

**The Effect of Group Dynamic Assessment on Raising Young Iranian EFL Learners' Metacognitive Awareness and Listening Comprehension**

**Mahmood Reza Moradian\***

*Department of English Language and Literature, Lorestan University, Khorramabad*

**Parisa Kogani Baharvand**

*Department of English Language and Literature, Lorestan University*

**Abstract**

Listening has long been the neglected skill in second/foreign language acquisition, research, teaching, and assessment. And managing listening instruction and improving listening comprehension in the classroom are difficult for teachers and EFL learners. In this regard, this study aimed at investigating the effect of group dynamic assessment (G-DA) on Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive listening strategies and listening comprehension. Sixty young EFL listeners were assigned to an experimental and a control group at random. The experimental group (n = 30) was metacognitively instructed based on group dynamic assessment. The students in the control group (n = 30) were orally exposed to the same material without being metacognitively instructed by the same teacher. After ten instructional sessions, a listening comprehension post-test and the metacognitive awareness listening questionnaire (MALQ) were administered to both groups to measure their listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness, respectively. A comparison of pre- and post-test scores of the G-DA group showed that the learners benefited from metacognitive instruction as measured by the listening comprehension test. As well, it was found that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on both listening comprehension and MALQ post-tests.

**Keywords:** listening strategies; group dynamic assessment; listening comprehension; metacognitive instruction

---

\* Department of English Language and Literature, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran.

-Received on:18/01/2016

Accepted on: 16/03/2016

Email: : *mmoradian@yahoo.com*

## **1. Introduction**

With regard to the importance of listening comprehension in L2 learning and the beneficial impact of enhancing this skill on the development of other language skills (Rost, 2002), the very need for more research in this area is felt. Goh (2006) mentions listening as a process and believes that it should also be taught as a process. In recent years, L2 listening researchers demonstrate a growing interest in exploring and understanding learners' metacognitive awareness with an eye on enhancing this skill in L2 listeners and promoting their autonomy (Cross, 2010). To ameliorate the complex process of listening, strategic instruction has been highlighted during the last two decades (Mendelson, 1995) to equip listeners with the ability and awareness to use strategies and control the comprehension process over time and contexts (Goh & Hu, 2014). Furthermore, there has been a shift from the product and full comprehension of the text to the cognitive process by developing strategies and skills knowledge of learners. Within such a process-oriented instruction, the goal is to develop metacognitive abilities and proficiency levels in language learners to have self-control over listening comprehension by orchestrating appropriate strategies as well as practicing skills.

Vandergrift (2007) correspondingly proposes that what is needed now is a research and teaching shift from the product (correct/incorrect answer) to the process of listening. In this regard, Field (2000, 2008), Goh (2002), Vandergrift (2007) shed some lights on the prominence of research investigating the actual processes of listening through the lens of various pedagogical approaches with the intention to inform instructional practices.

In a similar vein, Buck (2003) confesses the complexity of listening comprehension process, and asserts that "if we want to measure [assess and teach] it, we must understand how that process works" (p. 150). Accordingly, listening lessons should include activities that teach learners explicitly how to listen effectively as part of their ongoing language development. Every lesson can be an opportunity for them to develop greater awareness and autonomy as second language listeners and strategies for facilitating comprehension and progress in listening. Goh (2008) refers to this type of process-based approach as 'metacognitive instruction'. It enables listeners to increase simultaneously their awareness of the process and employ effective strategies in listening comprehension.

Additionally, another approach to assessment which can result is individuals' development is dynamic assessment (DA) (e.g., Lantolf & Poehner, 2014). It is an integration of assessment and instruction aiming at facilitating and uncovering domains of learners' abilities. Vygotsky proposed that an instruction to be most effective, it has to be aligned with individuals'

zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD has been defined as the “optimum time for teaching both the group and individual ZPD” (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 204). In classrooms, a whole class ZPD should be included with teachers and students jointly co-constructing knowledge, what has been termed as group DA (G-DA) by Poehner (2009). Moreover, to date, little socioculturally-informed studies have been conducted to explore the effect of metacognitive instruction via whole class ZPD on listening in EFL setting. In short, this study intends to make a meager contribution to the metacognitive teaching through raising young learners’ attention to the process of listening via G-DA instruction.

## 2. Literature Review

In recent years, L2 listening research has begun to question the preponderance of the product-oriented trend as compared with the process-oriented approach in listening studies and instruction (e.g. Buck, 2003; Field, 2000; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Goh, 2002; Vandergrift, 2007). Flowerdew and Miller (2005), for example, assert that language instructors “must focus not only on the product of listening but also on the process” (p. 20). Vandergrift (2007) correspondingly proposes that what is needed now is a research and teaching shift from the product (correct/incorrect answer) to the process of listening. In this regard, Field (2000, 2008), Goh (2002), Vandergrift (2007) shed some light on the prominence of research investigating the actual processes of listening through the lens of various pedagogical approaches with the intention to inform instructional practices.

