Ryan and Dörnyei, 2013, p.90) construct.

2.4.1 Models of Motivation

According to MacIntyre, Noels and Moore (2010, p.1), no one single paradigm dominates SLA research. They are diverse and numerous and the study of motivation can be studied from different perspectives. MacIntyre and his colleagues liken this theoretical perspective approach to viewing a garden:

> A famous garden at the Ryonaji Temple in Japan has 15 stones. The positioning of the stones is fascinating; from any vantage point an observer will see 14 stones, never all 15… Contemplating the meaning of the garden at Ryonaji raised for us a two-part question: what does it mean to take a perspective and how can those lessons be applied to the study of motivation in second language acquisition (SLA)?

(MacIntyre, Noels and Moore, 2010, p. 1)

Hence, the value of studying a theory from different points and combining it with other theories would enable researchers to see "complementary and perhaps richer ways of understanding motivation and language learning (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.20).

The following section will adopt this idea of the theoretical perspective-taking approach (MacIntyre, Noels and Moore, 2010) and shed light on the concepts of self and identity that have been framed by three motivational theories – namely, the Socio-Educational Model (SEM, Gardner, 1985), Self-Determination Theory (SDT, Deci and

Ryan, 2000), and the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS, Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). It is

hoped, that by the end of this section, points of convergence and divergence among the

theories will be identified in an attempt to reach a nuanced understanding of the role of

the self in L2 motivation (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.20).

2.4.1.1 The Social-Educational Model (SEM)

Gardner and Lambert's social-educational theory is grounded on the tenet that

"students' attitudes toward a specific language group are bound to influence how

successful they will be in incorporating aspects of that language" (Gardner, 1985, p.6).

The components of the model are shown in Figure 2.3.
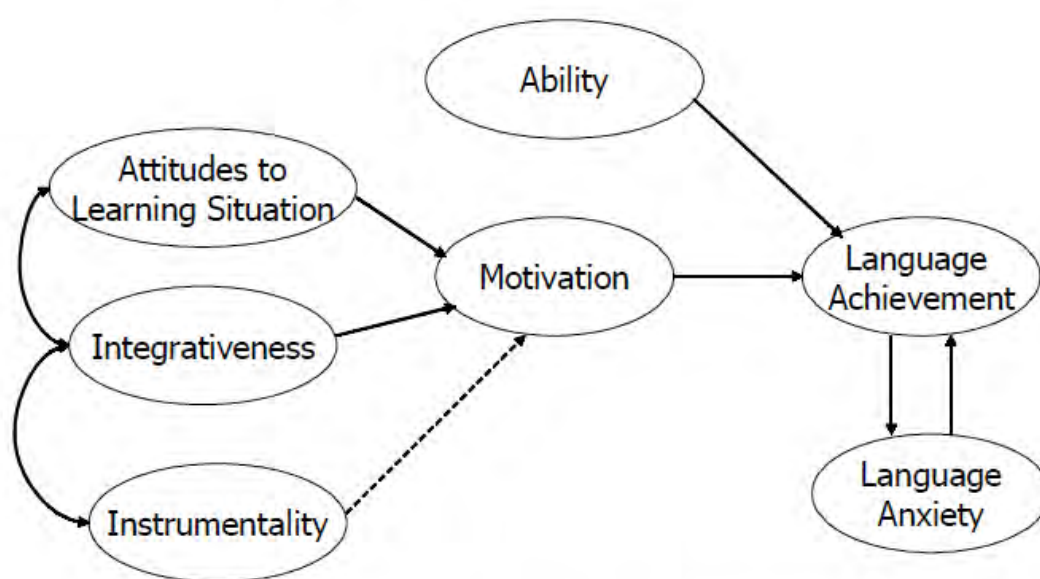
Figure 2.3: The Social-Educational Model (Gardner, 2005, p.6)

As depicted in the figure, two variables are at the heart of the model, namely, Attitudes

toward the *Learning Situation* and *Integrativeness*, which are thought to have an

important impact on motivation (Gardner, 2005, pp.6-7). The former variable is related

to how the learning environment could influence the level of the learners' motivation,

while the latter reflects "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture

represented by other groups" (Lambert, 1974, cited in Gardner, 1985, p.134). As the model proposes some learners will be more open to the "other ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups" (Gardner, 2005, p.7) and that would affect their motivation to learn another language. Hence, integrativeness does not literally mean, as other researchers have criticised the socio-educational model, (see Lamb, 2004) that learners "integrate" in another community and become a member of it. Rather, according to Gardner (2005, p.7), integrativeness means learners' openness to other groups which would enable them to take on the characteristics of these ethnic, cultural or linguistic groups. According to Gardner, there is a proportional relationship between ethnicity and integrativeness: integrativeness would be low for "individuals for whom their ethno-linguistic heritage is a major part of their sense of identity", while it would be high for "those [whose] … ethnicity is not a major component, and who are interested in other cultural communities" (Gardner, 2005, p.7).

As Figure 2.3 shows, another variable that has an impact on achievement is instrumentality. An instrumental orientation stresses on the utilitarian value and the advantages learners would gain from learning a new language" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, cited in Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2012, p.397). Individuals would learn a language for practical reasons such as getting a better job (Vandergrift, 2005, p.71).

The socio-educational model posits that there are other variables that are at interplay with motivation such as *Language Anxiety*. Anxiety is thought to have a dual role in language teaching. Higher levels of anxiety would have a negative impact on language learning, whereas a low level of anxiety would be motivating (Gardner, 2005, p.8).

Despite the insight that Gardner's (1985) socio-educational theory has given about variables implicating motivation and the integration of "individualistic and social

psychology" (Dörnyei, 2005, p.67) in the study of human behaviour, it was criticised for focusing on studying the interrelationships on a macro-level and paying little attention to the "individual L2 learner or the micro-context of the L2 classroom" (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p.77). In addition, the theory has been reduced to the dual dimensions of integrativeness and instrumentality. This duality was oversimplistic. However, as Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p.76) explain that that reduced view of the social psychological approach was understandable at a time where all scholars and linguists were more interested in a more simplified interpretation of the complex motivation construct. Irrespective of the criticism that has been levelled at the socio-educational theory it was "radically new and almost three decades ahead of its time" unlike all the previous theories of human behaviour (Dörnyei, 2005, p.67).

2.4.1.2 The Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT, Deci and Ryan, 2000, 2009) posits that human beings have "an innate tendency to explore and master new situations in their environment" (Noels, 2009, p.296) and to "assimilate these new experiences with their existing self-structures (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.22), including the self. This process of integrating the old and the new experiences continues throughout the lifespan (Ryan and Powelson, 1991, cited in Noels, 2009, p.296).

In order to achieve this integration, there are three fundamental psychological needs that have to be met. Deci and Ryan (2000, 2009) liken these psychological needs to the basic physiological needs like water that need to be met. They maintain that either the supporting or the thwarting of these psychological needs could have a "profound impact on the motivation, cognition, affect and wellbeing of human beings" (Deci and Ryan, 2009, p.442).

Autonomy, competence and relatedness exemplify these fundamental needs. The Self-Determination Theory postulates that similar to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation can also be internalised and become autonomous actions. In this internalisation process, human beings are assumed to take in "external values and regulations … to varying degrees" (Deci and Ryan, 2009, p.443) and regulate their behaviour in accordance with their "sense of the self" (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.22). On a continuum, the theory outlines four types of extrinsic motivation that differ in the degree of autonomy and the internalisation of motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2009, p.443). It is worth mentioning that these types are points on a continuum and do not represent a categorical difference in motivational orientations (Noels, 2009, p.297).

Learners' engagement in activities in order to either get rewarded or avoid punishment, while no internalisation has taken place yet, exemplifies the first extrinsic motivation type external regulation (Deci and Ryan, 2009, p.443). This is the least autonomous type. Though this type could be motivating, once the contingency (reward/punishment) is removed, the "engagement would desist" (Noels, 2009, p.297).

Second along the continuum would be introjected regulation. Still not fully controlled but rather partially internalised, learners would engage in an activity because others, such as parents or teachers have stressed the value of this activity and by partaking this activity, learners would avoid a sense of guilt or shame (Sugita McEown, Noels and Saumure, 2014, p.228).

When learners feel that learning a language would be beneficial for them and can help them reach their aspirations (Sugita McEown, Noels and Saumure, 2014, p.228), they

will be motivated and engage in the activity volitionally. This type of extrinsic motivation is termed identified regulation.

The final type of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. Learners would engage in activity when they have assimilated with it and it has become fully internalised and well integrated with their sense of the self (Deci and Ryan, 2009, p.443). Although both integrated regulation and intrinsic motivation are similar in that both are autonomous and related to flexible thinking and behaving, they are different (Deci and Ryan, 2009, p.443). In intrinsic motivation, learners would engage in an activity because they are interested in it and enjoy doing it (McEown, Noels and Saumure, 2014, p.228). Integrated regulation, on the other hand, relies on the well internalisation of values (Deci and Ryan, 2009, p.443).

On the far left end of the continuum is amotivation. It is a characteristic of those learners who suffer from apathy and disinterest in an activity. They perform any activity involuntarily especially when learners feel that somebody imposes on them carrying out that activity (Norton, 2007, cited in Noels, 2009, p.298).

Competence is the second basic need. It means that persons have the feeling that they are capable of carrying out or accomplishing an action (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p.81). People "seek out opportunities to challenge themselves and thereby develop their skills and capacities" (Noels, 2009, p.303).

When people care about others, are cared about, devote time to other people (Noels, 2009, p.303) and feel a sense of belongingness and connectedness to other people, they have a sense of relatedness (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, p.81).

2.4.1.3 The L2 Motivational Self System

In 2005, Dörnyei proposed a model that was rooted in the psychological concept of possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986, cited in Dörnyei, 2014, p.521). This concept represents "people's ideas of what they *might* become, what they *would like* to become, and what they *are afraid of* becoming" (Dörnyei, 2014, p.521). These possible selves represent people's "ideal" self-images where they envision future-oriented scenarios of what they aspire to be, are likely to be or even dread of being (Ryan and Dörnyei, 2013, p.91). Hence, it is theorised that due to basic psychological needs, these future-oriented ideal self-images are more likely to direct behaviour in order to "reduce any discrepancies between the current self and the ideal self" (Ryan and Dörnyei, 2013, p.91).

The L2 Motivational Self System is based on three tenets. The first component is the *Ideal L2 Self*. Learners are said to have an ideal L2 when they would like to speak an L2 (Dörnyei, 2009, p.29). This Ideal L2 Self is a "powerful language motivator to learn an L2" (Dörnyei, 2010, p.79) because any discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self is reduced (Dörnyei, 2009, p.29). The *Ought-to L2 Self* component pertains to the "attributes one believes one *ought to* meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2010, p.80). Dörnyei (2005) complemented these two selves by adding a third tenet, the *L2 Learning Experience* that is relevant to the immediate environment in which the learning takes place such as the influence of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group in addition to previous experiences of success and failure (Dörnyei, 2010, p.80).

Ryan and Dörnyei (2013, p.92) propose some suggestions for motivation to be energised. First, learners are not expected to exert effort if the aspired outcome is not

successful. Thus, self-images have to be "plausible". In addition, these self-images have to be congruent with the social environment and conform to social norms. It is also suggested that if the future-oriented self-image is close to the current image, the individual is less likely to expect that it would be different and that only little effort is needed to attain it. Finally, future-oriented self-images should be activated by the person envisioning his future self or else these images would likely not have a significant effect on behaviour.

2.4.1.5 Convergence and Divergence among Motivational Models

The first comparison is between Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model (SEM) and Deci and Ryan's (2000, 2009) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Although it might be argued that both intrinsic-extrinsic and integrative-instrumental distinctions might be rendered equal, they are not synonymous (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.24). According to Gardner (2006), integrative orientation could be considered as an extrinsic motivation since it is not related to engaging in an activity due to pure enjoyment (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.24). This could be partly true but empirical research has shown a strong relationship between both integrative orientation and intrinsic motivation on one hand and on the other hand, between integrative orientation and the other forms of self-determined extrinsic motivation (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.24).

The differences between Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model (SEM) and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) have been discussed by Dörnyei (2009). Though Dörnyei's (L2MSS) model is based on the principles of Gardner's (SEM) model, it was an attempt to relate these tenets to "global English in the 21st century" (Lamb, 2012, p.100). Accordingly, the main difference between these two

models is characterised by whether they are affectively based (SEM) or rooted in cognition (L2MSS) (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.25). Another difference pertains to the identification with either the others or the self: in Gardner's model the individual identifies with others, while in Dörnyei's model that identification is with future-oriented versions of the self (Lamb, 2012, p.100).

Nevertheless, there are convergences between both Deci and Ryan's (2000, 2009) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Dörnyei's (2005) the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). According to Dörnyei (2009), it could be argued that both the *Ought-to Self* and introjected regulation would seem congruent by definition (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.26) since in both there is an external obligation imposed on the learners to learn and engage in an activity. In addition, both the *Ideal L2 Self* and the dimensions of both identified and integrated extrinsic motivation are similar since they both reflect "personally held values" (Sugita McEown, Noels and Chaffee, 2014, p.26). This similarity could be attributed to the fact that when Dörnyei proposed his L2MSS model in 2005, it was based on previous theories of SLA and his own empirical research in psychology (Dörnyei, 2014, p.520).

2.4.2 Learner Strategies and Motivation Research

Dörnyei and Skehan (2003, p.612) pointed to the idea that using learning strategies successfully would "sustain" motivation. Based on this notion, Vandergrift (2005) studied the relationship between motivation and metacognition, with particular reference to the cognitive and metacognitive strategies learners employ while listening to French (L2) listening comprehension. The study was also grounded on Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory. Fifty-seven adolescent Canadian learners of French were asked to complete three instruments: the Metacognitive Awareness

Listening Questionnaire (MALQ), a motivation questionnaire and a listening comprehension test. The motivation questionnaire, the language Learning Orientations Scale, investigated the motivational orientations of amotivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. With regard to the MALQ, it probes into the metacognitive listening strategies learners use while listening to authentic French texts. Students' responses on both instruments were correlated to identify any relationship between the three motivational orientations and metacognitive listening strategies. Results of the listening comprehension test were also correlated with learners' responses on the motivation questionnaire. Results showed that there was a strong relationship between greater use of metacognitive strategies and higher degrees of motivation, with some evidence of a self-determination continuum evident in the response patterns. However, the relationship between amotivation and listening comprehension test results were negative and the correlation between both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and listening comprehension was not as high as has been anticipated.

It is worth mentioning that Vandergrift's (2005) study was the only study, to my knowledge, that has investigated the relationship between motivation, metacognitive strategies and listening comprehension.

2.5 Podcasts

Broadly defined, "podcasting refers to the distribution of audio/ video files in digital format (McGarr, 2009). These files can be downloaded through syndication for playback on a computer or an MP3 player (O'Bannon *et al*., 2011) or they can be kept on smart phones. The benefits of podcasting in improving learning and teaching are numerous. Hew (2009, p.334) postulates that "probably the main advantage of podcasting is the simplicity, convenience, and time savings that it offers to learners".

Many studies have been conducted to explore the impact of technology and, particularly podcasting, on learning (e.g Heilesen, 2010). Others investigated the effect of podcasts on psychological attributes such as motivation and readiness of use (Abdous, Facer, and Yen, 2012; Rahimi and Katal, 2012, p.1153) or metacognition or the learners' planning, monitoring and evaluation of their own learning (Sanchez-Alonso and Vovides, 2007, cited in, Rahimi and Katal, 2012, p.1153) while developing an understanding of their metacognitive processes through the use of podcasts.

2.5.1 Taxonomy of Podcasts

Since the advent of podcasts in 2001, there were several attempts to classify them (Al Qasim and Al Fadda, 2013; Heilesen, 2010; Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel, 2009; Hew, 2009; McGarr, 2009; Rosell-Auguilar, 2007; Vogele and Gard, 2006). This section provides a brief description of these taxonomies and at the end presents a taxonomy that suits the purpose of the study.

For some researchers such as Carvalho, Aguiar and Maciel (2009) podcasts are not meant to be used in classrooms. For others, on the other hand, see Al Qasim and Al Fadda, 2013, Heilesen, 2010, and Vogele and Gard, podcasts could be used either to augment teaching or to present material to students.

The majority of the taxonomies reviewed above were concerned with the classification of podcasts based on either author (whether teacher, student or organisation) or type which varied from one categorisation to the other. Nevertheless, Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel (2009) proposed six dimensions for classifying podcasts – namely, type, medium, length, author, style and purpose, which, apart from type and author, were absent from the other taxonomies.

As for the type of podcasts, they fall into six types: informative (it presents concepts, analysis, explanations of using tools and equipment, recitation of poems) (Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel, 2009, p.134); administrative (guides to freshmen, general information) (Vogele and Gard, 2006, p.5); special lecture series (welcome lectures to guests) (Vogele and Gard, 2006, p.5); classroom-related and these are further classified into those prepared by the teacher (substitutional – substituting classroom teaching) and (supplementary – augmenting classroom teaching or providing extra material (Hew, 2009; McGarr, 2009). The other type of classroom-related podcasts pertains to those prepared by students as either providing feedback to their colleagues in a group work (Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel, 2009, p.134) or as a part of students'' projects (Al Qasim and Al Fadda, 2013; Rossell-Aguilar, 2007). The resources available on the Internet represent the last type of podcasts which is authentic. This type is related to the second dimension of medium. Researchers classified podcasts as either audio or video. Enhanced audios where images are combined with audios have also been documented. If screen shots are captured along with the audio, they become screencasts (Edrisingah *et al.*, 2008, cited in Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel, 2009, p.134). There are vidcasts or vodcasts as well. Given that the definition of podcasts embraces all the audio/video files in a digital format, this could also apply to both TED Talks and YouTube videos.

Podcasts vary according to length. Short podcasts last (1-5 minutes), moderate (6-15 minutes) and the longer ones last more than 15 minutes (Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel, 2009, p.134). When podcasts exceed more than 15 minutes, attention, while listening, might be remarkably lost (Cebeci and Tekdal, 2006, p.51).

As mentioned above, both the teachers and the students can produce podcasts. Podcasts can also be produced by organisations and communities.

With regard to style, podcasts can be either formal or informal. It depends on the degree of formality (Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel, 2009, p.134). According to Edrisingah et al. (2008, cited in Carvahlo, Aguiar and Maciel, 2009, p.134), "a friendly tone invites students to learn and helps to build intimacy with the speaker". Thus, incorporating people's experiences and anecdotes makes podcasts more interesting.

The final dimension –namely, purpose, relates to the purpose for producing or using podasts which Carvahlo and his colleagues (2009, p.134) summarise as an action verb such as "inform, analyse, develop, motivate, and mediate for reflective learning".

These dimensions are interrelated and cannot easily be separated from each other.

Based on the above mentioned taxonomies of the types of podcasts and for the purpose of the present study, podcasts will be classified as follows: (see Figure 2.4). This classification relies on the type of the podcasts used in the study. Types of podcasts used in the present study will be discussed later on in detail (see Chapter 3 – 3.2.1.9.3).

2.5.2 Benefits of Podcasts

Although researchers have been sceptical regarding the academic effectiveness of podcasts in general, its benefit in the language learning realm has been largely identified (Abdous, Facer, and Yen, 2012). These benefits pertain to both the learners and the teachers. The flexibility of podcasts as exemplified in the advantage of downloading authentic podcasts anytime and anywhere has been advocated by many researchers (Fernandez, Simo and Sallan, 2009; Evans, 2008). It is as Beres (2011, cited in Abdous, Facer and Yen, 2012, p.45) states "smart phones and MP3 players can become language learning tools, allowing students to easily and immediately access materials from a variety of sources and to engage with those materials where and where

they please", hence, it gives the learners the opportunity to control their own learning in terms of time and place. Another unique characteristic of podcasts is that can increase learners' motivation (see Fernandez, Simo and Sallan, 2009). The quality of repetition and listening to the podcast several times adds too to the advantages of podcasts (McKinney, Dyck and Luber, 2009, p.618).

Using podcasts is also advantageous for teachers. Podcasts could facilitate the teaching process by providing learners with materials and enhancing communication and interaction between teachers and students (Harris, H and Park, 2008, p.549). In addition, the introduction of vidcasts deems podcasts suitable for learners of different learning styles (see Kay, 2012).

2.5.3 Podcasts and Language Learning Studies

A review of the studies carried out on the effect of podcasts on language learning revealed that these studies can be divided into two main groups of interest: a) those studies that pertain to the effect of podcast on enhancing language skills, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation and b) studies reporting learners' attitudes and perceptions toward the use of podcasts in learning. The following section sheds light on these studies.

2.5.3.1 Effect of Podcasts on Enhancing Language Skills, Vocabulary, Grammar and Pronunciation

Boriga (2010) examined the effect of using enhanced podcasts developed by pre-service teachers to reinforce the vocabulary of fifth grade students in a reading course. Results showed that podcasts were effective in increasing the vocabulary repertoire of the learners. Similarly, in Putman and Kingsley's (2012) study, 58 fifth grade learners

listened to science-specific podcasts for seven consecutive weeks. Learners had also to complete activities that aimed at reinforcing the use of the new scientific terms. Results showed that listening to these podcasts enhanced learners' learning of science-specific vocabulary. In addition, students perceived the use of podcasts in teaching science to have tapped their motivation.
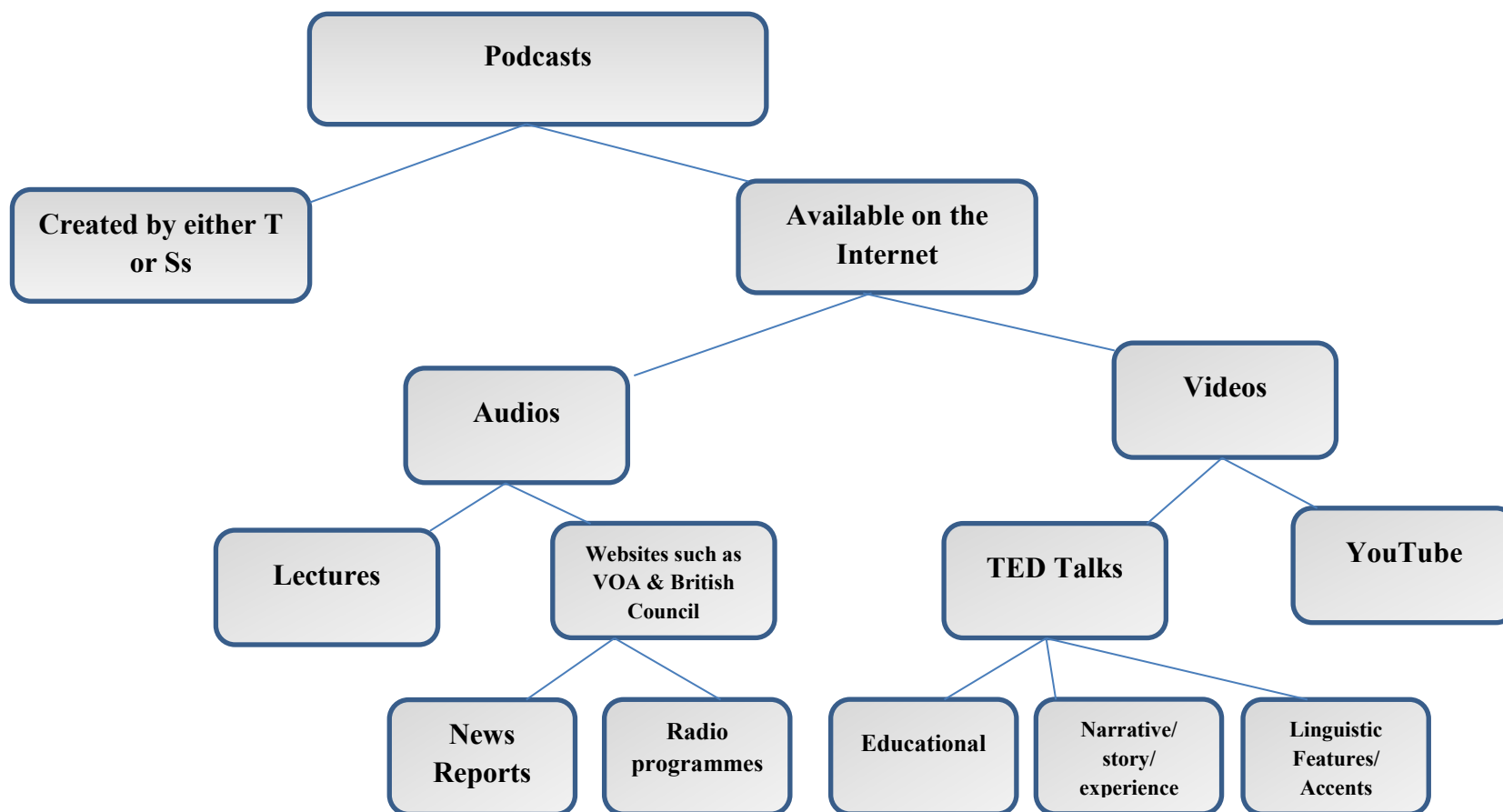
Figure 2.4: Classification of Podcasts in the Present Study

In (2011), Istanto and Indrianti designed five podcast units as supplementary material to the teaching of listening. The podcast units integrated listening skills with grammar knowledge and knowledge of the culture of the target language. Twenty beginner undergraduate students learning Indonesian as a foreign language participated in the study. Qualitative data were collected through the learners' filling out of a questionnaire, which consisted of three parts. The first part was a demographic questionnaire, students were asked about the ownership of MP3 players and accessibility to computers and the internet. The second part and the third part dealt mainly with exploring the reasons students reported for being motivated in learning listening, their perceptions of the podcast units and suggestions of the topics they would propose to include in these podcast units. Results revealed that the podcast units had a positive effect on enhancing learners' listening comprehension, grammar knowledge and knowledge of the culture of the target language.

The aim of Kavaliauskienė and Anusienė's (2009) study was to investigate the challenges learners reported to face while listening to authentic podcasts and the learners' self-evaluation of their performance individually. It was also aimed that the study would make recommendations for good practices in order to enhance listening comprehension at the tertiary level. Learners listened to two podcasts of their choice at their own pace that were within the limits of the upper-intermediate, advanced or native-like proficiency levels. By writing entries in weblogs, learners reflected on the podcasts, speaking rate and their listening abilities. The study was concluded by presenting a number of implications: First, learners' listening to authentic podcasts at their own pace and convenience motivates and enhances their listening skills in a non-threatening environment. Second,

raising learners' awareness of the different ways of enhancing their listening skills promotes language learning. Third, out of classroom listening practice away from teachers and peers' observations generates learners' motivation. Fourth, the synchronisation of online listening podcasts with activities should be beneficial to all learners. Fifth, learners' awareness is raised of the positive effect of practice on improving their listening skills. Finally, reflecting on their own listening skills and performance by writing weblogs enables learners to keep improving.

Fifty-eight sophomore students at an Iranian university were assigned randomly to a control and an experimental group in Ashraf, Noroozi and Salami's (2011) study. The experimental group students were requested to download and listen to English podcasts, whereas the experimental group participants had to listen to English radio programmes. Three instruments were used to collect data: a pre- and a post-test, interviews of some participants and participants' reflective journals. The results of the tests showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. In addition, the analysis of both the interviews and the reflective journals revealed that learners favoured the use of podcasts. Nevertheless, it was found that learners of a high proficiency level showed lack of interest. They attributed this disinterest to slow speech rate and the repetition of the podcasts three times.

In a Saudi college of languages and translation, Al Qasim and Al Fadda (2013) investigated the influence of podcasts on improving listening skills. Forty six female students took part in the study. Participants had no prior experience with listening or downloading podcasts. Participants were further divided into an experimental and a control group. The control group was not exposed to any intervention, whereas the

experimental group received podcasts on their mobile phones to produce their own listening channel. Data were collected via a pre-and post-test that was given to both groups and consisted of 15 items. Six weeks after the completion of the intervention, the post-test was administered. The experimental group participants had to fill out a questionnaire that probed into their evaluation of the course and their motivation as well. They were also required to create their own listening channel based on the podcasts the teacher provided them with and with the assistance of the teacher. Results showed that podcasts, and in this case, producing podcasts, had a positive impact on enhancing learners' listening skills and boosting their motivation. Participants' attitudes were unequivocally in favour of using podcasts in teaching.

Ducate and Lomicka (2009) examined the effect of podcasts on developing students' pronunciation and how learners' attitudes had changed towards pronunciation over a term. Twenty-two learners of German and French recorded 5 scripted podcasts and 3 extemporaneous podcasts that were all related to the theme of studying abroad. Participants received training of producing and recording podcasts at the beginning of the course. Participants also completed a Pronunciation Attitude Inventory to assess their perceptions regarding pronunciation. With regard to the influence of podcasts on developing pronunciation, results did not show any significance in either accentedness or comprehensibility. According to the researchers, the non-significant results could be ascribed to the insufficiency of practice. Nevertheless, participants thought positively of the podcast project and appreciated the feedback they received.

2.5.3.2 Learners' Attitudes and Perceptions toward Podcasts

In their 2007 study, Edrisingha, Rizzi, Nie and Rothwell probed into the effect of integrating podcasts in the teaching of an English and Language Communication module for undergraduates at Kingston University. The researchers developed six modules with the aim of enhancing students' learning and study skills and provide advice with regard to portfolio development and presentation skills. Participants' responses were gleaned through the conduct of focus groups and interviews, and the learners' completion of end of term evaluation questionnaires. Results showed that the use of podcasts had a positive impact on improving participants' learning and study skills in addition to providing them with significant advice on portfolios and presentation skills.

Evans (2008) gave 200 first-level tertiary level students revision podcasts after they have finished a course on Information and Communications Technology and before final exams were held. Participants were required to fill out an online five-point Likert scale questionnaire where they compared their attitudes to lectures, podcasts, notes, textbooks and multimedia e-learning systems. Results showed that learners valued the unique characteristic of podcast flexibility since it enabled them to study when and wherever they wanted. However, listening to podcasts did not facilitate multi-tasking as students could not perform other tasks while listening. Moreover, students' responses were in favour of podcasts in comparison to the use of notes, textbooks and lectures as revision tools. Nevertheless, learners were not unequivocal with regard to their relatedness to the lecturer more in a podcast than in a revision lecture. Evans (2008, p.496) explains this as this could "suggest that lecturers are just as effective at personalising the materials as

podcasts". To sum it, the study showed that podcasts could be used as an effective learning tool in higher education.

By the conduct of a three-phase project, Kim and King (2011) investigated ESOL teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward the instructional use of podcasts and blogs in a core assignment. In order to collect data, a variety of qualitative data instruments were used such as observations, research field notes, interviews, discussions, and emails in addition to the quantitative tool of an anonymous survey. According to the results of the study, ESOL teachers thought that the integration of technology as exemplified in podcasts and blogs was beneficial and effective for themselves as teachers. Hence, they agreed on incorporating these technologies in their future teaching of ELL to their younger students.

In conclusion, the use of podcasts in teaching has shown to be more effective than the conventional methods of teaching. Numerous studies on podcasts have shown their effectiveness in enhancing learning, boosting of motivation, and improving of academic performance. Podcasts are a powerful tool of learning. Accordingly, the findings of the studies have revealed the positive attitudes of both the learners and the teachers toward the integration of podcasting in the learning process.

2.6 The Current Study

The current study will adopt Vandergrift's (2004) metacognitive pedagogical sequence with the aim of raising learners' metacognitive awareness which would enable them to regulate their own learning, transfer strategies to other real-life situations and ultimately become autonomous learners.

No study in Egypt, to my knowledge, has investigated the effect of strategy training on raising learners' metacognitive awareness with special reference to listening. It is hoped that such a study might contribute to the literature since "little attention has been focused on systematic practice in L2 listening, that is, on the integrated instruction of a sequential repertoire of strategies that help L2 learners develop comprehension skills for real-life listening" (Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010). In addition, this could be one of the first attempts to implement metacognitive strategy training through action research. While other studies would teach listening once per week for a total of six or maximum eight sessions, this study consisted of two cycles per semester with each cycle lasting for five weeks with a total of fifteen hours of metacognitive strategy training per cycle. Finally, given that the use of technology would have a dual benefit in terms of motivation and confidence and in enhancing the skills of listening and speaking (Macrory, Chrétien and Ortega-Martin, 2012, p.442), in the current study, there was an attempt to integrate the use of technology in the form of podcasts and YouTube videos in order to generate learners' motivation.

2.7 Criticism of Previous Similar Studies

In reviewing the literature, Siegel's (2015) book *Exploring listening strategy instruction through action research* claims that "a thorough review of the literature has not uncovered any description or report of a synchronised process approach to listening instruction set in a classroom context. Likewise, research into the effectiveness of such an approach is also lacking in the field" (Siegel, 2015, pp.47- 48). This view can be challenged. Literature on listening instruction revealed a growing interest in raising learners' metacognitive awareness of listening processes (Vandergrift, 2007, p.197). A

process-based approach teaches learners *how* to listen and "guides them through the stages that seem to characterise real-life listening (Vandergrift, 2004, p.11). Many studies such as Mareschal, 2007; Goh and Taib, 2006; Vandergrift, 2002a, 2003; and Goh, 2002 have focused on listening as a process rather than a product.

Another issue of disagreement with Siegel (2015, p.50) pertains to his claim that "metacognitive strategies may be limited to the classroom, while they may be useful for tests of listening, they may not be applicable to real-world listening". This argument is not accurate as one of the main aims of metacognitive strategy training is to teach learners skills and strategies that they would transfer to real-life listening. Studies cited above by Mareschal, 2007; Cross, 2010 and Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari (2010) are good examples of the positive effect of metacognitive strategy training on learners' listening comprehension. The pilot focus group (see Chapter 4 – 4.1.3.1) that was conducted prior to the implementation of the pilot study revealed that students benefited from the strategy training carried out a semester earlier on an informal basis. Two students could transfer the strategies they learnt in the course to the learning of two other languages, namely, Arabic and Japanese. They employed the metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring and evaluation to the learning of the new two languages.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 In Pursuit of Truth

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.17) define phenomena as "the things we directly apprehend through our senses as we go about our daily lives". Thus, how we perceive these phenomena and understand them will differ from one person to another. It is as Anderson and Aresnault postulate:

> How you see the world is largely a function of where you view it from,
> what you look at, what lens you use to help you see, what tools you
> use to clarify your image, what you reflect on and how you report
> your world to others.

<div align="right">(Anderson and Aresnault, 1998, p.2)</div>

This difference is governed by both epistemological and ontological assumptions. Epistemology is 'the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated' (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007, p.15). It is the 'lens' through which the individual can understand the surrounding world in a certain way (Boden, Kenway and Epstein, 2005, p.41). However, understanding the world cannot be achieved through one lens or epistemology; accordingly, one has to possess an array of available epistemologies (Boden, Kenway and Epstein, 2005, p.41).

If "epistemology" is concerned with knowledge, then "ontology" is about "conceptions of our positionality in the world" and how this affects our knowledge of the world (Cousin, 2009, p.6). We come to understand the world around us through our ontological standpoints that influence our epistemological viewpoints and which, in turn, enable us to understand truth.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) *pose* the following questions regarding the ontological assumptions of social phenomena:

> Is social reality external to individuals – imposing itself on their consciousness
> from without – or is the product of individual consciousness? Is reality of an
> objective nature, or the result of individual cognition? Is it a given 'out there'
> in the world, or is it created by one's own mind?

<div align="center">(Burrell and Morgan, 1979, cited in, Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.5)</div>

All these epistemological and ontological assumptions have their bearings on educational research since our knowledge of the world will have an impact on our perceptions of the research problem that we select, the methods we employ, and the interpretations that are made (Schutz, Chambless and De Cuir., 2004, p.273). According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.21), ontological assumptions instigate epistemological assumptions which, in turn, have "methodological implications for the choice of particular data collection techniques". They further comment that the interaction among all these aspects cannot be "over-estimated" (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.21)

Despite the importance of these assumptions, the complexity of the responses to questions of ontological, epistemological and methodological nature has led two traditions in social research (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.21), namely: the quantitative and the qualitative paradigms. The quantitative paradigm is congruent with the positivist approach, whereas there is consistency between the qualitative approach and interpretivisim. It is as if both of them are two ends of a continuum.

Auguste Comte, the nineteenth- century philosopher is regarded as the father of the positivist approach. According to this approach, human behaviour is predictable and amenable to observation. Human behaviour is thus 'governed by general, universal laws and characterised by

underlying regularities' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.15). Social phenomena, like physical phenomena, are law-governed. Any phenomena or propositions that cannot be tested empirically and are not verifiable are rejected. Hence, this philosophy refuses metaphysics and theology. Consequently, positivism purports that there is no "qualitative difference between the natural and the social world" (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.22)

In the same vein, the tenets of positivism underlie how education is viewed. As O'Connor explains:

> Education, like medicine and engineering, is a set of practical activities and we understand better how to carry them out if we understand the natural laws that apply to the material with which we have to work.
>
> (O'Connor, 1957, cited in Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.68)

Thus, education is viewed in the same way as that of the natural sciences with the aim of reaching laws and law-like generalisations which predict the behaviour in the future. This view could be acceptable when it comes to inanimate objects but with human behaviour "man is not the subject of science" and these "are peculiarities of each person's perceptions and interpretations of events that significant generalisation is impossible" (Pring, 2015, p.45).

As a response to the criticism levelled at the positivist approach, people turned to epistemological approaches that aimed at investigating phenomena through 'interpretive notions of understanding, meaning and action' rather than the positivistic conceptions of explanation, prediction and control (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.83).

Both the positivist and the interpretive approaches differ in how they view behaviour, action and theory. Positivism advocates view behaviour as responses to either 'external environmental stimuli (another person, or the demands of society) or to internal stimuli (hunger or the need to achieve)' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.17). However, the interpretive approach rejects the idea of 'reifying' (treating as an object) behaviour (Pring, 2015, p.115). Rather the focus of interpretivism is action. Perhaps the clearest definition of the interpretive viewpoint is Weber's (1964):

> Sociology…is a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action…. In 'action' is included all human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. Action in this sense may be either overt or purely inward or subjective; it may consist of positive intervention in a situation, or of deliberately refraining from such intervention or passively acquiescing in the situation. Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course.
>
> (Weber, 1964, cited in, Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.87)

This definition is very comprehensive as it embraces all the tenets underlying the interpretive approach. In order to understand people's actions, one needs to understand their intentions, motives and purposes while carrying out their actions. 'They are behaviours infused with intentions' (Pring, 2015, p. 117). Furthermore, the interpretations of the individual regarding the performance of these actions need to be understood, too. Hence, understanding these interpretations and motives would mean grasping the "subjective meaning the action has to the actor' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.88) and "qualification of actions, ideas, values and meanings through the eyes of participants rather than quantification through the eyes of an outside observer" (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.26).

As with regard to theory, while the positivistic principles of explanation and prediction suggest that 'theory relates to practice through a process of technical control' (Carr and Kemmis, 1988, p.91), the aim of the interpretivist approach is the disclosure of the rules and assumptions governing social behaviour and actions and consequently, to 'illuminate' these actions.

