METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS OF LISTENING STRATEGIES AMONG MALAYSIAN ESL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study is purported to examine and explore if Malaysian second language learners of English Language have metacognitive awareness of listening strategies when they perform listening activities. Findings from this study will help instructors to guide the learners during listening activities (L.Weijing, & A.Ahmed, A.Sahail, A. Yousef, 2013). A research was carried out on 100 ESL undergraduates from a private university in Malaysia to find out the relationship between their metacognitive awareness of listening strategies and listening comprehension performance. The participants did a listening comprehension test which was taken from the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) listening syllabus. Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (Vandergrift et al, 2006) was administered to check their level of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies. Interviews were held with some of the participants to help with the interpretation of data. Data obtained from the questionnaire was assessed using SPSS version 22 to obtain information about the participants' level of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies. Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient was used to find out any probable relationship between participants' levels of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies and their listening test score. Multiple regression analysis was also done to study the relationship between the five MALQ factors and participants' listening comprehension performance. The result obtained from this study showed that there is a significant relationship between the English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' metacognitive awareness of listening strategies and their listening test score. However, the results from this study cannot be generalised as the participants would not represent the entire population of the ESL learners in Malaysia. Previous studies conducted had focused on (English as a Foreign Language) EFL learners but not many studies were conducted on Malaysian ESL learners.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji dan menerokai jika pelajar Malaysia yang mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua menggunakan kesedaran metacognitif untuk strategi mendengar apabila mereka melaksanakan aktiviti mendengar. Hasil kajian ini akan membantu tenaga pengajar untuk membimbing pelajar di dalam aktiviti-aktiviti mendengar (L.Weijing, & A.Ahmed, A.Sahail, A. Yousef, 2013). Penyelidikan telah dijalankan ke atas 100 pelajar ESL daripada sebuah universiti swasta di Malaysia untuk mengetahui hubungan antara tahap kesedaran metacognitif untuk strategi mendengar mereka dan prestasi ujian kefahaman mendengar. Para peserta telah membuat ujian kefahaman mendengar yang diambil daripada huraian sukatan pelajaran mendengar Ujian Bahasa Inggeris peringkat university Malaysia (MUET). Borang soal selidik kesedaran metacognitif strategi mendengar (MALQ) (Vandergrift et al, 2006) ditadbir untuk memeriksa tahap kesedaran metacognitif strategi mendengar. Temubual telah diadakan dengan beberapa peserta untuk membantu dengan tafsiran data. Data yang diperolehi dari soal selidik telah dinilai menggunakan SPSS versi 22 untuk mendapatkan maklumat mengenai tahap kesedaran metacognitif strategi mendengar peserta. Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient telah digunakan untuk mengetahui sebarang kemungkinan hubungan antara tahap kesedaran metacognitif mendengar strategi peserta dan skor ujian pendengaran mereka. Analisis regresi berganda juga dilakukan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara lima faktor-faktor MALQ dan prestasi kefahaman mendengar peserta. Hasil yang diperolehi daripada kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan bererti antara kesedaran metacognitif strategi mendengar dan skor ujian pendengaran dalam kalangan para pelajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua (ESL). Walau bagaimanapun, hasil daripada kajian ini tidak dapat digeneralisasikan kerana peserta tidak mewakili keseluruhan populasi pelajar ESL di Malaysia. Kajian terdahulu yang dilakukan telah memfokuskan pelajar Bahasa Inggeris

sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) tetapi tidak banyak kajian telah dijalankan ke atas pelajar ESL di Malaysia.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
KET	Key English Test
LCT	Listening Comprehension Test
LLOS	Language Learning Orientations Scale
M	Mean Score
MALQ	Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Questionnaire
MALS	Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies
MCQ	Multiple Choice Question
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
PMR	Penilaian Menengah Rendah
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The introductory chapter covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study as well as definition of terms used in this study.

1.2 Background of the Study

In Malaysia, English Language has the second language status. This means that English Language is the medium of communication for various reasons such as in education, administration and many others. The language is taught at preschool level where learners acquire the language through formal education. The use of English Language is considerably vast in Malaysia and it has become a necessity to know and be able to converse competently in the language. Its status globally had impacted in many policy changes in many countries and Malaysia being one of them. Despite being introduced to the language at an early age, second language learners of English Language in Malaysia are still lacking in the language in many aspects especially in listening skill (Goh & Hu, 2014).