Goh (2008) also promoted a process-based approach to listening instruction in order to ‘demystify the skills’ involved in listening comprehension. She referred to this type of process-based listening instruction as ‘metacognitive instruction in listening’, which is informed by the theory of metacognition and is now regarded as a vital part of human learning. Metacognition is defined by Flavell (1976) as “one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them...Metacognition refers, among other things, to active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective” (p. 232).

### *2.1 Metacognitive Instruction in Listening Strategies*

Until recently, in most of the listening strategy studies, the focus of attention has been on exploring the types of strategies used by learners or the patterns of strategies in successful versus less successful learners. However, the focus has shifted to research into ways to teach the effective strategy use. There is not a

consensus on whether listening strategies should be actively taught or not. Chamot (2004) proposed that “teachers should opt for explicit instruction and should probably integrate the instruction into their regular course work, rather than providing a separate learning strategies course” (p.19). Despite these disagreements in the field of listening strategy instruction, research shows that L2 learners do benefit from being actively taught to use various strategies as they approach listening tasks. Mendelsohn (1995) states that it is the responsibility of the listening instructor to teach students to use strategies rather than simply providing opportunities for students to listen to oral passages.

Vandergrift (2004) and Goh (2008) began to discuss the rationale for integrating metacognitive instruction into teaching listening comprehension based on the assumption that metacognitive instruction can potentially promote learners' awareness of their listening and learning processes and develop their ability to use appropriate strategies in various contexts (Goh, 2008), although the mixed findings of the empirical studies on the efficacy of metacognitive instruction in listening performance have challenged the accuracy of this assumption.

Vandergrift (2004) introduces a metacognitive cycle in which learners employ strategies to regulate listening and achieve good comprehension. This cycle is best featured by typical metacognitive elements: verification, evaluation, and reflection. These aim to raise learners' awareness about the strategy use and offer necessary scaffolding in the process of listening. Using these strategies not only help learners to improve their comprehension but also experience an increase in motivation (e.g., Goh, 2008).

## *2.2. Sociocultural Theory and Group Dynamic Assessment*

Daniels (2005) holds that the role of social processes as a mechanism for learning is usually attributed to Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1978) claims that higher mental abilities of human beings are mediated. This mediation is made possible through tools and signs or, to use Vygotsky's word, “cultural artifacts.” Vygotsky conceives development of a joint venture of environment and development, namely the dialectic relationship between the outer world and internal world or respectively environmental and developmental worlds. He labeled his ideas on learning and development Socio-historical or Sociocultural Theory (SCT) of learning. One of the most recent derivations of SCT has been Dynamic Assessment (DA). Vygotsky (1998) claimed that in order to support individuals and groups' development, assessment should be offered within their ZPD in which the theoretical background of DA is found. In DA procedures, mediation is presented to the learners in order to help them co-construct a ZPD.

Alternatively, according to Poehner (2009) social mediation and interaction within the class context should be studied under a new framework

known as group dynamic assessment (G-DA) because in DA, a major challenge is how to use it in the classroom where the teacher interacts with not a single ZPD but a group of ZPDs, a context which does not allow the use of one-to-one interactions. SCT practitioners flag that the mediator can interact simultaneously with a group of learners in co-constructing several ZPDs and moving the entire group forward in their ZPDs (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Poehner, 2009).

According to Poehner (2009) involving all group members does not mean that the teacher should not suggest mediation to individuals, but the group should be directed to every mediating as well. In what follows this study tends to develop an understanding the concept of concurrent G-DA, in this format the teacher converses with the entire group. To be sure, the teacher may supply mediation in response to an individual, but the interaction fluctuates rapidly between primary and secondary interactants (primary interactants are those participants who teacher offers mediation in response to their difficulties as they negotiate and support is needed and secondary interactants are the other group members because the exchange occurs in the social space of the class and it has mediating possibilities for the rest of the group as well) as one learner's question, struggle, discuss or comment sets the floor for another's contribution. So, concurrent G-DA may appear to an observer to be the same as whole class instruction, but the loss of one-on-one interactions does not preclude development within individuals' ZPDs. Moreover concurrent G-DA supports the progress of each individual by working within the group's ZPD.

Recent studies have focused on the effect of metacognition on the listening skill (Cross, 2011; Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari, 2010). Vandergrift (2002) conducted a study on beginning-level French students performing on listening tasks and making use of instruments that engaged them in prediction, evaluation, and other processes involved in listening. He argues that reflection on the processes of listening can help students develop metacognitive knowledge and achieve success in listening tasks.