Pring (2015) warns against "false dualism' or what he calls a polarisation between two competing paradigms: the quantitative and the qualitative paradigms. This distinction could be seen to stem from both 'epistemological' and 'ontological' differences (Pring, 2015, p.60). The quantifiable positivist generalisations as opposed to the non-physical personal and social interpretive meaning characterise the epistemological divide (Pring, 2015, p.60), on one hand. On the other hand, researching the world 'as it really is' reflects the positivist viewpoint, whereas the interpretive approach can never view 'reality' as 'independent of the person researching it (Pring, 2015, p.60). However, both the quantitative and the qualitative research are complementary and any distinction between them is 'simplistic' and 'naïve'. As Reichardt and Cook, for example, postulate:

> In practical terms, quantitative and qualitative research are in many ways indistinguishable, and that 'researchers in no way follow the principles of a supposed paradigm without simultaneously assuming methods and values of the alternative paradigms.

> (Reichardt and Cook , 1979, cited in Nunan, 1992, p.3)

Nunan (1992) further explains by demonstrating that a distinction is drawn between quantitative and qualitative research. In the first, research is suggested to be "obtrusive and uncontrolled, objective, generalisable, outcome oriented, and assumes the existence of "facts" which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or

researcher". In qualitative research, on the other hand, there is an assumption that knowledge is "relative, that there is a subjective element to all knowledge and research, and that holistic, ungeneralisable studies are justifiable". Nunan uses a metaphor where quantitative research seen as "hard" and qualitative research as "soft" (Nunan, 1992, p.3).

As Richards (2005, cited in Dörnyei, 2011, p.36) concludes "qualitative and quantitative data do not inhabit different worlds. They are different ways of recording observations of the same world". Hence, the integration of these two research paradigms can lead to the achievement of the research aims and objectives.

3.2 Research Strategy

3.2.1 Action research

3.2.1.1 Definition and Characteristics of Action Research

Action research is the research strategy that will be adopted in this study. Broadly defined, action research is the umbrella that covers a "wide range of research paradigms and processes, each with its own philosophies and rationales" (Norton, 2009, p.51). These philosophies and rationales are more of a qualitative nature. Further, the aim of action research is to improve a situation and can lead to change. The key factor in this change is reflection.

Though definitions and interpretations of action research are still "under development" (Burns, 2011, p.241), Carr and Kemmis's definition is considered to be the most frequently cited. Carr and Kemmis offer the following definition:

> Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out.
>
> (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.162)

Koshy's (2005) definition of action research is useful. She states:

> I define action research as an enquiry undertaken with rigour and understanding so as to constantly refine practice; the emerging evidence- based outcomes will then contribute to the researching practitioner's continuing professional development.
>
> (Koshy, 2005, pp.1-2)

Hence, the characteristics of action research could be summarised as follows. Reflection is the key word in carrying out action research. The term "reflection" has been derived from the work of Schön (1983, cited in Norton, 2009, p.21) , who argues in his book *The Reflective Practitioner*, that regardless of one's profession, one needs to reflect as facing new situations or problems for which one is not trained, is unavoidable. Reflection is central because it is the "means by which experience can be turned into action" (Norton, 2009, p.32) and reflection occurs at every stage of action research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.310). Secondly, "refining practice" or improvement is one of the features that distinguishes action research from other research approaches (Norton, 2009; Kember, 2005) as the aim of action research is to "transform the present to produce a different future" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.183). Researchers reflect on their own practice in an attempt to improve it, hence learning from their own experience and sharing this experience with others which exemplify another characteristic of action research, namely, constructive enquiry (Koshy, 2005, p.9). Pertinent to the idea of improvement, action research is "cyclical" or "spiral". An action research cycle starts with planning, action, observing and reflecting which is only a beginning because if the process stops at this point, it will not be regarded as

action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.185). As can be seen in Figure 3.1, these stages are spiral or cyclical and one stage leads to another; there is no certain order. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007, p.601) attribute this cyclicity to a number of reasons: First, stages are not always performed in the same order. Secondly, some researchers may return to earlier stages while the research is progressing and finally, many may repeat the stages rather than bring the research to an end. Moreover, according to Kember (2005, p.23) although these stages should follow a logical path, "diversions' should be acceptable and they should not be followed too rigidly. Based on the cyclical nature of action research, emerged a number of models which will be discussed in detail later on.
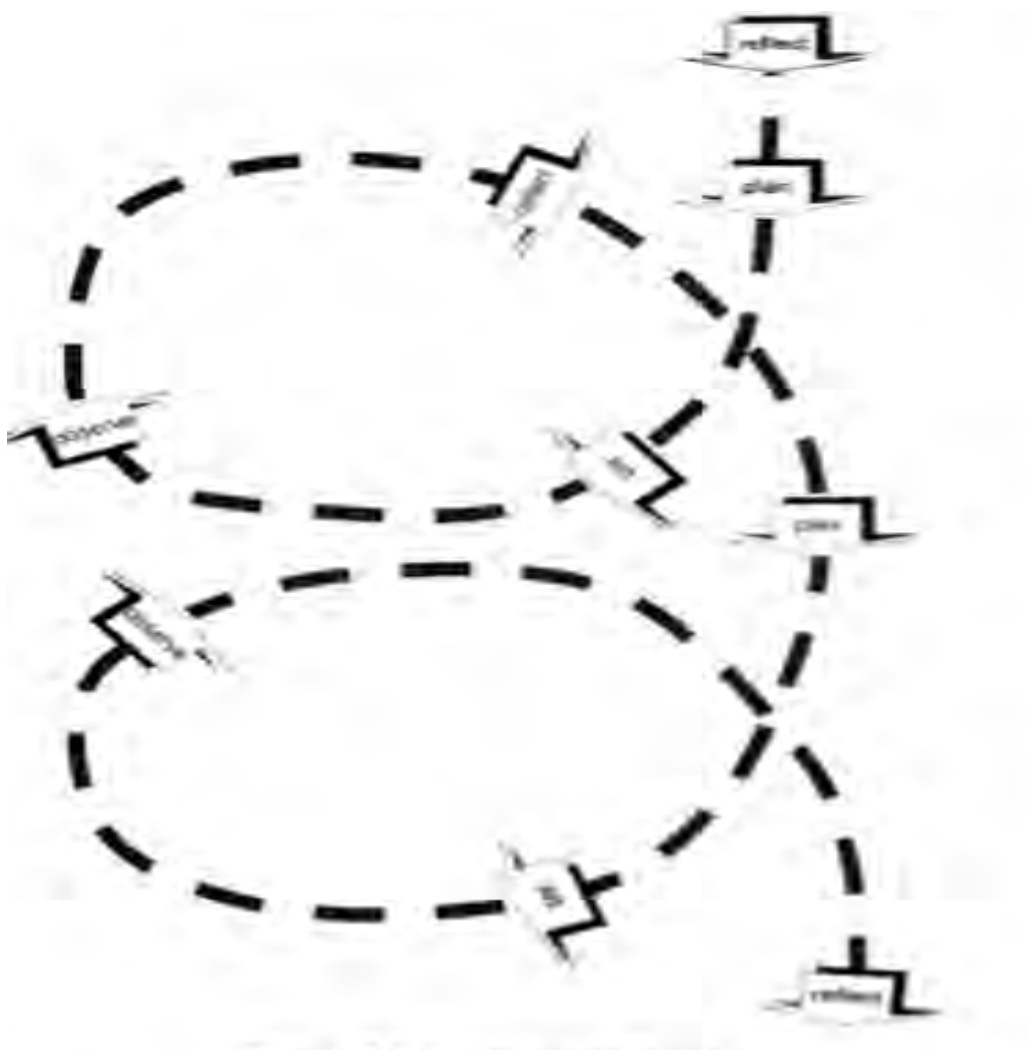
Figure 3.1: Action research as a cycle (Kember, 2005, p.22)

Another characteristic of action research is that it is participative (Reason and Bradbury, 2008, p.4). It is participative in the sense that it is not only the researcher who carries out action research. Rather, there are other actors in this process like the students and sometimes other colleagues or teachers who are involved in this social practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.182). However, Dick (2000, cited in Costello, 2007, p.6) refutes the idea of participation as being one of the major characteristics of action research and argues that he considers the cyclical/spiral process and the "pursuit of both action and research" as the "defining characteristics" of action research. Furthermore, the action researchers through reflecting on their own practice are able to construct a theory of practice (Koshy, 2005, p.10) as theory is brought closer to practice (Kember, 2005, p.23). Last but not least, Carr and Kemmis (1986) explain that action researchers adopt a dialectical view where they recognise on one hand that there are "objective" uncontrollable social aspects that might have an impact on some individuals' actions at particular time and that it may be necessary to change the way these aspects constrain people's actions in order to change how people act. At the same time, there is a recognition of the how individuals' "subjective" understanding of situations can constrain their actions, and that these "understandings can be changed". Carr and Kemmis further comment that what might be seen as an "objective" constraint for one individual might be considered "subjective" for another (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.183).

Hence, the action researcher tries to understand both the "objective" and the "subjective" conditions and tries to examine how they could be changed (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.183). Thus, the dialectical view of rationality which action researchers employ is the dialectical relationship between two terms which are "normally thought of as opposed and mutually exclusive: theory and practice and

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individual and society" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.184). According to Carr and

Kemmis (1986, p.184) the heart of action research, which is named as participatory and

self-reflective, is this double dialectical view of theory and practice on one hand and

individual and society, on the other.

3.2.1.2 Types of Action Research

It is imperative for action practitioners to decide on the purpose of carrying out action

research so that there would be consistency between the results of their research and its

purpose (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007, p.599). There are two camps of classifying the

purposes and types of action research. Zeichner and Noffke (2001, cited in Gall, Gall

and Borg, 2007, p.599), on one hand, state that action practitioners are driven by

different purposes when they carry out action research endeavours. The motivations

that underlie them could be summarised as follows: personal purposes for action

research, professional purposes for action research and political purposes for action

research. The teacher carries out personal action research for the purpose of the

improvement of his or her practice and the emphasis is on both the teacher and his or

her own students. Thus, the purpose of personal action research is to promote "greater

self-knowledge, fulfilment, and professional awareness among practitioners" (Gall,

Gall and Borg, 2007, p.599). On the other hand, when practitioners carry out

professional action research, their purpose is to "extend research beyond the

classroom" (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007, p.600). This, in turn, helps them to study and

affect directly the surrounding social and institutional contexts themselves without

depending on an outside observer (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007, p.600). Zeichner and

Noffke maintain that professional action research "helps to bridge the gap between

theory and practice, but without fundamentally altering the relationship between the

educational and practice communities" (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007, p.600). Unlike

professional action research, political action research aims at bringing about drastic (fundamental) social change with the purpose of achieving social justice for all (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007, p.600). Action researchers seek in this process to free themselves (emancipate), voice their thoughts and take actions that could be challenging to their status quo "with respect to their professional identities" (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007, p.600).

On the other hand, drawing on Habermas's theory of knowledge- constitutive interests, Carr and Kemmis (1986) distinguish three kinds of action research: technical, practical and critical action research. According to Habermas (cited in Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.135), in technical interest, human beings are concerned with the acquisition of knowledge that would, in turn, facilitate their "technical control over natural objects". The aim of this knowledge is not the technical application. Rather, "disinterested attitude" is the form of this knowledge (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.135). However, according to Habermas, understanding "communicative action" is not reduced to scientific knowledge (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.135). Hence, in order to understand others, there is a need to grasp the "social meanings constitutive of social reality" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.135). The outcome of this "practical interest" is the generation of interpretive knowledge (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.135). Nevertheless, this subjective approach fails to assess the role of "prevailing social, cultural or political conditions " in distorting any forms of communication (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.135). The last type of interest, namely, the emancipatory interest is concerned with the acquisition of emancipatory knowledge of the "objective framework within which communication and social action occur" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.136). As Schatzki (2002, cited in Kemmis, 2009, p.469) argues there is a difference between these types as regards their

"teleoaffective structure, that is to say, "their overall structure as "projects" for the people involved (their telos or overarching purpose)" in which different types of emotional investments and states (the affective element) may be involved.

3.2.1.3 The Evolution of Action Research

John Collier and Kurt Lewin are considered to be the fathers of action research. Collier's concern was to develop "community" which was related to the education and social context of Native Americans. This could be achieved through "the experience of responsible democracy" (Collier, 1945, cited in McNiff., 2013, p.56). The same interests were shared by Kurt Lewin but from a different perspective as he explored the way in which productivity could be enhanced and which was the result of industrial contexts and participation in decision-making (McNiff, 2013, p.56).

Concurrent to the development of new educational and ethnographic approaches such as the Science Education movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Progressive Education of John Dewey, the Free Schools movement, and the Group Dynamics movement in social psychology and human relations training, emerged action research and was seen as an important factor for the reconstruction of post-war society (McNiff, 2013, p.57; McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.40).

Although Lewin's work was concerned with industrial and organisational contexts, the relevance of the ideas was adopted in educational research. Furthermore, his work influenced other researchers who organised their work and reports as a cycle of steps: observe – reflect – act – evaluate – modify (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006, p.36). In 1953, Corey's book *Action Research to Improve School Practices* aroused interest in action research. Nonetheless, in the late 1950s, this interest declined and post – Sputnik

Research Development and Diffusion model in the USA and Britain started to replace it. The new model was favoured in 1960s and it focused on the "separation of research and practice" (McNiff, 2013; Kemmis, 1993).

In the late 1960s, internal unease generated by civil right movements, protests against the Korean and Vietnam wars and increased focus on technological control and education turned attention again to action research. The practitioner researcher was seen as "a form of educational and social change" (McNiff, 2013, p.58).

In the same vein in Britain, the work of Stenhouse (1975, cited in McNiff, 2013, p.58) revitalised action research. He saw the teacher at the heart of research as research and teaching are closely "linked". According to Stenhouse, teachers should reflect on their practices and they are the best judges of their work, are accountable of their own work and their influence on the educational process could be scrutinised (McNiff, 2013, p.58). As Stenhouse puts it:

> All well-founded curriculum research and development, whether the work of an individual teacher, of a school, of a group working in a teacher's centre or a group working within the co-ordinating framework of a national project, is based on the study of classrooms. It thus rests on work of teachers.
>
> (Stenhouse, 1975, cited in McNiff, 2013, p.58)

Moreover, Stenhouse's views were that "fruitful development in the field of curriculum and teaching depends upon the evolving styles of co-operative research by teachers and using full-time researchers to support the teachers' work" (Stenhouse, 1975, cited in McNiff, 2013, pp. 58-59). However, the form of theory was conceptual and the approach was interpretive. There was no account of teachers who discussed their practice and whether they have evaluated their practice and developed theories in relation to their educational values (McNiff, 2013, p.59).

Around Stenhouse gathered other researchers who contributed to the field of action research. Among them is Stephen Kemmis who produced in collaboration with Wilfred Carr(1986) an influential model of action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.45). Another researcher, who had on impact on the field of action research, is John Elliott. The models of both Kemmis and Elliott will be explained below in the section of models of action research.

3.2.1.4 Advantages of Action Research

The advantages of action research have been documented by many researchers (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Kember, 2005; Koshy, 2005; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 2003). Koshy (2005) summarises these advantages as the opportunity of setting research within a specific context, the possibility that researchers play the roles of participants, the continuous striving of action research to ensure continuous evaluation and modification is carried out while the project is progressing. There is also the ability of the emergence of theory rather than following a previously set theory. Hence, the study could lead to wide and varied outcomes (Koshy, 2005, p.21).

Moreover, one of the main characteristics of action research is that teachers and practitioners can research their own classrooms without depending on external experts or researchers (Kember, 2005, p.23).

3.2.1.5 Limitations and Criticism of Action Research

Action research has been criticised as being a "soft option" thus the researcher needs to define the parameters of the research before embarking on it (Koshy, 2005, p.21). Moreover, there is also the issue of ethical considerations pertinent to action research. These will be discussed in a separate section later on.

Another criticism of action research is that it is not "proper" research since it does not follow the traditional models of academic research (Norton, 2009, p.60). According to Norton (2009, p.63), as the main aim of action research is to instigate change and consists of many cycles that are based on experience and reflection, it does not fit the traditional experimental methods. Rather, the cyclical nature of action research leads to the gathering of feedback, then adaptation is made and it could be followed by subsequent cycles of implementation or adaptations or what Kember (2000, cited in Norton, 2009, p.63) calls "fine-tuning".

3.2.1.6 Models of Action Research

From the 1940s until the present day, action researchers have produced "linguistic or visual models" to convey their ideas (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.39). McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (2003) point out that some of the researchers present it as cycles of reflective action (Lewin, 1946; Griffiths, 1990); some as flow charts (Elliott, 1991; Evans, 1993); and others as spirals (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982; McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.59). Only the models of action research that have been influential and have been frequently cited will be discussed in this section.

Kurt Lewin (1946) presented the first action research model. His model starts with careful planning. If this is successful, two other items ensue: an overall plan and a decision concerning the first step of action. Then, comes the carrying out of the overall plan which, in turn, is followed by the reconnaissance or fact finding. The cycle is repeated again with a "circle of planning, executing and reconnaissance or fact-finding". After that, the results are evaluated for preparation for the next planning step (Lewin, 1946, pp.37-38).

Lewin's model can be illustrated as follows:
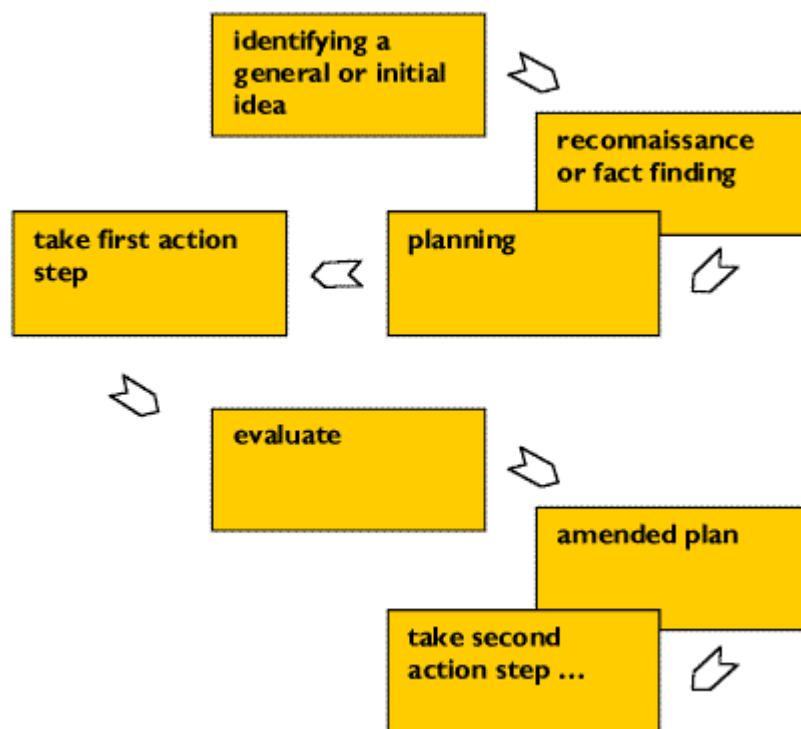
Figure 3.2: Lewin's model (Adapted from: http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-lewin.htm)

Based on the ideas of Lewin, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, cited in Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007, p.276) developed a model of participatory action research. They allege that though the model is poorly described in the form of a "mechanical sequence of steps", it is thought of as a "spiral of self-reflective cycles" which could be summarised as follows (see Figure 3.3):

- Planning a change
- Acting and observing the process and consequences of the change
- Reflecting on these processes and consequences
- Replanning
- Acting and observing again
- Reflecting again, and so on …

(Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007, p.276)

McNiff and Whitehead (2002, p.48) criticised this model regarding the following of a

linear sequence of steps without paying attention to the problems that might arise while

carrying out research. It is as if life goes along one path. It seems that Kemmis and

McTaggart in the third edition of the *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* (2007) revised

this issue. They comment that in reality, the steps might not be followed that faithfully

starting with planning, acting, observing, and ending up with reflecting. Rather, the

stages overlap and the initial plans might be discarded since the researcher learns from

experience. They further add that "in reality, the process is likely to be more fluid, open

and responsive". To say that participants have succeeded is not based on their

following of steps religiously but on their "strong and authentic sense of development

and evolution in their *practices*, their *understandings* of their practices, and the

situations in which they practise" (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007, p.277).
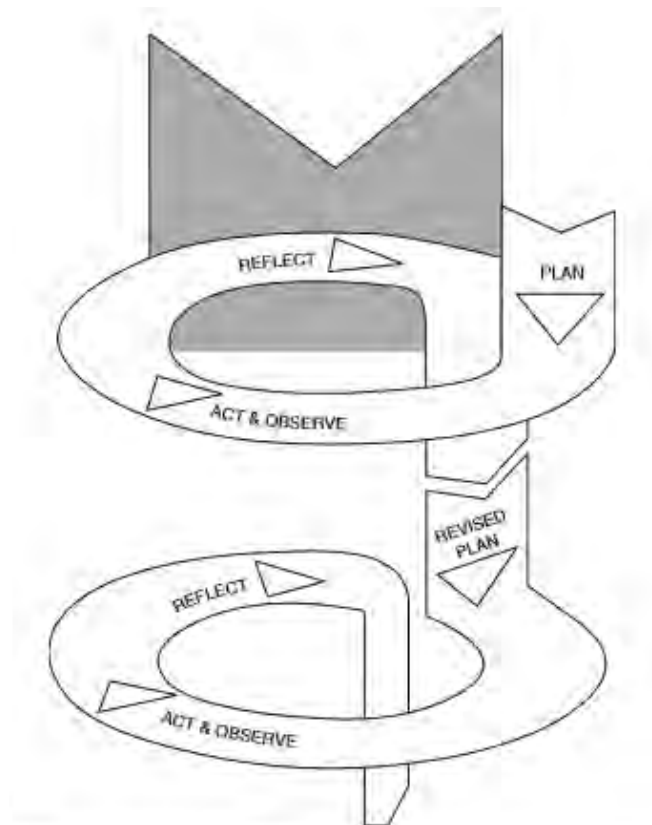
Figure 3.3: The Action Research Spiral (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007, p.278)

In 1991, John Elliott (cited in McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.48) while agreeing with

the action-reflection spiral, presents critique of Lewin's model. Elliott explains that:

> Although I think Lewin's model is an excellent basis for starting to think about what action research involves, it can … allow those who use it to assume that 'the general idea' can be fixed in advance, that 'reconnaissance' is merely fact-finding, and that 'implementation' is a fairly straightforward process.

Figure 3.4 illustrates the modifications Elliott has added to Lewin's action-reflection

spiral model. Elliott goes on to argue that:

- The general idea should be allowed to shift.
- Reconnaissance should involve analysis as well as fact-finding and should constantly recur in the spiral of activities, rather than occur only at the beginning.
- Implementation of an action step is not always easy, and one should not proceed to evaluate the effects of an action until one has monitored the extent to which it has been implemented.

(McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.49)
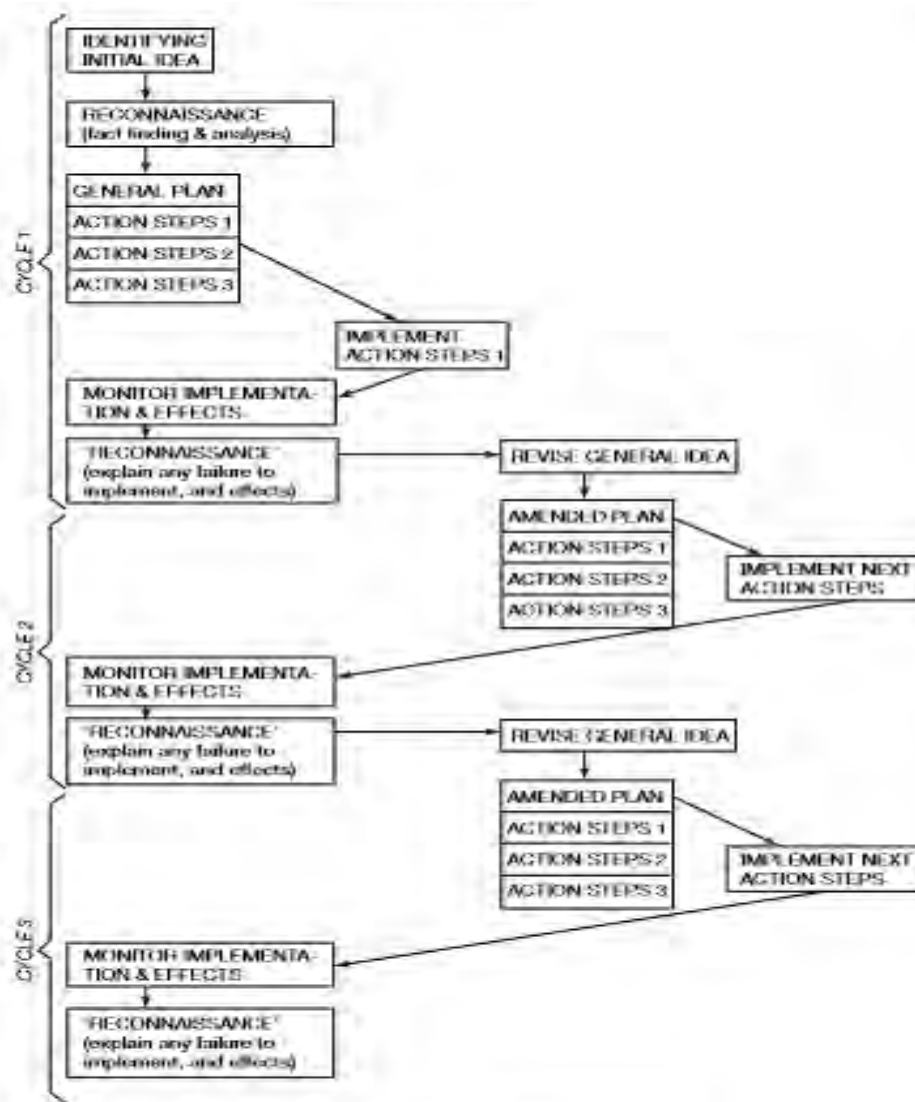
Figure 3.4: Revised version of Lewin's model of action research (Elliott, 1991, cited in McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.50).

Zuber-Skerritt's (1996, cited in Zuber-Skerritt, 2001) model sets a framework for emancipatory (critical) action research where practitioners collaborate to solve a problem through teamwork and a cyclical process. This cyclical process starts with "1) strategic planning, 2) implementing the plan (action), 3) observation, evaluation and self-evaluation, 4) critical and self-critical reflection of the results from (1) – (3), and making decisions for the next cycle of action plan" (Zuber-Skerritt, 2001, p.19) (see Figure 3.5).
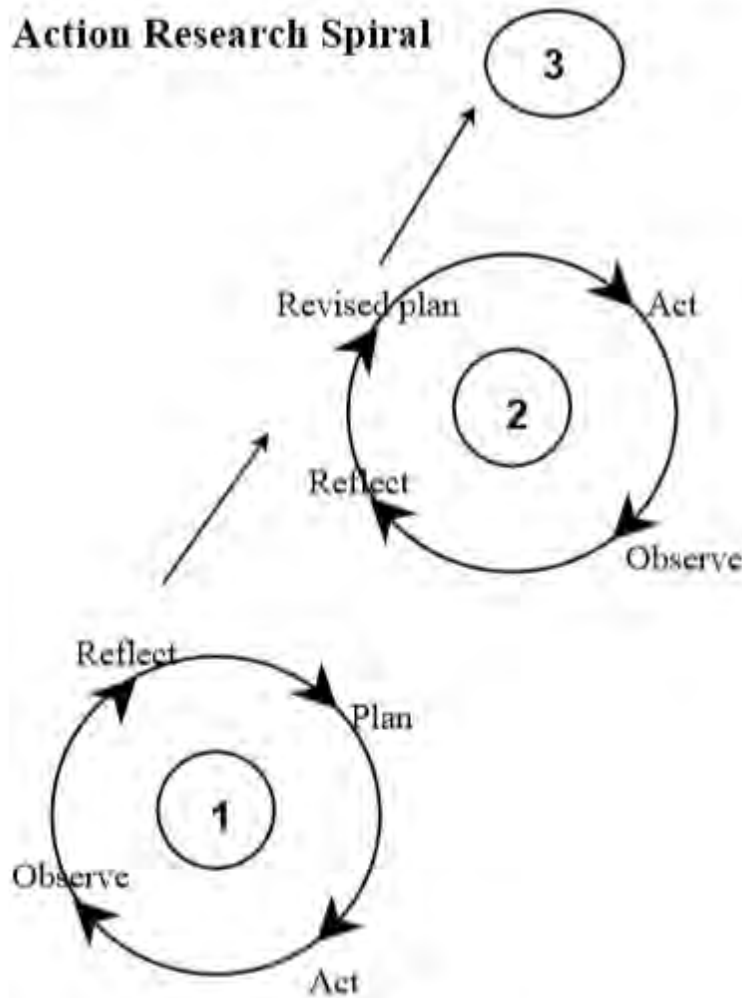
Figure 3.5: The Spiral of Action Research Cycles (Zuber-Skerritt, 2001, p.20).

Denscombe's (1998, cited in Denscombe, 2010) model represents the cyclical process

and consists of five stages: professional practice, critical reflection, research, strategic

planning and action (see Figure 7). Research starts with professional practice and

reflecting critically on it. This reflection enables the researcher to either identify a

problem or evaluate changes. These, it turn, may lead to researching and enquiring

about the problem or issue. After completing the enquiry, the findings reached become

the "starting point for the development of an action plan" (Costello, 2007, p.10). Then

strategic planning leads to the instigation of change, which in turn, feeds back to

professional practice and the cycle is repeated again. The practitioner does not only

reflect with the aim of identifying problems but can also evaluate instigated change which could, in turn, "prompt further research" (Denscombe, 2010, p.129).

There are two salient characteristics of the cycle of action research, namely, that "research feeds back directly into practice and that the process is ongoing" (Denscombe, 2010, p.129). However, as Denscombe points out this model is ideal and in reality, action research "often limits itself to discrete, one-off pieces of research" (Denscombe, 2010, p.129).
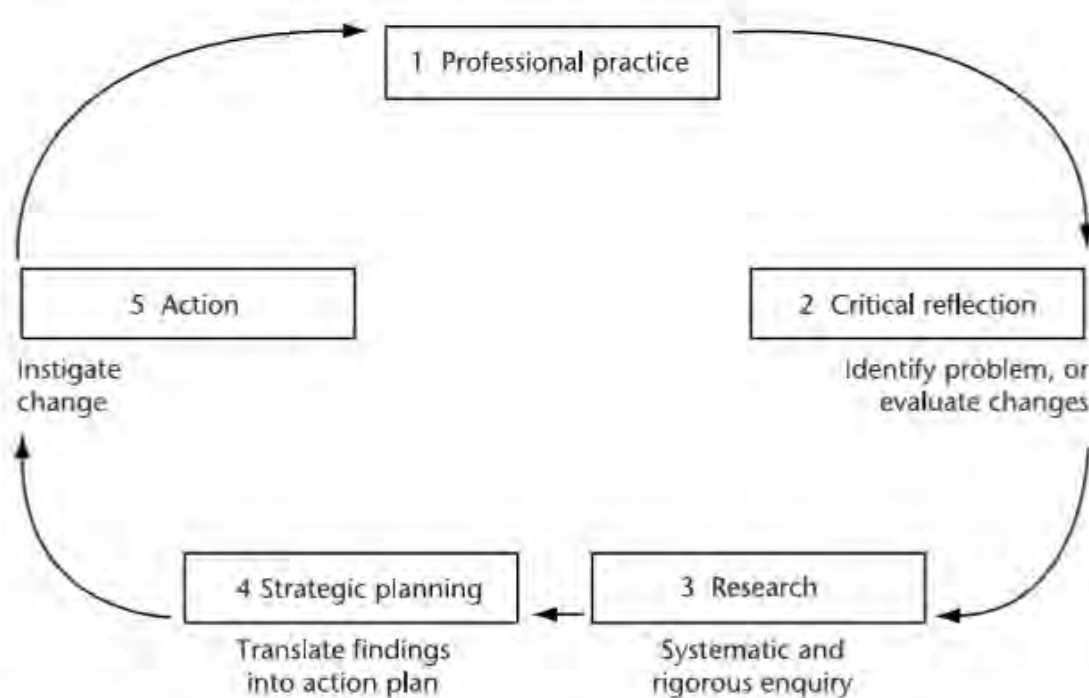
Figure 3.6: The cyclical process in action research (Denscombe, 2010, p.129)

McNiff and Whitehead (2002) present an eight-step model (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 2003; McNiff and Whitehead, 2002).

A basic action research process can be described as:

- We review our current practice,
- identify an aspect we want to improve,

- imagine a way forward,
- try it out, and
- take stock of what happens,
- We modify our plan in the light of what we have found and continue with the 'action',
- evaluate the modified action,
- and so on until we are satisfied with that aspect of our work.

(McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 2003, p. 58; McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p. 71)

This cycle will be repeated again.

Like other researchers McNiff and Whitehead think of action research as a "continuous process" or as a cycle of action-reflection. "When the work appears as an ongoing process, it can be seen as a cycle of cycles" (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 2003, p.58).

3.2.1.7 Criticism Levelled at Action Research Models

McNiff (2013, p.63) offers a critique of the action research models mentioned above. She describes them as "prescriptive and disconnected from real-life practices". Bourdieu (1990, cited in McNiff, 2013, p.63) is also concerned with the same idea. He maintains that model-makers see a model as a "universal given" and not a metaphor. This, in turn, creates a "slippage" between the model and reality. He further adds that this applies to models that are sequential and predictable and thus they are presented as synopses of events or what Bourdieu (McNiff, 2013, p.63) calls "synoptic illusion" since "the model does not necessarily communicate people's experiences of reality". Hence, Bourdieu wishes for a "simple generative model" of the logic of practice that could be adjusted to changeable situations (McNiff, 2013, p.64). As mentioned above and as McNiff has noted linear or sequential models of action research do not cater for the constant changes that could happen in the learning process. This is emphasised by

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Pring (2015, p.144) when he mentions that "the teacher is constantly adjusting to unforeseen circumstances, responding to the levels of understanding of the learners, trying new approaches. The teacher is managing a situation which is fluid, unpredictable, dynamic".

This has also been reinforced in Higgins' (2000, cited in McNiff, 2013, p.64) report that 'action does not proceed in a fixed linear fashion'.

Furthermore, Hopkins (2002, cited in Costello, 2007) states that the prescriptive nature of action research models may have an impact on the flexibility with which teachers carry out their studies. Hopkins (2002, cited in Costello, 2007, pp.11-12) further suggests that "the tight specification of process steps and cycles may trap teachers within a framework which they come to depend on and which will, consequently, inhibit independent action". He also adds that the "models may appear daunting and confusing to practitioners" (Hopkins, 2002, cited in Costello, 2007, p.12).

3.2.1.8 Response to Criticism Advanced to Action Research Models and Rationale for Choosing Action Research as a Research Strategy

Many researchers tried to avoid the criticism levelled at action research models by offering suggestions to help new action practitioners who might find themselves perplexed in choosing which model to follow. Koshy (2005, p.8) warns against the idea of following a particular model faithfully as this might have an impact on the "emerging and flexibility" of action research. Consequently, she suggests that the action researcher should adopt a model that fits the purpose of his/her research (Koshy, 2005, p.5). Moreover, Costello (2007, p.12) asserts that some models are "complex both in their design and theoretical justifications" and this denudes action research of

one of its defining characteristics, namely, its cyclical nature and which, in turn, focuses on both action and critical reflection. He further comments that the wide range of models offered gives the practitioner the chance to "choose". Hence, the focus is on "*choice*" and not "prescription" (Costello, 2007, p.12). Costello also recommends that it is advisable to have a sound structure of a project before embarking on it (Costello, 2007, p.12). The same ideas are resonated in McNiff's (2013) comment that a practitioner should not follow models as they are not "necessarily representative of the realities you experience". She proposes that models should be seen as the purpose for which they have been produced: "guidelines for how it is hoped things will eventually turn out" (McNiff, 2013, p.64).

All the above mentioned criticism and suggestions for taking models as guidelines have been taken into considerations in the conduct of the study using action research strategy.

According to Schön (1991, cited in Costello, 2007, p.15) 1) practitioners should take part in their own practice and 2) develop their educational theories that are driven from that practice. These views were the impetus that drove me to choose action research as a research strategy since action research is the medium via which these aims could be achieved. Furthermore, the researcher's investigation of his/her research is in accordance with the spirit of action research (Denscombe, 2010, p.127) as it is characterised by change.

3.2.1.9 Action Research in this Study

Bearing into mind all the limitations and the criticism advanced to action research, I started off my research by planning the study. First of all, the aims and objectives of the study in addition to the research questions were finalised. Secondly the participants

have been selected. Thirdly, a pilot study has been carried out. Finally, the main study was conducted.

3.2.1.9.1 Pilot Study

3.2. 1.9.1.1 Procedures

The ethical approval of the research project has been obtained prior to the carrying out of the pilot study in May 2015. The consent of the college of language and media, where I work, to conduct the study has been obtained, too. The pilot study started in the term of September 2015. It consisted of one cycle from October 2015 – November 2015 and lasted for five weeks. The purpose of this cycle was to trial the materials and pilot the strategy training programme, reflect on it and evaluate it. I also implemented the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ), a validated instrument, which will be explained in detail later on.

Sixty-two students took part in this cycle but due to absence and not handing in all listening journals, data for only fifty-six students will be used. Full details of the participants' demographic features and proficiency level are addressed in the participants' section. Participants came from three separate classes: two of them are students of an intermediate level while students in the third class were of a low-intermediate level.

Normally, at the institution where I work, an academic term lasts for 15 teaching weeks but with days off due to official holidays it is only 13 weeks.

The listening course comprises 60 hours divided into two sessions per week, each lasting for an hour and a half. In week 1 and after introducing students to the aims and objectives of the course, students are introduced to note-taking techniques as that would

be of help for them in other courses. They practised how to take down notes by focusing on the main key words, abbreviations and deletion of unnecessary words. As this is one of the main objectives of the listening course, note-taking will be recurrent in each session. By the second session of week 2, they listened to a mini-lecture about *Two Functions of Listening* (Lynch, 2004). Prior to listening to the extract, I told students about the title of the audio and asked them to brainstorm and think of the words/ideas they expect they would listen to. I then wrote down on the board all the words/ ideas they came up with. I did not comment whether their ideas were right or wrong. After that, as a while-listening task, I asked students to take notes of the main points they could listen to and mainly to focus on the title of the mini-lecture: *Two Functions of Listening*. Students listened once and I moved around to check whether they could manage to take down notes. After they had listened for the first time, some students reported that they were not able to keep up with the audio. So, I asked them to work in pairs and compare their notes. Then, the audio was played again for students to check their notes. Next, I chose three students randomly and asked them to write their notes on the board and we had a whole class discussion.

Upon completion of the post-listening task, I would normally ask learners to write their reflections on the steps they have followed while they were listening to the audio recording. I asked them to think whether these strategies were effective/ ineffective and whether they would like to change them. I also asked them to write their thoughts whether the audio recording was easy/difficult and what they thought rendered it as easy/difficult. These, in turn, were discussed as a whole discussion and I inquired whether students had problems in expressing their thoughts or ideas. Given that one of the criticisms levelled at writing journals is that the time that lapses between listening to an audio recording and writing the journal could lead to unconscious editing (Fry,

1988, p.160) , learners were asked to reflect on their listening strategies immediately after they have finished listening. These listening journals would go into the developmental portfolio that students keep from the beginning until the end of the term.

Immediately after students had written their reflections, participant information sheets were given out to the participants to introduce them to the research outline. Attached with it was a self-completion questionnaire (demographic questionnaire) (see Appendix 1) asking participants to provide information about their age, years of studying English, their assessment of their command of the English language and any extracurricular activities they undertake to enhance their listening skills. It also included a consent form for participants to identify the level at which they agree to be involved with the study, from completing the questionnaires to being contacted for taking part in focus groups interviews (see Appendices 3 and 4).