When learning a language, learners are usually exposed to the four main skills that form the major component of a language: listening, reading, writing and speaking skills.

These skills are taught to them through the use of various teaching strategies duringtheir schooling years. However, learners perform differently in different skills when assessed. Based on the analysis of Malaysian University Entrance Test (MUET) scores, it was found that students performed the worst in the listening component of the test (Shahirah, Nur, Raimizar, Azizah & Mohamed, 2017). Their scores for the listening component were relatively lower than other skills: reading, writing and speaking. When students were asked about their scores, some students mentioned that they had not done any listening activities during their schooling years. A listening test is something they had never had. This is understood because the middle high school examination (PMR) and school leaving examination (SPM) in Malaysia do not have a listening component. In both examinations, students are only tested on reading, writing, and other aspects of the language in the written examinations whereas the speaking skill is tested in a separate oral examination. Although listening skill forms part of the syllabus, it is not tested in an examination. This had led the educators to pay less attention to this particular skill when they teach the English Language. As a result, learners performed poorly in the listening component in MUET, a language examination introduced at tertiary level.

Among the four main skills, listening skill is found to be the most difficult to teach or assess. Many teachers find it challenging to measure a learner's listening ability as it involves many processes that take place in the brain. In most ESL classes, listening skill is taught through listening activities such as listening to interviews, news where the focus is only to get correct answers to a set of questions prepared based on the audio. The goal here is to merely identify information and comprehend the audio text. The teacher is focused more on the activities rather than teaching them exactly how to do it, in this case, how to listen effectively.

Teaching language skills to second language learners involves the introduction of specific strategies that aid their mastery of a particular language skill. For instance, reading and understanding the keywords in a question before doing a listening task is a listening strategy that can be employed by a learner for effective listening to take place. By employing such strategy, the learner will be able to follow the listening audio and be able to remember specific details since he had already studied the keywords in the question before even starting to listen. Such listening strategies unfortunately, are not taught in the ESL classrooms in Malaysia. Listening strategies are not taught explicitly and the teachers hardly ever pay attention in developing them among learners.The listening comprehension performance of the learners in MUET clearly proves their lack of knowledge on listening strategies. It is crucial to take note that listening skill is an important aspect of language development.

At least 40-50% of our interaction time is spent on listening (Mendelsohn, 1994). Since listening is an active process, learners have to build their listening skills to ensure effective communication takes place. Listening process requires listeners to engage in different mental processes. These processes are also referred to as listening comprehension strategies. A past study (Chang & Read, 2006) proves that it is challenging for second language learners to undergo such listening processes as it involves many tasks ranging from listening for specific details to deciphering speaker's message.In general, listening comprehension strategies can be categorised into cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy and social interactional strategy(O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, and Kupper, 1985). The cognitive strategies include the following: transfer, elaboration, repeating, translation, contextualisation, key word search, grouping, auditory representation, note taking, imagery, deducting. The metacognitive strategies refer to strategies like planning one's learning, thinking over

the learning process while it is happening, monitoring such learning process, and evaluating the process of learning once it is over. The social interactional strategies include trading with one another and social reconciliation. These strategies are crucial for language learning to take place. Some of the studies conducted on listening strategies have led researchers (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 2002) to unveil the importance of metacognitive listening comprehension strategies in determining the listening comprehension performance among English Language learners. Past studies that have been conducted (Escobar, 2015; Harputlu and Ceylan, Roya, 2014) support that when learners have awareness of metacognitive listening strategies, they perform better in the listening activities.