Vandergrift and Tafagodtari (2010) measured the listening comprehension of (n = 106) tertiary-level high-beginner and lower-intermediate learners of French as an L2 over a semester. Fifty-nine students in the experimental group listened to texts using a methodology that led learners through the metacognitive processes, (prediction/planning, monitoring, evaluating, and problem solving) underlying successful L2 listening. The same teacher taught 47 students in the control group, and students listened to the same texts the same number of times, but without any guided attention to the processes involved in listening. The findings from pre-test and post-test scores showed the experimental group outperformed the control group in the listening comprehension measure, and the less-skilled learners participated in the guided

methodology (strategy-based) benefited from the instruction more than more-skilled learners.

In a DA project carried out on L2 listening comprehension on university level intermediate learners of French, Ableeva (2010) detected ten types of mediational strategies throughout the interactions she had with the learners. The strategies were accepting responses, structuring the text, replaying a passage, asking the words, identifying a problem area, finding metalinguistic clues, offering a choice, using translation, providing a correct pattern, and providing an explicit explanation. Ableeva's study followed a multi-assessment procedure in the format of non-dynamic and dynamic pretest - enrichment program – non-dynamic and dynamic posttest – non-dynamic and dynamic transfer. Ableeva observed that causes of poor performance were sometimes the result of a lack of lexical knowledge of the L2, problems stemming from phonology, limited knowledge of the L2 culture and issues with discourse level grammar.

Hashemi Shahraki, Ketabi, and Barati (2015) also focused on the effects of G-DA on learners' pragmatic knowledge of conversational implicatures in the context of listening with 50 intermediate level students. Through the analysis of the mediated interactions between the learners and the mediator, they detected nine mediational strategies effective in the development of listening abilities which varied in their degrees of explicitness. The result suggested that G-DA procedures led to the improvement of learners' listening ability especially their pragmatic understanding of conversational implicatures; however, all the learners did not improve in the same amount.

Alavi, Kaivanpanah, and Shabani (2012) also tested the applicability of G-DA in identifying the mediational strategies offered by a mediator during his G-DA interactions with a group of L2 learners in the context of listening. The results indicated collective scaffolding could pave the way for establishing, distributed help among learners within the social space of the class in the course of which secondary and primary interactants mutually benefit from each other's contributions (Poehner, 2009). In order to meet the objectives of the present study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Does metacognitive instruction through G-DA have any impact on fostering young EFL learners' listening comprehension?
2. Does metacognitive instruction through G-DA have any impact on developing young Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness?
3. Is there any significant difference between listening comprehension post-test scores of the G-DA and control groups?
4. How metacognitive strategies through G-DA instruction affect the young Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness?

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Participants

Four intact classes of female and male Iranian young EFL learners ( $n = 60$ ) were selected based on convenience sampling from a private language institute in Khorramabad, Iran. They were at the beginning level of language proficiency and homogenous on the basis of their pre-test scores as well as teacher's appraisal. The learners ranged from 11 to 13 years old. Additionally, the participants were not aware of the purpose of the study, and they did not know in which group they would be placed. It is worth noting that two groups were instructed by same teacher who had been working with them for about 1 year.

#### 3.2 Tasks and Tests

The metacognitive awareness listening questionnaire (MALQ) and Movers listening comprehension test were employed as instruments of this study. The MALQ has been designed for researchers and instructors to assess the extent to which language learners were aware of and can regulate the process of L2 listening comprehension (Vandergrift et al., 2006). It was also intended to serve as a self-assessment instrument that learners can use to appraise their awareness of the listening process and to reflect on their strategy use when listening in the L2. It contained 21 items, each was rated on a six-point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), partially disagree (3), partially agree (4) agree (5), and strongly agree (6)). The instrument comprised the five components of metacognitive awareness: (a) problem-solving, (b) planning and evaluation, (c) mental translation, (d) person knowledge, and (e) directed attention represented by items 6, 5, 3, 3, and 4, respectively. A simplified translated version of the MALQ was used twice, once as a pre-test and then as a post-test. To increase the parallelism of the two versions (i.e., both English and Persian translation) the researcher shared the Persian version with some experts.

Furthermore, to investigate listening comprehension of the experimental and control groups both prior to and after the instruction, the researcher deployed the Movers listening comprehension test as a standard listening test for young listeners. The parallel version of this test was used in all three phases of the study. In short, four different versions of this test were employed as the task, pre- and post-test. Each Movers test consisted of 5 parts (25 questions) and took about 30 minutes to be answered. For each part, learners had to listen to a recorded text or texts and answer the questions following the text. Regarding the test validity, the exam result is accepted by

thousands of leading businesses and educational institutions worldwide. Around 2,800 centers worldwide offer Cambridge English exams. Furthermore, Cambridge ESOL Examinations offers the world's leading range of qualifications for learners and teachers of English. Around 1.75 million people in 135 countries take Cambridge ESOL exams each year. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .89. Finally, the materials selected for classroom practices were a number of listening tasks with a good audio quality from listening tasks.

### *3.3 Data Analysis*

The present study enjoys a mixed method design meaning that the data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative data were measured through the two groups' post-test scores by means of SPSS software version 18. Consequently, qualitative data were analyzed through microgenetic analysis. Then, results were discussed in the light of the literature reviewed.