Then, the extent of learners' awareness of employing metacognitive strategies while listening was assessed through the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal and Tafaghdotari, 2006) (see Appendix 1). I distributed the MALQ and asked students to fill it out. I made sure this was carried out immediately after the students have listened to an audio recording as students should be engaged in an authentic task prior to answering the MALQ since these responses reflect accurately what the listeners have done unlike the unfocused responses which represent general perceptions of L2 listening (Cross and Vandergrift, 2014, p.88).

Given that the focus of the study was the teaching of the metacognitive strategies - namely, planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluation, I tried to follow Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) metacognitive pedagogical sequence (see Table 3.1) where as a teacher, I did not elaborate on the concept of listening strategies nor did I

explain to the students the benefits of using these strategies. Instead, I tried to help students to regulate their listening by becoming aware of themselves as listeners (person knowledge), the demands of the task at hand (task knowledge) and the strategies that would enable them better regulate their listening (strategic knowledge) (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.108). This would be augmented by the collaboration of peers which would enable listeners to orchestrate appropriate strategies and ultimately achieve "greater success in L2 listening" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.108). Accordingly, sessions would start off with the prediction or brainstorming of the key words/ key ideas that learners are expected to listen to in the listening extract or what is called "activation of schemata" (Kemp, 2010, p.386). Then, learners would listen and take down notes. After that, they compared their notes with a partner. That was followed by the stage of the second verification where students listened for a second time for additional information or for correction of information. The final stage was the reflection and the goal settings stage. I incorporated note-taking to the model and did not follow the three phases of verification. Sometimes students could get the main ideas and key words easily and found it unnecessary to listen to the audio recording or watch the video for a third time, so I omitted the third listening time. In my selection of the audio/videos I made sure that the listening text was in Krashen's (1982) terms an i+1. It was neither too easy for the students so that they felt bored when listening nor was it too difficult to make them feel frustrated and eventually get demotivated and uninterested in attending the listening class.

Table 3.1: Stages of Instruction and Underlying Metacognitive Processes for Generic Listening Activities (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.110)

Pedagogical stages	Metacognitive Processes
1. Pre-listening –Planning/ predicting stage After learners have been informed of the topic and the text type, they predict the types of information and possible words they may hear.	1. Planning

2. First listen – First verification stage
  a. Learners verify their initial hypotheses, correct as required, and note additional information understood.
  b. Learners compare what they have understood/ written with a partner, modify as required, establish what still needs resolution, and decide on the important details that still require special attention.
	2a. Monitoring and evaluation
	
	2b. Monitoring, evaluation and planning

3. Second listen – Second verification stage
  a. Learners verify points of earlier disagreement, make corrections, and write down additional information understood.
  b. Class discussion in which all class members contribute 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.
	3a. Monitoring and problem-solving
	
	3b. Monitoring and problem-solving

4. Third listen – Final verification stage Learners listen specifically for the information revealed in the class discussion which they were not able to make out earlier. This listen may also be accompanied by the transcript of all or part of the text.	4. Monitoring and problem-solving
5. Reflection and goal setting Based on the earlier discussion of strategies used to compensate for what was not understood, learners write goals for the next listening activity.	5. Evaluation and planning

As homework assignments, students were required to listen to a certain podcast that I selected. I would give students a word zip file where they would find the podcast and a word sheet. This word sheet consisted of three tasks. In the first task, learners were asked to listen to the audio and take down notes. Then based on these notes, they had to

state whether the statements were true or false as they had to listen for a purpose. Finally, learners would write their reflections on their strategies. The aim of both the assignments and the journals was to raise learners' metacognitive awareness. The rationale for giving students these homework assignments is to let them practise the strategies individually and to form a habit of listening.

Piloting of the focus groups questions was conducted on 28th October, 2015. The participants were older students that I had taught the previous term. Seven participants (all females) took part in this focus group. See Appendix 2 for the questions of the focus group interview. Detailed information of the pilot focus group will be explained in the focus group section.

3.2.1.9.1.1.1 Note-taking

Of note is that the implementation of the pedagogical sequence (see Table 3.1) does not include a note-taking component. It has been added to cater for the needs of my students so that they will be able to take down notes in their other academic courses. This is an objective that has been incorporated in the course upon the request of the other subject matters instructors. The benefits of note-taking have been widely recognised (Rost, 2011, p. 188) since it enables learners to store information for later use and gives them the chance to encode information (Nation and Newton, 2009, p.52). These encoded pieces of information are best recalled when they are transferred from a linear to an organised form (Nation and Newton, 2009, p.53). As was stated in the section of the procedures of the pilot study, prior to the conduct of the study, methods of note-taking were introduced to the students such as the Cornell's method, the split page method, outlining, mapping, the charting method, sentence, and topic and concept card. Of these methods, Cornell's method has been widely acknowledged (Quintus *et*

al., 2012, p.30) to be the most commonly used method due to the use which facilitates the recall of information (see Figure 3.8). As Figure 3.8 illustrates, the learner would divide a page into three sections: a left column, a right column and a section at the of bottom of the page. The main points of the lecture will be recorded during class in the right column where learners employ all the techniques they have learnt such as identifying keywords, omitting unnecessary words (e.g., articles, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, relative pronouns and demonstratives), using abbreviations and any other symbols that learners. would consistently use for writing short forms of words.
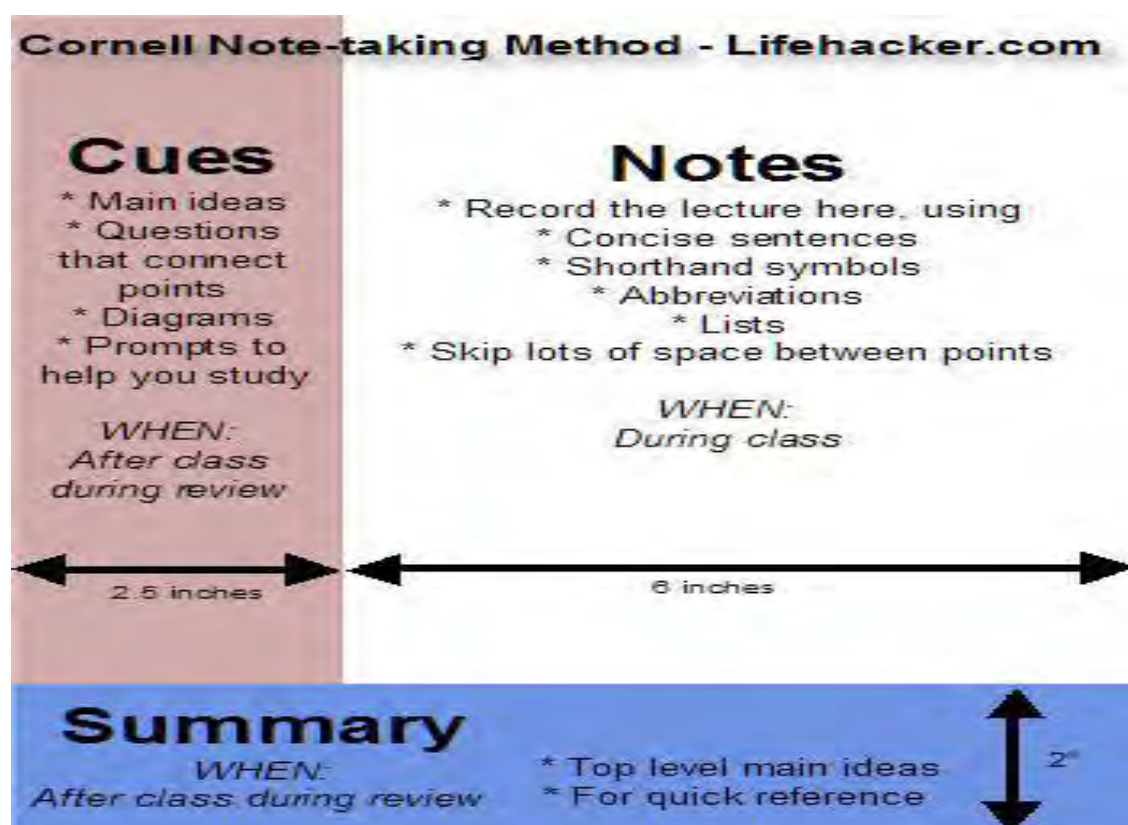
Figure 3.7: Cornell's note-taking method (Adapted from The McGraw Centre for Teaching and Learning, 2012).

After class has finished and during review, students could add in the left column or the cues section the questions and thoughts that would link ideas together. The summary

section functions as a quick review of the main ideas discussed in the lecture and learners could use it for revision before they sit exams.

As was mentioned previously, the pilot study lasted for five weeks and the purpose of which was to trial the materials that would be used in the intervention. The benefits of carrying out the pilot study were two-fold for me as a researcher. First, I experimented with the implementation of the procedures of action research by planning, observing and reflecting on the process of action research itself. Second, asking participants about their perceptions of the audio recordings extracted from *Study Listening* (Lynch, 2004) revealed that the students were not satisfied with these recordings since they did not generate their motivation and students felt that the listening course was a traditional one similar to the courses they had been exposed to in the pre-tertiary experience. Based on these observations, new materials, especially videos extracted from ted.com and YouTube were introduced into the course and these had a positive impact on motivating students and changing their attitude toward the listening course. This has been reflected in learners' listening journals as they could feel that the integration of these materials bypassed the traditional course they have been used to at school (see 4.1.1). Upon the completion of the pilot study, the MALQ was re-administered to probe more deeply into the learners' metacognitive listening strategies and to reinforce the raising of learners' awareness. The main study began immediately after the completion of the MALQ.

3.2.1.9.2 The Main Study

All the procedures and the materials used in the first cycle were revised before embarking on the main study. Immediately after the participants had filled the MALQ out, they started the first cycle of the main study. It took place between November 2015

and January 2016 and lasted for five weeks, too. It was a continuation of the same metacognitive strategy training programme that was started in the pilot study cycle. Veenman, Van-Hout Wolters and Afflerbach (2006, p.9) identified three key principles for a metacognitive instruction programme to be successful. It could be summarised as follows: 1) metacognitive instruction has to be embedded in subject matter so that connectivity is guaranteed, 2) learners have to be informed of the benefits of metacognitive activities so that they "exert the initial extra effort" and 3) the training has to be carried out over a long period of time in order to ensure the "smooth and guaranteed maintenance of the metacognitive activity".

As mentioned earlier, participants wrote their reflections after they had listened to an audio recording or watched a video and kept them in a developmental portfolio. In addition, by the end of the second cycle, learners were asked to write a final reflection paper where they reflected on their listening strategies from the beginning of the course until the end and whether they thought that their listening skills had developed or not.

A week after the completion of the second cycle, the MALQ was filled out for a third time. The MALQ was repeated for three times to "chart" the impact of the metacognitive training and to assess "learners' growing awareness of the processes underlying successful L2 listening" (Vandergrift et al., 2006, p.453).

Those students who consented to participate in a focus group interview were contacted. Details of the focus group questions, time and procedure will be addressed thoroughly in the methods of data collection section.

The same procedures that were carried out in the pilot cycle and the first cycle were repeated with cycles two and three. The latter two cycles started in the term of February 2016. Cycle three started the 20th February and ended in the 20th March 2016, whereas

the beginning of the fourth cycle was in the end of March and was finished in 24th April 2016. Participants who took part in these two cycles were members of cohort B. Both the demographic features and the characteristics of this cohort will be discussed fully in the participants section.

3.2.1.9.3 Materials Used in Both the Pilot and the Main Study Cycles

As stated in Chapter 2, podcasting refers to "the distribution of audio/video files in a digital format" (McGarr, 2009). These files can be downloaded through syndication for playback on a computer or an MP3 player (O'Bannon *et al.*, 2011) or they can be kept on smart phones. Since this is the broad definition of podcasts and since podcasts are the media through which the metacognitive strategy programme would take place, I tried to select audio recordings/videos within the parameters of this term.

The first source of materials that I had made use of during both the pilot cycle and the cycles of the main study was Tony Lynch's (2004) *Study Listening*. This book has been designed for intermediate and advanced students who need to practise listening to lectures and taking down notes. The book consists of authentic lectures by lecturers and speakers from six countries. Academic topics are addressed and six macro-strategies for listening are stressed on, mainly, predicting, monitoring, responding, clarifying, inferencing, and evaluation. Only those that targeted the teaching of metacognitive strategies have been selected.

Other audios have been downloaded from the website of the Voice of America: http://learningenglish.voanews/archive/learningenglish like the *Education Reports* and the *Story of Words* programme.

Another source for materials has been the British Council website

https://learningenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/professionals-podcasts where I made use of

podcasts in particular.

Videos were mainly downloaded from www.ted.com. These were a variety of videos

that addressed different topics such as *A School in the Cloud*, *Virtual Reality*, *The Story*

of Two Refugees, *Why Light Needs Darkness*, *How to Find and Do Work You Love*,

Five Tips of Listening, and *The Desire to Know the Other*.

I made use of YouTube also. Videos downloaded from YouTube included videos like

Make a Presentation Like Steve Jobs, *The Jonathan Ross Show – Cristiano Ronaldo*,

and *Bollywood Actress Sonal Chauhan… Exclusive Interview*.

3.2.1.9.3.1 Rationale for the Selection of Materials

Before I embarked on the study, I thought there are certain criteria that I have to meet

in selecting material – namely, authenticity, relevance and having interesting material.

These were criteria students from previous terms agreed that they have to be met in

selecting podcasts. Accordingly, I tried my best to get students audios or videos that

were spoken by experts in their field as in the case of Tony Lynch's (2004) book or real

speakers as in TED talk lectures. Given that participants are students of both media and

language specialities, I thought that they have to be exposed to a variety of topics from

different fields and tried as hard as I could to incorporate different English accents.

Pertinent to the idea of relevance would be that podcasts had to be interesting and as

mentioned address a variety of topics. *Titanic* and *Future of English* were examples of

the topics of podcasts that were given as homework assignments. These two topics

were chosen as the former is familiar for the students as nearly all of them have

watched the film "Titanic" and the latter could be of interest to them. The difficulty of

podcasts given as homework assignments increased gradually. By the end of the term, learners listened to the *Education Report* podcast which dealt with suppressing regimes like Afghanistan and another podcast was about advances in telemedicine.

It is worth mentioning that sometimes I had to shorten the audio clip or devise more questions and provide more scaffolding to cater for the level of the participants, especially those of cohort B.

3.2.1.9.3.2 Notes on the Material

I kept my own notes of students' comments and feedback regarding the audios clips they listened to and the videos they watched. I also kept in these notes my observations of the learners' behaviour while they were listening to/ watching the videos and doing tasks related to the material. I will be demonstrating some examples of audios/videos that were very salient and seemed to increase learners' motivation.

- *Make a Presentation Like Steve Jobs*

One of the objectives of the listening course is that students should be able to give a presentation. The course aims at integrating both the skills of listening and speaking. After introducing the topic and asking students to provide their own definition of an oral presentation, which they surprisingly managed to do very well, I noticed that students seemed highly motivated. I also noticed that they were very keen to take down notes. After they finished watching the video, participants compared notes with their fellow students. They were very satisfied. They reported that the cause of their satisfaction was that the accompanying video helped them a lot. Even the low-achievers were very much satisfied with their notes.

Moreover, *Emojis* was another short audio clip that was downloaded from the Voice of America website (VOA). Sometimes I thought that I wanted to make a kind of change and expose learners to unusual topics. This audio is about the difference between "emojis" and "emoticons". As such, it shed light on the different forms of emojis and how they are used in social media. From what I observed, almost all learners, without an exception, liked the idea and it was even surprising for them to listen to an audio about emojis. Accordingly, they were highly motivated.

Scott Dinsmore's TED talk *How to Find and Do Work You Love* was another manifestation of how students were highly motivated. This video dates back to 2012 and lasts for 17 minutes. Students of a high proficiency level found it very motivating and interesting to quote their words. It was very striking for me, in the pre-listening stage, when I asked learners about where they saw themselves in four years and then told them about the title of the video, when they started to provide me with extensive key words and ideas they thought they would listen to. They even turned the chairs towards the screen before I told them. I think that the topic could have been of relevance for them; that is why, they were highly motivated. Although the video lasted for 17 minutes and although it was full of unnecessary details, learners managed to plan their listening and get only the main ideas. Even the weak students managed to get the main ideas. It is also worth mentioning that the speaker had a fast speech rate and he moved erratically; however, this did not impede learners from getting the main ideas.

In an attempt to expose learners' to different accents, they watched a video about Bollywood actress, Solan Chauhan, exclusive interview. The interviewer had a very heavy Indian English accent that affected comprehension negatively. Nevertheless, the majority of students managed to understand the interview due to two reasons. First, given that the video was an interview, learners drew a plan of the video by thinking that

they would listen to a question and an answer. Moreover, it was ensured that the accent of the actress was intelligible; thereby learners could infer the questions based on the answers, which in turn facilitated their comprehension.

3.2.1.9.4 Context of the Study

Prior to the discussion of the criteria for selecting participants, it is worth shedding light on the educational system in Egypt and the context of studying at the private institution where I work. As was discussed in Chapter 1, education in Egypt is divided into three main streams: governmental, private and international. The governmental education is free of charge and is managed by the Ministry of Education (henceforth, MOE). The second stream, namely, the private education comprises schools owned by individuals or organizations but supervised by the MOE. IGCSE, American Diploma, French Baccalaureate and German Abitur exemplify the third stream: the international one. At the end of the high school stage, all students from the three streams have to sit a final exam. It is called Thanweya Amma for both the first and second streams, whereas graduates of the third stream will obtain either the IGCSE certificate, the American Diploma, the French Baccalaureate or the German Abitur according to the educational system they have been through. The scores of these exams dictate which college the students will get enrolled in according to the percentages set by the Supreme Council of Higher Education. This council meets each year by the end of the academic year, after the results of the above mentioned exams have been announced to students, and determines the percentages students should get in order to join the college of their choice. If the students get the scores pre-determined by the Supreme Council of Higher Education, they will join the selected college. If not, students have to join a college that is in accordance with the scores or the percentages they have obtained in the above mentioned high school stage final exams.

The scores of joining the private institution where I work are also determined by the Supreme Council of Higher Education. Students, who want to get enrolled in any of the institution's colleges, have first to sit for a language proficiency test, the Cambridge Proficiency Test. It is an online test. There is a threshold level that students have to pass in order to be able to join any of the colleges of the institution. This threshold level will vary from one college to another according to the requirements of the college. For some colleges, students just need to pass the exam in order to get enrolled in the college that matches their scores in the above mentioned high school certificates and in these colleges the language of instruction is Arabic, hence, it is not mandatory for these students to have a good command of the English language. As for the language and media, where I teach, the prospective graduates will work either in the fields of media or translation and accordingly need to have a good proficiency level of the English language. Hence, only students of an intermediate proficiency level are allowed to join this college.

It is also worth mentioning that the academic year at the private institution is divided into two main terms: September and February in addition to an intensive summer course. Normally, the largest intake of students is in the September term. Students who have just finished the high school exams join colleges in this term. As for the February term, the number of students is very small in comparison to that of September. These are students who were on the waiting list due to not finding vacancies in the September term or they had to sit for delayed exams in either the American Diploma or the IGCSE programmes. Since the institution follows the credit hour system, students who want to finish more courses or improve their GPA can study for an intensive summer course. Intensive means that the course is just for six weeks and not for four months as would normally happen in both the September and February intakes.

The college of language and media where I work offers a dual certificate of both language and media. The first year is very basic since the aim is to reinforce the skills of listening, writing, in addition to grammar and an introduction to literary texts. Students also study Arabic and an introduction to computer skills. These six courses comprise the first term. The second term consists of the courses of phonetics, poetry, novel, and a second foreign language. The students also get introduced to mass communication and translation as a prelude for choosing the track of specialisation either translation or media. They start their specialisation in term three.

3.2.1.9.5 Participants

Since the study follows the action research design, there have been five cycles. The first cycle started October 2015 and ended in November 2015. That cycle was also the pilot study. The second cycle started in November 2015 and ended in December 2015. Each cycle lasted for 5 weeks, an hour and a half twice per week with a total of 30 hours of training. The participants recruited in the first two cycles (cohort A) were students at the first term at the college of language and media. They all belonged to the "intermediate" and "upper intermediate" level according to their scores on the Cambridge Proficiency Test. They were all of an Arabic origin, aged between 17-22 years old. There were only six males out of the total of the fifty-six participants. All were Egyptians except for three who had a dual nationality like Egyptian American, Egyptian Dutch and Egyptian Canadian. They all came from the different high school streams mentioned above. Their studying of the English language ranged from 6 years to 15 years with the majority having been exposed to the English language for 14 years which means from kindergarten until they have finished high school. The majority of the participants rated their language skills as good. Furthermore, the majority of the participants in the first two cycles mentioned watching films without subtitles and

listening to songs as out of the classroom activities to improve their listening skills. It is worth mentioning that the participants who took part in both the pilot study and cycle 1 were highly motivated and very willing to participate in the study.

Ten participants were recruited in both the third and the fourth cycle (cohort B). As mentioned earlier the intake in February is very small compared to that of September. Moreover, the proficiency level of the students tends to be lower. It was also observed that participants did not seem that motivated. The participants were all Egyptians except for one Moroccan student. They were aged from 18-20 years old.

As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the small number of cohort B participants did not allow for themes to emerge and that necessitated the recruitment of a third cohort of participants, cohort C. These students were asked to take part in the study to further probe deeply into the podcasts that both participants of cohorts A and B have reported to be problematic, interesting/uninteresting or challenging. Cohort C consisted of 21 participants: 17 females and 3 males. All were of an Egyptian nationality.

The number of participants of each cohort, dates of interventions for each cohort, type and date of data collected for each cohort is summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Participants in the Study

Cohort	No of participants	Date of intervention	Type and date of data collection
A	56	Cycle 1 (5 October 2015 – 2 November 2015) Cycle 2 (9 November 2015 – 5 January 2016)	Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)(5 October 2015 – 9 November 2015- 8 January 2016) Listening journals (8 January 2016)

			Final reflection papers (8 January 2016) Focus group interviews (20 January 2016)
B	10	Cycle 1 (20 February 2016 – 20 March 2016) Cycle 2 (27 March 2016 – 24 April 2016)	MALQ (20 February 2016 – 27 March 2016 – 8 May 2016) Listening Journals (15 May 2016)
C	20	1 Cycle (26 September – 3 October 2016)	MALQ (26 September 2016 – 10 October 2016) Listening Journals (17 October 2016)

Convenience sampling was used in the selection of the participants. It is convenient since I teach at the college of language and media. This means that the participants under study have not been selected randomly and therefore the results of the study cannot be generalised to the broader university community. Instead, the aim of this study is to investigate the effect of a metacognitive strategy training on raising students' metacognitive strategies with reference to listening via the use of podcasts as a medium of aural input. Convenience sampling is also used because of the easy access to participants.

3.3 Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative data and respective research instruments were used in order to enrich the quality of data gathered.

In order to answer the research questions, a number of methods have been employed.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

3.3.1.1 Characteristics of Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be defined as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (Brown, 2001, cited in, Dörnyei, 2003, p.6). One of the main advantages of questionnaires is that they can yield large amounts of data relatively quickly (Burton and Bartlett, 2005, p.108). Hence, they are attractive to the researcher in terms of a) researcher time, b) researcher effort, and c) financial resources (Dörnyei, 2003, p.9).

However, unlike interviews, questions cannot be changed once the questionnaires have been distributed (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007; Perry, 2005). Another problem with questionnaires is the response rate since losing respondents is a kind of attrition of the sample, which could lead to a biased sample (Brown, 2001, cited in, Perry, 2005). Hence, as a rule of thumb 70 % of response rate should be obtained in order to consider the data as representative of a target population (Perry, 2005, p.124).

Unclear questions or not being able to understand questions while working out the questionnaires on their own could be one of the factors that render questionnaires unsuitable for in depth investigation (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007; Dörnyei, 2003). Moreover, the shorter time respondents would like to spend filling in a questionnaire which again, in turn, limits the investigation of an issue deeply (Dörnyei, 2003, p.10). Unreliable and unmotivated participants are another limitation of questionnaires. They can leave some items out due to lack of interest or mistake (Dörnyei, 2003, p.10).

Cross and Vandergrift (2014, p.88) warn that "questionnaire data should be treated with some caution since they are based on self-reporting" and accordingly, these data should be combined with other sources of information.

3.3.1.2 Use of Questionnaires in this Study

3.3.1.2.1   The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)

In order to answer the first research question, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghdotari, 2006) (see Appendix 1) was employed.

The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) consists of 21 randomly selected items. Learners are invited to respond to statements "describing some strategies for listening comprehension and their perceptions about themselves as learners learning to listen in another language, thus revealing their metacognitive knowledge" (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006, p.462).

Drawing on Flavell's (1979) model of metacognitive knowledge, the MALQ, a previously designed questionnaire, was primarily designed to function as both a diagnostic or consciousness-raising tool that teachers use to assess L2 learners' awareness and perceived use of the listening strategies (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012 Vandergrift *et al*., 2006) and as a self- assessment tool that L2 learners make use of to evaluate their awareness of the listening process and their employment of listening strategies (Vandergrift and Goh; 2012 Vandergrift *et al*., 2006).

The developers of the MALQ started off the process of the development and validation of the instrument with a thorough scrutiny of the literature on metacognition, listening

comprehension and self-regulation. That was followed by examining all standard criteria for the development of reliable and valid questionnaires. Furthermore, they revised all the existing instruments that have been developed in the fields of both listening and reading comprehension. Next, expert judgement has been used to review the list of strategies and abilities compiled for the purpose of validation and the exclusion of any redundancies. This resulted in having 51 items which were piloted with a number of students. As a result of the pilot study, the instrument was further fine-tuned.

The draft version of the MALQ was field tested with a large sample of respondents (N=966) in various countries, in different learning contexts, and at different levels of language proficiency (Vandergrift *et al.,* 2006, p.441). Then, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted and this led to a 21-item revised, short form of the MALQ which was in turn submitted to confirmatory factor analysis. The second administration of the MALQ took place a year after with another large number of respondents (N=512).

After the administration of MALQ, other calculations of the factor and confirmatory analyses were carried out and five distinct factors emerged: direct attention, (no) mental translation, planning and evaluation, problem-solving and person knowledge (Goh and Hu, 2014, p.258). By calculating five factors, there was an improvement in the goodness-of-fit indexes (CFI= 0.91, TLI= 0.91).

Finally, in addition to the validation of the questionnaire, a moderately significant correlation (r= .36, p < .001) between participants' listening comprehension ability in a

listening test and the overall scores on MALQ (Goh and Hu, 2014; Vandergrift *et al.*, 2006) was obtained. Moreover, the scores of the test were regressed on those of the MALQ and the results could suggest that about 13 % of variance in listening comprehension could be explained by metacognition (Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari, 2010; Vandergrift *et al.*, 2006).

Given that the MALQ could be used as a diagnostic tool, in this study, the MALQ was first administered to probe into the listening strategies learners employed before they received any treatment. In addition, it was also used as a research tool where it was administered at three occasions in the present study: pre-intervention, between or mid-cycles and after the second cycle has been finished to assess the impact of listening strategy training on raising learners' awareness of the listening process.

3.3.2 Learner Listening Journals

3.3.2.1 Characteristics of Listening Journals

According to Bailey (1991, p.60) a "diary study in second language learning, acquisition, or teaching is an account of a second language experience as recorded in a first-person journal". Many studies in the realm of listening comprehension have used journals to probe into the perceptions and processes of learners such as Ma and Oxford, 2014; Goh, 1997; Matsumoto, 1996. Keeping journals is advantageous for both the learner and the teacher. When learners write journals, they are reflecting on the learning process and any obstacles they might have faced. As for the teacher, journals are not only tools that stimulate learners' reflections but they also function as feedback about "learning, attitudes to the course and anxieties about the course" (Jarvis, 1992, p.142). Hence, journals form a link between two "interacting parties", namely, the learner and

the teacher (Krishnan and Hoon, 2002, p.227). Journals are also beneficial for the researcher. Using Long's (1980, 1983, cited in Bailey, 1991, p.86) metaphor investigating journals written by learners gives the researcher the chance to view the inside of the "black box". Researchers can examine extensively the perceptions and attitudes of learners and how they employ certain strategies; thus, informing research.

Conversely, there are disadvantages of journals. Given that journals are retrospective, written after a task has been finished, they are bound to be affected by other constraints such as memory and unconscious editing (Fry, 1988, p.160). Another disadvantage pertains to the "learners' perceived experience" (Carson and Longhini, 2002, p.402) in that learners report the problem or the experience as they perceive it but the teacher/researcher cannot make sure that what the learners are reporting is correct. Related to this point would be the richness versus the poverty of some listening journal entries. Some participants are highly articulated and can express their feelings and perceptions elaborately while others can hardly write in a foreign language or even express their thoughts and ideas (Hall, 2008, p.116).

3.3.2.2 Use of Listening Journals in this Study

Upon completion of listening to the podcast, participants were asked to write their reflections on the problems they faced while listening, strategies employed and any future resolutions they thought were deemed appropriate to improve their listening. Since time lapse would affect the quality of data reported (Fry, 1988), the journal writing was carried out immediately after learners finished listening. At the beginning of the course, particularly that learners were not accustomed to the idea of writing journals, I used to provide them with prompts such as some examples of strategies and some guidelines that they could follow in writing their journals. It was observed that

those learners who were of a good proficiency level tended to integrate these prompts in their journals, whereas their weaker counterparts used to just check the strategies they employed while listening to the podcast. By the progress of the course and as students started to get accustomed to journal keeping they began to write their own journals and elaborate thoroughly on the strategies they used. Of note is that learners were instructed to write in either paragraph or bullet form but the they had to write the journals in English since the language of instruction used at the language and media college is English.

3.3.3 Developmental Portfolios

3.3.3.1 Characteristics of Developmental Portfolios

Broadly defined, a portfolio is a "purposeful, interrelated collection of student's efforts, progress or achievement in one or more areas. The collection includes evidence of students' self-reflection and their participation in setting the goal, selecting the contents, and judging merit" (Paulson and Paulson, 1991, p.3). Cameron (2001) illustrates the idea of a portfolio by giving an example of the portfolios artists and photographers keep to put their pictures and photos. They use these portfolios in order to demonstrate their skills and styles to prospective customers or employers (p.237). Moreover, it is an evidence that learning has taken place (Davis *et al*., 2001, p.357). Hence, two components should be included in portfolios: an evidence of learning (Ashcroft and Hall, 2006, p.1) and students' reflections on what has been learnt (Baume, 2001, p.6). These reflections are in a written form as journals (Ashcroft and Hall, 2006, p.1) where learners would both identify and acknowledge their points of strength and weakness (Pitts, Coles and Thomas, 2001, p.351).

According to Rolheiser, Bower and Stevhan (2000, p.4), portfolios are classified into two types: best work and growth portfolio. Sometimes called showcase portfolios, where students exhibit in best work portfolios their achievements in learning and the work that they like to share with others. The advantage of such type of portfolio is that learners choose the items that represent their highest achievement and provide reasons why these items represent the best of their achievements (Rolheiser, Bower and Stevhan, 2000, p.4). By keeping growth portfolio, or developmental portfolios, learners demonstrate development in different fields such as thinking skills, content or knowledge. It is a portrayal of the journey of learning that includes "evidence of struggle, failure, success and change" (Rolheiser, Bower and Stevhan , 2000, p.4). The recognition of growth, providing reason for it and accordingly seeing change and setting goals is significant about growth portfolios (Rolheiser, Bower and Stevhan, 2000, p.4).

Portfolios are kept for a number of reasons. For some teachers, portfolios are used as a tool of summative assessment, which could include a record of learners' achievement or it could be simply used to record their best work (Zhang, 2009, p.99). Teachers use portfolios also to document learners' learning process (Zhang, 2009, p.99) and to promote metacognitive development through the writing of reflections (Davis *et al.*, 2001, p.237). Portfolios have also been used as a record for personal development and as a career journal (Pitts, Coles and Thomas, 2001, p.351).

Advantages of portfolios have been widely documented. Yang (2003, p.295) enumerates the advantages of portfolios. Portfolios offer learners an opportunity to "value their work, reflect on their performance, enhance their learning and autonomy, alter their views of the teacher's role, encourage themselves to take responsibility for their own learning, and involves them in the assessment process". Furthermore,

portfolios bridge the gap between experience and personal interpretation and provide an "on-going basis for planning and goal setting" in addition to their provision of a framework for continuous professional development (Ashcroft and Hall, 2006, p.1).

Nevertheless, drawbacks in the use of portfolios have been recognised. Portfolios are time-consuming for both the students and the teachers (Ashcroft and Hall, 2006, p.1). They are unfamiliar to the students   and require a lot of effort to be exerted in writing and preparing them (Ashcroft and Hall, 2006, p.1). When used as an assessment tool, there are concerns with regard to reliability, practicability and students' acceptance of the process (Davis, Ponnamperuma and Ker, 2009, p.90).

3.3.3.2 Use of Developmental Portfolios in this Study

At the beginning of the course, learners were informed that all the above mentioned journals should be kept in a portfolio. However, the purpose for keeping the portfolio was never disclosed to them. It was hoped that they would find it out on their own. The majority of participants could understand that the rationale for keeping journals and having them in a portfolio was meant for these students to trace their development in using strategies borrowing students' terms, identifying any obstacles they used to face and how they managed to overcome them throughout the course. Finally, by comparing the reflections learners wrote from the beginning of the course until the end, they were able to keep track of the improvement in their listening competence.

3.3.4 Focus Groups

3.3.4.1 Characteristics of Focus Groups

A focus group is defined as a "research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher" (Morgan, 1996, p.130). This

interaction is advantageous since it allows for the sharing of views and experiences between group members (Miller and Brewer, 2003, p.120) and the emergence of rich and insightful data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.436) and can even "take research in new and often unexpected directions" (Kitzinger, 1995, p.299).

In addition to the benefits of the interaction between focus group participants, focus groups are "cheap, quick, and easy to run" (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990, cited in Wilkinson, 1998, p.187); they save a lot of time and generate large amounts of data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.436) from multiple participants (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran, 2009, p.1). Last but not least, focus groups are versatile and appropriate for any research area (Dörnyei, 2011, p.146) or epistemological view (Wilkinson, 1998, p.187) and are often seen as a method "for all reasons" (Wilkinson, 1998, p.187).

However, focus groups are not without their flaws. Both the reliability and the validity of focus groups are questioned (Wilkinson, 1998, p.187). Hence, they have to be triangulated with other research instruments. In addition, the researcher's bias, identity or gender could impact the discussions negatively (Wilkinson, 1998, Morgan, 1996). Smithson (2000, cited in, Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.437) cautioned that one of the main limitations of focus groups is "dominant voices" where the voice of the most articulate individual in the group overrides the voices of the other participants, which in turn, could affect the group dynamics irrespective of the attempts of the moderator to prevent this.

3.3.4.2 Use of Focus Groups in the Study

Prior to the conduct of the pilot study, and after obtaining the Ethical approval, a focus group interview to pilot the questions of the focus group was carried out on 28th

October 2015. These were students whom I had taught a term earlier to the carrying out of the main study (February 2015). Volunteers from the whole cohort of fifteen students were asked to take part in the interview and a time was set for the interview. On the day of the focus group, seven volunteers showed up. Pseudonyms had been assigned to each one of them.

The focus group was undertaken in a quiet and comfortable hall at the private institution and some refreshments were served to add to the relaxation factor. The interview lasted for 70 minutes. The session was audio-recorded using a computer program after obtaining the permission of participants. Furthermore, I kept notes of the important points discussed by participants during the focus group interview.

After the guidelines of the interview were read and explained, a questioning route was followed. This interview schedule had been prepared in advance and was revised by the Director of Studies. The questions in this schedule were pertinent to the research questions and comprised the following questions (see Appendix 2). Though the pilot focus group was conducted primarily to test the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the interview schedule questions, the interaction and sharing of opinions and stories among participants allowed the production of insightful and rich data.

The same procedures were repeated with the main study focus groups. These consisted of two groups for cohort A students and one group for cohort B. Parallel groups give the chance to elucidate any" idiosyncratic results" which could stem from internal or external factors and could have an impact on group dynamics (Dörnyei, 2011, p.145). All in all, there was a total of four groups including the pilot study focus group.

To aid reliability and validity, as a researcher and the teacher of the metacognitive training programme, I was aware of my power as a teacher. Hence, I planned for the main study focus groups to take place after participants had sat for the final exam and after I had submitted their grades. Facebook messenger messages were sent to participants asking volunteers to take part in a focus group interview. Since that was at the beginning of the mid-term break and already a large number of students had started their vacation, four participants agreed to share in the interview of the first focus group and the second focus group consisted of eight participants. Pseudonyms were assigned for all participants in all groups.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

"Reliability and validity are the corner-stones of any research" (Newby, 2014, p.130). Defined in simple terms, reliability is "the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions" (Bell, 2010, p.119). As Bogdan and Biklen (1992, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.202) argue it is the "fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e. a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage".

Validity, on the other hand, is defined as "the degree to which the researcher has measured what he has set out to measure" (Smith, 1991, cited in Kumar, 2011, p.178). It is the "representation of the actors, the purposes of the research, and the appropriateness of the processes involved" (Winter, 2000, p.7) and pertains to the inferences the researcher makes and not the validity of the instrument itself (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009, p.148). In qualitative research, validity might be "addressed through

the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (Winter, 2000, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.179). Nevertheless, as Gronlund (1981, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.179) argues, validity should be viewed as a "matter of degree rather than as an absolute state" since "the subjectivity of respondents, their opinions, attitudes and perspectives contribute to a degree of bias" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.179). Hence, as Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2011, p.179) comment researchers should in this case, at best, minimise invalidity and maximise validity.

Given that each of the above mentioned instruments has its drawbacks, I tried, as much as possible, to balance the weaknesses of each instrument by using multiple methods or triangulation. This notion is of high relevance to validity since Begley (1996, p.127) cautions that there is an unfortunate fact that some "neophyte researchers" 'use triangulation' without explaining the rationale behind their decisions, expecting that the mere implementation of this approach would "magically" solve all "problems of bias, error and invalidity".

Hence, I tried in every possible to practical way to ensure that the use of each instrument in the present study is appropriate, fits the purpose of research and aids in answering the research questions.

It is worth mentioning that qualitative studies, by definition, are not designed to be generalised to a wider population (Maxwell, 1992, p.293) but are rather confined to the specific persons and conditions under study. Hence, it is not guaranteed that any other subsequent replication of the study would yield similar results.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2011, p.164), the main tenets of ethical research could be summarised as follows: 1) getting the informed consent of those participants who are either going to be interviewed, questioned, observed or taken material from, 2) reaching an agreement of the use, analysis, reporting and dissemination of data and 3) "keeping to such agreements when they have been reached".

Since asking participants to divulge information about themselves could pose a kind of threat, special care, in the present study, has been ensured to consider how the "research purposes, contents, methods, reporting and outcomes abide by ethical principles and practices" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.76) and does not breach or violate participants' rights and values. Hence, ethical responsibility is crucial to be followed throughout all stages of research, from the design of the study to the recruitment of participants, how they are treated throughout the carrying out of the procedures and finally to the consequences of their partaking in research (Miller and Brewer, 2003, p.95). There are a number of ethical considerations that have been followed in the present study and which are in adherence to the guidelines of the British Education Research Association (BERA) (2011).