Research in the area of ESL learners' listening comprehension performance and metacognitive awareness of listening strategies is scarce. Since teachers often use language learning or social strategies to teach listening, the metacognitive aspect of listening strategies is less commonly studied. In Malaysia, undergraduates will have to take the Malaysian University English Test (MUET), a language requirement test before getting admitted into the public or private universities. This test is a measure of learners' English language proficiency. One of the components of the test is listening skill. Many students often find this particular component very challenging due to several reasons. There are many more reasons that could lead to a poor performance in listening comprehension test such as lack of exposure to the language (Graham, 2006). Lack of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies is one of the reasons too. In a study (S Selamat & GK Sidhu, 2011)conducted among a group of Malaysian ESL learners in a public university in Malaysia, it was found that the learners responded better in the listening comprehension test after their level of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies was raised. There is a need to explore the relationship between

metacognitive awareness of listening strategies with regards to learners' listening comprehension performance and thus, this study was conducted.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There are many strategies used for listening, however, metacognitive strategies are less popular. From the past study, there is evidence that metacognition is partly responsible for students' limitations in learning (Goh & Hu, 2014). Although there was evidence of the importance metacognition had on learning, only in recent years, did metacognition gain its importance as a construct in second language listening. Many more studies have been done to raise the awareness of the metacognitive approach in teaching second language listening (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010; Zeng, 2012). Metacognitive awareness of listening strategies is crucial for a learner as it will help the learner to process and restore information better (Vandergrift, 2006). In a previous study, moderate mean score was achieved in the MALQ (3.96 out of 6) which proved a lack of strategy knowledge among learners. The results also provide evidence that there is lack of metacognitive activities in the language class (Goh & Hu, 2014).

Traditionally, listening lessons take up much of the learning time in getting the students to listen to the audios and then, answer some questions based on the audio text (Goh, 1997). This kind of listening activity can lead to discussions, however, the focus is only on the content of the listening text but not on the listening process. It is vital for language teachers to view the listening skill as a thinking process and get students to think and reflect on their thinking processes especially from a metacognitive perspective (Goh, 1997).

In Malaysian private universities, learners only do practices but do not learn appropriate strategies as to how to listen effectively. Not only that, metacognitive strategies are rarely part of their syllabus. Based on the overall analysis of the MUET 2015 and 2016 results, the Malaysian Examination Council reported that the students' performance has generally reduced. The insufficient knowledge of listening skills is one of the causes for such deterioration of results, reported the examiners (Malaysian Examinations Council 2015 & 2016). Although much research is being carried, there is a need to explore the metacognitive awareness of listening strategies among second language learners in a Malaysian context.

1.4 Research Objective

Ever since the term metacognition came into existence (1970s), there's much interest among researchers to study about it in relation to second language acquisition. In the last 30 years, many studies have been conducted to show the positive effects of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies in enhancing language learners' listening comprehension performance. Thus, this study is purported to study the connection between metacognitive awareness of listening strategies of Malaysian ESL learners and their listening comprehension performance. Not only that, the MALQ factors that account for listening comprehension performance will also be studied.

1.5 Research Questions

This study will be answering the following research questions:

Research Question No.1

What is the level of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies among Malaysian ESL learners?

Research Question No.2

Is there a connection between Malaysian ESL learners' metacognitive awareness of L2 listening strategies and their listening comprehension performance?

Research Question No.3

In what ways do the factorsin MALQ, which represent the different features of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies, associate themselves with the learners' listening comprehension performance?

1.6 Significance of the Study

By finding out about the metacognitive awareness of listening strategies, (henceforth MALS), level possessed by the learners, it will be helpful for an instructor to guide the learners during listening activities (Wenjing; Ahmed, Sahail, &Yousef, 2013). Instructors can work on areas which the learner needs scaffolding in. The findings from this research will also benefit learners to enable them to discover their MALS level and work on it to improve their listening comprehension performance. MALS is crucial for a learner as it will help the learner to process and restore information better (Vandergrift, 2006). The findings from this study will further enhance the reliability of the existing studies on the similar area, thus contributing to the literature on second language listening performance and ESL learners' MALS.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The results from this study cannot be generalised since the participants did not represent the entire population of Malaysian ESL learners in Malaysia. In this study, only one aspect of MALS is studied however, there could be other factors like cultural background, motivation that could possibly contribute to the listening test score of the participants. Not only that, the participants were selected based on their MUET score to ensure homogeneity. For this present study, only participants who had achieved at least Band 4 in the MUET were chosen.