### *3.4 Microgenetic Analysis*

Microgenetic method was originally devised by Heniz Werner, an Australian developmental psychologist in the mid-1920s, and it was then endorsed by Vygotsky (1978), who proposed the genetic model in psychology. Microgenesis, as one of the genetics of the genetic model, is defined by Gutiérrez (2008) as "the moment-to-moment co-construction of language and language learning" (p. 2). The genetic model is premised on the fact that the comprehensive understanding of the higher, culturally organized levels of human mental functioning is only achieved through the study of the processes rather than the products of development (Vygotsky, 1978). In line with the previous argument, most sociocultural researches perform the microgenetic method since focusing merely on the products may lead us to neglecting the genetic relationship between the elementary and higher levels of the mental activity and may not provide the researchers with the internal nature of mental development (Vygotsky, 1978). Indeed, as Mitchell and Myles (2004) contend, microgenesis is 'a local, contextualized learning process . . . [that] can sometimes be traced visibly in the course of talk between expert and novice' (p. 198). Conducting a microgenetic analysis, teachers may be able to observe the subtle changes that may go unnoticed in a particular course of learning when the students go through the learning process. Moreover, the circumstances precede and follow a change, and the change itself is brought to light through direct and intensive observation in the microgenetic method (RS Siegler, 1991). As a result, microgenetic analysis can assist teachers to diagnose learners' needs and consequently to tailor their methods of teaching to learners' requirements. On such account, it has been employed by the present study with an eye on serving the objectives of this study, i.e., to track

the young EFL listeners metacognitive development over ten treatment sessions.

### *3.5 Data Collection Procedure*

In the current study, two parallel samples of Movers listening comprehension test, as the pre-test and post-test, were administered at the beginning and the end of the study to both groups. The MALQ was administered at the beginning and end points of the study, immediately after a listening activity. Instructional interventions lasted ten sessions within a time span of five weeks. Thirty learners of G-DA received a paper which was divided into three parts namely as pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. They were asked to verbalize their thoughts and write them down regarding the strategies and activities they use in these three stages. Initially, the learners tried to brainstorm the information they might hear together with the words which might be used in the task at hand. Further, they were asked to set the goals of the task. After group work, the teacher involved the experimental group in classroom discussions. More precisely, the teacher tried to set the ground for all groups to pool their resources together and enrich the pre-listening phase. The teacher posed some questions and outlined what the participants shared on the board. It was speculated that rendering the participants' verbal contributions into concrete written language on the board could open up opportunities for further reflection and dialogue among all of the participants. After predicting the topic and vocabularies, the experimental group listened to the text for the first time; as they were listening, they noted down what they understood. Then, the participants were engaged in group work and shared their information and discussed over it. The teacher strived to motivate them into dialoguing in order to remove the sources of incomprehensibility and to identify parts of the text requiring careful attention. For the second and third time, the participants listened to the text to modify their possible misunderstandings of the text. Afterwards, teacher asked the class to reflect individually on the ways through which they had completed the listening task and engaged all the students in a classroom discussion to set the scene for all to reflect upon their task performance and resolve the existing sources of difficulty.

In each phase, as each learner expressed his/her notes one by one, the teacher as a mediator gave them graduated mediation based on their notes and their emerging needs within their ZPDs. The concurrent approach to G-DA was employed. In other words, when a learner faced a problem, the mediator provided mediation in response to his/her problem. The assessment procedure adopted in this study coincided closely with those of Poehner's (2005). Following Poehner (2005), the mediation entailed hints, prompts, questions,

suggestions, and explanations determined by the mediator's assumptions about learners' requirements and upon learners' requests for mediation.

On the other hand, the participants of the control group just listened to the audio file twice and answered the questions without receiving any mediation, and if the learners could not understand the text and were unable to answer the questions, the teacher supplied them the correct answer directly. It is worthy of adding that all dialogues in experimental group were video-recorded and stored for the microgenetic analysis and qualitative part of the study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 The Results of Quantitative Analysis

The students' pre and post-test scores of the listening comprehension test in the G-DA group are demonstrated in the tables below. A paired-samples t-test was run to investigate whether metacognitive listening strategies through G-DA could have any impact on fostering young EFL learners listening comprehension. As shown in Table 1 and 2, there is a statistically significant increase in young EFL learners' listening comprehension from the pre-test ( $M = 11.26$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ) to post-test ( $M = 22.06$ ,  $SD = 2.79$ ),  $t(29) = 19.843$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed).