3.6.1 Informed Consent

One of the benefits of informed consent is the delegation of responsibility that "reduces the legal liability of the researcher" (Bowling, 2002, cited in Bell, 2010, p.46) and deems participants responsible for their decisions to take part in the study. At the beginning of the study and prior to the distribution of the first administration of the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ), the topic, aims and nature

of the study have, at the best of my ability, been carefully explained to the learners

enrolled in the Listening course. These were presented in lay terms in order not to bore

participants and not cause any kind of confusion but not as Oliver (2011, p.28) cautions

so "excessive as to distort the ideas themselves".

Respondents signed a consent form (see Appendix 3) and they were entirely assured

that they had all the right to choose whether to partake in research or withdraw from the

research at any point in time without having to provide reasons. In addition, one of the

points in the consent form required that students tick the option if they agreed to take

part in a focus group interview or not. Accordingly, only those respondents who

consented to participate in the focus group were contacted. The recording of the focus

group interviews was only carried out after obtaining the consent of informants.

Similarly, I got participants' approval to have access to both their listening journals and

the final reflection papers and it was stressed that their provision of these materials was

strictly voluntary and if they decided to withdraw at any point that would not affect

their marks adversely.

3.6.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Although both terms *confidentiality* and *anonymity* are used interchangeably there are

differences between them. As Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2011, p.92) argue that in

order to protect participants' rights, the researcher promises confidentiality. Hence,

confidentiality means two things. First, the researcher does not disclose any

information that would identify the participant. Second, it might also denote that the

researcher does not discuss an individual with others (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2011, p.92).

Anonymity offers the respondents the chance to have their identity hidden (Oliver, 2010, p.77) and the information collated from them should not reveal it. Hence, during the conduct of the focus group interviews and though the identities of the participants were known to the researcher, respondents were assured that pseudonyms would be used instead of their real names in case I needed to cite their quotations in the analysis section.

3.6.3 Avoidance of Harm

Though social research does not entail any physical harm as is characteristic of research in medicine and science, research in social science could cause harm to the respondents if they are asked to discuss feelings or attitudes that could make them feel uncomfortable and arouse feelings of agony (Miller and Brewer, p.97). Thus, the intervention should be prepared carefully and the respondents should be made aware of the potential outcomes of the research.

Taking all the above mentioned ethical considerations into account, I tried to strike a balance between pursuing my quest of carrying out the present research and trying, at my best, to maintain respondents' confidentiality and anonymity and not causing them any harm that might threaten their values and rights.

3.7 Data Analysis

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, pp. 551-552) identify seven methods for organising and presenting data analysis: by groups, by individuals, by issue or theme, by research question, by instrument, by case studies and by narrative account. Each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages. Organising the findings around the research questions "draws together all the relevant data … and preserves the coherence of the material. It returns the reader to the driving concerns of the research, thereby 'closing the loop' on the research questions that were raised in the early part of an enquiry" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.552). In this study, all the data collected from different data streams (Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ), focus group interviews, final reflection papers, and listening journals) will provide a "collective answer" to a research question. This will enable, in turn, themes to emerge and similarities, differences, and commonalities across these data streams to be explored "conveniently and clearly".

Before beginning to think of the framework for the analysis and based on the research questions and the key variables, a matrix outline of the data available was sketched (Miles, Huberman and Saldaňa, 2014, p.114) (see Appendix 5).

To answer the above mentioned research questions, a number of decisions had to be taken with regard to the analysis of the data collection instruments, namely, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ), the focus group interviews, the listening journal entries and the final reflection papers. The MALQ will be analysed quantitatively and will be discussed later on.

3.7.1 Decisions Taken Regarding Data Analysis

I followed the Miles and Huberman (1994) Interactive Model in analysing data. According to the authors the data analysis process starts with reduction of data, data display and conclusion drawing and verification.
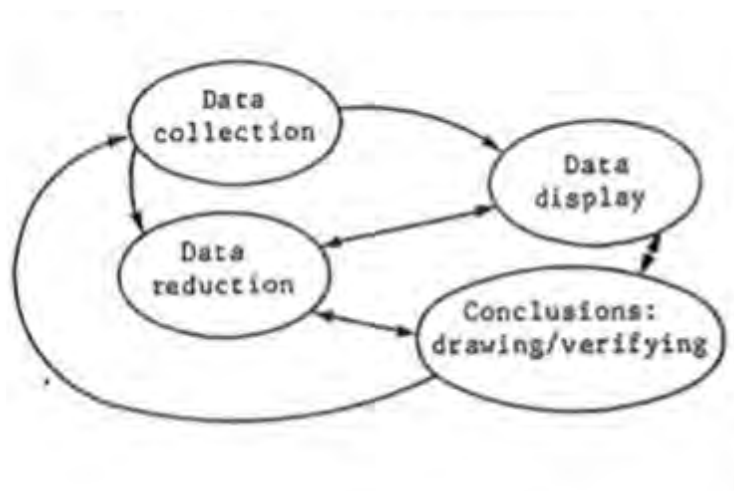
Figure 3.8: Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model (Adapted from Miles and Huberman, 1994)

3.7.1.1 Data Reduction

I started the first step in data analysis, data reduction, which is eliminating information that is not relevant to the research questions (Gläser and Laudel, 2011; Namey et *al*., 2008). According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.11), data reduction is not "separate" from analysis. Rather, it is a part of it. The researcher takes a number of analytic decisions such as which data chunks to "code", exclude or which "evolving story to tell". Hence, "data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organizes data in such a way that "final" conclusions can be drawn and verified".

Furthermore, Miles and Huberman (1994, p.11) assert that there are different ways in order to reduce data such as: selection, summary, paraphrase and through being subsumed in a larger pattern.

In addition, Berkowitz (1997) adds that:

> In qualitative analysis, the analyst decides which data are to be singled out for description according to principles of selectivity. This usually involves some combination of deductive and inductive analysis. While initial categorisations are shaped by pre-established study questions, the qualitative analyst should remain open to inducing new meanings from the data available.

With regard to the selection of journals to incorporate in my analysis, I have only chosen those entries that reflected both the aim and the research questions of the project. Those entries that expressed how interesting and nice the audio/video was and did not show any examples of strategy use, particularly metacognitive strategy use, were excluded from the analysis. This resonates with Krishnan and Hoon (2002, p.228) when they selected only entries that reflected their "request", i.e. a record of "thoughts and feelings". Then, as Krishnan and Hoon did, these entries were grouped according to the issues or themes that repeatedly appeared.

Another decision that was taken before embarking on the analysis of data was the classification of the podcasts as a genre. Participants had listened to a large number of podcasts and analysing all the data entries pertinent to these podcasts would require a long time. Hence, I thought of classifying these podcasts and videos into types and selecting only those that participants in the focus group interviews reported to have activated the use of metacognitive strategies. For classification of podcasts, see Chapter 2 - Figure 2.4).

Another criterion for choosing these podcasts was the researcher's observations while participants were working on them in class and the comments they have given immediately after they have finished listening to the podcast/watching the video. These remarks have been mentioned in Chapter 3 under Notes.

Accordingly, I decided to analyse the podcasts where participants were unanimous with regard to their activation of strategies. It is worth mentioning that some of these podcasts were difficult or the required task was not common for students. The podcasts are: *Teleworking and Distance Learning* (an aural lecture), *Would Chinese Replace English?* (a radio programme), *How to Find and Do Work you Love* (a TED talk video (educational), *A School in the Cloud* (a TED talk video (narrative/experience), *The Story of Two Refugees* (TED talk video (narrative/story), *Jonathan Ross Interview with Cristiano Ronaldo* (video (accent), and *The Educational Report* (a news report). These seven podcasts were analysed across the three cohorts.

3.7.1.2 Codification

3.7.1.2.1 Codification of Listening Strategies

Miles and Huberman (1984) define:

> Codes are categories. They usually derive from research questions, hypotheses, key concepts, or important themes. They are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the question, hypothesis, concept or themes. Clustering sets the stage for analysis.

> (Miles and Huberman, 1984, cited in Gläser and Laudel, 2011, p.21)

Since the study is primarily focused on metacognitive strategies, I thought that it would be better to classify the listening metacognitive strategies and other cognitive, social or affective strategies that participants would report to have used during the metacognitive

strategy training programme. Hence, literature was examined carefully for all the taxonomies of learning strategies I could find. I summarised all those strategies and tactics pertinent to listening. The following strategies have been adapted from Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015; Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Cohen, 2011; Goh, 2008; Klapper, 2006; 2003; Vandergrift *et al*., 2006; Vandergrift, 2003; Goh, 2002; Graham, 1997; Vandergrift, 1997; Chamot and O'Malley, 1994; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990.

As Table 3.2 shows, the codes of the strategies comprised of the initials of the main category and that of the subcategory. For example, "MP" stands for metacognitive and planning and the same applies to the rest of the strategies. Hence, "CR" is a code for cognitive and repetition and "SC" is the code for social and cooperation.

Table 3.3: Listening Comprehension Strategies and their Definitions with Representative Codes

Metacognitive Strategies		
1. Planning	Developing awareness of what needs to be done to accomplish a listening task, developing an appropriate action plan and/or appropriate contingency plans to overcome difficulties that may interfere with successful completion of a task.	MP
1.a Advance organisation	Examining and clarifying aspects of a forthcoming listening task by reading questions or proposing strategies for handling it.	MPAO
1.b Self-management	Understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish listening tasks, and arranging for the presence of these conditions.	MPSM
2. Focusing attention	Avoiding distractors and heeding the auditory input on different ways, or keeping to a plan for listening development.	MF
2.a Directed attention	Attending in general to the listening task and ignoring any irrelevant distractors; maintaining concentration while listening.	MFDA
2. b. Selective attention	Attending to specific aspects of language	MFSA

	input or situational details, often by scanning for key words, concepts, and/ or linguistic markers. These assist in understanding and/ or task completion.	
3. Monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a task.	MM
3.a Comprehension monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting understanding during listening.	MMCM
3.b Double-check monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting understanding across the task during the second time through the oral text.	MMDC
4. Evaluation	Checking the outcomes of listening comprehension or a listening plan against an internal or an external measure of completeness, reasonableness, and accuracy.	ME
4.a Self-evaluation	Judging one's overall execution of the task or one's own progress in the new language	MESE
4.b Strategy evaluation	Judging one's strategy use	MEST
4.c Problem identification	Identifying what needs resolution or what part of the task still needs to be completed	MEPI
4.d Substitution	Selecting alternative approaches, revised plans, or different words or phrases to accomplish a listening task or a future resolution to improve/facilitate listening. * this part is found in literature but I added it based on ls' journals	MES
Cognitive strategies		
1. Inferencing	Using information within the text or conversational context to guess the meanings of unfamiliar language items associated with a listening task, to predict content and outcomes, or to fill in missing information.	CI
1.a Linguistic inferencing	Using known words in an utterance to guess the meaning of unknown words	CIL
1.b Voice and paralinguistic inferencing	Using tone of voice and/ or paralinguistic to guess the meaning of unknown words in an utterance.	CIVP
1.c Kinesic inferencing	Using facial expressions, body language, and movements to guess the meaning of unknown words used by a speaker.	CIK
1.d Extralinguistic inferencing	Using background sounds and relationships between speakers in an oral text, material in the response sheet, or concrete situational references to guess the meaning of unknown words.	CIE

1.e Between parts inferencing	Relating parts of the text to each other to guess at meaning.	CIB
2. Elaboration	Using prior knowledge from outside the text or conversational context and relating it to knowledge gained from the text or conversation in order to embellish one's interpretation of the text.	CE
2.a Personal elaboration	Making meaningful personal associations with the new information.	CEP
2.b World elaboration	Using knowledge gained from experience in the world.	CEW
2.c Academic elaboration	Using knowledge gained in academic situations	CEA
2.d Questioning elaboration	Using combinations of questions and world knowledge to brainstorm logical possibilities related to the task at hand.	CEQ
2.e Creative elaboration	Making up a story line, or introducing new possibilities into an event.	CEC
2. f Visual elaboration	Using mental or actual pictures or visuals to represent information.	CEV
3. Prediction	Anticipating the contents and the message of what one is going to hear.	CP
3.a Global prediction	Anticipating the gist or the general contents in a text.	CPG
3.b Local prediction	Anticipating details for specific parts of a text	CPL
4. Contextualisation	Placing what is heard in a specific context in order to prepare for listening or assist comprehension.	CC
4.a Linguistic contextualisation	Relating a word or a phrase heard to an environment where the word has appeared before.	CCL
4.b Schematic contextualisation	Relating a clue to some factual information in long-term memory.	CCS
5. Recognising	Transferring what one has processed into forms that help understanding, storage, and retrieval.	CR
5.a Summarization	Making a mental or written summary of language and information presented in listening task	CRS
5.b Repetition	Repeating a chunk of language (a word or phrase) several times to aid retention or understanding	CRR
5.c Grouping	Classifying words, terminology, quantities, or concepts according to their attributes.	CRG
5.d Note-taking	Writing down key words and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form to assist performance of a listening task.	CRN

6. Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding the second language.	CTranslate
7. Transfer	Using knowledge of one language (e.g., cognates) to facilitate listening in another.	CTransfer
8. Deduction/ Induction	Consciously applying learned or self-developed rules to understand the target language.	CD/I
9. Resourcing	Using available reference sources of information about the target language, including dictionaries, textbooks, and prior work.	CResource

Social strategies

1. Cooperation	Working with others to get help on improving comprehension, language use, and learning.	SC
1.a Clarification	Asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the language and/ or task.	SCC
1.b Joint task construction	Working together with someone other than an interlocutor to solve a problem, pool information, or check a learning task.	SCJ
2. Empathising with others	Putting oneself in other shoes and empathizing by developing cultural understanding and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings.	SE
2.a Developing cultural understanding	Trying to empathize with another person through learning about the culture, and trying to understand the other person's relation to that culture.	SEC
2.b Awareness of others' thoughts and feelings	It also includes observing the behaviours of others as a possible expression of their thoughts	SEA

Affective strategies

1. Lowering anxiety	Reducing anxiety through the use of mental techniques that make one feel more competent to perform a listening task	ALA
2. Self-encouragement	Providing personal motivation through positive self-talk and/ or arranging rewards for oneself during a listening activity or upon its completion.	ASE
3. Taking emotional temperature	Becoming aware of, and getting in touch with, one's emotions while listening, in order to avert negative ones and make the most of positive ones.	AET

Since I could not get a colleague to verify my categorisations and to ensure reliability, the listening journal entries were left for four months and then they were analysed again. This method was used by Goh (1997). Then both versions of categories were compared. If the two versions of categories matched, they were accepted. If there was any discrepancy, the categorisation was repeated for a third time. This revision of categorisation was helpful as I found that I coded learners' resolutions under Evaluation/Substitution "MES" where they actually could be subsumed under Evaluation/Problem identification "MEPI" as the definition of problem identification dictates. All listening journal entries were revised accordingly and any discrepancy was cleared.

3.7.1.2.2 Codification of Focus Group Interview Questions

 MacQueen et al. (cited in, Namey *et al*., 2007, p.140) describe the term "*structural codes* which refers to question-based, rather than theme-based codes". This approach is suitable for data collected through structured and semi-structured interviews or for focus groups where discrete questions and probes are repeated across multiple groups and in a data set. Each discrete question and its associated probes are given a code which, in turn, is linked to the question and "subsequent" response (Namey *et al*., 2007, p.140). Questions could also be grouped under a conceptual domain of inquiry. Within each domain, questions were given code names that started with a prefix for the domain and an identifier for the question topic (Namey *et al*., 2007, p.141). For example, within the listening podcast section, participants were asked "What do you think of the themes of the podcasts we listened to or the videos we watched?" The code developed for this section was LP_Theme. These codes were defined "ex ante" or as Gläser and Laudel put it:

The code can be either an existing one (one that was defined prior to the analysis or one that was derived from the text during the analysis) or a new one, which the analyst defines in order to represent the information.

(Gläser and Laudel, 2011, p.25)

Accordingly, the questions were grouped into six domains of inquiry: prior teaching versus current, collaboration with peers, listening podcast, task type, listening journals, and self-assessment and suggestions. The codes of the focus group questions will be as follows:

Table 3.4: Domains of inquiry and question codes

Domain	Question Code
Prior teaching versus Current (PC)	PC_Method PC_Note PC_Repetition PC_Variety
Collaboration with peers (CP)	CP
Listening Podcast (LP)	LP_Theme LP_Lexis LP_Length LP_Prosodic Features LP_Concentration Loss LP_Authenticity LP_Genre
Task Type (TT)	TT_MCQ TT_True or False TT_Re-arrangement TT_ Gap filling (cloze test)
Listening Assignments (LA)	LA_Question LA_Access LA_Problems
Listening Journals (LJ)	LJ_Difficulty LJ_Prompts
Self-assessment and Transfer (ST)	ST_Skills ST_Other Aspects ST_Suggestions

Of note is that in order to maintain authenticity and give learners' voices the opportunity to be heard, the excerpts taken from the journals were presented without any changes of either the grammar or the spelling.

The results of applying the above mentioned decisions in data analysis will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

This chapter will present the data yielded by the study and the findings of the analyses that were carried out. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed to obtain results. The qualitative results and findings of the qualitative instruments of data collection will be presented first, and then will be followed by the display of the statistical analysis of the only quantitative method used in this study, namely, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). This analysis enabled, in turn, themes to emerge and similarities, differences, and commonalities across these data streams to be explored "conveniently and clearly". Finally, my researcher's notes will also be discussed.

4.1 Qualitative Data Collection Instrument Results

4.1.1 Listening Journals

As mentioned in Chapter 3, each session, upon completion of listening to an audio/ watching a video, students were required to write their reflections of the processes they used to understand the podcast and any difficulties they might have encountered while listening. These reflections were kept in a developmental portfolio. See Appendix 6 for a sample of a listening journal.

As was mentioned in Chapter 3, no colleague was available to verify my categorisations of the listening journal entries and to ensure reliability, the entries were left for four months and then they were analysed again. This method was used by Goh (1997). Then both versions of categories were compared. If the two versions of

categories matched, they were accepted. If there was any discrepancy, the categorisation was repeated for a third time.

As discussed earlier, each interventional cycle lasted for five weeks with a total of fifteen hours per cycle. Hence, there were two cycles for cohort A (September 2015) which consisted of both the pilot study and the first cycle. Cohort B (February 2016) comprised two cycles as well. Since the number of the participants of cohort B has been very small in number in comparison to that of cohort A, (only six students, in order to verify any differences found between both cohort A and B), I thought of repeating only one cycle with another cohort, cohort C (September 2016) . This cycle lasted only three weeks. Those podcasts that participants of both cohorts A and B have reported to be easy, difficult or challenging in addition to the observations of the researcher were only incorporated in this cycle. It could be said that this was the essence of the former two cohorts. Accordingly, I ended up with having entries for only seven podcasts as discussed earlier in the data reduction section.

As was previously discussed, seven podcasts that represented the subtypes of podcasts were selected to be analysed qualitatively across the three cohorts. The table below illustrates the number of listening journal entries that was returned for each podcast subtype across the three cohorts.

Table 4.1: Number of Listening Journal Entries Returned by Participants

No	Podcast subtype title	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort C
1.	Teleworking and distance learning	37	5	12
2.	Would Chinese replace English	35	5	15
3.	How to find and do work you love	38	5	13
4.	A School in the Cloud	32	6	10
5.	The story of two refugees	36	6	10

6.	Jonathan Ross interview with Cristiano Ronaldo	38	5	13
7.	The educational report	36	4	14

These were the data entries that were retained after applying the criteria mentioned above of excluding any listening journal entry that did not show any instances of strategy use. The journals were read several times and key phrases and strategies were highlighted and copied to the coding frame mentioned previously (see Chapter 3).

Table 4.2 shows the occurrences of strategies in the three cohorts A, B and C for the seven podcasts (see Appendix 7 for a sample of coding a listening journal using the coding system mentioned in Chapter 3). Only those strategies that were deployed by participants during the listening process will be reported in this table. It is also worth mentioning that an identified discrete strategy was counted only once, even if it was reported several times.

Table 4.2: Reported Strategies as Revealed by Learners' Listening Journals

Main category	Subcategory	Code	Number of occurrence in each cohort		
			A	B	C
Metacognitive	Planning	MP	1	0	2
	Advance organisation	MPAO	19	1	3
	Self-management	MPSM	1	0	
	Focusing attention	MF	2	0	5
	Directed attention	MFDA	15	1	7
	Selective attention	MFSA	26	2	12

	Comprehension monitoring	MMCM	2	0	0
	Double-check monitoring	MMDC	14	3	9
	Evaluation	ME	6	2	3
	Self-evaluation	MESE	190	19	42
	Strategy-evaluation	MEST	52	3	5
	Problem-identification	MEPI	136	20	39
	Substitution	MES	18	3	1
Cognitive	Inferencing	CI	2	0	0
	Linguistic inferencing	CIL	8	0	8
	Extralinguistic inferencing	CIE	1	0	0
	Between parts inferencing	CIB	2	0	0
	Elaboration	CE	5	0	0
	World elaboration	CEW	2	0	1
	Questioning elaboration	CEQ	9	1	0
	Prediction	CP	15	2	2
	Global prediction	CPG	9	1	1
	Local prediction	CPL	4	0	1
	Repetition	CRR	10	0	3

	Note-taking	CRN	2	2	4
	Translation	CTranslate	5	1	0
	Deduction/Induction	CD/I	1	0	0
	Resourcing	CResource	6	0	0
Social	Joint-task cooperation	SCJ	35	5	16
Affective	Lowering anxiety	ALA	1	0	0
	Self-encouragement	ASE	3	0	0
	Taking emotional temperature	AET	5	0	0

As can be seen from the table above, participants in all cohorts employed more metacognitive strategies in comparison to the other types of strategies. Furthermore, the metacognitive strategy, self-evaluation "MESE", was the highest of all the metacognitive strategies reported across the three cohorts: 190, 19 and 42, respectively. According to the definition of this subcategory, any instances of the participants' evaluation of the completion of the task or their evaluation of their own progress in the language were subsumed under this subcategory.

The second highest occurrence of metacognitive strategies after self-evaluation "MESE" was that of problem-identification "MEPI", 136 for cohort A, 20 for cohort B, and 39 for cohort C, respectively. Both strategies are sub-categories of the broader metacognitive strategy: evaluation. Participants could identify the problem that needed a resolution and the part of the task that was still incomplete and accordingly take an

appropriate action to solve this problem. It was noted that the problem identification

strategy was either preceded by the strategy of self-evaluation "MESE" or followed by

it. Students would first identify the problem that confounded their listening

comprehension, and then would accordingly evaluate their completion of the listening

task. In another case, learners would evaluate either their overall execution of the

listening task or their progress in the language and follow it by a future resolution that

they would like to undertake to better improve the listening comprehension process.

This pattern was repeated 33 times in cohort A, 7 times in cohort B, and 21 times in

cohort C. The following extracts from the three cohorts exemplify the grouping of both

the metacognitive strategies of evaluation (problem identification and self-evaluation):

> If I were to evaluate myself, would say that I have improved but didn't reach
> highest level (MESE). I still need to practise at home and in class (MEPI/future
> resolution)
>
> (RK, cohort A)

> I found it clear but didn't catch a lot of keywords (MEPI/problem) but I
> understood what the speaker said and talked about (MESE)
>
> (YM, cohort B)

> Actually, today I'm very happy because I improved in taking notes (MESE)
> although I faced a problem with some speeches that were said fast
> (MEPI/problem)
>
> (AA, cohort C)

It was also noted that both the metacognitive strategies of focusing attention (directed

attention "MFDA" and selective attention "MFSA") were grouped with the

metacognitive strategy of problem identification since most of the time these attention

strategies followed it. This occurred only in cohorts A and C since the small size of

cohort B (n=6) did not allow for enough strategies to be employed. Students identified

the problem that affected their listening and consequently focused their attention to

complete the listening task. The following excerpts are examples of the grouping of

these strategies:

> I lost concentration in the middle (MEPI/problem) but managed to take notes by focusing on keywords and trying to recognise the whole topic and focusing on the information which he gave us more than the examples (MFSA)

> (HA, cohort A)

> I lost concentration in the middle but I was able to regain my focus by concentrating on the main ideas the topic tackles.

> (NB, cohort C)

Another pattern that recurred across both cohorts A and C and which was absent in

cohort B was the students' grouping of the advance organisation metacognitive strategy

"MPAO" with the attention focusing strategies of either directed attention "MFDA" or

selective attention "MFSA". The following extracts show how learners first planned for

their listening by either reading questions or proposing strategies for handling it and

how this could be followed by focusing attention by either avoiding any distractions

and heeding to the aural input or by attending to particular aspects of the language to

better understand the listening excerpt and accomplish the listening task:

> I planned for my listening before I start (MPAO) and I listen to details, keywords and main ideas (MFSA)

> (TM, cohort A)

> I read the questions first (MPAO) then I looked for keywords in her speech so I can answer the questions (MFSA)

> (RM, cohort C)

Listening journals also revealed learners' use of cognitive strategies, which "involve manipulation of the target language in order to accomplish a given task" (Vandergrift, 1992, p.103). A close look at Table 2 will show that there is no consensus with regard to the cognitive strategy that occurred repeatedly across the three cohorts. It varied from one group to the other. The highest reporting of the cognitive strategies in cohort A was in the following order: prediction, repetition and then global prediction. As mentioned above, a small number of the participants in cohort B did not allow for a striking occurrence of cognitive strategies to be noted. As far as cohort C is concerned, the highly occurring cognitive strategies were: linguistic inferencing, note-taking and repetition. As mentioned above, the application of the criteria of incorporating only journals that showed instances of strategy use yielded a small number of journals (see Table 4.1). This, in turn, did not allow for a certain pattern of cognitive strategy use to emerge.

Unlike the cognitive strategies and as Table 4.2 shows, students across the three cohorts were unanimous with regard to the use of the social strategy of cooperation: joint task construction "SCJ". The definition of this strategy denotes the joint collaboration with peers to solve a problem, pool information or check a learning task. Extracts from the three cohorts reveal how learners thought positively of this strategy:

> Exchanging notes is beneficial because it helps me see what ideas I didn't catch and vice versa
>
> (RS, cohort A)

> When I checked my notes with my partner, I found it correct. So I was very happy
>
> (AD, cohort B)

> Working in pairs made it easier to collect the missing information

Reading through learners' listening journals allowed for some themes to emerge. These could be summarised as follows:

- Impact of the inherent characteristics of the audio/video on the activation of strategies.

- The impact of the schooling system on the students' abilities to reflect on their listening process.

- Influence of proficiency level on strategy use

4.1.1.1 Impact of the inherent characteristics of the audio/video on the activation of strategies

As mentioned above, only seven podcasts (whether audios/videos) that students reported to have been problematic, challenging, interesting or boring were analysed. Moreover, my observations of the learners' performance while listening to/ watching videos were another criterion for the selection of the incorporation of these podcasts in the analysis. Studies have investigated the effect of a number of inherent features in the text that would deem the listening text difficult for the learner. Some of these features were noted during the analysis process such as: unfamiliar lexical items, speech rate, task type, length, accent and type of scaffolding.

4.1.1.2 Audio versus Video

Thompson and Rubin (1996, p.334) postulate that "video allows for the use of a wider range of strategies than audio" but it has not been examined by them and neither by any other researcher, as far as I know. Hence, it was thought that the integration of both sound and visual clues would have an effect on the strategies engendered as revealed

by learners' listening journals. The following table presents the strategies that were generated while learners were watching videos whether these were extracted from TEDx Talks or downloaded from YouTube.

Table 4.3 shows that the learners across the three cohorts orchestrated different types of metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective strategies. During the analysis phase, it was thought that the orchestration of these strategies will be pertinent only to the TEDx Talks and that an ordinary video, like that of Cristiano, would not activate the employment of strategies. Nevertheless, this did not prove to be correct. The highest rating of all the strategies was the metacognitive strategy of evaluation "MESE" across all videos. This echoes what has already been mentioned above in the cumulative analysis of the overall listening journals across the three cohorts that students used more evaluation strategies if compared to the rest of all strategies. In addition, the evaluation strategy, problem solving "MEPI" was also the second highly reported strategy as has been shown above. All in all, the visual effect facilitated the generation of strategies.

In order to verify the above mentioned finding, the frequency of learners' strategy use while listening to audio podcasts had to be examined as well (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.3: Strategies Engendered while Watching TED Talks/ YouTube videos

Main Strategy Category	Strategy Subcategory	Frequency of occurrence in How to do and love work you love	Frequency of occurrence in School in the Cloud	Frequency of occurrence in The story of two refugees	Frequency of occurrence in Jonathan Ross Interview with Cristiano Ronaldo
Metacognitive	MP	1	-	1	
	MPAO	1	1	1	1
	MPSM	-	-	-	-
	MF	-	-	-	4
	MFDA	5	1	2	4
	MMCM	-	-	-	-
	MMDC	2	-	-	1
	ME	4	-	2	1
	MESE	35	34	29	38
	MEST	6	4	6	9
	MEPI	25	28	14	16
	MES	-	-	-	-
Cognitive	CI	-	-	-	1
	CIL	1	1	-	7
	CIE	-	-	-	-
	CIB	-	-	-	1
	CE	1	-	1	-

	CEW	-	-	-	-
	CEQ	-	-	1	-
	CP	3	4	3	3
	CPG	3	-	-	-
	CPL	-	1	-	-
	CRR	-	-	-	-
	CRN	3	-	-	1
	C-Translate	-	-	-	1
	CD/I	-	-	-	-
	C-Resource	-	-	-	4
Social	SJC	5	22	6	8
	ALA	-	-	-	-
Affective	ASE	1	1		1
	AET	1	1		-

Table 4.4: Strategies Generated while Listening to Aural Podcasts

Main Strategy Category	Strategy Subcategory	Frequency of occurrence in Teleworking and Distance Learning	Frequency of occurrence in Would Chinese Replace English	Frequency of occurrence in The Educational Report
Metacognitive	MP	-	-	1
	MPAO	3	10	2
	MPSM	-	2	-
	MF	2	1	1
	MFDA	1	2	3
	MFSA	5	8	10
	MMCM	-	2	-
	MMDC	2	7	16
	ME	-	-	1
	MESE	41	29	28
	MEST	3	5	18
	MEPI	26	21	44
	MES	-	1	3
Cognitive	CI	-	-	-
	CIL	-	1	6
	CIE	-	1	-
	CIB	-	-	1
	CE	-	1	1
	CEQ	-	-	13
	CEW	1	-	1
	CP	1	3	3
	CPG	1	3	2
	CPL	2	1	1
	CRR	-	-	11

	CRN	3	2	4
	C-Translate	1	1	5
	CD/I	-	-	1
	C-Resource	-	-	4
Social	SJC	3	11	-
Affective	ALA	-	-	1
	ASE	-	-	1
	AET	1	2	-

As can be seen from the table, the above mentioned assumption - that watching videos would allow more strategies to be generated if compared to aural podcasts - does not seem to hold true. Students coordinated a number of metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective strategies while listening to aural podcasts.

4.1.1.3 Unfamiliar lexical items, dense information, orality and organisation

It was striking to note that *The Educational Report* was the aural podcast that engendered the highest number of different strategies, compared with other forms of podcasts whether aural or visual. *The Educational Report* is a six-minute news podcast, where a number of the inherent features of a text that could impede listening comprehension, are manifested. First of all, the topic of the podcast is unfamiliar as it a call to countries such as Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan to have a stronger health system and how these countries share similar circumstances including political unrest, a military regime and lack of trust among people. Then, the report compares the views of one of the researchers in Nigeria who enumerates the reasons why there should be a move to a leader centric approach to eradicate polio and the Taliban's stance to support immunization of polio in an attempt to gain legitimacy. For a sample of the notes a students took down, see Appendix 8). Such a topic is unfamiliar for the students and topic familiarity plays a great role in facilitating L2 listening comprehension (Tyler, 2001; Schmidt- Rinehart, 1994). In addition, learners are not accustomed to such a type of podcasts and it was thought that giving it as a homework assignment would give them the opportunity to look up the meaning of difficult words. However, unfamiliar genres could compromise understanding, whereas "ample" exposure could facilitate comprehension (Shohamy and Inbar, 1991, p.35). As a genre, the news podcast is characterised by a "larger density of propositions "where these

propositions "follow one another without pause" (Shohamy and Inbar, 1991, p. 34). The

following extracts explain the density of the news podcast:

> I did not understand anything in the first time, I just wrote down random notes.   This is
> maybe due to the great deal of details and that I lost concentration in the beginning of the
> audio.

> (MM, cohort A)

> Although the speaker was talking slowly and the words were clear I lost concentration.
> There were so many details that had to be written and all the words were important too.

> (FN, cohort A)

Another feature of the podcast that has contributed to its difficulty and which varies between

passage types is the degree of orality (Bloomfield *et al.,* 2010, p.41). *Orality* is "the extent to

which a passage contains features of spoken language as opposed to features typical of written

language, with highly oral passages tending to contain more disfluencies, redundancy, and

simpler syntax (Tannen, 1982, cited in Bloomfield *et al*., 2010, p.41). According to this

definition, the *Educational Report* falls at the far end of less formality on a continuum of orality

and less orality, where the structure is dense and "complex grammatical and syntactic structures

such as the passive and dependent and relative clauses" are extensively used (Shohamy and

Inbar, 1991, p.34). In addition, this feature is relevant to the organisation of the news podcast.

Thus, lectures delivered from written material will pose more difficulty to L2 learners than less

planned conversations (Bloomfield *et al*., 2010, p.42)

A close look at Table 4.4 shows that the evaluation strategy of problem solving "MPEI" was the

most reported strategy, 44 times across all cohorts. Given that the podcast was challenging for

the learners, the frequency of employing the "MPEI" strategy increased. Many students

pinpointed the problem that they faced while listening to the *Educational Report* in particular.

Then, when they were reflecting on the strategies, they mentioned their future resolution.

Learners attributed the difficulty of this podcast to be brought about by unfamiliar lexical items.

> The audio was hard to understand at first then I read the questions, I found some words that I didn't understand so I googled it for translation.
>
> (AA, cohort A)

> It is the hardest topic I ever listened to and tried to answer. The topic is little scientific and the words are complicated and hard to listen to and write. I managed to solve this problem by listening to the audio several times.
>
> (AD, cohort B)

> The topic is not familiar to me, and I had to search for some difficult words so I can understand the audio. Some of the problems that I encountered while listening is losing track because of some difficult words, but I managed to get over it by skipping to the next point and write those difficult words to search for them later.
>
> (YT, cohort A)

> I didn't understand a lot of the vocab in the audio. It was really hard to understand some words but I could manage to deduce the meaning from context.
>
> (TM, cohort A)

As can be seen from the extracts, the learners could first identify the problem of unfamiliar vocabulary and accordingly they thought of the solutions that could be undertaken to solve this problem. AA resorted to the cognitive strategy of translation to find equivalents to the difficult words in the mother tongue. Another student (YT), used another cognitive strategy, namely, resourcing to look up the meaning of the lexical items she thought would compromise her comprehension. Moreover, employing the cognitive strategy of repetition was the solution that AD employed while listening to unfamiliar vocabulary. Finally, TM managed to understand the meaning of the difficult unfamiliar lexical items by deducing their meaning from context, thus deploying the cognitive strategy of deduction.

Furthermore, both the metacognitive strategy of double-check monitoring "MMDC" where learners wait for the second listen to verify their comprehension and the cognitive strategy of repetition "CRC" were used excessively by students while listening to this podcast. It is as one of the students puts it:

> It was a clear track. I did not find many difficulties while listening to it except for the foreign names and some medical definitions that were mentioned. I overcame this problem by guessing the spelling of the terms and searching for their meanings. But I had to listen twice in order to get them correctly and manage to note down all the important details. The speakers' voice was clear and the accent was good. In addition, when I noted down the points in the first time of listening, I read what I have written in order to understand what the audio is talking about. I find this strategy quite helpful to me especially when I listen for the second time; it helps me fill in what I have missed and in answering the questions after that.
>
> (LD, cohort A)

The extract summarises the problems learners encountered while listening to the *Educational Report*, the solutions suggested solving these problems and the orchestration of numerous strategies. Similar to her colleagues, LD viewed the unfamiliar lexical items as the source of the difficulty in understanding the podcast by using the evaluation strategy of problem solving to identify the problem that hindered listening. She wrote the difficult words down and looked up their meaning by implementing the cognitive strategy of resourcing. Since the podcast was dense and she could not manage to write down all the important details, she used the metacognitive strategy of double-check monitoring where she verified her understanding by listening to the audio for a second time. Finally, LD deployed the evaluation strategy "MEST" when she judged the effectiveness of the strategy she had used.

In spite the fact that students identified unknown vocabulary to have had a negative impact on their comprehension while listening to the *Educational Report*, none of them reported that it was a hindrance that led them to stop listening. All of them tried to find a solution to alleviate this

problem and continue listening. Finding a solution to deal with unfamiliar lexical items could be "related to their metacognition and ability to regulate L2 listening processes" (Vandergrift and Baker, 2015, p.395).

Overall, topic familiarity, information density and unfamiliar lexical items may have an effect on learners' listening comprehension.

4.1.1.4 Passage Length

One of the aspects of a passage difficulty (Rost, 2006, p.49) and which could have a negative impact on listening comprehension is passage length. The longer the passage, the more burden is exerted on the working memory to store and retain information and integrate it with the new information (Henning, 1991, cited in Wayland *et al*., 2013, p.5). "Passage length has been identified with a number of measures, including syllables/sounds, duration (in minutes or seconds), and number of words or sentences (Bloomfield *et al*., 2010, p.19). Students reported passage length as one of the factors that affected their listening comprehension in two podcasts: *Teleworking and Distance Learning*, and *A School in the Cloud*.

Teleworking and Distance Learning is a ten-minute aural lecture extracted from Lynch's (2004) book *Study Listening*. It is a lecture that compares the advantages and disadvantages of both teleworking and distance learning from the point of view of the employee, employer and society in the case of the former and for the latter from the point of view of the learner, the course planner and the teacher. Students reported that the lecture was lengthy:

Before I started listening to this podcast, I read the topic and started to brainstorm the keywords that I might hear while am listening. During the audio I lost concentration for a little bit as it was somehow lengthy and contained unnecessary details but I managed to cover all the main ideas.

(FN, cohort A)

The audio was so long and I was lost. It wasn't clear enough also. However, I've got many correct answers.

(HH, cohort A)

Though it was mentioned in the learners' extracts that the passage was long, they did not stop listening and this did not have a detrimental effect on their comprehension. Both FN and HH regulated their learning using a number of metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Passage length alone does not compromise listening. Rather, there are other factors such as rate, density and redundancy that could affect listeners' working memory (Wayland *et al*., 2013, p.2318).

Given that the passage is quite lengthy, I provided students with a table (see Appendix 10) which they had to fill out with appropriate information from the audio. The table functioned as an example of scaffolding to help learners focus while listening. As can be seen, the table bridged the gap between the traditional type of listening learners were used to in the pre-tertiary experience and the metacognitive pedagogical sequence since the purpose of the task was to listen and fill in gaps which exemplified listening for testing already criticised in Chapter 2 (see 2.2.4.3). Students' views with regard to the difficulty, length, speed and whether the audio was interesting/ boring were mixed.