1.8 Definition of Terms

These terms are used in this study. It is important to look at their meaning.

MALQ

This acronym refers to Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire. This questionnaire was used in this study as a research instrument to measure the participants' metacognitive awareness of listening strategies when they did a listening task (Vandergrift *et al.*, 2006).

ESL

English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to contexts in which English is taught as a predominant language of communication. (Cater & Nunan, 2001, p.2).

Metacognition

Metacognition is a high-level mental process that needs to be managed and controlled consistently (Cross, 2010).

Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies (MALS)

Metacognitive awareness of listening strategies is defined as the cognitive appraisal or the metacognitive knowledge of perceptions one has about themselves, comprehension of the requirements of a listening task, mental goals, about how to complete a task and the strategies it requires (Vandergrift et al., 2006).

Listening

Listening is an operative process of decoding and building meaning from verbal and non-verbal information (Nunan, 1998).

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has given an overview of the background of the study, reasons why this study is significant, what is aimed to be achieved at the end of the study and few others. On the whole, the findings from this study will be useful for Malaysian ESL learners and language teachers. It is hoped that the current study will change the way listening skill is approached in an ESL setting in Malaysia. The next chapter focuses on important literature that is relevant to the current study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

In this chapter, the related literature on metacognition, metacognitive awareness and second language listening strategies are explored. This chapter is divided into five major parts. Part one will cover the literature on second language listening theories, its nature and listening strategies. Part two will focus on metacognition, its nature and components. Part three will cover metacognitive listening strategies, its role in second language listening and empirical studies done. Part four is about the metacognitive awareness of listening strategies (MALS) and second language learners' performance in the listening test, its significance and empirical studies done. Finally, part five will explain the theoretical framework used in this study.

2.2 Second Language Listening Theories

Among the four language skills, listening skill is not easily understood (Graham, Santos, & Francis-Brophy, 2014). When we communicate, half the time is spent on listening (Mendelson, 1994). Listening is an operative process of decoding and building meaning from verbal and non-verbal information (Nunan,1998). For second language learning to take place effectively, development of ESL learners' listening skills is crucial (Dunkel, 1991; Rost, 2002;Vandergrift, 2007). Listening skill was not given importance before the 1960s. It was only after that the productive aspect of listening was given emphasis. Since it had not been treated important, it had not received much focus for research and teaching.

In 2003, Krashen shed some light on the area of listening comprehension in second language learning. According to his hypothesis on second language acquisition, he inferred that language acquisition takes place when a learner comprehends messages. In other words, the learner needs to comprehend what is being heard and read. The information learners obtain come in the form of 'comprehensible input'. This hypothesis is called the Input Hypothesis. Based on this hypothesis, it can be understood that listening skill is necessary for a learner to develop in the target language linguistically. Another hypothesis that uplifted the importance of listening skill in second language acquisition in the 1990s is Michael Long's Interaction Hypothesis. This hypothesis proposed the idea that face-to-face reciprocal action and communication aid second language acquisition. Learners have to get engaged in a conversation that requires them to negotiate meaning. In such situations, listening skill becomes crucial. Lev Vygotsky developed the Sociocultural Theory in the 1920s. He claims that learners learn by interacting with others or the environment. His idea suggests that learning takes place at two levels; at social level and individual level. When learners take part in conversations, interaction helps them to build their language. Indirectly, listening skill becomes mandatory since it is required to converse with one another. All of these theories (Sociocultural Theory and others) as well as hypotheses (Input Hypothesis and Interaction Hypothesis) form the basis of the pedagogical implications exist today.

Over three decades, despite much research done in the area of second language listening, it was found that educators hardly ever use a strategy approach to teach listening (Brown, 2006; Guan, 2014; Oxford, 2011). Vandergrift (2004) proposed a metacognitive strategy approach to enhance listening skills. A continuum of research is being carried out on this aspect of listening.

2.2.1 The Nature of Listening

After Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis obtained attention for second language acquisition in the 1980s, listening has since then become an important aspect of language learning. For effective language learning to take place, learners need to be presented with an input (Rost, 1994). This input helps learners to develop his language skills. Two views emerged to explain how the listening process takes place. They are the top-down and bottom-up views. They were founded by Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) and later adopted by Chaudron and Richards (1986), Richards (1990) and others.