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for the G-DA Group on Listening Comprehension Pre- and Post-Tests*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Pre-test	30	11.26	2.08	.380
Post-test	30	22.06	2.79	.509

Table 2

*Inferential Statistics for the Effect of Metacognitive Instruction through G-DA on Listening Comprehension from the Pre- to Post-Test*

	<i>Paired Differences</i>			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.(2-tailed)</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>			
PrePost	11.033	3.045	.556	19.843	29	.000

As Table 2 shows, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of metacognitive instruction on the listening comprehension scores for the G-DA group. The effect size showed that the magnitude of the differences turned out to be strong ( $\eta^2 = 0.93$ ). Therefore, it can be

pointed out that metacognitive instruction through concurrent G-DA was effective in enhancing listening comprehension and could assist young listeners to monitor their listening and enhance their listening comprehension.

The second question asked whether metacognitive instruction through G-DA can have any impact on developing young EFL learners' metacognitive awareness. A paired-samples t-test was run to answer the question. In order to compare the results of the questionnaire (before and after the treatment) by statistical methods, the items were scored in quantitative order.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for the G-DA Group on Metacognitive Awareness in Pre- and Post-Tests*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Pre-test	30	75.466	11.643	2.125
Post-test	30	111.90	7.236	1.321

As displayed in Table 3, descriptive statistics indicate that the mean on post-test (M= 111.9) is higher than the pre-test (M= 75.46) in G-DA.

Table 4

*Inferential Statistics for the Effect of Metacognitive Instruction through G-DA on Metacognitive Awareness from the Pre- to Post-Test*

	<i>Paired Differences</i>			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.(2tailed)</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>			
rePost	36.433	9.496	1.733	21.013	29	.000

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, there is a statistically significant increase in metacognitive awareness of the G-DA group from pre-test (M =75.46, SD =11.64) to post-test (M =111.9, SD =7.23),  $t(29) = 21.01$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed). The obtained data evidenced that magnitude of the effect size (eta squared= 0.93) turned out to be strong. Therefore, it can be pointed out that metacognitive instruction through concurrent G-DA has been effective in enhancing metacognitive awareness and could assist young EFL listeners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening more cautiously after engaging in G-DA.

In order to answer the third question an independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the listening comprehension post-test scores of the G-DA and control groups.

Table 5  
*Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the G-DA and Control Group's Post-Tests*

<i>Groups</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
G-DA	30	22.0667	2.08332	.38036
Control	30	11.2667	2.79079	.50953

As portrayed in Table 5, descriptive statistics indicate that the G-DA group showed a higher level of comprehension ( $M = 22.06$ ) than the control group ( $M = 11.26$ ).

Table 6  
*A Comparison of the G-DA and Control Groups' Post-Test Scores*

<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
2.5	58	000.	10.800	.63584	9.52723	12.0727
	53	000.	10.800	.63584	9.52723	12.0749

As Table 5 and 6 show, there was a significant difference in scores for G-DA ( $M = 22.06$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ) and Control group ( $M = 11.26$ ,  $SD = 2.79$ ). The obtained data [ $t_{(58)} = 16.98$ ;  $p < 0/001$ ] evidenced that magnitude of the differences turned out to be strong ( $\eta^2 = 0.83$ ). Therefore, it can be pointed out that metacognitive instruction through concurrent G-DA was effective in enhancing listening comprehension and could assist young listeners to monitor their listening.

#### *4.2 The Results of Qualitative Analysis*

To answer the forth question, a microgenetic analysis was used to investigate how metacognitive strategies through G-DA can affect learners' listening comprehension and their metacognitive awareness. The qualitative portion of this study focused on analyzing the treatment sessions and interactions between the young learners under investigation and their teacher while they were undertaking either G-DA metacognitive instruction. Through the following extracts, some of the transcribed interactions are represented and then discussed to indicate the different processes of the metacognitive instruction. However, because of space limitation, only three extracts from treatment sessions in the first and the last sessions are presented. This was done intentionally since first and last sessions of treatment can signpost how

and how much learning has been made through engaging in G-DA instruction.

#### *4.2.1 Metacognitive Instruction with G-DA Group*

##### *4.2.1.1 The First Session (Post-Listening Part)*

All during ten treatment sessions, students were asked to write then talk about the strategies they employed in all three different stages of listening comprehension. The following is taken from a post-listening stage in first treatment session. Inviting listeners to write down their attitudes about the present session listening activity and their goals and plans for the next one, the learners fill the post-listening part as the final step. As usual, the teacher asks the learners to read aloud their written entries. They receive teacher feedback after expressing their actual level of development (i.e., after reading their attitudes and plans for the next listening activity). In Extract 1, there are samples of learners' statements at the initial sessions of the G-DA metacognitive instruction. The young EFL listeners' diaries express that they gradually become aware of their listening difficulties. It should be mentioned that almost all students use the word 'CD' to talk about playing the listening file.

##### *Extract 1*

*I listen carefully to the CD, but I do not understand completely. I don't understand all sentences and some of the words. When teacher said the word, I saw that I already knew it, but I couldnot get it on the CD. In the second and third listening, everything is much better than the first time.*

Reflected in post-listening diaries, students' frustration and dissatisfaction with their performance in listening skill is evident. Flowingly, the writings were discussed in the class. Talking about the origins of their hatred of listening, lack of understanding, and sharing some of their in common problems were addressed dialogically and concurrently in which all engaged in discussion.