Some students considered the audio to be easy to understand:

> Before listening, I expected the words I might hear. We did a table and listed all the points. The audio was very clear. I understood it perfectly. It was organised and I managed to get the points I needed to know. I sometimes lost concentration in the middle due to a lot of details. But I managed to get all the important points.
>
> (SA, cohort A)

> This audio was easy to understand but there was too much information so I got a little confused and distracted. But I regained my concentration and followed my pre-plan.
>
> (Aly, cohort A)

As can be seen from the excerpts the learners were able to employ a number of metacognitive strategies though MESE will be counted once and this would apply the cognitive strategy.

On the other hand, other learners thought that the audio was lengthy, difficult and that the scaffolding in the form of a table impeded their understanding:

> Actually, I wasn't able to hear anything or heard a little at the beginning and then I lost track. The audio was too long, the voice was also low. As a result, I didn't understand the audio. I only understood the advantages and the disadvantages of teleworking. I didn't know how I can use the table.
>
> (AM, cohort B)

> In today's lecture, we listened to TW and DL. Actually, the topic was boring as the speaker's tone was sleepy and made me bored. I kept on losing concentration and I gained it back by the notes that the teacher told us about.
>
> (HS, cohort C)

Although neither learner liked the audio and it induced in them a feeling of boredom, their reflections show instances of using metacognitive strategies as they are able to identify the problem that influenced their listening comprehension and evaluate it as well.

One last group of learners considered the table I provided for them as helpful in spite of the fact that they would too report that there were some problems with the audio itself:

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It was long. The table that we made helped me to takes notes of the main points easily. I used background knowledge. The volume is clear but I got lost in the middle.

(M.A.M, cohort A)

Today's lecture was the best in this semester. We talked about distance learning and teleworking. It was the first time that I concentrate like this, but I know why, because the teacher made us a table full of questions so you are hearing the audio and you fill the gaps by what you heard so I think that it is a very good way to let us concentrate.

(NB, cohort C)

These extracts show that scaffolding facilitated the listening process as learners' attention was focused on listening to specific pieces of information in order to fill out the table.

The other podcast that was characterised to be quite lengthy as well is the TEDx Talk *A School in the Cloud*. Informative, succinct sessions that do not exceed 18 minutes and provide "targeted enlightment of various topics or ideas" are the distinctive features of TEDx Talks (Romanelli, Cain and McNamara, 2014, p.1). They are delivered by knowledgeable, skilful presenters "in sophisticated studios with trendy backdrops" and "follow a format that focuses on the presenter and limited extremely purposeful visual aids" (Romanelli, Cain and McNamara, 2014, p.1). In addition, the talks are categorised in seven genres: the big idea, the tech demo, the performance, the artist's statement, the "dazzle with wonder", the small idea and the "issue talk" (TED website).

A School in the Cloud is one of TED talks that is a bit longer than the 18 minutes as described by TED organisation as it lasts for 21 minutes. The presenter, Sugatra Mitra, won the 2013 TED Prize. He explains his experience with putting a computer in a hole in a slum and observing how little children living in poverty teach themselves and others to use the computer. The video is about the experience and includes no redundancies where ideas and lexical items are repeated in

a way that facilitates listening. It is also worth mentioning that the presenter had a slight Indian

English accent which did not hinder comprehension.

> We brainstormed first before watching the video. The presenter was Indian but actually his accent was very clear and easy. There was some difficulty in some sentences, but I got the main idea and guessed the linking words that might help me and I managed to catch up with the speaker and my note-taking covered mostly the whole topic.

> (MM, cohort A)

Some students did not consider length to have impacted their listening comprehension:

> I was so interested by the video, so I managed to take down a lot of notes. Also my brainstorming helped me to expect what the video will be about. I didn't lose my focus despite some minor accent issues. Next time I will try working on understanding different accents, which will help me taking down more information. When I recheck my notes with my colleagues, I sometimes find it helpful cause they have taken down something that I didn't get.

> (MS, cohort A)

> - The video was very interesting.
> - His language (accent) was clear.
> - His use of humour was fun.
> - It was easy because his pace was slow.
> - Today I found myself able to take plenty of notes which made me very happy.
> - I concentrated very well before and during the video.

> (SM, cohort A)

Learners were very much interested in the video so that they forgot about the length and

orchestrated a number of metacognitive, social and affective strategies.

On the other hand, some listeners did not like the fact that the video was quite lengthy:

> This piece of listening was very lengthy, I lost concentration many times. I was only able to write down main ideas and I wasn't really capable of writing all the details. I thought my notes were missing, that is why I didn't participate while discussing the notes as I missed many details.

> (NY, cohort A)

The learner contradicts herself as she reported that she managed to take down the main ideas; she is not required to write down any unnecessary details.

For other learners, however, they could not manage to take down notes as they were enchanted by the video:

> It was a video of TEDx presentation. It was really interesting and nice to see but it was not easy to write notes because I just couldn't stop watching. Working with my colleagues after watching helps a lot to write the notes that I couldn't manage to write. And I think I need to improve my taking down notes while watching videos.
>
> (AA, cohort A)

Being impressed by idea of the video and the uniqueness of the experience the presenter is telling the audience about made the student forget about using strategies. However, she did employ some metacognitive strategies like the evaluation strategy "MESE" when she evaluated her notes and the problem-solving strategy "MEPI" was deployed when the learner identified the cause of her not having taken down notes. AA also comments on the effectiveness of the social strategy of collaboration and by the end of her listening journal, she uses the metacognitive problem-solving strategy "MEPI" for taking a future resolution.

As mentioned above, the length of the passage alone does not affect comprehension negatively.

4.1.1.5 Speech Rate

How to Do and Love Work You Do is another TEDx Talk video that learners' listening journals revealed to be problematic. A seventeen-minute video that has been watched by more than 8

million viewers as it is inspirational and motivational and explains how to find and love the work

one is doing:

> How inspiring was that video! I was lost in his words and in the topic that I didn't take
> down all the important notes. However, my colleague, LK, helped me with the missing
> notes when we compared our notes together. I wish our teacher could get us more videos
> like this always!
>
> (YT, cohort A)

Many students agreed with YT that the video was inspirational. Nevertheless, they identified a

problem that they think could have confounded their listening, namely, speech rate.

> I like TEDx Talks so much. This time it was hard to take notes as it was fast. I just need
> to sit back and listen. But I like it, his way in giving a presentation and his body
> language. He gives us a positive energy to achieve what we fear of and there is nothing
> impossible.
> I enjoyed it ☺
>
> (HO, cohort A)

Although students could pinpoint the fast speech rate of the presenter, they do not consider it to

have been a barrier to their listening comprehension:

> I started by brainstorming the main ideas, and the keywords. It was easy to understand
> and take notes. Maybe the problem I had was the speed, it wasn't as fast as writing.
>
> (MS, cohort A)

> This video was very inspiring. The speed rate was very fast but easy to understand. At
> first it was hard but then I understood quite well.
> This video gave me a very good push and great amount of +ve energy.
>
> (NT, cohort A)

However, not all students shared the same opinion with regard to the difficulty speech rate posed

on their listening comprehension:

Today, my reflection may be a little bit negative. I tried to take notes as much as I can, but the speaker was talking really fast and I had the impression that he didn't like the topic he is talking about. He was talking about passion in workplace and how to have passion. I used the list form to get down notes but they were not enough. I felt he was bored, so as a result, I felt bored and wanted to finish fastly.

(NH, cohort C)

The audio was kind of hard to keep up with since the guy was talking really fast and he used so many details that made me lose my concentration at one point but I managed to write down all the important stuff that he talked about.

(ND, cohort A)

- I think I found it boring and I didn't like it.
- It was too long. I got lost.
- He was talking too fast I couldn't keep up with him.
- He used body language a lot.
- It was difficult to me to understand it.

(RR, cohort A)

As the extracts of ND and RR reveal that speech rate alone does not affect listening comprehension negatively. There are other factors that could confound comprehension, including quality, speaker accent and text length (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2010, p.63) in addition to information density. In the case of ND, information density limited comprehension when she mentioned that there were a lot of details. For RR, on the other hand, the length of the video, 17 minutes, was the cause she could not manage to keep up with the video.

Overall, although studies were incontrovertible regarding the effect of speech rate on listening comprehension (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2011, p.2319), there is a negative impact on speech rate on working memory:

Speech rate also affects the strain on working memory: a faster rate provides less time for the L2 listener to process the input, leading to greater cognitive load (Rost, 2006). Because a faster speech rate results in a passage shorter in duration, predictions for

working memory load based on the overall duration of a passage may not accurately represent strain imposed on the listener.

(Bloomfield *et al*., 2011, pp.2320-2321)

Similar to the other podcasts, whether aural or visual, several types of strategies were orchestrated with evaluation "MES" ranking the highest with 35 occurrences followed by problem-solving MEPI which was reported 25 times while learners were watching the *How to Find and Love Work You Do* video. Hence, it would be assumed that although some learners identified speech rate as a source of difficulty, the employment of strategies and metacognitive strategies, in particular, was not affected.

4.1.1.6 Multiple Speakers

The inherent feature of multiple speakers is evident in the podcast *Would Chinese Replace English*. It is an audio which was downloaded from the website of the Voice of America (VOA). It is a podcast that poses a question about the possibility that Chinese would, ultimately, replace English. The podcast demonstrates a variety of opinions of opponents of this view who explain the dominance of English in different domains and its prevalence as a lingua franca. What is salient about this podcast and differentiates it from other audios is the integration of multiple speakers, who function as the opponents of the idea of Chinese replacing English. In other words, there is a narrator of the audio and other multi-speakers which would add to the difficulty of the podcast. As mentioned in Chapter 3, learners were required first to take down notes while listening, answer true and false questions and justify their answers in both cases based on their notes. Then, learners listen to the audio for a second time to check or correct their understanding. Though the "question-answer-check" approach was criticised in Chapter 2, it was thought that learners have to listen for a purpose. Field (2008, p.244) criticises this approach as he argues that

the teacher guides the attention of the learner which, in turn, alleviates any burden on the memory that occurs when the listener does not know how to go about the listening passage and "tries to make a mental note of every detail of the passage". However, learners in this study had first to decide on the main points to write down during the note-taking phase, and then based on these notes, they would answer questions. According to Shohamy and Inbar (1991, p.36), students who adopt a knowledge based approach, where they rely on reading questions to make predictions, check these predictions in the first listen and then fill in any missing gaps in information in the second listen, most likely will complete a task successfully. Furthermore, as long as, upon completion of the task, learners reflected on the processes and strategies they used while listening, the focus of listening was not on the product, but rather on the processes carried out while listening (see Chapter 2).

Some students thought that the audio was easy and the idea of having multiple speakers facilitated their understanding:

> The audio was important because it make me notice information about Chinese language. Also, it was different because there was some quotations in the audio, it helped me to keep me focused.
>
> <div align="right">(MA, cohort B)</div>

For other students, on the other hand, quotations uttered by multiple speakers confounded their understanding:

> I found this one hard as it was fast and many people were talking, a lot of information so I lost concentration but I managed to take fair notes. If I was to evaluate myself may be 25 -50% this time. I think I should train myself on fast audios.
>
> <div align="right">(NA, cohort A)</div>

Some other students thought at the beginning that listening to multiple speakers had a negative impact on their comprehension but then commented that the second listening made understanding easier:

> I always had problem in listening the right part to collect important information. After hearing the record for the first time I become confused because there is one person talking and giving more than one opinion, but after hearing it for the second time, I got it. Working in pairs made me collect the parts I miss.

> (SA, cohort C)

Listening to multiple speakers did not confound listening since "listeners adjust their phonemic representations to reflect the speech they are exposed to"; thus, they rarely face any difficulty when they hear different accents (Kraljic and Samuel, 2007, p.1). In addition, regardless of the influence of the integration of several quotations by different speakers in the audio and the lack of agreement among the learners regarding the difficulty it imposed on their comprehension, students in the above extracts orchestrated a number of metacognitive, cognitive and top-down processes to understand the aural input.

4.1.1.7 Speakers' Accents

Students watched in one of the session the Jonathan Ross Interview with Cristiano Ronaldo. The interview was downloaded from YouTube and was mainly chosen to tap the motivation of the learners. Given that both Jonathan Ross and Cristiano Ronaldo accents were unfamiliar to the students, any deviation from the listener's accent would make the listening process difficult (Weil, 2001, p.1). This view has been manifested in learners' listening journals when they reflected on watching the interview:

- It wasn't one of my favourite tracks to hear, as I am not a fan of football players.
- It was different however than normal sports interviews, as it was an interview about Ronaldo as a human being and not a player.
- To be honest, I had difficulty trying to understand most of what he was saying, because of his accent. But I tried guessing the words while noting down and it helped a little.
- I didn't manage to note down all of the details this time, just the main points.
- Overall, despite finding difficulty understanding his accent, I managed to understand a good ratio of the interview, plus it was a new experience for me, listening to a personal story of a football player.

(LD, cohort A)

Despite the fact that the student reported accents to have impacted her listening, she managed to resort to the cognitive strategy of inferencing to guess the meaning of the accented words that she could not figure out.

Conversely, other learners expressed their interest in watching the video and how the accents of both the interviewer and the interviewee did not affect their understanding:

- The video was really fabulous; I like Cristiano Ronaldo a lot.
- The accent of both Cristiano and the interviewer was easy for me to understand, I didn't face any problems when I was listening.
- I have taken a lot of notes this time; I managed to write almost everything that Cristiano talked about.
- When I compared my notes with my colleagues, it was the same.
- I think my skills in listening have really improved.

(NY, cohort A)

Being interested in watching the video enabled the learner to use the metacognitive strategy of evaluation several times in a positive manner where she first managed to effortlessly understand the video without paying attention to the accents. Moreover, she focused her attention and took down complete notes. NY also evaluated her overall progress in listening and based on her success in completing the task at hand, she considered her listening skill to have become better.

Finally, she employed the social strategy of collaboration when she checked notes with her colleagues.

For other students, it was not the accents that had influenced their understanding. Rather, the length of the video, which was around 17 minutes, had a negative impact on their listening:

> It was hard to keep concentrating, as it was very long. And interviews are usually harder to take notes for. But I barely had any difficulty with his accents, or the questions, and I managed to take mostly everything down. But what was annoying is its length, but other than that was fine.
>
> (LA, cohort B)

> Today is the most adorable topic, it is about CRISTIANO RONALDO.
> The interview was a bit long so sometimes I lost concentration but I was able to regain my mind by concentrating on the main ideas.
>
> (ZA, cohort C)

Although both students, LA and ZA's reporting of the video's length as a factor that they thought have bothered them while watching the video, neither of them stopped watching the video nor were they not able to keep up with the video. Rather, as the extracts show, both learners regulated their listening process by employing a number of metacognitive strategies such as problem solving, focusing attention and upon completion of the task, evaluation.

Of note was one of the learners' comments of how the visual clues of the videos have helped her:

> We made a brainstorm and came up with some ideas. There were two kinds of accents. Both of them I found so easy. It was a video not just audio; visuality (visual clues) helped me more. Today I'm so proud of my achievement. I could take down most or all the details. And I managed to keep up with both speakers. Also I found this video very interesting today.
>
> (ME, cohort A)

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The sense of achievement and interest allowed the student to coordinate a number of cognitive and metacognitive strategies while watching the video.

One of the students' use of the metacognitive strategy planning/ advance organisation was noteworthy:

> Today's interview was really good. I managed to understand everything they said. Before listening I knew that it was an interview so I divided my paper into Qs and As to facilitate it. It was very effective and helped me a lot. When I revised my notes with NA, I found it different than mine. All in all, it was easy but I should work more on my note taking to be shorter.

> (Mayar, cohort A)

As the extract shows, the student first planned for her listening using the metacognitive strategy of planning/advance organisation and then she evaluated the effectiveness of this strategy. Meanwhile, she employed other metacognitive strategies such as evaluation and problem solving in addition to her use of the social strategy of collaboration when she compared her notes with her partner.

It is worth mentioning that given that the students were fans of Cristiano Ronaldo, they were interested in watching the interview and Jonathan Ross's "non-rhotic dialect r fronting" speech impediment (Smith, 2011) went unnoticed.

4.1.1.8 Task Type

The last data entries are about the TEDx Talk *The Story of Two Refugees*. It tells the story of two Syrian refugees by depicting their journey and the hardships they have encountered until they were rescued. The video is very emotional and as students describe it:

> The video was very easy, language was clear and it was very emotional and heart-breaking but I managed to focus on the task.

> (NA, cohort A)

One student expressed the extent to which the video touched her that she cried and did not concentrate on the listening task:

> This video was the most touching and a different one. Before I started to watch the video I brainstormed my ideas and tried to guess the keywords. As the video carried on I started to cry and I was really upset from what I heard. The presenter was excellent; she managed to deliver the whole story in an amazing way that I could hardly bear my tears. I didn't write much or managed to cover the main points. I was touched and hurt.

> (FN, cohort A)

Unlike the above-mentioned podcasts, the difficulty of this video was not inherent in its features. Rather, the task that learners were required to complete prior to and during the listening was not familiar to them. The video as mentioned previously is a story that is full of events which students had to put in correct order. Prior to watching the video, learners were given a task sheet (see Appendix 9) where they had to put the events of the story in correct order. They had first to read the sentences and make their predictions with regard to the correct sequence of events. Then, they would listen for the first time and verify the correctness of their predictions. With a colleague, the students would double-check their predictions. After that, listeners watch the video again to fill in any missing information gaps. Upon completion of the second listen, the correct order of events was discussed as a class discussion.

Given that this type of task is not one that learners are accustomed to, the listening journals showed a variation in the perceptions of the students regarding the difficulty/ease of such a task.

Today's lecture when I firstly read the sentences, I felt confused and I couldn't make a plan of the sentences order in my mind as a premiere prediction. But after concentrating in the video task seriously, it all became logical. I think it is a fine task not too difficult but too emotional. The story made me almost cry. I like working in pairs as I get help to complete my missing information which I wasn't able to collect individually.

(MH, cohort C)

On the other hand, there are other students who did not consider the task type to have caused a problem and thought it was easy from the onset of the listening:

- Today was a different challenge in the listening course.
- I found it was easy to listen and watch the video and then arrange some phrases. I didn't face any difficulties. The speaker's accent was fluent for me and I understood the whole topic. Before listening, I read the phrases and managed to get them correctly.

(ME, cohort A)

A close look at the above extracts reveal that the type of the task "re-arrangement" did not impede the listening process. In addition, all learners, irrespective of their perceptions of the difficulty/ease of the task, managed their listening by deploying a variety of metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective strategies.

To sum up, as both Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show, neither did the inherent characteristics of the podcast nor the task type have an impact on the employment of strategies. Learners used a variety of strategies while listening to/watching these podcasts; they managed to "plan, monitor and evaluate" their learning. This could be attributed to the high proficiency level of the students which enabled them to overcome any difficulty brought about by any of the above mentioned inherent features.

4.1.1.9 The Impact of the Schooling System on the Students' Abilities to Reflect on their Listening Process

Though this theme was one of the questions that was addressed in the focus group protocol questions, the effect of the schooling system on both strategy use and reporting of strategies was noted in how students wrote their listening journals. As mentioned in Chapter three, there are in Egypt three streams of schooling systems: governmental, private and international. Those students who were graduates of either the private or the international stream, even if they reported not having any prior official teaching of the listening skill, managed to understand the idea of strategy use and reflections on these strategies in their journals. Students coming from governmental schools, on the other hand, reported their inability to use strategies and even if they did use strategies, the strategies were ineffective.

Moreover, it was also remarkable to note that those students coming from governmental schools depended on repetition in writing their listening journals. This could have stemmed from a problem in the writing skill itself as they do not possess enough language tools and do not have a lexical repertoire that they can resort to in writing; therefore, they tend to use repetition. Another explanation could be that these students are influenced by the writing style in Arabic language which depends to a great extent on redundancy and repetition in different ways to show mastery of the language.

Those students who went to either private or international schools, on the other hand, and were immersed in a foreign language, whether English, French or German, did have the chance to be exposed to a different culture, diverse modes of teaching and thinking. Even if they report that they did not have prior teaching of the listening skill, being immersed in a language played an

implicit role in instilling strategies in these students even if they were unaware of their existence from the very beginning. Hence, this could be a reason why more proficient students reported the use of more strategies and metacognitive strategies, in particular.

4.1.1.10 Influence of Proficiency Level on Strategy Use

Participants in this study have all passed the threshold level required to join the college where I work and the majority of them are at an intermediate level of proficiency based on their scores on the Cambridge Proficiency Test (CPT). Based on the results of this test, learners reach the benchmark or the threshold level if they score 40 or above on the exam. It was observed that those who scored from 40 to 49 exhibited more of the characteristics of an elementary learner rather than those of an intermediate student. These students are at the borderline of becoming independent users; however, they tend to be more at the A2 (Waystage) band of the CPT which means that they are still basic users of the language. They still lack the language that would enable them to belong to the threshold level though they scored 40 on the proficiency test. This, in turn, had its impact on their reporting of cognitive strategies more than metacognitive ones when they wrote their listening journals.

The Common European Framework Reference, CEFR describes in detail learners' level by skill, in a language neutral format (Cambridge University Press, 2013, p.2). The CEFR has three broad tiers A, B and C and which are called Basic, Independent and Proficient (Cambridge University Press, 2013, p.2). Each of these bands is divided into two with a total of six bands: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. According to the CEFR, the following are the listening competences of learners of each band: A2 and B1 and they describe what each band should be able to demonstrate:

Table 4.5: CEFR competencies of both bands A2 and B1 in the listening skill (Adapted from http://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages, pp.66-68)

Scales	A2	B1
Overall listening comprehension	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated(A2+) Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated (A2-)	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent
Understanding conversations between native speakers	Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her, when it is conducted slowly and clearly	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.
Listening to announcements and instructions	Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements. Can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport.	Can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for everyday equipment. Can follow detailed directions.
Listening as a member of native audience	No descriptor available	Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured (B1+) Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics provided these are delivered in

		clearly articulated standard speech (B1-).
Listening to audio media and recordings	Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly	Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast audio material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech (B1+) Can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly (B1-)

It should be noted that the CEFR assigns two levels, a strong (+) and a weaker one (-), within the same band for the competences required for a number of media and situations. This could be because students at the B1 - level are still at a level where the listening skills have not been yet internalised and there are other factors that could compound the listening process such as lexical knowledge of the L2, phonological constraints and segmentation of the acoustic input, which renders it difficult for students to process the aural input, and hence use strategies automatically(see Siegel, 2013; Field, 2003; Hasan, 2000; Goh, 1997; Ellis, 1994; Segalowitz and Segalowitz, 1993).

Moreover, I observed that the class performance of those students, who were on the borderline, was satisfactory. They were hard workers though they had problems in communicating in English all the time. In addition, they had some pronunciation problems but these are characteristic of the Egyptian educational system since there are phonological differences

between both the English and the Arabic language. As long as these phonological constraints did

not impede comprehension, they are not considered a problem. Some students can work on

improving their pronunciation, whereas others would find it difficult since these pronunciation

problems have fossilised. It was only their reflections that revealed that they relied more on

bottom- up listening processes, which in turn, activated cognitive strategies. Some of these

cognitive strategies were ineffective like translation and repetition.

I began conducting this study with a preconceived notion that I have a convenient sample that

embraced participants at an intermediate level. Nevertheless, reading through the listening

journals several times allowed other information to be gleaned, namely, that even if learners

could pass the threshold level, there could still be remnants of the previous level that have not

been fully automatised. Consequently, I decided, during the analysis phase, to trace the strategies

that five students who belong to the borderline level report they have employed in reflecting on

the above mentioned podcasts that were selected to be analysed. I wanted to confirm or refute the

assumption that they would use more cognitive strategies in comparison to their colleagues who

belonged to the stronger threshold level or even higher.

The following is an extract of an intermediate learner who orchestrated a number of strategies

while listening to the *Educational News Report*:

> This audio wasn't really quite easy for me to take all the important notes down from the
> first time that I had to listen to it three times. The topic is not familiar to me and I had to
> search for some difficult words so I can understand the audio. Some of the problems that
> I encountered while listening is losing track because of some difficult words, but I
> managed to get over it by skipping to the next point and write those difficult words to
> search for them later. Another difficulty was not being able to take the notes as fast as
> possible due to the large amount of details, so I had to write abbreviations and symbols,

that later I organised them and wrote them in a better way. However, somehow the audio was difficult to me, reading the questions before listening and searching for some words, made it somehow easier for me. What I would like to change in my strategies next time, is to organise my thoughts more, pay more attention, and not lose track.

(YT, cohort A)

This intermediate student could from the beginning evaluate the difficulty of the podcast and accordingly admits that she had to listen to the audio recording three times in order to understand the podcast. Then she enumerates the problems she faced while listening and presents the solutions she thought of to help her better understand the audio. She first employed metacognitive strategies exemplified in selective attention "MFSA". These were then followed by a cognitive strategy, namely, note-taking as she wrote down the main points which were organised in a better way later on. In addition, the metacognitive strategy of planning advanced organisation "MPAO" was deployed by reading the questions and combined with the cognitive strategy of "C-resource" as she looked up the meaning of difficult words. According to the learner, the orchestration of these strategies could facilitate comprehension. Finally, she concluded the listening journal by mentioning a future resolution, which is another metacognitive strategy, evaluation "MES" where she wants to improve both her planning and comprehension strategies. The proficiency level of this student enabled her to orchestrate a number of cognitive and metacognitive strategies to accomplish the listening task. She used them appropriately and in the correct context. This has been investigated in a number of studies where skilled learners employed more metacognitive strategies than did their less effective counterparts (Goh, 2000; Bacon, 1992; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Moreover, skilled listeners tend to orchestrate strategies (Vandergrift, 2003a; Graham and Macaro, 2008) in a way that would enhance the development of self-regulated learning (Goh and Taib, 2006; Vandergrift, 2002a, 2003b).

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It is worth mentioning that the analysis of the journals of only five of the students who were

borderline could be said not to be conclusive. The listening journals belonged to four students

from cohort A and a student from cohort B. There was a variety of proficiency levels within the

"threshold" band in cohort A, one student in cohort B. Cohort C, on the other hand, could be

classified to truly represent the threshold level as they scored higher than 50 in the Cambridge

Proficiency Test.

The listening journals of the borderline threshold level showed their use of cognitive strategies

more than metacognitive ones. Not only did the borderline threshold learners report more

cognitive strategies than their more skilled counterparts but also when they used metacognitive

strategies they were not effective.

> Actually listening to something about health makes me very interested
> Because it helps me will writing an essay and Also to know about other people problems
> and how we can benefit from them. I liked the audio so much it was easy but the
> problems which faces me are. First, the names I kept listening to it many times to know
> what is this names (CRN). Second, I don't know how to write this names & the deases
> which are mentioned. Third, it is the first time for me to notice that listening to people
> speak slowly is difficult to me because when I want to write something I wait till the
> woman complete the sentence and then I write it down. In this case I forgot what the 1st
> words of the sentens as she speaks slowly. Actually I didn't have any strategies for
> listening in my mind befor I listen I have to listen because everything I hear is more
> information to me. I don't know How to have steps before listening, and I don't find it
> difficult or wrong to not have steps during listening.

> (DS, cohort A, *Educational Report*)

The learner's journals shows that she is not aware that she uses strategies during listening. She

used the cognitive strategy of repetition when she says "I kept listening to it many times".

However, this strategy is ineffective as repeated listening is not an emulation of real-life

speaking. The ephemeral, on-line nature of listening does not allow for repetition. The learner was compelled to repeat the audio since she is still struggling to decode the aural input.

The use of translation was also noted in borderline learners though it was not employed in reporting strategy use in each podcast. One student (LM) thought that translat[ing] "every each word to Arabic, and it was effective for me it helps me more to understand the audio". This idea of the role of translation to the mother tongue in facilitating comprehension was also echoed by (SA), who states "This time was so easy to me, because it was so clear, and I try to find Arabic translation to what I'm listening".

Finding an Arabic equivalent to the word that they were listening to might have given learners a sense of security, which, in turn, made them feel that they were on the right track (Ghoneim, 2009, p.80). Another explanation could be that in their pre-tertiary experience, resorting to the mother tongue was acceptable in the English course. Given that quintessential role listening plays in communication, this translation is not acceptable (Ghoneim, 2009, p.80).

It is true that those lower intermediate learners used metacognitive strategies; nevertheless, the journals did not reflect depth in thinking. Learners are not only required to use strategies. Rather, they have to use them appropriately and in accordance with the task at hand. The following examples extracted from the listening journals of students of the borderline level reveal the inappropriate use of metacognitive strategies and the lack of depth in their strategy use:

> This audio was so easy, because it was visual and this makes it so easy to understand it. I'm trying to practice a lot to be a good one I listening.

> (LM, cohort A)

As can be seen from the extract, in spite of the fact that the learner used a metacognitive strategy "MESE" where she evaluated the ease of the video and attributed it to the visual characteristic of the input, this reason is not solely responsible for the ease of the podcast. In addition, by using the metacognitive strategy "MES" the learner mentioned a future resolution to become a good listener but she could not identify exactly what needs to be worked on. Her resolution is very broad.

Another borderline student orchestrated a metacognitive strategy with an ineffective bottom-up process followed by an evaluation of the effectiveness of this process:

> I listen to details, I try to understand every single word and I found it confusing.
>
> (EG, cohort A)

This student tried first to focus her attention on the details by employing a metacognitive strategy while listening. After that, similar to learners of a low proficiency, she relied on a bottom-up process of understanding every single word. However, the learner is aware that this process is "confusing".

In summary, as noted, though the metacognitive strategies the borderline learners employed were not yet fully automatised since "the short term memory was overburdened with a lot of sounds, utterances and linguistic features; hence, there was no space for metacognitive strategies to come into effect" (Ghoneim, 2009, p.81).

4.1.2 Final Reflection Papers

As discussed in the Methodology Chapter, learners kept a developmental portfolio with all their listening journals. It was an attempt to round off reflections in "something that consolidates learners' metacognitive learning" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.134). By the end of the term, they wrote a final reflection paper where they reflected on the metacognitive strategy training and presented their perceptions regarding the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of this approach. Learners from only cohort A submitted all in all 54 reflection papers. Not a single one of the six participants, who comprised cohort B, handed in a final reflection paper. Cohort C students were not asked to reflect on the metacognitive strategy training as the intervention lasted only for 3 weeks and the rest of the course was taught by a colleague. Screening students' final reflection papers yielded a number of themes about their perceptions with regard to the following issues:

- Metacognitive knowledge

- Collaboration with peers

- Transferrable skills

- Out-of-classroom practice

- Note-taking

- Effectiveness of the metacognitive strategy training programme.

  These issues will be explored in detail below.

 4..1.2.1 **Metacognitive Knowledge**

As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, Flavell (1979) was the father of the term metacognition. According to Flavell, metacognitive knowledge is divided into three categories: person knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge. Person knowledge refers to the

learners' judgments of their own ability and their knowledge of the external and internal factors that have a positive or negative impact on their own learning (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006, p.433). Task knowledge denotes to the learners' knowledge about a task including its purpose, demands and the inherent characteristics of the learning task itself. Strategic knowledge refers to the learners' general knowledge about the effective ways for achieving their learning goals (Goh, 2008, p.197).

Given that the students in this study wrote final reflections papers, where they expressed their perceptions of the effectiveness/ ineffectiveness of the metacognitive strategy training, I found it an opportunity to probe more deeply into the development of the learners' metacognitive knowledge as revealed by their reflections.

In her study, Goh (1997) analysed learners' beliefs and observations and classified them under person knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge. Likewise, I categorised participants' perceptions of themselves as learners, the task and the strategies they employ while listening along the lines of Goh's classifications.

4.1.2.1.1 Person Knowledge

As mentioned above, person knowledge refers to the learners' judgment of the factors that could impact listening and what they know about themselves as listeners. This shapes their self-concept *and self-efficacy* (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.86). *Self-efficacy is the learners' beliefs about their competences that would enable them in succeeding in accomplishing a task. Self-efficacy is* believed to be pertinent to explanations learners give about how they are satisfied about accomplishing a task (Graham, 2011, p.114). Research has shown a strong link between self-efficacy and higher levels of achievement and the learners' willingness to "face challenges and to

exert effort" (Mills, Pajares and Herron, 2006, p.278). Person knowledge is also related to learners' greater sense of confidence and a lower level of anxiety (Goh and Hu, 2014, p.265). To illustrate learners' person knowledge a number of extracts will be presented.

Many students did not have prior formal teaching of listening:

> At first when I knew about the listening class I was really excited because it was a brand new experience to me. It was the first time to experience such a class.
>
> (AG)

Accordingly, many of them reported their apprehensions regarding the difficulty of the course and their potential failure in listening before they started studying the listening course:

> At the beginning of the course I was afraid to fail because I am the type of people who always feels insecure and scared from anything about studies especially listening because it is the first time to take it.
>
> (SM)

Given that students, especially those who have studied high school in one of the governmental schools, where English was only the language of instruction during the English language classes that did not exceed six sessions per week, would express a feeling of anxiety when they discovered that one of the courses they have to study at college is a listening course. For Egyptian learners, who have been to a governmental school, studying the listening skill is considered to be unnerving as it undermines the feelings of security as expressed by SM. Though these students could pass the threshold level of the Cambridge Proficiency Test as indicated in 4.1.1, they were not accustomed to listening in English. The teaching of listening in high school would normally focus on listening to very short dialogues that last for 1 or 2 minutes or to

identify the word they listen to from a list of words. As the final exam of Thanweya Ama (High School Certificate) does not include a listening component, some teachers would relegate teaching listening to the teaching of other more important components that relate to the examination, according to their points of view, such as grammar or vocabulary, which would merit learners a high grade, which in turn, would enable them to join a better college. In addition, since this is the concept of normalcy that is instilled in learners and that having good listening competences is not important, they would feel anxious about studying a listening course for the first time as expressed by AG. The negative correlation between anxiety and language achievement has been shown by research (Mills, Pajares and Herron, 2006, p.279).

However, by the progress of the course, the use of incremental increase of the difficulty of the texts "the teacher usually gave us either an audio or video and gradually she started giving us harder audios and videos", and the integration of interesting audios and videos, the students' perceptions of their self-efficacy changed:

> At the beginning of the year, I was not confident to listen to any audios but we had a lot of training in class and now it's Ok for me to listen to anything.

> (SM)

According to Goh and Hu (2014, p.265), there is a strong relationship between reporting a great sense of confidence and a low level of anxiety, which in turn, leads to better achievement in listening.

Moreover, there is a relationship between self-efficacy and attributions or how learners' explain – whether consciously or sub-consciously- their performance on a specific task (Hsieh and Shallert, 2008, p.514). When learners' achievement in a certain task is ascribed to factors they

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have control of such as exertion of effort or employment of strategies, their levels of self-efficacy

rise and they will be motivated to carry out a similar task again (Graham and Macaro, 2008,

p.755):

> At first, I thought it would be hard and will probably face difficulties. However, over the
> months and the course, I gradually noticed my ability and capacities. This course will
> lead me to be a better listener in all fields and domains.

> (HH)

> As the time passed during this semester my confidence in myself increased.
> … In conclusion, determination, persistence and confidence are the only way to achieve
> any goal. I am glad to say that my listening skills have been improved a lot during this
> semester. In addition to that, we should all know that self-learning is quite important to
> be unique and achieve your goals.

> (NT)

The higher level of self-efficacy enabled learners to use strategies that in turn helped them in

becoming good listeners. Students were willing to expend effort since they saw a desirable

effect. When learners see a positive relationship between the effort that is exerted and the

outcome, this strengthens their sense of "instrumentality" (Paris and Winograd, 1990, cited in

Graham, 2011, p.114), which in turn, is likely to impact their motivation positively (Graham,

2011, p.114). This view was summarised by NT when she attributed success in achieving a goal

to "determination, persistence and confidence" and most importantly to becoming an

autonomous learner.

4.1.2.1.2 Task Knowledge

Task knowledge relates to the learners' knowledge of the purpose of the task, the demands and

nature of the listening task (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p. 86). Following Goh's (1997)

classification, a number of factors were identified: accents, fast speech rate, and physical factors such as fatigue and noise in addition to the learners being interested in a topic.

A large number of students reported that listening to different accents was a problem at the beginning of the course:

> I was exposed to so many accents whether Indian English, British English or Portuguese English that were difficult to understand at first but with practice it is now much easier for me to understand all these accents.

<div align="right">(RS)</div>

Hence, practice and listening to different accents helped learners to understand different accents. I observed that listening to accents had a negative impact on learners' confidence and self-efficacy and they started to report their unwillingness to listen to accents. That feeling followed their watching a YouTube interview with Bollywood actress Sunal Chauhan. The interviewer had a heavy Indian English accent and the students could hardly understand his questions. The video was chosen since the answers of the actress were intelligible and students could infer the questions based on the answers. However, many students expressed their frustration. Therefore, the TED Talk *School in the Cloud* was selected since the accent of the presenter, Sugatra Mitra, was understandable and it was an attempt to let students overcome their frustration from listening to Indian English. Likewise, the selection of the YouTube "Jonathan Ross interview with Cristiano Ronaldo" relied on the popularity of the football player and how though both the presenter and the football player had an accent, neither his nor the presenter's accent confounded listening. This resonates with the above finding (see 4.1.1 learners' journals) though students reported accents to be difficult, they did not impede their listening and they resorted to other cognitive strategies to make up for this difficulty. Given that the student (RS) is reflecting on the

overall metacognitive awareness training after the 10 weeks of the training have passed, she

reported that practice and exposure to a variety of accents has elucidated any difficulty.

Fast speech rate has also been reported to have posed difficulty during listening:

> The most common difficulty that faced me several times actually that I couldn't understand few words or that the tone of the speaker was very fast. By the time I managed to deal with those problems. If there is any word that I could not hear well or understand it, I just skip it and keep up with the speaker.
>
> (ME)

As the extract reveals, though the learner encountered some problems with fast speech rate at the

beginning of the course, she could manage to find a way to solve the problem by skipping a word

that she could not understand. This finding is in alignment with the results of listening journals

(see 4.1.1), where students considered fast speech rate to have affected their listening but it did

not impede their listening comprehension and they could manage to orchestrate a number of

metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

A student considered the physical factors of both fatigue and noise to have impacted her

listening:

> I always lose track in the middle of the listening course because of the loud noise or because of me being tired at the end of the day. However, our lecturer helped us a lot to improve our difficulties. For example, we discussed the topic before we listened. It was also helpful to brainstorm the ideas together. After that we listened to the audio and we took down notes. For the first time it was really difficult but by time I improved myself. I was always wondering of how come we do take a listening course in college. This course helped me a lot to have better listening skills.
>
> (SA)

Furthermore, both the interest in the topic(s) and the course are among the components of task

knowledge. For some students, interesting topics had a positive influence on their concentration:

When I first started this semester and started to take the listening course, I faced some problems. One of the main problems in the listening course was that I used to lose concentration easily and that was really annoying. Bit by bit I started to focus more, especially when the audio or video was interesting.

(TM)

The same view was expressed especially when TEDx Talks and YouTube videos were integrated in the training programme:

I really liked the "Ted Talks" I found it full of knowledge and also has a variety of nationalities with different languages and many of topics around the world. In addition watching celebrities' interviews was so exciting as I am in love with the media world, and I found it really supporting my career as I will work in the media society.

(HE)

Interesting topics and watching interviews with famous actresses and football players generated learners' motivation.