The bottom-up view suggests that listening takes place when learners decode the simplest unit of sound, which is known as 'phoneme'. For example, consonant sounds, /f/ and /v/ can appear confusing to learners since they sound quite similar when pronounced. Once learners are able to distinguish between sounds, they will then make combinations of the sounds they have listened to in order to build words like /fæn/ (fan) and /væn/ (van). The next step is to make sense of the combination of words at phrase level followed by sentence levels. In the end, meaning is constructed as a product of the listening process. This is one of the approaches used by educators to teach listening skill in the language classroom. Dictation is a type of listening activity that is commonly carried out in a listening lesson whereby the listeners write down the text that is being read aloud to them by their language teacher in a quiet setting. It is an example of bottom-up approach to teach learners to construct meaning. The learners will usually listen to the educator reading out series of unfamiliar texts for which the learners need to listen and write down what they hear and make sense of it through the process of decoding meaning.

On the other hand, top-down view explains listening as a process of rebuilding the actual meaning of the listening text based on learners' previous knowledge that relates to the subject of the listening text and the situation in which the listening happens. Leaners will have to make sense of what they listen to according to the situation in which the listening occurs and their general knowledge about it (Long, 1989). Learners can form meaning by focusing on context and reflecting back on their knowledge of the key terms (Newton, 2009).

A combination of these two approaches to teach listening emerged and was called the Interactive Processing (Peterson, 2001). He explained that learners who are more competent in the language use both approaches during a listening activity. When the learner finds it difficult to process information at any one point, he switches between the two to arrive at meaning.

2.2.2 Listening Strategies

Listening is considered an important skill among the four language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing. This is due to its wide use in everyday life (Morley, 2001; Rost, 2001). Learners often obtain information aurally in a language classroom. Therefore, it is crucial for them to learn listening strategies in order to be successful in accomplishing a listening comprehension task (Thompson & Rubin, 1996; Hauck, 2005). It is said that a learner can learn listening skill in a second language effortlessly by applying his knowledge of listening strategies into the listening task (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Goh, 1997; O' Malley & Chamot, 1990). In order to ensure listening processes take place effectively, listening strategies need to be employed.

Listening strategies have been given meaning as things a learner does to make learning a language productive and entertaining (Oxford, 2002). Listening is a demanding process that needs learners to employ various actions to decipher meaning. These processes that take place in the brain are called listening comprehension strategies (Coskun, 2010). From a previous study (Chang & Read, 2006), it was found that second language learners face difficulties in using these strategies in second language listening. One probable reason to explain this is that these learners are not always exposed to the language being learnt (Graham, 2006).

Listening comprehension strategies can be classified into three categories (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990): cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective. Cognitive strategies refer to mental actions that take charge of language during a listening activity. Some of the cognitive strategies (Cook, 1993) that learners use include searching for resource, elaboration, repetition, inferencing, note-taking, and translation. Metacognitive strategies refer to strategies learners use to think about theirmental processes. They include strategies like planning, selective attention, directed attention, self-reinforcement, self-monitoring, self-evaluation. Socio-affective strategies are strategies used during an interaction to learn a language and aid in regulating emotions, attitudes and motivation towards learning. Asking for clarification and negotiating are part of socio-affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies have been found to be the most vital of the three strategies to assist in listening tasks (Ahmed, Sahail & Yousef, 2013). In order to understand the metacognitive strategies, the concept of metacognition needs to be analysed first. The next section will give an outline of metacognition and its components.

2.3 Metacognition

The concept of metacognition will be discussed in this section. The definitions of metacognition, its nature and components will be explored.

2.3.1 The Definitions of Metacognition

'Metacognition' was a concept created by Flavell, an American psychologist in the 1970s. It refers to thinking about one's thinking processes. Paris & Winograd (1990, pp.15-51) noted that there are two features of metacognition which are "self-appraisal and self-management of cognition". In other words, it refers to the knowledge one has regarding his own mental processes and its products. It also concerns one's ability to control these mental processes to accomplish certain goals. Metacognition is exemplified in the following situations.