##### *4.2.1.2 The Tenth Session (Post-Listening Part)*

The young EFL learners demonstrated more signs of development as the semester progressed. In the following extract, the students are asked to talk about the strategies they employed in the while listening stage. Worthy of notice is students' self-initiated collaborations and expressing more cognitive statements. They demonstrate signs of awareness of their listening comprehension process through their more cautious talks in the class as well as their pre-listening documents. Subsequently, their diary writings demonstrate

more awareness of the different listening phases. Some steps such as setting the goal for the next listening activity, planning, more strategic listening and evaluating their performances were undertaken. In extract 2 some of these steps employed an individual is presented.

*Extract 2*

*I know that I should focus on what I hear while I am listening. There is no need to translate the words separately, but I should try to get the meaning in general. I am not worried about the words that I do not know their meanings since I know I can guess them or after listening I can ask them from my teacher. That is GREAT when my guesses come true.*

*Extract 3*

*Now, I know that most of the words that I did not understand while listening are the words I already knew them. The words are pronounced too fast to distinguish them easily. I need to listen more carefully.*

The results of qualitative analysis in G-DA group can be explained on some accounts. EFL listeners who received ZPD sensitive feedback as primary interactants made progresses since the feedback was in tuned with their levels of requisite. In other words, the type of quality and quantity of the feedback they received fulfilled three requirements of effective feedback: ‘graduated, dialogic, and contingent’ (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Moreover, G-DA helped them to co-shape knowledge dialogically. The instruction through G-DA also enjoyed some qualities such as stopping the support from the expert part not impedes learners’ progress in self-regulation. It could be reasonably argued that numerous learning opportunities were also created in collaborations that were likely to promote the learners’ ongoing metacognitive development.

As it is evident from the extract, G-DA is group-based, and the dialogic and graduated principles of DA extend the focus to potentially a whole class, meaning that the teacher aims at involving an entire class ZPD. According to Poehner (2009), making a group does not mean “simply placing individuals together and assigning tasks to be performed, with little or no consideration given to whether such groups constitute socially coherent units” (p.473). Instead, Poehner proposes that the existence of psychological factors is necessary. In other words, the group member who has a shared objective work “for others as for oneself” or “to oneself as to others” (Petrovsky, 1985, p. 191).

As the data illustrates in the remainder of the analysis, a collective ZPD can emerge in the context of the group. As Poehner (2009) asserts, both

the primary interactants (i.e., those who are confronted by the language problems and get involved in oral discussion with their teacher) and the secondary interactants (i.e., those who witness but indirectly make use of the interaction between the primary interactants and the teacher through private speech) are engaged in a dialogic interaction. Consequently, all classroom participants can benefit from the collaborative dialogue so as to identify, evaluate, and hence improve their abilities.

## **5. Conclusions and Implications**

The study outlines a new approach to assessing and teaching metacognitive awareness in listening comprehension grounded in Vygotskian SCT. The approach generated an inventory of mediational strategies that, according to the results, have proven to be useful in promoting the listening comprehension and metacognitive instruction of young EFL listeners. All in all, the findings of this study provide evidence that metacognitive listening instruction through nurturing large groups' ZPD can promote listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness as well as alleviating learners' frustration toward listening skill. In fact, tailored feedback given in G-DA approach can assist learners to move toward better listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness.

Furthermore, G-DA group profited from receiving metacognitive instruction in concurrent approach and get assistance aligned with their ZPD. Lantolf and Poehner (2004) underscored the significance of the quality of interaction in DA. There is not any claim of offering a complete and ideal form of mediation by the present study's teacher within G-DA, but the G-DA sessions analysis revealed how challenging, unpredictable, and spontaneous the nature of the G-DA-informed mediation is. Some steps were undertaken to enhance the quality of the DA interactions such as mediating learners by their present teacher who had a fair level of prior acquaintance and familiarity with the young listeners through which she set the ground to increase the level of learners' engagement in the G-DA mediation. However, any teacher mentor's endeavor to standardize the prompts within DA limits the mentor's opportunities to be responsive to developing learners' need and co-construction of a ZPD (Poehner, 2008).

Ultimately, in line with Goh and Taib's (2006) findings, less skilled young EFL learners can benefit from metacognitive instruction. Moreover, what is new with findings of this study was the impact of revisiting the process and procedure of this instruction attuned with individuals' ZPD, which can assist socialization of teachers' cognition and upgradation of cognitive transformation. It can be inferred from the results of this study that the individuals' abilities are emergent and should be increased through interaction

in the social context (Vygotsky, 1978). Accordingly, the learners' current abilities should not be considered as their mental development. Rather, the teacher should particularly focus on those young listeners' abilities which are on the edge of emergence and assist them to extend their current competence by equipping them with the assistance which is in tune with their ZPDs (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994).