Of note was that most of the task knowledge factors or problems were linked to loss of concentration. This was, in turn, related to one of the factors that affect metacognition: problem solving. This factor represents a group of strategies to make inferences and monitor them (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006, p.450). When students faced a problem while listening, they would try to overcome this difficulty by trying to infer meaning based on background knowledge, directed attention, and skipping any unknown words that they could not understand due to caused unfamiliar accent and guess their meaning.

Others reported general interest in the course and enumerated reasons for this interest:

Indeed, this course is my favourite one so far because of many reasons. First, the variety of topics was interesting especially when we started listening to TEDx motivational talks. Second, it helped me how to take down notes more quickly which will help me if I work as an interviewer, translator, freelance writer or even TV or Radio presenter. Third, this course helps me to determine what type of listener am I as it provides me with basic skills

of listening, barriers to listening, listening habits, body language, and activities to improve listening habits.

4.1.2.1.3 Strategic Knowledge

Strategic knowledge refers to learners' knowledge of the ways that help them best achieve a listening task. Learners demonstrated extensive employment of strategies that helped them plan, monitor and evaluate their learning:

> As it was my first time to listen to English, I didn't have any strategies while listening. However, I have learned how to map my mind before I start listening and while I am listening. On one hand, before I start listening I need to brainstorm. Like trying to know how words you may find in the audio; and when I succeeded in the first time, brainstorming encouraged me to do it every time before I start listening. I found it very useful because it makes me think in everything, try to analyse and understand it. On the other hand, while I am listening at the beginning I was trying to write the important words in boxes and write the idea in it, but I found that this strategy is very difficult to me. So, I have found that the easiest way to write down notes is to write in points and not to draw boxes. Also, while listening I try to write the words which I don't know to add it to my vocabulary.

Though this student belonged to the borderline threshold level learners (see 4.1.1) and her proficiency level was more similar to pre-intermediate learners despite her scoring 42 on the Cambridge Proficiency Test, she demonstrated a high level of orchestration of strategies where she first planned for a listening task, monitored her learning and ultimately evaluated the effectiveness/ ineffectiveness of the strategy deployed.

However, high-proficiency learners also reported how they have learnt strategies from the course and how these have benefited them:

Because of the much better experience, I truly believe I have become a better listener and English speaker. In this course, I learned new strategies concerning an audio exercise. First, I start by reading the title and the questions before listening to the audio, then brainstorm the keywords that I may find in the audio. Then I do a preplan for each listen I have to try to get all the essential information I need. While I am listening, I try to concentrate on the main goal and eliminate any type of distraction. Also, I make sure that I well organise my note taking and leave out unnecessary words and details. And each time I try to take notes more efficiently and not to lose my focus.

(MS)

MS is a high-achiever with a good command of the English language, who has been exposed to foreign languages since his childhood and who practises extensively listening to English. He too regulated his listening using a variety of metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Hence, it would be assumed that strategy training does not only benefit ineffective listeners but also more skilled students.

Reading through the final reflection papers showed that learners possess a high level of metacognitive awareness as they are aware of the factors that could facilitate or impinge on their comprehension. They are not only cognizant of their cognitive processes but they are "capable of verbalising their theories about learning to listen in another language" (Goh, 1997, p.367).

4.1.2.2 Reflections on Journals

Despite the fact that learners underestimated the importance of keeping journals from the very beginning of the course and they used to complain that they were boring and they felt that they repeated the same ideas every time they reflected on their listening processes, by the end of the training programme, they realised the crucial role reflections play in enhancing learning:

One of the things that I underestimated its importance was writing journals. At the beginning of the course, I did not understand the importance of writing journals. But going through them and by writing one after the other, I realised that I was keeping track of my progress as well as my weak points in listening. For example, one of my weak

points is that I sometimes focus on a word that I don't know its meaning, and I find myself falling back behind the track. Consequently, this made difficulties for me while listening. However, by exercising a lot and by note-taking, I trained myself to skip the ambiguous words in the first attempt of listening and try to guess it in the second one.

(NM)

However, two of the students expressed their dissatisfaction with writing their reflections by commenting that they did not feel that the reflections were of benefit to them:

The annoying thing about this course is writing a reflection and I didn't think it helped me to improve any of my skills even the writing skills.

(SK)

I did not feel that the reflections helped me in any way. I did not even get the point of writing them after our classes.

(MM)

It is noteworthy to mention that the three students, NM, SK and MM were of a high-proficiency level. NM could realise the purpose behind reflecting on her listening processes whereas that was not the case with both SK and MM. NM was an analytic learner who had previous experience by studying in a similar college. Since she discovered, during studying in the other college, that the teaching mode and language of instruction did not enable her to achieve her goal, she opted to transfer colleges and study at the college where I teach as the language of instruction is English. This experience as she is older than the other two learners could have helped her to think deeply of the rationale for keeping listening journals. She herself admitted that she "underestimated them". The other two students, SK and MM did not feel that writing the listening journal entries benefited them though they both thought positively of the listening course as revealed by their quotations cited in this section. They were satisfied with their level of listening and their use of the strategies has become automatised so that they are not anymore able to report them. MM's view could consolidate this view when she mentions "I learned that there are many methods of

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taking notes and I have to choose the one that will make me comfortable. However, now I do not even need to have a paper and a pen to take notes as my brain would work on its own when I'm listening to a broadcast or watching the news. I would automatically focus on the important things said only".

4.1.2.3 Note-taking

In spite the fact that note-taking is thought to be too demanding on the working memory (Bloomfield *et al*., 2011, p.2321), one of the main aims of the listening course was to teach learners note-taking techniques in an attempt to help them with their academic listening in other subject matter courses. Furthermore, the final reflection papers of the students showed that they did not consider note-taking to be a burden on their working memory. Rather, reflections are in favour of note-taking and participants find it an aid in other academic courses:

> Taking notes in class has many benefits and sets the stage for academic success. It me it helped me a lot, it helped me to consolidate my learning by having multiple senses such as hearing the instructor, seeing the information, and recording your notes on a piece of paper. The notes I take are permanent records of what I am learning so they are a very valuable resource. It gives me information about topics I didn't hear about.

> (SAA)

SAA distils the benefits of note-taking and how they affected her positively. This aligns with the results of research that note-taking helps (Carrell et al., 2002, cited in Bloomfield *et al*., 2011, p.2321). Lin (2006, cited in Bloomfield *et al*., 2011, p.2321) argues that what determines whether note-taking aids or impedes comprehension is the learners' choice of when to listen and when to take down notes.

4.1.2.4 Transferrable Skills

In their final reflection papers, a large number of students reported their thoughts on how they could transfer the strategies they learnt in the listening course to other courses and situations:

> I have learned a lot of techniques and am sure it will help in the other courses.
>
> (RR)

> And what I learned from this class was very important that it will stick in my mind forever and help me in future.
>
> (AG)

Learners are aware that the listening strategies and skills that they learnt in the listening course are not only limited to the success in that course but they can make use of them and apply them to other courses and to future situations as well.

4.1.2.5 Out-of- Classroom Practice

Bialystok (1981) classified language learning strategies that can be practised out of the classroom into four types: formal and functional practising, monitoring and inferencing (p.24). Functional practising would include activities such as going to movies, reading books, or talking to native speakers (Pickard, 1996, p.151).

Some students reported practising listening at home by listening to songs or watching movies:

> I practised at home by watching more English movies and listening to interviews with English movie stars.
>
> (MR)

> I worked hard to improve my listening skills. I listen to more English songs, movies and news. I try to listen and take down notes of the most important points.
>
> (RR)

Other students, on the other hand, realised the importance of keeping practising listening after the listening course has finished:

> I must listen to more audios and watch more videos myself (on my own) and not to after the course as this will help me in the future.

<div align="right">(HM)</div>

The strategies learners employed in this study concur with those used by the German learning students in Pickard's (1996) study. Learners augmented their learning by practising out-of-the classroom activities. They attempted to have access to more exposure of the foreign language by creating practise opportunities via whichever mode available (Pickard, 1996, p.158).

4.1.2.6 Collaboration with Peers

In section 4.1.1, it was demonstrated how learners employed the social strategy of joint task collaboration "SCJ". This reporting of this strategy was also noted in their final reflection papers and students were all unanimous with regard to the positive impact of peer collaboration:

> The brainstorming we did before listening to the audio or watching the video, not only did it help me in taking notes, but it also exposed me to my colleagues' thoughts and ideas. Each one of use would add a sentence or an idea that would complete the picture. Even if we were not always accurate and did not always agree with each other.

<div align="right">(MM)</div>

> A major help in this course was the human interaction and the group work, sharing our work and seeing each other notes opened my mind to new strategies and points of view in taking notes.

<div align="right">(MS)</div>

> I enjoyed communicating with my colleagues and my teacher and had many opportunities to express myself and they "actually listen" to me and interact all together, such an amazing feeling.

<div align="right">(YT)</div>

<div align="center">235</div>

Students attributed their success in the listening process to the cooperation with their colleagues which enabled them to pool any missing information, elucidate any difficulties with the listening task at hand and exchange strategies they have never used before which the peers recommended they should use.

4.1.2.7 Effectiveness of the Awareness Raising Strategy Training

All the above mentioned learners' perspectives shape their perceptions with regard to the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the metacognitive awareness strategy training programme.

> In conclusion, the listening class was a great ride that was full of benefits. I am very grateful and quite satisfied with myself as a listener as well as a note-taker as for now.

> (SM)

> Finally, I realise the importance of taking English listening classes during the first years of college career because it prepares a person to communicate well in spoken words. I am looking forward to utilising these newly found skills in my next college years and even try to develop them more to reach the level I wish having.

> (MS)

All in all, final reflection papers reveal learners' perception of the metacognitive awareness training programme and how the majority of them were satisfied by the outcomes of the programme and how they would transfer the strategies they have learned to other courses and to real-life listening in general and would work more on better improving these skills. Hence, it would be assumed that the training was successful.

4.1.3 Focus Groups Interviews

4.1.3.1 Pilot Focus Group Interview

Prior to the conduct of the pilot study, and after obtaining the Ethical approval, a focus group interview to pilot the questions of the focus group was carried out on 28 October 2015. These

were students whom I had taught a term earlier to the carrying out of the main study (February 2015). Volunteers from the whole cohort of fifteen students were asked to take part in the interview and a time was set for the interview. On the day of the focus group, seven volunteers showed up. Pseudonyms had been assigned to each one of them. They were all of Egyptian nationality and their profiles are as follows:

Table 4.6: Profiles of Pilot Focus Group Interview Participants

Student (Pseudonym)	Number of years studying English	Student rating of his/her listening skills	Out-of-classroom practice
Nour	14	Fair	Songs, English channels (movies and shows)
Lara	15	Excellent	Movies without subtitles and songs
Ayten	9	Fair	Sometimes at home to increase performance (didn't specify)
Sana	14	Fair	Movies, music, shows
Sally	12	Good	Writes music lyrics while listening
Merna	14	Good	Movies without subtitles, music
Pery	16	Good	Movies, music, listening websites

The focus group was undertaken in a quiet and comfortable hall at the Academy and some refreshments were served to add to the relaxation factor. The interview lasted for 70 minutes. The session was audio-recorded using a computer program after obtaining the permission of participants. Furthermore, I kept notes of the important points discussed by participants during the focus group interview.

After the guidelines of the interview were read and explained, a questioning route was followed. This interview schedule had been prepared in advance and was revised by the Director of Studies. The questions in this schedule were pertinent to the research questions and comprised the following questions (see Appendix 2). Though the pilot focus group was conducted primarily to test the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the interview schedule questions, the interaction and sharing of opinions and stories among participants allowed the production of insightful and rich data.

I transcribed the interview as Chafe (1995, cited in Flick, 2013, p.66) states it unequivocally that "one cannot fully understand data unless one has been in on it from the beginning" and in order to ascertain validity, parts of it were revised by a friend and no discrepancies were found. Gathered data were coded according to the structural code discussed earlier in the Methodology Chapter.

Although the participants of the pilot focus group were not exposed to the same intervention implemented in the teaching of the other three cohorts, the responses of the participants shed light on some issues that were of value in the selection of the material to be incorporated in the main study (cohorts A, B and C). I followed the same metacognitive sequence in teaching and participants even kept listening journals; however, there were two points that differentiated the pilot focus group from the other cohorts. First, I depended solely on aural podcasts and lectures. The integration of TED talks in the materials of the intervention was the suggestion of the Director of Studies. Furthermore, participants were not asked to write a final reflection paper that reveals their perceptions of the whole course.

4.1.3.2 Cohort A Focus Groups Interviews

To aid reliability and validity, as a researcher and the teacher of the metacognitive training programme, I was aware of my power as a teacher. Hence, I planned for the focus groups to take place after participants had sat for the final exam and after I had submitted their grades. Facebook messenger messages were sent to participants asking volunteers to take part in a focus group interview. Since that was at the beginning of the mid-term break and already a large number of students had started their vacation, four participants agreed to share in the interview of the first focus group and the second focus group consisted of eight participants. Both focus groups were carried out on 20th January, 2016 at different timings that suited the participants. Pseudonyms were also assigned and the demographic profiles of the participants of both focus groups are as follows:

Table 4.7: Profile of Participants of Focus Group One (Cohort A)

Student (Pseudonym)	Number of years studying English	Student rating of his/her listening skills	Out-of-classroom practice
Rana	14	Fair	Usually practice
Jana	14	Good	movies and songs
Farah	14	Good	movies and songs
Hana	10	Good	She practises listening at home.

It is worth mentioning that the participants underestimated their listening skills, especially, Rana, who considered herself to be a fair listener while she is a very good listener based on her grades, and use of metacognitive strategies as revealed by her listening journals and class discussions. Both focus group sessions of cohort A lasted almost the same amount of time : around an hour and forty minutes.

Table 4.8: Profile of Participants of Focus Group Two (Cohort A)

Student (Pseudonym)	Number of years studying English	Student rating of his/her listening skills	Out-of-classroom practice
Mayar	12	Fair	Songs and movies
Maha	14	Good	Audiobooks, movies and internet sites
Aly	18	Good	TV series without subtitles
Sarah	10	Good	Movies without subtitles
Mona	12	Good	Songs and movies
Mira	12	Good	Movies and speaks with sister in English
Dina	14	Fair	Practices at home
Malak	14	Poor	Movies and songs. Speaks in English with friends and family members

Again, it was noted that Malak, who had Egyptian-American nationality rated her listening skills as poor. That was contrary to her actual level as her grades had shown that she is an excellent student. Moreover, her listening journals were very insightful in addition to her class discussions.

The same procedures followed for the pilot focus group were repeated with the two focus groups that comprised cohort A.

4.3.1.3 Cohort B Focus Group Interview

The focus group of cohort B was carried out on 12th May, 2016 and lasted for sixty two minutes. Six students out of eight students, who comprised the whole cohort, took part in the interview. Pseudonyms were assigned for this group as well. The demographic profile of the students is as follows:

Table 4.9: Profile of Participants of the Focus Group (Cohort B)

Student (Pseudonym)	Number of years studying English	Student rating of his/her listening skills	Out-of-classroom practice
Ahmed	16	Excellent	Movies and series
Amr	13	Good	movies and songs
Soha	3	Fair	Yes – didn't specify
Mariam	14	Fair	Yes – she's trying
Mohamed	9	Good	Movies
Amira	14	Good	Listens and speaks to English most of the time.

The same procedures that were followed in carrying out the pilot focus group and cohort A focus groups were repeated with cohort B.

4.1.3.4 Responses of Participants to the Focus Group Questions

As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, the questions were grouped into five domains of inquiry: prior teaching versus current, listening podcast, listening assignments, listening journals, and self-assessment and suggestions (see **Table 3.4:** Domains of inquiry and questions codes). The results that will be presented in this section were analysed in light of these codes.

4.1.3.4.1 Responses of the Pilot Focus Group

It is worth mentioning that the responses of the pilot focus group participants that could be deemed "unique" of this group and give insight of their perceptions of the metacognitive awareness strategy training and could aid in the selection of the material for the main study will be discussed in this section. In order to avoid repetition of responses, the rest of their views, which are similar to those of the rest of the main study participants, will be incorporated in the next section.

Nevertheless, the repeated reading of participants' responses and of the notes that were taken during the interview allowed the following points to be noted:

It was very noteworthy to find that the participants could still remember the podcasts very well.

When I asked them about the reason, they mentioned:

> Sana: the topics are different and because I gained some knowledge from them, too.
> Merna: It was interesting =
> Nour: I write them down. I remember better when I write down. I remember notes I took. =
> Lara: and also I was fond of the course so I was not doing it just to write down =
> Sana: yes, exactly. That's the main point =
> Merna: this is not much a studying course as it was a practical one.
> Sana: We self-developed ourselves.

This conversation between the pilot focus group participants demonstrates that that they have a high degree of metacognitive knowledge including its three components; person knowledge which was exemplified by self-efficacy "we self-developed ourselves", task knowledge "it was interesting" and strategic knowledge "I write them down" were aware of their capabilities as learners.

Pilot focus group participants identified the characteristics of an effective podcast:

- Simple vocabulary

- Definition of technical terms

- Moderate speech rate; neither too fast nor too slow

- Authentic and interesting pieces of information

In addition, they all agreed on the importance of teaching listening as they needed to learn "the basic skills" since they will need them "at work" , " normal daily life" and "listening is basic in conversations not specifically the English language, even in Arabic".

Transfer of strategies from English to other courses was another issue that learners tried to use with other languages. The following extracts illustrate strategy transfer:

> I have been learning German for a year. After the listening course, I tried to apply the same to German but it was very difficult but I've been trying to do it. It is not my native language. English is my second near native language. German because it is relatively a new language to me so I feel like I'm a baby listening or learning a language still from day 1. So when I listen, I listen to the very basic German podcasts or songs or little episodes or TV shows and try to focus on what they are talking about.
>
> (Lara)

> Nour: Like when I actually watch any Japanese show, I try to write down the words that I learn, like I don't know. I don't have it know; it's full of Japanese words. Whenever I hear a word, I write it down.
> I: You write down the words and what do you do with them afterwards?
> Nour: I try … I try to use them when I'm talking with my Japanese teacher at the Japanese consulate. The teacher is a native speaker and she speaks really fast. But because we've watched a lot of Japanese films and we have listened to songs, we try to understand. Sometimes she really goes fast and we like what's that!

> Mirna: I discovered that my English listening skills are better than the Arabic ones because I really focused when I started taking translation because I discovered my Arabic is terrible. So I try to listen to more Arabic stuff like news, movies, old movies some of which are historical because they talk in real Arabic=
> I: Standard Arabic?
> Mirna: yes. So I tried my best to collect new vocab or express myself more in Arabic because when I started the translation course, I discovered I can't even translate. I translate easier from Arabic to English than from English to Arabic.

The extracts of the three students demonstrated that they tried to transfer the strategies they learned in the listening course to the learning of other languages German, Japanese and Arabic. The process was difficult at the beginning because of the difference between the three languages and the English language but they evidently felt it was worth the effort. It would be assumed that Lara, the student who was trying to learn German, will not continue to have a problem because of the phonological similarity between German and English in phonology, vocabulary and syntax

(Swan and Smith, 2001, p.37). The other two languages are totally different from the English

language and that would deem learning them difficult though the strategies are universal and can

be transferred from one language to the other.

When students were asked about how they dealt with loss of concentration while studying, one

learner responded that:

> Sana: I try to connect the dots of what I heard before.
> I: How do you do this?
> Sana: Keywords. Maybe they mention something afterwards that would relate to what
> was mentioned earlier.

However, it was surprising to find that other learners employed unconventional strategies when

they lost concentration:

> "I drink water. Then I start crying. If it is something important, I start crying and that's it"
> (Ayten)
> "I do something outrageous. When I study and start losing concentration, I start slapping
> myself on the face". (Nour)
> "I laugh and stop studying. No problem" (Perry)
> "I lose concentration to the point I don't know I lost concentration" (Lara)
> "Actually when I start concentrating, I lose concentration. Sometimes when you tell
> yourself I'm not going to focus on something you do it well." (Mirna)

Although these strategies are not pertinent to listening to concatenated speech, they show that

these learners are aware of the problem of loss of concentration they face while studying. They

try to overcome this problem even if it is in an untraditional way. These participants are high-

achievers in general and in listening in particular. Maybe these unconventional methods of

restoring concentration helped them in becoming good learners.

4.1.3.4.2 Responses of All Participants to the Focus Group Interview Questions

4.1.3.4.2.1 Prior teaching versus Current (PC)

Students in the four focus groups including the pilot focus groups had different experiences as

far as prior teaching of listening before joining college is concerned. Some learners did not have

any kind of teaching of listening when they were at school:

> Actually, I never had a listening course before. I've never even heard there is something
> called a listening course.

> (Malak, cohort A)

> Amr: No, I didn't ever listen to something academic. I only listened to music, tried to
> understand some movies or somethings.
> I: That's what you did on your own. What about school?
> Amr: Nothing.

Others reported that the teaching was very rudimentary and was only limited to listening to a text

in order to answer true or false questions or fill in gaps with information from the text:

> It was very basic there; there weren't any skills taught. We were just depending on the
> listening piece to try to listen to and try to decipher the text. There wasn't any practice or
> teaching, not even interaction.

> (Lara, pilot focus group)

> We just listened to an audio and we had a textbook. We chose – we listened to a text and
> we had to answer the questions. That's all. It's not … we didn't spot the light on
> listening. We didn't. It wasn't a main thing to care about or educate us. It's not like here,
> like what we're having here in college.

> (Farah, cohort A)

Even those students, who had some form of teaching either because they had to sit for the

International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), the Diplôme d'Etudes en

Langue Française (DELF) certificate or the TOEFL as a requirement for passing the SAT exam,

did not report a high level of satisfaction with the teaching of listening they got before joining college:

> In high school, we were not taught any techniques. Teacher did not teach us any techniques. Exams were really hard and I didn't get the whole topic, highlight the keywords, or the main points. No, we just got surprised by questions and the whole idea of the topic.
>
> (Mira, cohort A)

> Actually, me neither I didn't have a listening course ever. But sometimes in the English or French course I had, we had a listening exercise and sometimes we had to watch a movie and analyse it. And sometimes we had taking … we had to take notes and we had discussion at the end to analyse the movie and what's only going on in the movie but like the hidden messages. And sometimes when we had exams for languages but I did them in French. It's called the DELF. That exam was divided into several parts and one of them was listening. So, we had to listen to some sort of and audio and do some exercise about if and of course every level of the DELF was harder than the one before. At first, it was just an exercise about the audio then we had to listen and write a whole paragraph or an essay about the subject we heard. Like … like I had never been taught specific strategies to take notes. So when I came here, it was complicated at first as I didn't know – I just had my own instinct what I normally do and that's it.
>
> (Aly, cohort A)

> I think my experience was similar to Amira's when I was at school. Amira and I both were in the American systems so both of use came from almost the same thing. I took listening only in the TOEFL. I think they tried teaching us but not in a good way. They tried; they didn't succeed as much as the students hoped.
>
> (Ahmed, cohort B)

As discussed in learners' extracts there is no formal systematic teaching of listening in schools. Students are never taught any skills, strategies or techniques that would facilitate the listening process. Rather it is thought that listening skills would emerge by frequent exposure and practice as was discussed in Chapter 2 (see the osmosis approach). This has been the philosophy that governed the teaching of foreign languages in addition to grammar for decades. I mentioned in the introduction of Chapter 2 that I was taught listening in the same vein; nobody taught me how

to undertake a listening activity. Some teachers even think that it would be inappropriate to teach learners, in language schools, any skills or rules and they have to find these out on their own by trial and error. There should not be overgeneralisations but this view is still prevalent in a lot of Egyptian schools today. This, in turn, led learners to feel dissatisfied and the schools did not help them in reaching a high level of listening.

Consequently, they were all, without exception, unanimous regarding their satisfaction with the teaching of listening at the college where I work.

A student's response shows how the teaching of listening was underestimated in schools and how she started to realise the importance of listening when she joined college:

> I was never introduced to the strategies of listening and note-taking. I was … it was … I was first introduced to it here in college. When I was taught listening in the right way, I found it helpful. I found it's a big part of English; it's an essential part. I always thought in school that listening is not important and it is not essential. But when I got to college, I was sure it's really important than writing and speaking and so on.
>
> (Mayar, cohort A)

Students were sceptical regarding the nature of the listening course at college and thought they would have a similar experience like that they had at school:

> I went into the course thinking it would be CD listening and that's it. But I was surprised as there was so much interaction and I really did learn a lot from it. Like as the course was flexible and the audio and the topics discussed.
>
> (Lara, pilot focus group)

> The first impression I had when I knew that I had a listening course, it was very bad. I thought it was boring. It was similar to the school course; an academic boring one. Later on, when I managed to know other topics, it got more interesting.
>
> (Mohamed, cohort B)

Both Lara and Mohamed demonstrate a high level of metacognitive knowledge. They both had their own apprehensions concerning the listening course at the beginning of the term but studying the course made them change their mind. Identifying the flexibility of the course and the interesting topics add to the factors that facilitate their learning and ultimately broaden their metacognitive knowledge.

As for the teaching of note-taking skills, two thirds of the learners from all groups agreed that it was essential and aids in their other academic courses:

> I like note-taking and I have to admit that it makes things easier. For other courses, we have to summarise what we're writing. It helps. Practice. Practice makes perfect and for summarising we have to practise a lot.

> (Amira, cohort B)

> So, it was really … listening was so much helpful for us. As in other courses, the note-taking part as in other lectures, I had to write everything that's important that I thought was important information. Note-taking helped me in this part in other courses. Note-taking was difficult at first but at the end I managed.

> (Jana, cohort A)

Unlike the results of the learners' final reflection papers where they reported their positive views of learning note-taking skills and techniques, some students in the focus group interviews, especially cohort B, expressed their dissatisfaction with their note-taking skills:

> I hate note-taking. When I lose concentration, I get frustrated and lose interest in the rest of the listening audio (translated from Arabic)

> (Amr, cohort B)

> When the accent of the audio is not clear for me, I don't manage to take down enough notes (translated from Arabic).

> (Soha, cohort B)

Both Amr and Soha did not express their general dissatisfaction with note-taking. Rather they attributed it to another factor such as loss of concentration or accent that rendered note-taking difficult for them.

Once the question about the teaching method at college was posed, students started discussing listening strategies extensively. As mentioned above, the majority of them, if not all, did not have proper teaching of listening skills and strategies at school.

> So, I think that the strategies we learned it helped me realise what kind of person I am. Like what kind of taking notes I use. I used a technique of taking notes that I didn't realise it's a technique until I learned it.
>
> (Aly, cohort A)

Reading through the focus group interviews showed that the participants orchestrated a number of metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective (self-talk) strategies.

Two students used the affective strategy of self-encouragement to motivate themselves through positive self-talk:

> For me, the listening course was different here because it was for me the first time to listen in the English language. So first I feel disappointed and I feel I cannot listen to anything that I can't take notes or anything from this audio. And I can't concentrate in the audio. So, second I say to myself that I can do it and I can listen in English language.
>
> (Hana, cohort A)

> Actually, the thing that I … the lesson I learnt from the listening course "Don't let anything stop you". While I am listening, what will happen if I do not understand a word? Do I stop and breakdown and don't continue? Or just continue and eventually I will have the meaning, it's not a problem.
>
> (Jana, cohort A)

It could be assumed that Jana integrated two affective strategies, namely, self-management through self-talk and lowering anxiety by telling herself that it is not a problem if she missed a word. That should not deter her from listening.

With regard to repetition and the optimal number of times learners thought an audio/video should be played, the majority of students agreed that it should be played twice. In the first listen they would get the gist of the listening text and the main points, while in the second listen, learners would focus on any details needed and organise their notes. A student sets a condition for the repetition of the audio:

> I think it depends on the length of the video or the audio. Sometimes the audio was very long so we didn't need to listen to it twice because the ideas were smooth and it was well-organised so it was easy to write them down. Sometimes the audio was short and there were too many ideas so we needed to listen to it more than once in order to make sure we had all the ideas written down.

(Mayar, cohort A)

Research has shown that immediate, exact repetition has been beneficial to both lower and higher level students (Wayland *et al*., 2013, p.6). Hence, audios were played twice but with long videos and well-organised ones they were only played once. Given that one of the objectives of the course was to teach learners note-taking skills with the hope they would transfer them to other academic courses, so the audio was normally played twice.

4.1.3.4.2.2 Collaboration with Peers (CP)

Participants reported in both the listening journals (see 4.1.1) and final reflection papers (see 4.1.2) that collaboration with colleagues was very useful, helped them exchange notes and learn each other's strategies. In the same vein, when students were asked about their opinion regarding working with their peers, almost all of them agreed that:

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As for me, when we compared notes, with no doubt it is very helpful. But it helped me specifically to spot where did I miss something, where the gap; for example, from my colleague that I am comparing my notes with. It is also helpful in a way that sometimes I feel I am the only one who did not get good notes. So, when I compare I see it's not only me and I am not the only one so I feel satisfied.

(Rana, cohort A)

Students sometimes feel insecure when studying a foreign language and they get a misconception that no matter how good they are at the language, they do not come up to a satisfactory level. They underestimate their competences as was shown in the learners' rating of the listening skills when asked about evaluating them (see demographic profile of focus group participants). Consequently, exchanging notes and ideas with colleagues gives them the chance to get to know their own level and try to better improve their skills and strategies.

4.1.3.4.2.3 Listening Podcast (LP)

4.1.3.4.2.3 .1 LP_Theme

As mentioned in Chapter 3, there was a variety of themes and topics that were incorporated in the metacognitive awareness training programme. These ranged from academic themes, very general topics to interviews with celebrities. The rationale for the integration of such a diversity of topics was to cater for the learners' needs as both translation and media students and their need to be exposed to a variety of English topics and themes.

Students' comments were in favour for the diversity of topics:

As for the topics, it was interesting and new and I really think it helped to deepen our thoughts and to open up our minds to really listen even if we do not understand or face difficulties, I think you were brilliant in this because you just have to really develop our listening skills.

(Farah, cohort A)

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Sana: the topics were beneficial; they taught us something. It wasn't just a listening course. It was more than that.
Ayten: Something knowledgeable for our=
Nour: It wasn't boring. It wasn't the same. Different topic every week.

(Pilot focus group participants)

4.1.3.4.2.3 .2 LP_Lexis

Similar to the results of both the listening journals (see 4.1.1) and the final reflection papers (see 4.1.2) unfamiliar lexis did not pose a problem for students:

I don't think any vocab is so difficult. If I knew what he is talking about. If I understand the topic, vocab won't be difficult for me. But if difficult I like to know the vocab to enrich my vocab.

(Dina, cohort A)

Only those participants who came from a French background had a problem:

For me, vocab it was actually difficult because I didn't study English vocabulary at school. It was all in French and we did not focus on English. That was a problem for me. When I listen to an audio, I can't understand and I translate it into French and if I translate it into French, it's not the same equivalent (translated)

(Hana, cohort A)

Although French and English vocabulary is similar (Swan and Smith, 2001, p.52), Hana considered it to be a problem. This problem was also reported by another participant, Soha , cohort B. Nevertheless, there were other learners who studied French as the first foreign language and for whom unfamiliar lexis did not cause any difficulty. It could be assumed that the low-proficiency level of both Hana and Soha impinged on their understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary, particularly that they both scored from 40-42 in the Cambridge Proficiency Test.

4.1.3.4.2.3 .3 LP_Length

Another point of agreement among students was that the length of an audio/ video did not confound their listening. For them, there are other factors that affected the listening comprehension other than the length of an audio/video:

> It's not a problem as long as we understand and enjoy what we are listening or watching, it's not a problem. It's not necessary because it's a 21-minute length audio or video, we take three pages note-taking. I remember the audio of the TEDx "How to find and do work you love" yes it was very long and I ended up taking almost a page; the important notes. So, because I listened to the audio and I understood it so I don't think that the length of the audio doesn't matter as long as we can take down the important notes.
>
> (Farah, cohort A)

Even one student, Mohamed, cohort B, commented that he did not notice the length of the video because he was interested in what he was watching:

> It was very interesting so I could concentrate and didn't feel time.
>
> (Mohamed, cohort B)

Nevertheless, one participant reported that the length of audio/video would distract her:

> As for me, I'm quite different because sometimes I think it's very long so I just day dream. I don't day dream for a long time, for 5 seconds and then I get back. That's what happened especially… it's not the idea of getting bored but I feel that it's very long and I am trained for a couple of minutes. But when it exceeds this, I day dream and then get re-focused and that's what happened with lengthy audios. But other than that if it's 10 minutes, if it's 10-15 minutes, it's Ok. But if it exceeds this, when it comes to 20 or 19, I day dream, to be honest.
>
> (Rana, cohort A)

It was surprising to note that these were Rana's remarks as she is one of the most conscientious and hardworking students. She herself does not consider the length of the video to have completely impeded her comprehension; they were just "5 seconds". However, her notes,

discussions in class and reflections show that she could manage to comprehend long audios/videos without a problem. When she was asked to rate her listening skills (see Table 6), she underestimated her competences. It could be that she is that sort of the learner who seeks perfection and would not feel satisfied if optimum circumstances are lacking "I am trained for a couple of minutes". It is her conviction that she should follow what she has been taught and any deviation from that norm would cause her difficulty. Hence, it could be assumed that not only inherent characteristics could have an impact on listening comprehension but personality and learning style as well (Chen, Lee and Lin, 2010, p.254).

4.1.3.4.2.3 .4 LP_Prosodic Features

Similar to the results of the listening journals (see 4.1.1), students did not reach a consensus regarding the effect of prosodic features on their listening. For some, pronunciation did not confound their listening:

> The least difficult one was the pronunciation. I didn't have any obstacles to listen to the pronunciation.

> (Rana, cohort A)

Others, on the other hand, thought that what impacted their listening comprehension was speech rate:

> I think that the speed – like if the audio was fast, is better than if it had different accent that I didn't understand. If the presenter has a different accent and he speaks slowly, I won't be able to understand him anyways. So, even if he speaks slowly or fast, it doesn't matter. But like the speed if he speaks in good English and a little bit fast, yeah, it's been hard but at least I understand what he is saying. It's hard like to take down the main points; that's why, we need to like listen in a faster audio but if the audio or video had different accents that I'm not used to, it's kind of hard or unusual for me to take down notes.
> (Aly, cohort A)

This view has been shared by another learner who stressed that speech rate should be moderate:

> I think that the speed should be a little bit moderate like not too fast nor too slow because if it's too slow, I tend to get – to lose concentration easily. When it's really fast, I don't know even where to start. He talks really fast; it's not normal.

> (Malak, cohort A)

Nevertheless, one student felt that different accents were a problem for her:

> For me, the accent was my problem. I didn't get used to listen to different accents. When I listen to different accents it made me confused. I don't know how the spelling is right. But this motivates me to go home and listen to different accents and watch movies that are British and American and so helped me.

> (Dina, cohort A)

Dina is one of the students, who belongs to the borderline threshold level, as she scored 42 on the Cambridge Proficiency Test. Though she identifies accents as a problem, she exerts effort to overcome this difficulty by watching British and American films as out-of-classroom practice. Hence, this strengthens her sense of "instrumentality" (Paris and Winograd, 1990, cited in Graham, 2011, p.114) that she says "motivates" me and she evaluates it as "helpful". This could be considered a step towards fostering an autonomous learner.

4.1.3.4.2.3 .5 LP_ Concentration Loss

Students differed in how they reacted to concentration loss. Some students resort to the affective strategies of self-encouragement and taking emotional temperature to calm themselves down:

> I try to comfort myself because I usually panic. When I lose concentration, I always panic. So I say to myself "It's Ok, calm down. I'm going to catch this the second time I listen to it" and resume my concentration.

> (Mira, cohort A)

Others tended to focus their attention on a certain point they might have missed:

When I used to lose concentration while listening, it took me a while to get back. But what I did was trying to listen to the next point. For example, he was talking about a specific point and he keeps talking about it so whenever I'm listening I can't relate. So, I wait till he finishes this point and relate the next keywords he is going to use. May be it's related to the subject and try to come back from this point.

(Mayar, cohort A)

Sometimes the second listen was the solution for loss of concentration:

Normally I didn't lose a lot of times my concentration. But when I did it was because I missed a main point. When I lose a main point, I tend to panic and to lose my concentration for the whole audio. But then I learned a way not to panic or to miss the whole audio like for a word or a main point. I just like put an exclamation mark or a question mark in the part I missed and I continue listening to the rest of the audio. In the second listen, I check what I missed and write it down. It helped me a lot.

(Aly, cohort A)

However, it was surprising to note that the setting, for some students, had an impact on how they performed on a listening task:

Sarah: Actually, I tended to lose concentration only in class and not at home. Because when I'm at home, this is an assignment and I have to get done with it. So, I listen to it only once, really focus hard and do the assignment and listen again one more time to get sure I got everything right. But when I'm in class, when I lose concentration, I don't really panic. But when I look around and I find everyone focusing, so I focus again.

Dina: In the class when I lose concentration, I try to persuade myself that this is a mission you have to do it. But at home when I listen to any video and I feel it's so boring, I close it.

All in all, students managed to deal with concentration loss problem by employing a variety of directed attention strategies but without letting this loss affect their comprehension or abandoning the listening.

4.1.3.4.2.3 .6 LP_ Authenticity

Another point of agreement was that students reported that they preferred to listen to/watch

authentic videos rather than the audios that accompany textbooks and are artificial:

> Mirna: The authentic one because you get to understand something new and it's not related to studying. There are some things that are very basic like our IGCSE exams, for example. They were full of basic information and the information was even boring. We didn't like it at all. But listening to something authentic like Titanic or the Future of English, they were nice. We had more information.

> Lara: I think the more authentic the thing, the more challenging it is. And I think it's necessary if someone really wants to develop real listening skills because as you said we are not going to ask someone to slow down. It doesn't work like that in the real world.

Students are able to theorise for their own learning and they are cognizant of the challenges of

real life listening, yet they choose to challenge themselves as this would benefit them in their

future career. Hence, this shows a high level of metacognitive knowledge since learners have a

high level of self-efficacy and they are aware of how to nurture this need.

4.1.3.4.2.3 .7 LP_Genre

In Chapter 3, it was mentioned that the podcasts were classified into audios and videos and these

were further categorised. It was noted that students preferred watching videos rather than

listening to audios and that was another issue of controversy. Some students favoured watching

videos because of a number of reasons:

> Body language, audience, better quality. I get to know who is speaking (Mohamed, cohort B)

> Videos are better also because I can concentrate well when I look at the speaker than just listen to him/her (translated into English). Sometimes there are annotations on the video that help me in taking down notes (translated into English) (Amr, cohort B)

However, a student reported that he did not like watching TED talks because they recount a personal experience:

> I disagree because in TED talk it tends to give a personal opinion or a personal experience for a specific person and I don't like to hear like a personal opinion or something because I am usually against all opinions. So, if I'm listening to something, I like it to be more proved or more supported with evidence than just an opinion or an experience he had. I liked the audios that had some support like some audios had some studies made and some others had research and something like that. So, that's the audios I think are the kind more beneficial than the personal experience.
>
> (Aly, cohort A)

Other students were not in alignment with Aly's view and commented that:

> I actually, like Dina, like TED talks and the one with refugees. I like the stories because you can relate to what is going on. The assignments were not really my thing because a news report about something, I didn't really like that. And I like the TED talks because even though it has a personal experience, it also has a proof. Like they don't just say their personal opinion without supporting it.
>
> (Malak, cohort A)

For others, choosing between either listening to an audio or watching a video was a matter of learning style:

> It doesn't matter for me whether it is an audio or a video; I imagine the person speaking. It doesn't really differ if I see something or listen to something.
>
> (Ahmed, cohort B)

For the three students Aly, Malak and Ahmed favouring videos over audios or vice versa is a matter of learning style preference that would differ from one student to the other. Nevertheless, two students sum up, according to their opinion, the criteria for choosing a certain genre over the other:

Mayar: I don't think it has to do with the type of audios/videos we are listening to; it has to do with the topic and the presenter =

Sarah: Yes, as long as you understand what they are saying and you can learn something from it, it's a good audio.

Accordingly, it could be assumed that learners' opinions with regard to the preferred genre is governed by other criteria such as the topic, the presenter and information or what could be subsumed under inherent characteristics of the text. It's a recursive process where one criterion leads to the other.

4.1.3.4.2.4 Task Type (TT)

As was mentioned in Chapter 3 one of the main objectives of the course is note-taking. Consequently, learners listened to a variety of topics where they were required to take down notes and sometimes, especially with audios, answer different types of questions. These ranged from MCQ, True or False, re-arrangement to gap filling. Similar to the previously mentioned points, students were incontrovertible as regards which task type impinged on their listening comprehension:

> As for me, the MCQ choices were tricky because in the audio, for example, they mention something and this thing appears in the first source and you think that there the error is here and then they continue their talk. It's kind of deceptive. You think what you have listened to is the answer but you have to think further more, concentrate further more and wait because the answer is coming before the final answer.

> (Farah, cohort A)

For others, the true or false question was the most difficult:

> For me, the true or false was the most difficult. I couldn't get it … I couldn't get this phrase to say correct or false. And complete it was also difficult for me because I can't get the missing words.

> (Hana, cohort A)

This view is seconded by Farah when she explains:

> Adding to this we were not used to justifying the correct answer. We used in our school the wrong answer. That's it. But justifying the right answer this is new for me. Sometimes I didn't know what to say; the answer is correct. Why? I don't know.

On the other hand, the majority of students considered the re-arrangement task type to be the most difficult "it's confusing". This is in alignment with the results of the listening journals where some students expressed their dissatisfaction with the re-arrangement task type:

> The idea is easy but I did not like the re-arrangement task; it's difficult.
>
> (Mariam, cohort B)

> Normally, the arrangement is not that difficult but what we had was long; a lot of paragraphs, 17 or whatsoever. So it was right to get every one right. And the video was long so you tend to lose concentration easily. In that type of question, you can't because if you lost concentration, you dropped like a paragraph and you will mess up the order of the paragraphs.
>
> (Aly, cohort A)

> I think the arrangement would have been easier if we did not do our thoughts about first like arranging it first because that's what got me confused. If I was just numbering the sentences through the speaker that I hear, I think that it would be more easier.
>
> (Malak, cohort A)

Both Aly and Malak ascribe the difficulty of the task to other inherent characteristics of the task and not to the task in general. That is to say for the former student both the length of the video and the long list of jumbled sentences deemed the task difficult. For the latter participant, on the other hand, the conduct of the metacognitive pedagogical cycle prior to watching the could have been the reason why she rated the task as difficult.

Mona, on the other hand, liked the task as it was challenging and appeals to her personality as an inquisitive learner:

Actually it was hard but it was really interesting because I like the imagining of the story. First, I read all the sentences and then I tried to imagine the story in my head like if I was in their place like what happened first, what should I do and stuff like this. After I imagined the story and arranged it in my thoughts, I find myself like only 3 went wrong so I really was satisfied and my imagination did the thing.

The learner was satisfied that she could get the majority of the answers correctly; thus adding to her motivation.

In addition, Rana singled out the difficulty of the task type to be related to a personal problem:

I also need to add that the re-arrange task it is a personal problem because I had to face this problem in other courses especially the writing course. I feel actually that I do not re-arrange my thoughts. How are you asking me to arrange someone else's thoughts? It's very hard for me. As a person, I found it really hard. With no doubt, I have a problem when I speak I don't arrange what I'm going to speak about. So, are you asking me to arrange someone else's story!

As shown previously this is both a personality and a learning style preference issue that is not related to the nature of the re-arrangement task type *per se*.

4.1.3.2.5 Listening Journals (LJ)

Learners' views regarding the effectiveness of keeping journals were mixed. These results were similar to those obtained from the listening journals (see 4.1.1).

Some students reported that they used to repeat the same ideas every time they wrote their reflections:

It was a burden because every time I used to write the same thing: either I lose concentration or I don't. So, I didn't change between this reflection and the other. So, I used to write every time the same thing in the reflection. I find I didn't notice a huge progress because I used to write the same thing. I didn't face that much of a problem.

(Sarah, cohort A)

For me, it was sometimes helpful and sometimes it was a burden for me because I didn't know what to write; nothing new. For example, for two lectures or three, the progress was stable it didn't go up or down so I don't know what to write. Yes and when you say reflection Ah, I didn't know what to write. So, I wrote it was an interesting lecture, I enjoyed listening and the topic was nice. But when I feel there was progress or something new, I write it. And I write it with passion; I want to write it. Sometimes it was really a burden.

(Farah, cohort A)

Sarah and Farah are students of a high-proficiency level so they felt they did not benefit from keeping a journal since the high proficiency level did not allow for any decoding or comprehension problems to emerge.

A student commented that he wrote more reflections more at home than in class:

Most of the time, I wrote the same reflection, I don't know how. It was a problem when we listened to a different accent or the audio was of a bad quality. In the assignments it was better as I managed to write more reflections.

(Mohamed, cohort B)

The student was more relaxed at home and did not feel any kind of pressure or anxiety; thus freed space in the working term memory and allowed strategies to emerge.

Others, on the other hand, understood the rationale behind keeping a journal though they were of a high proficiency level as well. Hence, it cannot be postulated that the proficiency level plays a role in whether students like writing/do not like writing journals:

It shows how you improve (Amira, cohort B)

Actually, I liked the reflections because every time I had a problem somewhere that I wanted to improve. And at the same time, I say what I feel about what I was hearing; my strategies. So, I think it's really good.

(Malak, cohort A)

At first, I was really happy that I have a teacher that is concerned with progress more than marks or delivering a course. But first when I write down my reflections, I realised that I am repeating every session what's the same thing I wrote the last time. But when I got introduced to the strategies, I wrote my strategies in my reflection paper. I started to write more details; for example, if I understood or I didn't, whether I have a problem. Sometimes I was really depressed because there were several times that I had problems with note-taking but that made me write it down on paper, made me improve myself and made me realise that I do have a problem. So, it's better than just keeping it in mind, we won't do anything about it.

(Mayar, cohort A)

So it was really helpful for me. Because after the end of the course and before submitting the portfolio, I read all my reflections and I really found myself I really got rid of the problems. And I couldn't know I had these problems if I didn't write it down because every time I would just forget what I listened to or if I had a problem or not.

(Mona, cohort A)

One student reported that keeping journals motivated her:

I liked it because it made me measure myself if I am in the right track or the wrong track and it also motivates me. I have to go home and listen to different topics and different accents and I liked it.

(Dina, cohort A)

Throughout the focus group interview, it was noticed that Dina, a borderline threshold level student, whenever she faced a challenge, she used to motivate herself and practise by conducting out-of-classroom activities.

Rana likens writing reflections to taking an anti-depressant:

I felt it was like an anti-depressant because every session I had something new to add and when I sit comfortably back at home, I feel that a kind of re-recording I get what I heard and what I listen and what I not. I had something new in each session; for example, when it is emotional audio, I write it down. If it was a horrible audio like the re-arrange strategy, I write it down and I feel free to write whatever I came up with. It was like kind of just expressing myself and I liked it. May be it's a burden because we've finished with the audio and we've finished also with the note-taking and what about the reflection. But I felt it's really relaxing; a kind of anti-depression to express what you feel.

(Rana, cohort A)

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It is a means of self-expression, especially for shy people or as Jana puts it:

> Especially for shy people they don't … they don't participate in the class but they use the paper as a means to express what they didn't say. They don't have the courage to express themselves in the group.

<div align="right">(Jana, cohort A)</div>

Although the learners realised the importance of reflecting on their listening comprehension, the

pilot focus group recommended that discussing problems in class was more beneficial:

> I preferred to discuss my problems or issues with everyone so that I don't write it down for myself. I feel more comfortable with discussing it than writing down a journal. When we discuss things, it's good.

Accordingly, I conducted group discussions (see Goh, 2000, see researcher's notes in 4.1.4)

several times throughout the training. After students finished listening to the audio/ watching the

video and upon completion of the reflections, students discussed the problems they faced while

listening and listened to their colleagues' pieces of advice of how to deal with these difficulties.

4.1.3.2.6 Self-assessment and Transfer (ST)

There was a consensus among students of all cohorts of how far they think that their listening

skills and strategies have improved after they have studied the listening course:

> Actually, I really improved and I still need to improve. Because at first I didn't take listening seriously; I didn't even know we should do all this. I began to listen more to movies and songs and everything more clearly. I began to concentrate more on the words. And the thing about the note-taking, I still need to still need to improve it because I still have a little bit of problems with it but I will try to improve it more in the future.
> <div align="right">(Malak, cohort A)</div>
> My level has progressed since I began. I wasn't that bad in listening but the problem was that it wasn't my passion. I didn't have passion towards the listening course. So, when I started to like and fall in love with the course, it's more interesting for me. That's why I greatly progressed.

<div align="right">(Mira, cohort A)</div>

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Being interested in the course, which in turn, generates the motivation of the students led them to see a significant improvement in their listening skills.

Some learners thought that learning to carry out multiple tasks or what they call "multi-tasking" is one of the fruitful outcomes of the metacognitive awareness training programme:

> As for me, of course, there is great progress because I was not a multitasking person at all and I said that before that I couldn't hear and write at the same time. Now, I manage to do this. And it helped me to deal with the situation, any situation I find myself in like any audio. I have to take notes and I have to manage to hear it without any difficulties so it developed my skills. And it was an interesting course; it was fun and it was light.
>
> (Farah, cohort A)

> For my progress, I had many strategies that were eye-openers. First to multitask. Second, to keep writing whatever circumstances happen, whatever distractions happen just keep writing and just jot down what you've heard. And my progress first I couldn't actually multitask; it's either to listen or to write but at the end I could function well and that I multitask which is to listen and write. May be it's not may be it's for sure that I dropped some main ideas but the rate of dropping is decreasing.
>
> (Rana, cohort A)

Since learners were satisfied with their progress, they could manage to transfer some of the skills they learnt in the strategy training to other courses:

> I applied it in the literature course. I tried to organise my notes
>
> (Maha, cohort A)

> One of the best comments was the writing teacher's that my essay in the final exam was very remarkable because it was well-written. I used the same strategies as listening: brainstorm, try to use a mind-map to guide you through the essay. (Jana, cohort A)

For other students, they benefited from transferring the strategies they learnt in the training to everyday life situations in general by employing these strategies while speaking to other people:

> Generally speaking, the listening course not only taught me to concentrate while watching a movie or listening to a song but it also taught me to concentrate when my

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sister or mother are talking. It taught me to listen to them as I have to get the intent of what they are saying. In the listening course, when we watched a video, we used to watch it till the end to find an answer for a question. This taught me that whenever a family member or a friend is speaking, I have to listen carefully to get the intent of their speech and not to focus on what I only want to hear as I might not understand what they want to say. So, this listening course taught me to listen actively even if it is a piece of advice as this would benefit me and this, in turn, taught me to listen to anybody actively and to interact and discuss things with him/her. This helped me a lot. (Translated)

(Hana, cohort A)

Hana singled out active listening as one of the factors of successful listening:

It has benefited me in lectures and movie-watching. Now, I'm trying to talk to people and this has made a slight difference. At the beginning, I felt that speech was running and I couldn't understand anything and so I asked him to repeat.

(Amr, cohort B)

Mona learnt to organise her thoughts while listening:

When we're talking to a person, you're just talking; you're just saying what's on your mind. But now I found myself when I'm talking to a person, I listen very carefully and I just organise what I'm going to say to that person before I say it, which is really a helpful thing.

(Mona, cohort A)

As can be seen from the extracts, both students could manage to transfer some of the strategies like planning and organising to listening in general.

When learners were asked to make suggestions to better improve the training, the majority expressed their satisfaction with the course but some of them recommended integrating listening to different accents, increasing the frequency of exposing learners to difficult tasks such as re-arrangement and to have another course of listening to be taught in subsequent terms.

Students summed up the idea that using strategies has become automatised:

> Nour: I try to guess
> Sana: Related words
> Lara: I don't necessarily do it on paper but I found myself I have developed a
> subconscious skill.
> I: You started doing this, Lara?
> Lara: yes, they have become subconscious.

In conclusion, the results of the qualitative instruments of data analysis could be summarised as follows:

- Learners engendered a variety of strategies while listening.

- Learners possessed a high level of metacognitive knowledge

- Learners were cognizant of the factors that helped/impaired their listening and knew how to manipulate them.

- Learners had a high degree of self-efficacy

- The metacognitive awareness raising training enabled learners to transfer the skills and strategies they learnt to other courses and languages.

- Learners could theorise for their own learning.

- Students realised the importance of the strategy training and how this could lead to their becoming autonomous learners.

4.1.4 Researcher's Notes

Throughout the conduct of the cycle of the metacognitive awareness raising training programme, I kept notes of the observations I noted.

As mentioned in the previous section, based on the pilot focus group participants' views that they benefited more from discussing their strategies and skills more than writing them in a journal, process-based discussions were carried out. These discussions help in raising learners' metacognitive awareness and students can give each other feedback with regard to their strategies and they can also share their beliefs and feelings about listening (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.138). At the beginning of the course, some students reported that they found it difficult to listen to concatenated speech, thus, their colleagues recommended they watch Emma's Show as it was easy and only lasted for 3 minutes. The teacher also advised them to listen on a daily basis to *Randall's Café* (www.esl-lab.com) as listening texts are categorised according to proficiency level and they are accompanied by vocabulary and sentence structure exercises. Moreover, concentration loss was one of the frequently reported problems while listening in general. Consequently, their peers advised them to employ some directed attention strategies such as focusing on main ideas and to disregard any kind of distraction that could impact their comprehension.

During the pilot phase, I did not mention the word "strategy" but steps instead. However, upon the completion of the pilot phase, I held a class discussion where learners were asked whether they use any strategies in life in general or while they are studying. They reported that they use them to plan their listening. They also used to evaluate the strategies they used in life in general.

I also noted that whenever the learners were interested in the topic of a video, in particular, they would turn around to start watching the video before they even started brainstorming the topic.

Of note during the conduct of the focus group interviews was that students of both the pilot focus group and cohort A would talk effortlessly and any response would last for a couple of minutes. Cohort B participants, on the other hand, were very reluctant and I had to keep eliciting answers from them and that answer would not exceed an utterance. This concurs with the state of reluctance and demotivation that cohort B students suffer from.

During the administration of the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ), it was also observed that students of both cohorts A and B found items 6 and 13 difficult to understand. This was not the case with cohort C. Although the MALQ is a validated questionnaire that has been piloted in several countries, both items 6 and 13 posed a difficulty for my students:

Item 6: When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away.

Item 13: As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.

It could be assumed that the word "wander" in item 6 and the structure of the sentence of item 13 impaired the understanding of both cohorts A and B. Cohort C participants did not face this problem since they are high-achievers who scored 50 or above on the Cambridge Proficiency Test.

4.2 Quantitative Results

4.2.1 Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)

As was mentioned in Chapter 3, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was administered three times for each cohort: pre-cycle one, between cycles and post the last cycle. Upon completion of a listening task, the participants filled the questionnaire out. The MALQ consists of 21 items which could further be grouped into five subscales: planning and evaluation, directed attention, mental translation, problem solving and person knowledge (see Vandergrift *et al*., 2006). Table 10 shows the MALQ subscales and the items corresponding to them.

Table 4.10: MALQ subscales and corresponding items **(**Adapted from Goh and Hu, 2014, p.260)

MALQ subscales	MALQ items
Directed attention	2,6,12,16
Mental translation	4,11,18
Planning and evaluation	1,10,14,20, 21
Problem solving	5,7,9,13,17,19
Person knowledge	3,8,15

Participants chose responses to the MALQ based on a 6-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=partly disagree, 4=partly agree; 5=agree, 6=strongly agree). These responses were coded. Prior to carrying out any statistical analyses, items 3, 8 and 16 were reverse coded (see Vandergrift *et al*., 2006). These items were negatively phrased and if participants selected 6 (strongly agree) that would mean that they employed ineffective strategies. The same procedure of reverse coding was applied to the mental translation items since learners' resorting to

translation in the mother tongue is considered to be an ineffective strategy. All quantitative data were submitted to SPSS (Version 20) and the alpha level was set at 0.05 for each statistical test.

The following section will first discuss the descriptive results of the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) and will follow with the results of the inferential statistics.

4.2.1.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, consisting of means and standard deviations, were computed for the five subscales (directed attention, (no) mental translation, planning and evaluation, problem solving, and personal knowledge) for the three cohorts of participants, to examine the shape of the data (normal or skewed) and to determine the distribution of the scores and to ensure that the data approximated a normal distribution.

Table 4.11: Mean average scores of the five subscales for the three cohorts

	N	*Minimum*	*Maximum*	*M*	*SD*
Directed attention	83	3.58	5.83	4.97	0.45
Mental translation	83	1.33	5.17	3.72	0.86
Planning and evaluation	83	3.13	5.40	4.43	0.56
Problem solving	83	3.44	5.61	4.71	0.41
Personal knowledge	83	2.50	5.22	4.05	0.50

As shown in the table, the highest mean was for directed attention ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.45$) and the lowest mean average score was for mental translation ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.86$). The standard deviation scores for all items were very small.

4.2.1.2 Inferential Statistics

The figures rendered by the descriptive statistics were the input for inferential statistics. To compare the difference of the five subscales of the MALQ between the three groups, *a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)* was run. Furthermore, one-way analysis of variance *ANOVA* with repeated measures and a post hoc (LSD) test, Student *t*-test and paired *t*-test were calculated to examine the effect of the metacognitive awareness raising training on improving the metacognitive awareness of the participants in the three cohorts.

A one-way between subjects *ANOVA* was conducted to compare the differences of the five subscales of MALQ among the three cohorts of participants. There was a significant difference among the groups with regard to both the subscales of planning and evaluation and personal knowledge [$F(2, 80) = 4.87$, $p = 0.01$)] and [$F(2, 80) = 7.256$, $p = 0.001$)], respectively. The differences among the three groups with regard to the other three subscales, directed attention [($F(2, 80) = 1.417$, $p = 0.24$)], mental translation [($F(2, 80) = 2.863$, $p = 0.06$), and problem solving [($F(2, 80) = 1.490$, $p = 0.232$) did not reach a statistical significance though (no) mental translation fell just short of statistical significance at $p = 0.06$.

Moreover, as can be seen in Figure 4.1 and in an attempt to investigate the effect of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence on raising participants' metacognitive awareness, an *ANOVA* with repeated measures was run. When significant between-subject differences were

detected, a post Hoc (LSD) test, a paired *t*-test and Student *t*-test were conducted to better understand the differences among the three groups.

Table 4.12: A one-way analysis of variance (*ANOVA*) of the five subscales of MALQ

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Squares	*F*	Sig.
Directed attention Average	Between Groups	.592	2	0.296	1.417	0.249
	Within Groups	16.712	80	0.209		
	Total	17.303	82			
Mental translation Average	Between Groups	4.110	2	2.055	2.863	0.063
	Within Groups	57.428	80	0.718		
	Total	61.538	82			
Planning and evaluation Average	Between Groups	2.864	2	1.432	4.870	0.010*
	Within Groups	23.526	80	0.294		
	Total	26.390	82			
Problem solving Average	Between Groups	.512	2	0.256	1.490	0.232
	Within Groups	13.732	80	0.172		
	Total	14.244	82			
Personal knowledge Average	Between Groups	3.213	2	1.607	7.256	.001*
	Within Groups	17.714	80	0.221		
	Total	20.927	82			

*Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$
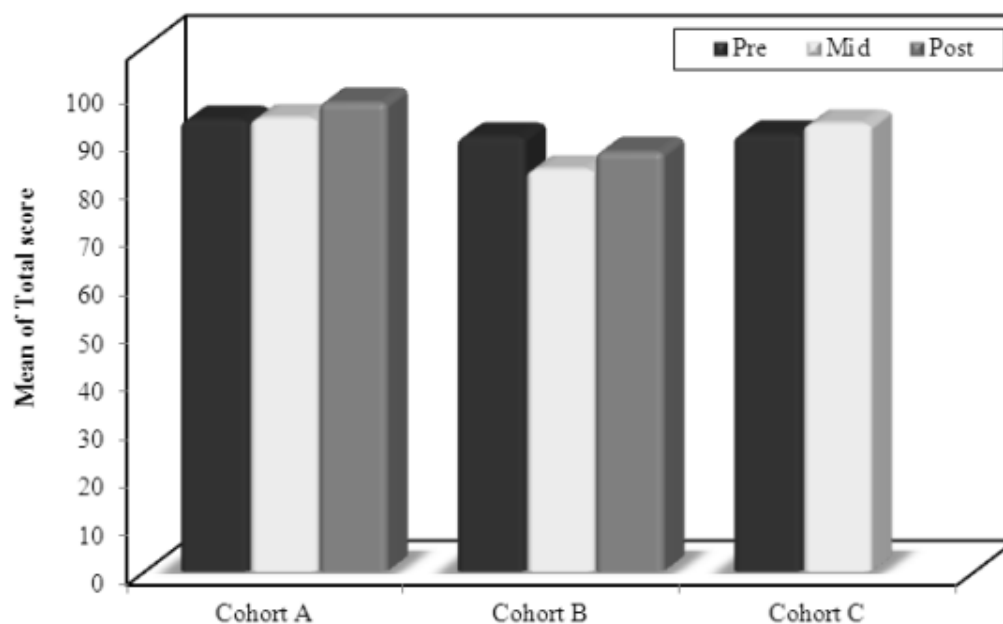
Figure 4.1: Comparison between the pre, mid and post – administrations of the MALQ for both cohorts A and B and the pre- and post- administrations of MALQ for cohort C according to total score.

As Figure 4.1 shows, there was a difference in the mean scores of cohort A ($M = 93.84$ for pre-, $M = 94.11$ for mid-, and $M = 97.43$ for post-intervention administration of the MALQ). Although the difference between the three administrations of the MALQ shows a very minimal increase in the level of metacognitive awareness of cohort A participants, it could be assumed that the metacognitive pedagogical sequence was effective. The same applies to cohort C ($M = 90.76$ for pre-, and $M = 93.0$ for post-intervention administration of the MALQ). Both the participants of cohorts A and C appear to have benefited from the metacognitive awareness raising training. The mean scores of cohort B, on the other hand, show a considerable decrease in the level of metacognitive awareness between the pre- ($M = 90.33$) and the mid- intervention administration of the MALQ ($M = 83.50$). There was a slight improvement of the level of metacognitive awareness after the post-intervention administration of the MALQ ($M = 87.17$) but that was still lower than the original pre-intervention mean score.

The interpretation of the above mentioned results will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

It is now time to conclude this study and pull together all the strands of this research work. This section will revisit the research aim and questions, summarise the findings of the study and offer conclusions based on these findings. Recommendations will be suggested, in terms of how to progress this study. Importantly, the contribution of this research work to the field of *listening* will be clarified. Finally, reflection on the research process undertaken will be discussed. Putting all these elements of research together will permit an assessment of how far the research objectives have been met.

5.1 Research Aim and Questions

The overall aim of this study was to advance understanding of the impact of using podcasts in a metacognitive awareness raising training programme designed for Egyptian EFL learners. In order to achieve this aim, specific questions were asked. Hence, it will be prudent to review the research questions, thereby 'closing the loop' on the research questions that were raised in the early part of an enquiry" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.552) and to assess how far the study was able to find answers to them.

The questions were as follows:

1. To what extent are Egyptian EFL learners aware of their listening metacognitive strategies?
2. What impact does metacognitive strategy training have on raising Egyptian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness?
3. What is the relationship between metacognitive awareness and listening strategy use?
4. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the metacognitive strategy awareness training?

Q1: To what extent are EFL learners aware of their listening metacognitive strategies?

As was stated in Chapter 2, Vandergrift (2002b) postulates that:

> When listeners know how to 1) analyse the requirements of a listening task; 2) activate the appropriate listening processes required; 3) make appropriate predictions; 4) monitor their comprehension; and evaluate the success of their approach, they are using metacognitive knowledge for successful listening comprehension.

(Vandergrift, 2002b)

In order to apply this metacognitive knowledge learners have to deploy metacognitive strategies through which they "manage, direct, regulate, and guide their learning, i.e., planning, monitoring, and evaluation" (Wenden, 1998, p.519). Learners in the current study could identify the purpose of the task while being aware of their own competences, monitored their own performance and tried to solve any problems that they had encountered while listening and eventually evaluated their comprehension and the strategies they employed while listening.

It was also stated in Chapters 2 and 4 that metacognitive knowledge is categorised into person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge. In order for metacognitive awareness to emerge, Victori and Lockhart (1995) summed it as follows:

> Students develop accurate or inaccurate beliefs about how cognitive factors such as intelligence, attitude, age and motivation influence language learning, as well as beliefs about their weaknesses and strengths and their self-concept as learners (person knowledge). They also have some knowledge about the task of language learning, its difficulty, and their role in the whole endeavour (task knowledge). Finally, learners develop ideas about using certain strategies and about their potential effectiveness (strategic knowledge). Learner training should start by considering this knowledge which students themselves bring to the task of language learning, and help learners modify it (their metacognitive knowledge) is potentially impending their learning and their potential for autonomy.

(Victori and Lockhart, 1995, p.225)

The findings of the current study are consistent with the findings of Victori and Lockhart (1995) and Mareschal (2007). The metacognitive awareness raising training enabled learners to evaluate the metacognitive knowledge they deployed in a listening task, assess its effectiveness and modify it accordingly if it was "impending" the listening abilities of the students and their potential to become autonomous learners.

The three types of metacognitive knowledge are manifested in learners' final reflection papers (see 4.1.2). *Person knowledge* was exemplified by learners' awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, lack of confidence and self-efficacy. As mentioned previously, learners embarked on the listening course with lack of confidence and apprehensions about their failure and that it would be similar to their pre-tertiary experiences of listening instruction. By the introduction of interesting podcasts, whether audios or videos, the metacognitive pedagogical sequence (see Chapter 3), the conduct of process-based discussions and collaboration with peers, learners became interested in the course and realised that it was different from their previous listening instruction experiences. Consequently, the confidence level of the learners increased and that led to change in students' self-efficacy. This finding is consistent with Graham and Macaro (2008) that self-efficacy had a positive effect on confidence, which in turn, impacted listening positively.

Moreover, there is a relationship between self-efficacy and attributions or how learners explain – consciously or sub-consciously – their performance on a specific task (Hsieh and Shallert, 2008, p.514). When learners' achievement on a certain task is ascribed to factors they have control of such as exertion of effort or employment of strategies, their levels of self-efficacy rise and they will be motivated to carry out a similar task again (Graham and Macaro, 2008, p.755). The higher level of self-efficacy enabled learners to use strategies, which in turn, helped them in

becoming good listeners. Students were willing to expend effort since they saw a desirable effect. When learners see a positive relationship between the effort that is exerted and the outcome, this strengthens their sense of "instrumentality" (Paris and Winograd, 1990, cited in Graham, 2011, p.114) which is likely to impact their motivation positively (Graham, 2011, p.113).

Task knowledge pertains to the learners' knowledge of the purpose, demands and nature of the learning task (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.86). Examples of task knowledge applied as manifested in learners' final reflection papers included practising to make up for any difficulties with accents and speech rates and practising out-of-the-classroom activities. Learners compensated for concentration loss by deploying other strategies such as trying to infer meaning based on background knowledge, directed attention, and skipping any unknown words that they could not understand due to unfamiliar accent and attempt to guess their meaning accordingly.

Strategic knowledge refers to learners' knowledge of the ways that help them best achieve a listening task. Learners demonstrated extensive employment of strategies that helped them plan, monitor and evaluate their listening. This was evident in the listening journals and final reflection papers of both the intermediate and the borderline learners. This finding concurs with Vandergrift (2003, p.438) that "skilled listeners often orchestrate a combination of strategies to achieve success in L2 listening". Hence, as the data in the current study suggest the metacognitive awareness raising training had a positive effect on raising learners' metacognitive awareness.

Q2: What impact does metacognitive strategy training have on raising Egyptian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness?

It was noted in Chapter 4 (see Figure 1) that the metacognitive awareness raising training had a positive effect on raising the metacognitive awareness of the participants though this improvement has been very minimal. This finding applies to both cohorts A and C. This could be attributed to two reasons. First, it could be assumed that the long duration of the training (10 weeks with a total of 30 hours of training) gave students the chance to practise using the strategies, which in turn, have become automatised. The second reason as has been mentioned in Chapter 4 (see 4.1.1) is that among cohort A participants, are those students who scored from 40-49 in the Cambridge Proficiency Test and still demonstrated the characteristics of learners who belong to the pre-intermediate or elementary proficiency level as assessed by this test. The number of these students was large in comparison to the high-achievers. The presence of these pre-intermediate and elementary participants in the study could have contributed to the observed improvement in the students' responses on the MALQ across the three points of administration. This finding concurs with previous research that only low-ability learners will benefit from a metacognitive strategy training (Cross, 2011; Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010; Vandergrift, 2004; Berne, 2004).

Surprisingly, with cohort B, there was no improvement from the pre- to the post-intervention administration of the MALQ. On the contrary, there was a decline in the middle phase. This could be attributed to an attitude or motivation problem. However, there was a slight improvement between the mid and the post-intervention administration of the MALQ. This could be attributed to the fact that the third cycle was carried out towards the end of the term. As was previously mentioned in Chapter 3 that a new intake at the college where I work is taken in two

terms: September and February. Cohort B students belong to the February intake. As illustrated in both Chapters 1 and 3, all high school students have to sit a final high school exam be it General Secondary Certificate (Thanaweya Amma) or the completion of any of the international certificates, i.e, the IGCSE, the French Baccalaureate, the German Abitur or the American Diploma (SAT) and based on the grades, students join the college that matches these grades. Cohort B students did not score well in the final high school exam and accordingly could not join college in the September and had to wait until the February term. Waiting until the February term and not being able to join college in September with their colleagues could have had a negative impact on the motivation of cohort B students which rendered them amotivated and they did not take the metacognitive awareness raising training seriously. "Since amotivated students see no relation between their actions and subsequent consequences, they are more likely to develop a passive approach" (Vandergrift, 2005, p.83). Such a passive approach is neither a characteristic of effective listeners (Vandergrift, 2003; Goh, 1998) nor is it a quality of an autonomous learner (Littlewood, 1996, cited in Vandergrift, 2005, p.83). Furthermore, as was mentioned previously, these students achieved high scores in the Cambridge Proficiency Test and were classified as intermediate or upper-intermediate learners (see Chapter 3). When these students were asked to fill the MALQ out prior to the conduct of the first cycle, they reflected on the strategies they were aware of using while listening. However, as they kept practising the metacognitive strategies, these strategies became automatised to the extent that the strategies became inaccessible (see Ellis, 1994). These results concur with the view of Cross (2011) that high-level learners reach a level where training becomes ineffective.

The second reason could be that by the progress of the course and as learners became engaged in it, they gained more confidence particularly that they have sat for their seventh week assessment

and they managed to get high grades. Getting high grades made learners regain confidence in their competences and erased any feeling of frustration these students might have been suffering from as their joining the media college where I teach might not have been their first choice. Moreover, performing well on the seventh week assessment might have motivated the learners to work on their listening skills. Hence, this could explain the slight improvement in the students' responses on the post-intervention administration of the MALQ.

It is worth mentioning that according to the perceptions of the students of cohort A (see Chapter 4.1.3) the integration of interesting videos and TED Talks by the second cycle of the intervention might account for the slight increase in the total score of the post-intervention administration of the MALQ. As discussed in Chapter 3 there was an incremental increase in the level of the difficulty of the audios/videos selected. In the first cycle and given that one of the aims of the listening course is to teach students note-taking skills, the materials used were extracted from academic lectures, aural podcasts and academic videos. For some learners these materials might have been uninteresting and they could have thought that the listening course would be similar to the traditional listening classes they are accustomed to in the pre-tertiary experience. By the second cycle, interesting and motivational TED Talks, according to the learners' perceptions, such as *The School in the Cloud*, *Jonathan's Ross Interview with Cristiano Ronaldo*, *the Story of Two Refugees* (see 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.3) were integrated in the course. This might have tapped the motivation of the learners and made them eager every session to listen to/ watch a new podcast. It is like one of the students has stated (see Chapter 4) that "every time there is a challenge", which in turn, satisfied students and made them interested in improving their listening skills as evident in their final reflection papers (see Chapter 4, 4.1.2).

In Chapter 3, it was mentioned that the aim of the conduct of the third cycle with cohort C was to verify the findings obtained from the listening journals and final reflection papers of both cohorts A and B. Only those podcasts that the participants of cohorts A and B have reported to be interesting, challenging or had caused them any kind of difficulty while listening were integrated in the material selected to be taught to cohort C. The training lasted only for 3 weeks.

The current finding that both high- and low-achievers could benefit from strategy training concurs with Mareschal's (2007) study where she found that both the low and high-proficiency learners benefited from the strategy training. Cross (2011) argues that the metacognitive pedagogical sequence is of little benefit to the improvement of the listening ability of high-proficiency listeners. His findings also support those of Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari (2010) and Goh and Taib (2006). However, it could be maintained that in the current study though the improvement was very minimal between the pre-, mid and post-intervention administrations of the MALQ since the difference between the mean average scores for the three cohorts did not exceed 3.67, the reflections of the learners of the strategies employed while listening in both the listening journals and final reflection papers showed that the learners did benefit from the metacognitive awareness raising training particularly as they had reported that these strategies have become automatised.

Q3: What is the relationship between metacognitive awareness and listening strategy use?
As the descriptive statistics in Chapter 4 (see 4.2.1.1) revealed the highest mean of the five subscales of the MALQ was for directed attention. When learners feel that their mind starts to wander, need to get back on track when they lose concentration, need to focus harder when they face difficulties in understanding and they cannot focus, they do not give up (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006) and they direct their attention to the aural input. Learners' listening journals (see 4.1.1)

showed that whenever students identified a problem while listening, they tended to attend to the listening task and ignore any distractors. This corroborates Goh and Hu's (2014) findings that when high proficiency learners notice they have missed something while listening, they try to listen for it and make up for what has been missed. In addition, directed attention was also ranked as the highest of the five subscales of the MALQ in their study.

The second highest subscale problem solving consists of a number of strategies that the learners use for inferencing (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006, p.450). The first three items (items 5, 17, and 19) pertain to the learners' deployment of these strategies to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words by either making use of familiar words, or through the general idea or to verify meaning based on what has been understood of the aural message. Making inferences occurs in an L1 and is activated when listening in a target language (Mendelsohn, 1995, cited in Goh and Hu, 2014, p.266). Hence, there is a difference between high- and low-proficiency learners with regard to the employment of the inferencing strategy. Given that the majority of the participants in the present study are high-achievers, it would be assumed that they could use the strategy of inferencing effectively when they faced an unfamiliar word (see 4.1.1 unfamiliar vocab), they resorted to different strategies among which was deducing meaning from context. In Goh and Hu's (2014) study the learners were of a low-proficiency level, thus, they could not use the inferencing strategy effectively.

The other three items, namely, items 7, 9, and 13 are related to comprehension monitoring and evaluation strategies. During listening, learners would tend to rely on their background knowledge and compare what they have understood to their prior knowledge of the topic. They would also verify and modify their comprehension in case they feel there was a comprehension gap. Hence, students are synchronising their comprehension monitoring strategies in real time. In

order to achieve this, students would rely on repeating the input by listening for a second time. This finding has been demonstrated in students' listening journals (see section 4.1.1) where they used excessively the metacognitive strategy of double-check monitoring "MMCD" to verify their comprehension. Conversely, the participants in Goh and Hu's (2014, p.266) study, due to their low-proficiency level, could not deploy more complex metacognitive strategies in order to check their comprehension.

As regards the third subscale planning and evaluation, it could be further divided into planning where learners set plans in order to go about the listening task and evaluation as they assess their own performance. Planning and evaluating are important for L2 learning (Wenden, 1998, cited in Goh and Hu, 2014, p.267). Before learners approach a listening task, they first have a plan of how to approach it and think of any similar texts that they have listened to which activates their schemata and could in turn facilitate their listening comprehension. The other sub-strategy is evaluation. This strategy is employed periodically at real time (online) while learners are listening to check their satisfaction with their performance and after they finish listening to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used (Goh and Hu, 2014; Vandergrift *et al*., 2006). The evaluation metacognitive strategy gives learners the chance to assess their comprehension and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies deployed, and consequently help them in their planning for what needs to be improved next time while listening, as this is one of the characteristics of the metacognitive pedagogical cycle (see Chapter 3). As the listening journals, final reflection papers, and focus group interviews have shown (see 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3), participants in the present study planned for how they would approach a listening task, checked the plausibility of their interpretations while listening, evaluated the effectiveness of the strategies used and thought of the weaknesses or problems that needed to be addressed in the

next time they listen. These high proficiency learners could not only engage in evaluating their interpretation in different ways but they could also free their attention to "try out different strategies" (Goh, 1998, p.142).

Of note were the results of the fourth subscale, person knowledge, as they were not in congruence with the findings of the final reflection papers (see 4.1.2). It is true that the learners at the beginning of the conduct of the study had their apprehensions regarding the listening course and how it was to be taught especially as they did not have prior experience of pre-tertiary listening instruction and even those who had, their experience was unpleasant. As the course was under way, with the integration of interesting aural and video podcasts, learners became motivated and demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the moderate mean of 4.05 shows that learners are still not that confident and that there is a level of anxiety.

As mentioned previously, person knowledge refers to the learners' judgment of the factors that could impact listening and what they know about themselves as listeners. This shapes their self-concept and self-efficacy (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.86). Self-efficacy is the learners' beliefs about their competences that would enable them in succeeding in accomplishing a task. Self-efficacy is believed to be pertinent to explanations learners give about how they are satisfied about accomplishing a task (Graham, 2011, p.114). Research has shown a strong link between self-efficacy and higher levels of achievement and the learners' willingness to "face challenges and to exert effort" (Mills, Pajares and Herron, 2006, p.278). Person knowledge is also related to learners' greater sense of confidence and a lower level of anxiety (Goh and Hu, 2014, p.265). However, the MALQ items (i.e. items 3, 8, 15) do not address these elements of person knowledge. Rather they investigated whether learners consider listening to be the most difficult among the four language skills, students feel that listening comprehension in English was a

challenge for them and that they did not feel nervous when they listened to English. These items did not reflect the truer sense of self-efficacy as demonstrated above. Hence, it could be considered a point of weakness in the MALQ since these three items could not address all the elements of person knowledge and self-efficacy. It is also worth mentioning that these items were reverse coded which could account for the moderate mean. Nevertheless, it could not be concluded that the learners suffered from anxiety and did not have a high level of self-efficacy which is contrary to the views they reported in their final reflection papers.