Although, the present study does not aim to offer prescriptive hints for teachers, the findings of this study can have important implications for all classroom or language institute teachers. Regardless of the learners' age and depending on their needs, teachers can implement G-DA in EFL classes in a strategic manner to enhance strategic listening and to provide additional instruction to promote learners' autonomy in further listening task performance. In addition, the combination of G-DA procedures with metacognitive instruction used in the current study has the potential to promote the instructional process regarding specific areas where learners need improvement in L2 listening comprehension.

Furthermore, the study of metacognitive listening strategy instruction is still at an exploratory stage in Iran, and more theoretical and empirical studies should be done to develop teaching and learning of listening in English. Although metacognitive listening strategy training may not solve all the problems that Iranian young learners have in English listening comprehension, it does have some impacts on their metacognitive listening strategy awareness listening ability. The results of this study provide a number of different avenues for further investigations with different modalities, such as using metacognitive instruction through G-DA with reading and writing.

There are some limitations to this study that should be acknowledged. First and foremost, the number of the participants was limited and it was conducted in one language institute; therefore, the generalizability of the findings should be done with some caution. Eventually, this study focused on young EFL listeners and overlooked other age levels. Thus, a fruitful line of research would be to investigate how different participants with different levels of proficiency and various ages might benefit from metacognitive instruction procedures through G-DA.

## **References**

- Ableeva, R. (2010). *Dynamic assessment of listening comprehension in second language learning*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.
- Alavi, S. M., Kaivanpanah, Sh., & Shabani, K. (2012). Group dynamic assessment: A inventory of mediational strategies for teaching listening. *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 3(4), 27-58.

- Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and learning in the zone of proximal development. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(4), 465-483.
- Buck, G. (2003). *Assessing Listening* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chamot, A. U. (2004). Issues in language learning strategy research and teaching. *Electronic journal of foreign language teaching*, 1(1), 14-26.
- Cross, J. (2010). Raising L2 listeners' metacognitive awareness: A sociocultural theory perspective. *Language Awareness*, 19, 281-297.
- Cross, J. (2011). Metacognitive instruction can help less-skilled listeners. *ELT Journal*, 65, 408-416.
- Daniels, H. (Ed.). (2005). *An introduction to Vygotsky*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Field, J. (2000). Finding one's way in the fog: listening strategies and second-language learners. *Modern English Teacher*, 9, 29-34.
- Field, J. (2008). Guest editor's introduction emergent and divergent: A view of second language listening research. *System*, 36, 2-9.
- Flavell, J. H. (1976). Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In L.B. Resnick (Eds.), *The nature of intelligence* (pp. 231-235). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (2005). *Second language listening: Theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goh, C. (2002). Exploring listening comprehension tactics and their interaction patterns. *System*, 30(2), 185-206.
- Goh, C. (2008). Metacognitive instruction for second language listening development: Theory, practice and research implications. *RELC journal*, 39(2), 188-213.
- Goh, C., & Hu, G. (2014). Exploring the relationship between metacognitive awareness and listening performance with questionnaire data. *Language Awareness Journal*, 23(3), 255-274.
- Goh, C., & Taib, Y. (2006). Metacognitive instruction in listening for young learners. *ELT Journal*, 60, 222-232.
- Gutiérrez, A. G. (2008). Microgenesis, method and object: A study of collaborative activity in a Spanish as a foreign language classroom. *Applied Linguistics*, 29, 120-148.
- Hashemi Shahraki, S., Ketabi, S., & Barati, H. (2015). Group dynamic assessment of EFL listening comprehension: Conversational implicatures in focus. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 4(3), 73-89.
- Lantolf, J. P., & Poehner, M. E. (2004). Dynamic Assessment: Bringing the Past into the Future. *Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1, 49-74.

- Lantolf, J. P., & Poehner, M. E. (2014). *Sociocultural theory and the pedagogical imperative in L2 education*. New York: Routledge.
- Mendelsohn, D. (1995). Applying learning strategies in the second/foreign language listening comprehension lesson. In D. Mendelsohn & J. Rubin (Eds.), *A guide for the teaching of second language listening* (PP. 132-150). San Diego, CA: Dominic Press.
- Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second language learning theories*. Routledge.
- Poehner, M. E. (2005). Dynamic assessment of advanced L2 learners of French (Doctoral dissertation). Pennsylvania State University.
- Poehner, M. E. (2009). Group dynamic assessment: Mediation for the L2 classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43, 471-491.
- Poehner, M. E., & Lantolf, J. P. (2005). Dynamic assessment in the language classroom. *Language Teaching Research*, 9, 1-33.
- Rost M. (2002). *Teaching and researching listening*. Longman: Pearson Education.
- RS Siegler, K. C. (1991). The microgenetic method: A direct means for studying cognitive development. *American Psychologist*, 46(6), 606.
- Vandergrift, L. (2002). 'It was nice to see that our predictions were right': Developing metacognition in listening comprehension in Grades 4-6. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 58, 555-75.
- Vandergrift, L. (2004). Listening to learn or learning to listen? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, 3-25.
- Vandergrift, L. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research. *Language Teaching*, 40(3), 191-210.
- Vandergrift, L., Goh, C., Mareschal, C. J., & Tafaghodtari, M. H. (2006). The metacognitive awareness listening questionnaire: Development and validation. *Language Learning*, 56(3), 431-462.
- Vandergrift, L., & Tafaghodtari, M. H. (2010). Teaching L2 learners how to listen does make a difference: An empirical study. *Language Learning*, 60(2), 470-497.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1998). The problem of age. In R. W. Rieber (Ed.), *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky Vol. 5. child psychology*. New York: Plenum.