As for the final subscale mental translation, it was surprising to find that it got the moderate mean of 3.72. The underlying tenet of this subscale is that learners should learn to avoid using this online strategy while listening (Vandergrift *et al*., 2006, p.450). The MALQ subscale (i.e., items 4, 11, 18) examines whether learners translate word by word, key words or the whole message in their heads. These items were also reverse coded. Learners in the present study were uncertain regarding the use of the translation strategy and this could be for a number of reasons. Like in Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari's (2010) study, participants were not compelled to resort to the mother tongue which is a characteristic of low-ability learners (Osada, 2001). Rather they employed this strategy as their repertoire of lexical knowledge increased and they used problem solving extensively as shown above, hence, they used all the information at their disposal to inference what was not understood (Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010, p.489). Another explanation could be that in all Egyptian schools irrespective of whether they are state, private or international, teachers tend to translate any unfamiliar word immediately to the mother tongue and encourage learners to use this method if they are stuck; consequently, learners do not learn that using mental translation should be avoided and did not think that resorting to the mother tongue is considered to be a characteristic of an ineffective listener. As Ishler (2010) has

concluded in his findings, Tunisian learners used to find the Arabic or French equivalent of an unknown word because sometimes at the pre-tertiary level, teachers asked them to translate into Arabic if they did not understand and the reason could be also as Ishler argues that learners used the translation strategy subconsciously.

Q4: What are EFL learners' perceptions of the metacognitive strategy awareness training?

Before discussing learners' perceptions of the metacognitive awareness raising training it is worth reminding ourselves of the background of prior listening instruction these learners have been exposed to at the pre-tertiary level. As was mentioned in both chapters 1 and 4, the majority of the Egyptian students in general, and the participants in the current study in particular, did not have any formal teaching of listening at the school stage. The teaching of listening was integrated into the teaching of other skills like reading or writing or even grammar as teachers believed that focusing on these skills would gain learners higher grades and thus better higher educational opportunities. Even those learners who were taught listening were not taught any skills or strategies since sessions were focused mainly on the application of the communicative approach (CA) (see Chapter 2) which is based on answering discrete items correctly (Siegel, 2014; Field, 2008; Flowerdew and Miller, 2005).

As a result of this pre-tertiary experience of listening instruction, participants in the current study started the listening course with a level of anxiety and lack of confidence in their listening competences as expressed in their listening journals and focus group interviews (see above – Research Question 2). However, the level of confidence increased as the learners progressed in the course. These findings corroborate those of Siegel, 2015; Mareschal, 2007; and Vandergrift, 2003 who find that when learners are satisfied with the outcome of the training and experience

success this leads to an increased feeling of confidence.

As the results of the listening journals, final reflection papers, and the focus group interviews showed learners were satisfied with the approach of teaching listening applied in the current study or the metacognitive pedagogical sequence. They thought that among the elements that differentiated the current teaching approach from the previous one they had undergone – if they had prior listening instruction – was the incremental grading of the level of difficulty of the podcasts and the integration of interesting audios and videos which had a positive effect on raising learners' motivation.

Another factor that learners identified to have had an impact on the success of the metacognitive awareness training was the collaboration with peers. Working with a colleague enabled them to pool any missing information, elucidate any difficulties with the listening task at hand and exchange strategies which they have never used before and which their peers recommended they should use. This finding is consistent with Vandergrift (2003) and Mareschal (2007). The low-proficiency learners in the former study and the high and low ability participants in the latter study also thought positively of collaboration with a peer since it enabled them to verify comprehension, reflect deeply on their understanding and accordingly increased their monitoring of their comprehension.

Despite the fact that learners underestimated the importance of keeping journals from the very beginning of the course and used to complain that the journals were boring and that they felt they repeated the same ideas every time they reflected on their listening process, by the end of the metacognitive awareness raising programme, students realised the crucial role reflections play in enhancing learning. Even those students who did not find writing journals as beneficial thought positively of the listening course and they were satisfied with their level of listening and their use

of strategies has become automatised to the extent that they could not report them. These findings where learners valued the use of the process-based approach when they discussed their listening process with their colleagues and the writing of reflections concurs with the results of Mareschal, 2007; Goh and Taib, 2006; Vandergrift, 2003; Goh, 1997, 2000 and Mastumoto, 1996, that keeping listening journals and discussing the processes they undergo in their learning play a significant role in raising learners' awareness of both their learning process and that of their colleagues. It also aids them in evaluating this process and further improves it.

Moreover, the data derived from the qualitative methods used in the study showed that students were aware of the benefits of the metacognitive awareness training and how they could transfer the strategies they learnt to other academic courses and to real-life listening situations. These were similar to the findings of Siegel (2015) where students realised the advantage of the training programme and how they could extend the use of the strategies developed in the course to other future situations and contexts.

Moreover, learners worked on further improving their listening skills by practising out – of – the – classroom activities such as watching movies without subtitles, listening to songs, and speaking to native speakers. These were similar activities to the ones the German learners in Pickard's (1996) study practised. Learners consolidated their learning by practising out – of – the – classroom activities. They attempted to have access to more exposure to the foreign language by creating practice opportunities via whichever mode available (Pickard, 1996, p.158).

Given all these elements together, it could be assumed that learners thought positively of the metacognitive awareness raising training. These learners could note the difference between the current listening course and their prior pre-tertiary experience of listening instruction, apply a

variety of strategies and metacognitive strategies in particular, and assess the factors that contributed to the improvement of their listening comprehension such as the characteristics of the podcasts incorporated in the study, keeping journals and peer collaboration. All these elements led, in the learners' views, to their satisfaction with their progress and ultimately to their positive perceptions of the metacognitive awareness raising training programme.

5.2 Key Issues

It has been proposed throughout this research work that effective listeners would exhibit the characteristics of autonomous learning and if they do not, it is our role to foster it by raising their metacognitive awareness and equipping them with strategies and metacognitive strategies in particular that would enable them to transfer these strategies to real-life learning and listening.

The implementation of the metacognitive awareness raising training tapped learners' motivation and consequently led to their perception of the training as beneficial. The training enabled learners to think critically of their pre-tertiary listening instruction experiences, compare them to the metacognitive pedagogical sequence and evaluate this approach as useful for them. Students, through the journey of awareness raising and reflection, were able not only to identify their strengths and weaknesses but they were also able to analyse listening tasks, think of solutions for any problems they encountered while listening, and apply metacognitive knowledge.

Since learners experienced improved outcomes following the metacognitive awareness raising training, they thought positively of it and consequently they could theorise for their own learning. The training met the goals of equipping learners with the strategies and skills that they could take beyond the boundaries of the classroom to other real-life situations and contexts.

The present study corroborated previous research (Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010; Mareschal, 2007; Goh and Taib, 2006; White, 2006; Vandergrift, 2002a, 2003; Goh, 2002) that found that focusing on the process rather than the product is more beneficial for learners. However, the results of the current research and other studies that adopted the metacognitive pedagogical sequence are not in congruence with previous research (Mendelsohn, 1994, 2006; Thompson and Rubin, 1996; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) (see Chapter 2) that found that the teaching of listening strategies should be explicit. The teacher would select one strategy each time and model it to the students. Learners, who study listening through the metacognitive pedagogical sequence, on the other hand, would acquire implicit knowledge about an L2 through collaboration with a colleague and without any informed explicit strategy training, which would resemble listening in real-life (Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010, pp.487-488).

It has also been an informative experience for me as both a teacher and a researcher. Raising the metacognitive awareness of learners through the implementation of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence through using podcasts as a medium for aural input proved to be fruitful to Egyptian university students, particularly, if these students did not have prior pre-tertiary experience of listening instruction. Conducting such a research work was very insightful and gave me the opportunity to probe more into ideas that I would like to carry out in both my teaching career and prospective research. These ideas will be discussed below in the final section of the report.

5.3 Limitations and Delimitations

5.3.1 Limitations

Since listening is an unobservable skill, as teachers we cannot know what happens in the mind of learners and how they manage to understand aural messages. Hence, the current study aimed at gaining more understanding of these processes through the use of research methods, triangulation, participants' voices and the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). However, despite the robustness of the research design and richness of the findings, there are some limitations that will be discussed in this section.

The first limitation that might have affected the results was placing the participants as intermediate/upper-intermediate learners. This classification was based on their scores in the Cambridge Proficiency Test. The component of listening included in this test consists of only three sections, and the longest listening passage does not exceed 3 minutes and 10 minutes. Hence, this classification did not accurately reflect the actual proficiency level of the students.

Another limitation pertains to the methods of data collection. The data were based on self-reports (listening journals, final reflection papers, focus group interviews and the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). "Questionnaires, although quick and easy to administer, are limited in their ability to probe the 'why' of participant responses (Vandergrift, 2005, p.83). To guard against these weaknesses, the data were collected from three groups in different points of time across the three terms of the conduct of the study. This triangulation revealed consistency in the results obtained from the different data collection tools.

Furthermore, although the questionnaire was piloted in several countries (see Vandergrift *et al.*, 2006), it was observed that participants of both cohorts A and B found two items problematic,

namely, items 6 and 13. It could further be assumed that the phrasing of the MALQ, though it was a standardised questionnaire, was not suitable for the intermediate proficiency level of the participants in the present study. Consequently, this could account for the incongruence between the results of the qualitative research methods and the MALQ, especially for the subscales of person knowledge and mental translation.

One final limitation is related to my position as both a researcher and a teacher as this would allow researcher's bias to emerge. In order to offset this undesirable effect, multiple research methods were utilised with different groups at different times. The results of these methods were cross-referenced. These steps added to the study's trustworthiness, credibility and dependability.

5.3.2 Delimitations

The main aim of the study was to raise learners' metacognitive awareness and it was hoped that, if the training was successful, that learners would take these strategies a step higher and transfer them to real-life listening and thus foster their becoming autonomous learners. As was argued previously, the Cambridge Proficiency Test administered at the private institution where I work includes a listening component that consists of three questions: an announcement, a short conversation and a mini-lecture. The longest of these passages does not exceed 3 minutes. These listening passages are accompanied by multiple choice questions that comprise three distracters. Hence, this raises the probability of learners' depending on chance to choose the right answer. Though Cambridge Proficiency Test is an adaptive test, where the level of the difficulty of questions is adjusted based on the proficiency level of the test-taker, the shortness of the listening passages does not reflect the actual listening ability of the test-takers. Furthermore, the level of the listening passages of the proficiency test is not in congruence with the level of the podcasts

incorporated in the current study. In other words, the lexis, length, grammar and sentence structure of the proficiency test passages is not as equal as that of the audios, videos and TED Talks used in the current study. Hence, if I wanted to assess the real effect of the metacognitive awareness raising training, I should have used a proficiency test that exhibits the same inherent characteristics of the intervention. Given that both the pre- and post-tests should be the same to guard against any bias and since the inherent characteristics of the proficiency test were totally different from those of the intervention, it would be unfair to conduct a post-test, as other studies did, and attribute any improvement to the training as this definitely would be the result of the incongruence between both the intervention and the post-test.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The review of literature made it clear that there is sparseness in the studies that focus on the teaching of academic listening. Since the current study was conducted in an academic setting and the main aim was to raise the metacognitive awareness of the listening strategies of media and translation students, it could give insight into how note-taking could be taught through a metacognitive pedagogical sequence and ultimately enhance learners' note-taking skills. The empirical research is unique since the interest in studying the role of "metacognition in L2 learning is relatively incipient" (Vandergrift and Cross, 2017, p.84). There is similarity between the current study and previous research with regard to the use of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence (Birjandi and Rahimi, 2012; Cross, 2010, 2011; Vandergrift, 2003), the administration of the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) such as Goh and Hu (2014) and Mareschal (2007) and the implementation of Action Research as a research approach in investigating learners' listening strategies (Siegel, 2014, 2015) and the consistency of the findings between the current study and Mareschal's (2007) that the pedagogical cycle benefits

intermediate learners. This study, however, also differs in a number of respects. Firstly, none of the above mentioned studies used authentic podcasts, whether audios or videos. Instead they depended on recorded material, either those accompanying textbooks or even when they stated to have used semi-authentic or authentic passages they did not specify the source of these passages. The current study, on the contrary, used authentic lectures extracted from *Study Listening* (Lynch, 2004), the Voice of America website and real-life videos downloaded from YouTube and TED Talks that gave the learners the opportunity to be exposed to real-life listening. Secondly, the duration of the listening passages did not exceed a couple of minutes in the previously mentioned studies; however in the current study, students watched videos that lasted for up to 21 minutes. In addition, no other study, to my knowledge, has combined both the use of authentic TED talks and the metacognitive pedagogical sequence. In addition, no other study has used developmental portfolios where learners kept their listening journals and were asked to write final reflection papers where they reflected on the listening training as a whole. Thus, the student's voice is an important element in this study, which is unusual in the context of the Egyptian educational system. Moreover, though Siegel (2014, 2015) has adopted Action research as a research approach in investigating listening strategies, he did not implement the metacognitive pedagogical sequence through action research cycles. Furthermore, no other researcher, in Egypt, has utilised authentic podcasts through implementing the metacognitive pedagogical sequence in order to raise to the metacognitive awareness of EFL Egyptian learners. Finally, as was discussed in Chapter 1 (see 1.2 Context of the Study) and given that the teaching of English in Egypt in general and the teaching of listening in particular faces many challenges, this study was an attempt to give an insight into the effectiveness of using the metacognitive pedagogical sequence in teaching listening and how learners' attitudes and perceptions could

play a crucial role in affecting their becoming in control of their own learning. Thus, they become autonomous learners.

The academic listening proficiency test framework suggested at the end of this research could embrace the drawbacks of the proficiency tests pinpointed above in 5.3.2.

5.5 Pedagogical Implications

This current study provided empirical evidence of the effectiveness of a metacognitive training programme in raising learners' metacognitive listening strategies. Given that a large number of L2 language learners perceive listening in a foreign language to be difficult, if not the most difficult skill to be learnt, the current study presents ample pedagogical implications for the field of listening strategies in general and the Egyptian context in particular.

As was explained in Chapter 1, the educational system in Egypt is exam-oriented and the teaching of English is dominated by the implementation of the communicative approach (CA). Teachers favour teaching grammar, vocabulary and reading at the expense of neglecting the teaching of both the skills of listening and speaking, particularly that they are not included in the final exams. There are many obstacles that constrain teaching English in general and teaching listening in particular which are pertinent to both logistical problems and the preparedness of teachers. Hence, a paradigm shift is needed to offer a plan for the teaching of listening in the Egyptian context.

The approach of "listen, answer, and check" is no longer appropriate for the teaching of listening since teachers cannot tap the listening processes of the learners and the strategies they employ while listening and consequently offer them any help that they might tend to be in need of. Rather teachers should adopt the use of a process-based approach, where learners listen, reflect

on their listening and the strategies they employed while listening and think of any problems they faced in the listening process. By discussing both the strategies that were deployed and the problems that were faced in the listening process with their colleagues and teacher, learners would be aware of the strategies and how to use them effectively in the appropriate context. Teachers will also benefit from such an approach by probing more deeply into learners' strategies and accordingly help them reinforce these strategies and design material that would enable students to better improve their listening. Applying such a process-based approach could be reinforced by the integration of a metacognitive pedagogical sequence, the MALQ, journals which all could be coordinated through the implementation of an action research approach.

The use of the pedagogical metacognitive sequence (Vandergrift, 2004) has shown to be effective in raising learners' listening metacognitive awareness. Though some learners have noticed that the repetitive use of the same approach every session might have aroused their boredom, the training of learners to start by thinking of plans to undertake the listening task, monitoring their comprehension and thinking of probable solutions while listening and following these strategies by evaluating the strategies that were employed and assessing their listening comprehension in general, plays a central role in raising learners' metacognitive awareness. Such an approach is suitable for learners of different proficiency levels. As Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari (2010, p.491) suggested a bottom-up component could be added to this approach. After learners listen to the audio for the second time, decode the message and understand the main intent of the audio, they could be provided by the transcription of the text where they "compare the concatenated speech with the written form and match the incomprehensible chunks of language with the visual representations of the sounds segments" (Vandergrift and Tafaghdotari, 2010, p.491). This added component is particularly useful with

low-proficiency listeners as it aids the learners' auditory skills of discriminating sounds (see Mareschal, 2007).

"Questionnaires are legitimate procedures that allow students to retrospect about their learning processes" (Matsumoto, 1993), however, their scope is limited. Given that responding to the MALQ does not require students to verbalise their strategies but rather they choose the strategy that they think they employ while listening, the use of MALQ could function as a diagnostic tool. Teachers could administer the MALQ at the beginning of the course to identify problematic areas in learners' strategies and accordingly pay more attention to these metacognitive strategies such as comprehension monitoring, for example, by providing learners with more practice.

To make up for any drawbacks that might be attributed to questionnaires, the use of MALQ could be augmented by asking learners to keep listening journals. Learners reflect on their listening strategies, pinpoint problems that they might have encountered while listening and set prospective goals to better improve their listening. Keeping these journals in a developmental or growth portfolio would give the learners the chance to delve more deeply into the strategies they use, identify and acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, and keep record of their progress. This, in turn, would tap their motivation and increase their self-efficacy since they could trace their own progress in learning the listening skill, on one hand. On the other hand, it allows teachers to listen to students' voices since "learners' voices can be very valuable to our understanding of their comprehension difficulties" (Goh, 2000, p.56) and it is also crucial in the "striving towards improvement in standards in education" to listen to diverse voices since "education works best with diversity" (Laugharne, 2005, p.1307).

The adoption of an action research approach would be the best frame in which the above-mentioned process-based approach could be put and which could render teaching more effective. Dividing the course among cycles gives the teacher the opportunity to plan, observe, act and accordingly carry out changes. The constraints impeding the teaching of listening in the Egyptian classrooms should not deter teachers from implementing such a process-based approach in their classes. It is true that the time allotted to teaching listening does not exceed a couple of minutes each week, still teachers can adopt AR by planning for a listening task and modelling to students how to use metacognitive strategies in dealing with a listening task even if the duration of the audio clip does not mount up to a couple of minutes. Students, then, could access the vast amounts of audio recordings and videos found on the internet and apply the listening strategies they learnt at school. By encouraging learners to practice out-of-classroom activities, teachers tap learners' motivation and ultimately foster autonomous learning.

Finally, teacher training programmes should emphasise the teaching of strategies to students. Teachers themselves should learn how to adopt a strategy-based approach to the teaching of English in general and to the teaching of listening in particular. Training programs should teach instructors how to make use of the vast amounts of audio recordings and videos and how to integrate them in the teaching of listening through the implementation of the metacognitive pedagogical sequence. Teachers themselves should try to come up with innovative ideas to boost learners' motivation and consequently foster their autonomy. The key for this autonomy is listening strategies.

5.6 Recommendations and Future Research

One recommendation would be the replication of the study with another sample of a different proficiency level. The participants in this study were all of an intermediate/upper intermediate level since this is the threshold level dictated by the Cambridge Proficiency Test and accepted as the benchmark for joining the college of language and media where I work. Definitely, the repetition of the study with either a weaker or a more advanced level would yield different results from the ones obtained in this study.

I would recommend that the MALQ be administered on the same day when students sit for the proficiency test; thus it would give a truer picture of the metacognitive strategies they employ while listening. In the present study, the first administration of the MALQ was after students listened to a mini-lecture entitled *Two Functions of Listening* (Lynch, 2004). Would the results of the MALQ have been different had it been administered after a long lecture or after a long listening proficiency test? It would be a better idea if a "think aloud" protocol could be conducted immediately after learners complete the proficiency test. This could be further augmented by another post-test that the students complete after the intervention has been finished. MALQ will be administered again after this test. Hence, the scores of the learners on both the pre-and post- tests could be cross-referenced and any actual impact of the intervention could be observed.

The current study integrated two genres of podcasts; mainly, audios and videos. It would be suggested that a study would be carried out to focus on one genre only and see whether it would have a different effect on the generation of strategies and metacognitive strategies, in particular,

or not. In the same vein, other studies could explore the impact of TED Talks, while controlling for the length of the video, on raising metacognitive strategies.

Though the previous studies conducted in the field of strategy instruction and metacognitive awareness raising in particular have shown that low-proficiency learners benefit more from a metacognitive strategy instruction programme than do their high-proficiency counterparts, they did not investigate whether the learners had prior experience with the teaching of listening and listening strategies in particular or not. I would claim that although learners in the current study were of a high proficiency level, the majority of them did not have prior teaching of the listening skill. Hence, it could be assumed that when it comes to listening instruction, these learners could be considered to be low in their experience with listening instruction and it would be assumed that the implicit knowledge they have been exposed to over the years could have contributed to their success in the metacognitive awareness raising programme if compared to the low-achievers in the study. It would be beneficial to explore whether the proficiency level has an impact on the success of a strategy instruction programme or whether there are other factors such as prior teaching of the listening skill that could have an influence on the success/ failure of a metacognitive strategy instruction programme.

5.6.1 Proposed Proficiency Test Framework

As was discussed above in both the Delimitation and the Contribution to Knowledge sections, the proficiency test administered at the institution where I teach suffers from some drawbacks. Bachman and Palmer (1996) set six criteria for the evaluation of the usefulness of a proficiency test, hence, the following proficiency test that could be used as a pre-test to assess the listening skills of learners would be suggested. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the majority of

Egyptian learners are not familiar with university academic settings, usually used in other proficiency tests (e.g., TOEFL) such as "registrar", "academic adviser", and "tutor". Students get introduced to this context only after they join college and not before that. Consequently, the use of such terms has to be avoided in preparing the test. The length of the audio recordings is another issue that has to be taken into consideration as it has been observed that there is no synergy between the length of the audio recordings in the Cambridge Proficiency Test and the podcasts integrated in the present study (see 5.3.2 above). Furthermore, the test will be standardised for both the pre-post administrations since the use of a standardised test with various forms of question types would enable learners to demonstrate their abilities of transferring strategies to different situations and hence provide "more reliable data of the success of the pedagogical intervention" (Vandergrift and Cross, 2017, p.83).

Though Bachman and Palmer's (1996) criteria were primarily established for evaluating the usefulness of proficiency tests, they will be the springboard upon which the proposed framework will be based. According to the authors, these test characteristics or criteria are: reliability, construct, validity, authenticity, interactiveness, impact and practicality. After the main purpose of constructing the test is identified such as achievement, placement or proficiency (Kang *et al*., 2016, p.13) and in this case for proficiency, the reliability of the test that the test scores remain consistent every time it is administered, is maintained. Construct validity then follows where test scores are used to assess the "meaningfulness and appropriateness of the interpretations" (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p.21). As discussed in Chapter 2, listening is an incontrovertible construct and has to be defined carefully. Accordingly, the incorporation of a variety of global, local, inferential subskills in addition to pragmatic and discoursal features is likely to increase the construct validity of the test. This could be further reinforced by the integration of visual

clues along with the auditory input. Authenticity is another criterion that has to be taken into account. It is the synergy between the characteristics of the test tasks and real features of the target language (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p.23). Thus, the selected audio recordings should reflect real-life listening since authentic texts tap learners' motivation and interest to listen.

Bachman and Palmer (1996, p.25) postulate that the characteristics of test takers such as "language knowledge, metacognitive strategies, topical knowledge and affective schemata" interact with the accomplishing of a test task. The fifth quality of impact pertains to the individuals who are affected by the use of a test on a micro level and the educational system or society on a macro level (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, pp.29-30). The overall scores of a test could be indicators for the evaluation of teaching when instructors use the test especially when teachers "teach for tests" (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p.33). Finally, the practicality characteristic is related to the cost effectiveness and logistics of the test for institutions and also to the delivery mode of the test whether paper-based, computer-based or computer-adaptive. Furthermore, the suitability of the test for the facilities available for the administration of the test should be taken into consideration.

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Appendix 1: The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (adapted from Vandergrift *et al*., 2006)

Dear Students,

You are kindly invited to participate in a study of foreign language education. My name is May Ghoneim and I am a PhD candidate at Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK. I am conducting a study to learn more about **Egyptian learners' listening comprehension skills**. The purpose of the study is to help students become better language learners. I would really appreciate it if you choose to participate in the study.

If you choose to participate, you will have first to fill out a questionnaire asking about your demographic information. Then, you will have to fill out another questionnaire that is related to your listening comprehension strategies. I will invite some students to take part in an interview that will be scheduled later. The completion of the demographic feature questionnaire and the questionnaire will take 20-30 minutes. I would appreciate it very much if you would accept this invitation, but you can choose not to.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will be kept confidential. Your names will not appear in any publications and will only be known by myself; and will only be referred to as anonymous.

Your participation is voluntary and if you decide at **ANY TIME** not to participate, your grades in class will not be affected.

If you are interested in the results of the study, I will be very pleased to discuss them with you.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Best regards,

Part One

Personal Information

Please answer the following questions:

1.   Name (Optional):

   _____

2.   Age: _____

3.   Nationality: _____

4.   Number of years studying English: _____

5.   Have you ever travelled abroad? (If yes: Where? How long have you stayed there?)

   _____

6.   How would you rate your listening skills (Please choose ONE answer only)

   a)   Excellent   b) good   c) fair   d) poor   e) very poor

7.   Do you practice listening outside the English classroom? (Please specify)

   _____

Part Two

The statements below describe some strategies for listening comprehension and how you feel about listening in the language you are learning. Do you agree with them?

This is not a test, so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. By responding to these statements, you can help yourself and your teacher understand your progress in learning to listen.

Please indicate your opinion after each statement. Circle the number which best shows your level of agreement with the statement. For example:

	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Partly agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
I like learning another language	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please circle only <u>ONE</u> number for each statement

1.	Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I find that listening in English is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I translate in my head as I listen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	I feel that listening comprehension in English is a challenge for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	I translate key words as I listen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	I don't feel nervous when I listen to English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I give up and stop listening.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6

18.	I translate word by word, as I listen.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
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.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
20.	As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
21.	I have a goal in mind as I listen.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

Adapted from Vandegrift, L., Goh, C.M., Mareschal, C., and Tafaghodtari, M. (2006). Language Learning, 56, 431-462.

If you have any questions, please email me at maghoneim@cardiffmet.ac.uk

You may keep a copy of this form.

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Focus Group Questions/Prompts:

Let's talk about your thoughts of the listening course.

1. **The teaching of the listening course in comparison to that at school**
   a. Did you study listening at school? How was that taught?

   b. What do you think of the teaching of listening here at the College of Language and Communication? Is it different? In what way?

   Suggest (if only need arises)
   - Method of teaching
   - Note-taking
   - Numbers of listening to the audio
   - Variety of topics discussed
   - Times of listening (individually or as a group)
   - Anything else?

2. **The listening podcasts**
   a. We used to listen to podcasts either in class or as homework assignments. What do you think of these podcasts? Were they difficult/easy? What made them difficult/easy?
      If they were difficult, what do you think was the cause of this difficulty?

   Suggest (only if need arises)
   - The subject matter (the theme of the podcast)
   - Vocabulary (lexical items)/ technical terms
   - Length of the podcast
   - Pronunciation
   - Speed of speaking
   - The length of the spoken sentences
   - The speaker's accent
   - Lack of concentration
   - Commercially produced texts vs. authentic texts
   - Teacher's instructions
   - Anything else?

   What did you do to overcome these problems?

   b. We used to listen to different types of podcasts: lectures, news and narratives? Which type did you understand more easily? Why? What about the others? Were they difficult?

Remind them there are subtypes of narrative podcasts:
- Monlogues
- Dialogues
- Interactive narratives where there are quotations of other people (e.g., "Would Chinese become a lingua franca")
-

3. **The listening assignments**
Remember, we used to have frequent listening assignments . Do you still recall them? What do you think of them? Were they difficult/easy? What made them difficult/easy?

Suggest (only if need arises)
- The questions were not clear
- The type of questions was not familiar
- Accessing the assignments was not easy
- Anything else?

4. **The listening journals**
a. What do you think of the listening journals you used to write either in class after each audio or as a HW assignment. Was it difficult/easy? Why?

b. Did you face any difficulty in writing them?

Suggest (only if need arises)
- Difficulty with reflecting on listening strategies
- Difficulty with expressing thoughts
- Difficulty with language
- Prompts
- Anything else?

c. How beneficial do you think was writing these journals?

5. **How you think you have improved**
a. All in all, do think that your listening skills have improved? Why? Why not?

b. Are they the same as when you started the semester?

c. Are there any other suggestions to improve the course?

Appendix 3: Information Sheet

Title of Project: Egyptian students' attitudes and perceptions as precursors of the success/failure of using podcasts as a means of aural input in a metacognitive awareness strategy training programme, with particular reference to listening.

Background

The focus of my research was stimulated by my interest in learning about the listening strategies students use while listening.

The questionnaire and the focus group are part of a research project to learn more about the listening strategies of EFL learners at the CLC and to provide for prospective students even more effectively in the future.

Your participation in the research project

Why you have been asked

Learners at the College of Language and Commuication (henceforth; CLC) need to master the skill of listening.

You have been invited to participate because you are a student on the BA of Language and Communication programme, and I am interested in the strategies you use while listening. I might also like to know about your opinion of the listening sessions. You are not required to participate – your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the research at any time or from any section of the study. Even if you agree to join the study, you can still change your mind and stop at any time. I will respect your decision. There are no penalties for stopping.

What would happen if you join the study?

If you agree to join the study, then initially, you will be asked to complete two questionnaires (set of questions with a choice of answers). The first questionnaire will ask you some general information about you such as your name, age, nationality, number of years studying English, whether you have travelled abroad before and the length of the stay, your rating of your listening skill and whether you listen to songs or watch movies outside the classroom. The other questionnaire will ask you about the strategies you use while listening. I anticipate that these will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and submit.

You will be asked if you are willing to participate further, in a group discussion with your colleagues. The discussion should last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Here, you would be asked about your personal experiences of the listening session at school and comparing it to the listening session at college, your opinion of the listening assignments, the listening journals you have written, and the listening audio you have listened to.

I will make use of the listening journals you will write. This will not by any means affect your grades.

Are there any risks?

I do not think there are any significant risks to you from taking part in the study. I will make sure that the information you share does not include any description that would identify you. If you do have concerns about answering the questions, you can stop at any time. The same applies to the questionnaires and the listening journals you provide.

Your rights.

You may withdraw from the study at any time or from any section of the study.

What happens to the results?

As the researcher, I will be responsible for putting all the information from the study (except names, and personal identification information) into a computer programme. I will then look to see if there is repetition in the strategies used. Furthermore, I will analyse the data from both the discussion groups and the listening journals. In the end, the results will form part of my doctoral thesis and might perhaps be written up for publication in an academic journal.

Are there any benefits from taking part?

There are no direct benefits from taking part; however you will help me to develop a better understanding of how we can improve the teaching of the listening course for you and for groups of students that follow you. You will neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged by your involvement in the study.

What happens next?

There is a voluntary informed consent form attached to this letter. If you are willing to participate please complete it and return it to me. This will then be saved in a word document. You will then be invited to participate in a focus group – the date has yet to be decided.

How I protect your privacy:

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential and your privacy will be respected. I will be taking careful steps to make sure that you cannot be identified from any of the data provided or any confidential information about you that is collated/held as part of the study.

I will keep your name and personal details completely separate from the information you provide voluntarily for the study. Data will be coded so that you will not be identifiable.

In reporting the results, individuals will be anonomised. When I have finished the study and analysed the information, all the forms used to gather data will be completely destroyed. I will retain a copy of the attached consent form for 10 years, because we are required to do so by the University.

Further information

If you have any questions about the research or how I intend to conduct the study, please contact me.

May Ghoneim

✉   maghoneim@cardfiimet.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Consent Form

If you consent to participate in the study, please complete the form below and return it to me (May Ghoneim) when we meet.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without my grades being affected.

☐

3. I understand that relevant data collected during the study may be used for reporting purposes and in the production of the researcher's professional doctoral thesis. The work might also be written up for publication in an academic journal.

☐

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

5. I agree to the focus group being audio recorded.

☐

6. I agree to the researcher making notes to record the focus group discussions.

☐

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix 5: Matrix representing key variables

- extracurricular activities

- metacognitive strategies

- motivation

- proficiency level

- prior teaching

- podcasts (types & characteristics)

- metacognitive strategies (implicit instruction)

Awareness of metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategy training

- metacognitive, cognitive, social or affective

- effective or ineffective

Listening strategy use

Perceptions

Reflection

- motivation

- proficiency level

- dialogic interaction (collaboration with peer)

- podcasts (characteristics), prosodic features & extralinguistic features

- reflections

- strategies

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Appendix 6: Sample of a Listening Journal

- I only had trouble in keeping up with the speaker at some parts as he speaks rapidly.
- Focusing on keywords and main ideas helped me get back on whenever I lost concentration.
- Managed to note down nearly all the important points of the lecture.
- Also, brainstorming with colleagues before listening helped a lot.

Appendix 7: Sample Coding of a Journal Using the Coding System

MESE

Today's interview was really good. <u>I managed to understand everything they said.</u> Before

MPAO

listening, I knew that it was an interview so <u>I divided my paper into Qs and As to facilitate it.</u>

MEST   **SJC**

<u>It was very effective and helped me a lot</u>. <u>When I revised my notes with Lara, I found it
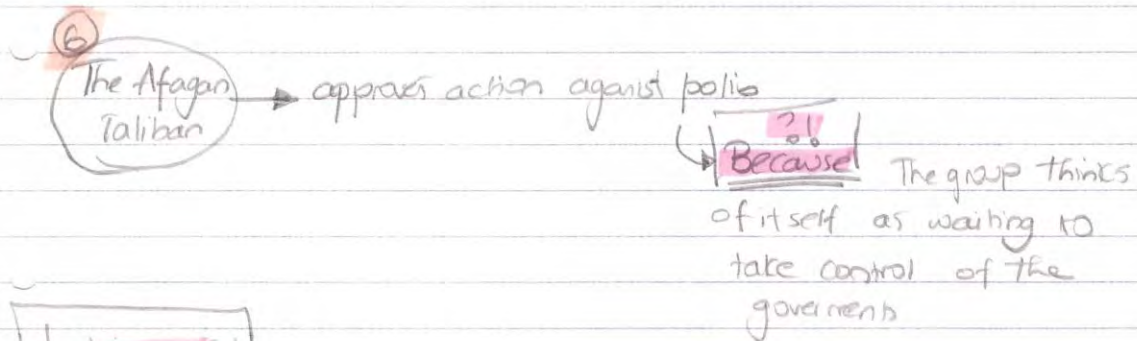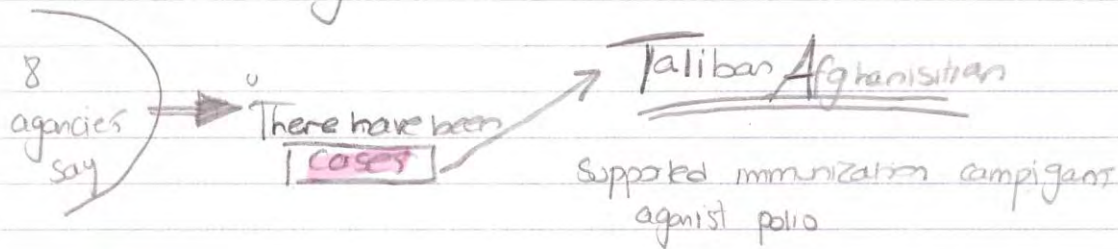
MES

different from mine.</u> All in all, it was easy but I <u>should work more on my note-taking to be s

shorter</u>.

Appendix 8: Sample of Notes (*The Educational Report*)

⑤ It is important to show militans group than health intervention.
are neccessary

8 agencies say → There have been [cases] → Taliban Afghanisitian

Supported immunization campigans agonist polio

⑥ (The Afagan Taliban) → approves action agonist polio

↳ [Because] ?! The group thinks of it self as waiting to take control of the governents

[In his words]

"when a militan group wants the trusts of people / they go at it by trying to do what the people want"

(He sees)

↳ Taliban → (as) its way of seeking to gain legistmacy

Try to seem responsble and worthy of governing

340
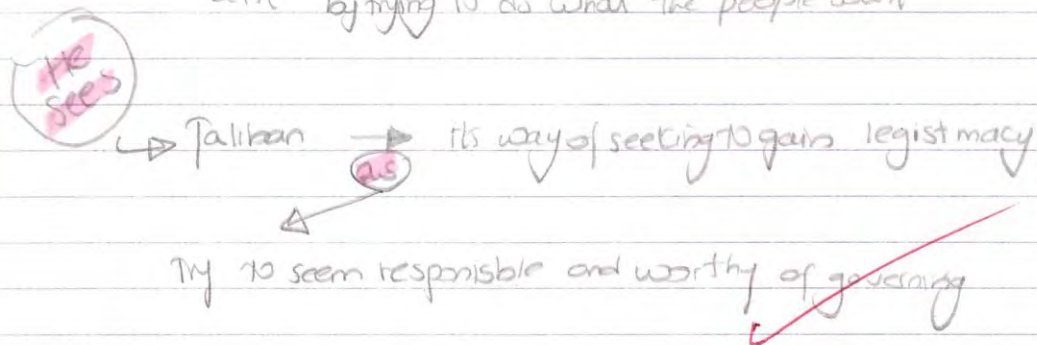
Appendix 9: The Story of Two Refugees

You will hear a story about two refugees. Below you will find a number of sentences that summarises the events of this story. Organize the sentences in the most logical order in which you think the story will unfold. Place the numbers of the sentences in the appropriate order under the column "My Predictions". To help you begin, the opening sentence has been marked with an asterisk (*). After the first listen to the text, place in the column "First Listen" the numbers of the statements in the order in which you thought you heard them. Compare your order of events with a partner and then, collaboratively, decide on an order of events that you will enter in the column "Our Predictions". After the second listen to the text, verify your predictions and make any changes, if necessary, in the column "Correct Sequence".

1. A merchant vessel rescued Doaa and the two kids. They were transported to the island of Crete by a helicopter. (   )
2. Aroud 100 person survived but as time was passing and no one came to rescue them, they lost hope and started to sink. (   )
3. A mother, who also couldn't struggle to survive, handed her little daughter, Masa, to Doaa. (   )
4. Doaa was very desperate and kept praying for God that somebody rescues her and the little children. (   )
5. A young Syrian refugee couple, Bassem and Doaa, decided to risk their lives and flee to Sweden. (*)
6. The small fishing boat started to sink. (   )
7. It was only Doaa and little Masa in addition to other nine passengers who could survive the wreck. (   )
8. The nineteen-year old refugee, Doaa found her responsible for two little kids. (   )
9. A small boat came closer to the fishing boat. The crew of the small boat kept asking the passengers to get off the fishing boat. When the passengers refused, the crew of the small boat dig a hole next to where Doaa was sitting. (   )
10. A father, who couldn't survive, handed over his son, Malek to both Bassem and Doaa . (   )
11. Based on the Greek's media reporting of the story of little Masa, she was united with her family in Sweden. (   )
12. Doaa exerted her utmost effort to help Bassem to hold to life but he sadly couldn't make it and drowned. (   )
13. Doaa couldn't swim but she managed with the help of a child's ring that Bassem had found. (   )
14. On a Saturday morning, people from different nationalities were squeezed in an old fishing boat bound to Italy. (   )
15. Doaa was awarded a medal of bravery by the Academy of Athens. (   )

	My Predictions	**First Listen**	**Our Predictions**	**Second Listen**	**Correct Sequence**
a.	5	5	5	5	5
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
f.					
g.					
h.					
i.					
j.					
k.					
l.					
m.					
n.					
o.					

Reflection/ goal setting: What made this task easy or difficult?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What I will do differently next time:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix 10: Teleworking (TW) and Distance Learning (DL)

Teleworking (TW) and Distance Learning (DL)		
Terminology:		
Occupations using TW:		
TW		
	Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Worker		
Employer		
Society		
DL		
	Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Learner		
Tutor/Course organiser		
Conclusion • • •		