## Appendix

## Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)

عبارت های زیر تکنیک های درک شنیداری و احساس شما را درباره مهارت شنیداری زبانی که می آموزید توصیف می کند. تا

چه اندازه با این جمله ها موافق هستید؟

این یک آزمون نیست بنابراین هیچ جواب درست یا غلطی ندارد. با جواب دادن به این عبارت ها شما می توانید به خودتان و معلم

تان کمک کنید تا میزان پیشرفت تان را در یادگیری مهارت شنیداری بسنجید.

لطفا نظرات خود را بعد از هر عبارت ثبت کنید. دور عددی که سطح موافقت شما را به عبارت نشان می دهد خط بکشید.

		Strongly Disagree کاملاً	Disagree معتدلاً	Partly Disagree تا حدی	Partly Agree تا حدی	Agree مؤلفه	Strongly Agree کاملاً
1	<i>Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen</i> قبل از گوش کردن، شیوه ای را که می خواهم به کمک آن به متن گوش دهم در ذهنم مجسم می کنم.						
2	<i>I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.</i> وقتی که فهمیدن متن برایم سخت است بیشتر روی متن تمرکز میکنم.						
3	<i>I find that listening in English is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing in English.</i> برای من، گوش کردن به انگلیسی سخت تر از خواندن، صحبت کردن و یا نوشتن به زبان انگلیسی است.						
4	<i>I translate in my head as I listen.</i> هر آنچه را که می شنوم در ذهنم ترجمه میکنم.						
5	<i>I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.</i> برای حدس زدن معنای لغت هایی که نمی فهمم از لغت هایی استفاده می کنم که می فهمم.						
6	<i>When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away.</i> وقتی که حواسم پرت می شود سعی می کنم فوراً تمرکز کنم.						
7	<i>As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic.</i> وقتی که گوش می دهم، آنچه را که می فهمم با آنچه را که در مورد موضوع می دانم مقایسه میکنم.						
8	<i>I feel that listening comprehension in English is a challenge for me.</i> من احساس می کنم درک شنیداری در انگلیسی برایم مشکل است.						
9	<i>I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand.</i> من از تجربه و دانشم برای کمک به فهمیدنم استفاده میکنم.						
10	<i>Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.</i> قبل از گوش دادن، به متن های مشابهی که ممکن است قبلاً به آنها						

	گوش کرده باشم، فکر می کنم.							
11	<i>I translate key words as I listen.</i> هنگام گوش دادن لغت های کلیدی را ترجمه می کنم.							
12	<i>I try to get back on track when I lose my concentration.</i> وقتی که تمرکز را از دست میدهم، سعی می کنم دوباره حواسم را متمرکز کنم .							
13	<i>As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.</i> هنگامی که گوش می دهم، اگر بفهمم برداشتم درست نیست سریعاً آن را تصحیح میکنم.							
14	<i>After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.</i> بعد از گوش دادن، به اینکه چطور گوش دادم و ممکن است بار دیگر چه عملکرد متفاوتی داشته باشم فکر میکنم.							
15	<i>I don't feel nervous when I listen to English.</i> وقتی به انگلیسی گوش می دهم عصبی نمی شوم.							
16	<i>When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I give up and stop listening.</i> وقتی که در فهمیدن آنچه که می شنوم مشکل دارم، ناامید می شوم و دیگر گوش نمی دهم.							
17	<i>I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand.</i> من از مفهوم کلی متن برای حدس معنای لغت هایی که نمی فهمم استفاده می کنم.							
18	<i>I translate word by word, as I listen.</i> هنگام گوش دادن، لغت به لغت ترجمه می کنم.							
19	<i>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.</i> وقتی که معنای لغتی را حدس می زنم ، به تمام چیزهایی که شنیده ام فکر می کنم تا ببینم حدس من درست بوده است یا نه.							
20	<i>As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.</i> هنگام گوش دادن، دائماً از خودم می پرسم که آیا از چیزی که درک کرده ام راضی هستم یا نه.							
21	<i>I have a goal in mind as I listen.</i> هنگام گوش دادن در ذهنم هدف دارم.							