John checks whether A is true before accepting or rejecting it. Sarah recognises the fact that she has issues learning A compared to B. Nadia thinks over all the options in a multiple choice question before choosing an answer. Timothy records information about C before forgetting about it (Flavell, 1976).

When someone carries out the actions like in the situations mentioned, they are said to have metacognition. Metacognition was later categorised into strategic knowledge, task knowledge and personal knowledge (Flavell, 1976). In 1979, Flavell gave another definition for metacognition, which is the awareness of one's cognition. Goh (1997) identified metacognition as a process of understanding how various factors come together and affect the activities in the brain. This concept of metacognition was adopted by Wenden who gave his definition to metacognition which is the "information learners acquire about their learning" (Wenden, 1998, pp.518). It is a complicated

thinking process that requires effective control of cognitive activities in the brain (Wenden, 1998, 1999). Wenden explained some principles of language learning through the process of metacognition. The term is also referred to as a person's ability to be conscious of his cognitive activities (Nelson, 1996; Vandergrift, 2004). Metacognition is also identified as metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1998). Metacognition is believed by Goh (2008) as an organisation of related thoughts and abstraction of a learners' experience. Cross (2010) views metacognition as a high-level mental process that needs to be managed and controlled consistently.

2.3.2 The Nature and Components of Metacognition

Since the term metacognition came into existence, many researchers have given it different definitions over the years. However, most of them agree that metacognition consists of two components. They are metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies (Brown et al.1983). Metacognitive knowledge is the information a learner has about his learning. Flavell (1979) categorised the concept of metacognitive knowledge into three categories: personal knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge. Personal knowledge is described as the information a learner has about himself and his abilities. Personal knowledge includes being aware of how to behave in a particular learning circumstance, knowing what problems one may face as a learner, and one's self-esteem. A learner's self-confidence is reflected very well on his personal knowledge. Task knowledge refers to the information a learner acquires about the objectives and requirements of a task. By having task knowledge, a learner can be sure of the demands and nature of any given task and knows how challenging it could get. Lastly, strategic knowledge is the information a learner has about his learning strategies and their functions. A learner uses such knowledge to attain learning objectives.

Strategy knowledge could help a learner to recognise how to learn and also identify ineffective ways of learning that may not be favourable to accomplish learning objectives (Wenden, 1998).

On the other hand, metacognitive strategies refer to skills a learner uses to plan, control and assess their own learning (Wenden, 1998; Brown, 2007). These skills include problem-solving, monitoring, planning, and evaluating (Oxford, 2002; Oxford 2013). Learners can benefit by using metacognitive strategies to take charge of their learning processes, deciding on which strategies to employ for learning, overseeing the learning processes, rectifying errors, studying the impacts of learning strategies employed, and adjusting learning attitudes and strategies when needed (Ridley et al., 1992). Metacognitive strategies are found to be used mostly among competent learners. These strategies function like their 'seventh sense' to help them with learning (Birjandi, Mirhassani, Abbasian, 2006; Chari, Samavi, & Kordestani, 2010). Learners who do well are indeed conscious of the application of these strategies to aid them with learning. They know exactly when and how to employ these strategies when the needs arise (Goh, 2008; Rezaei & Hashim, 2013).

2.4 Metacognitive Listening Strategies

The role of metacognitive listening strategies in second language listening will be discussed with reference to the existing literature in this section.

2.4.1 The Identification of Metacognitive Strategies in Listening

Based on Flavell (1976) and Brown's (1983) views on metacognitive strategies, it can be deduced that metacognitive strategies are common skills a learner uses to handle, control and assist his learning. Metacognitive strategies incorporate linking of new and old information, choosing appropriate thinking strategies, organising, observing and assessing cognitive processes (Oxford, 2002). Metacognitive strategies require thinking about the process of learning, organising learning, observing the learning task, assessing one's learning achievement (O' Malley and Chamot, 1990). Metacognitive strategies can be grouped into a number of categories as suggested by O' Malley and Chamot (1990):

i. Planning: Organising idea of a predicted learning activity; giving suggestions for strategies to managea future task; forming a plan for the components, order, primary ideas, or language use for managing a task.
ii. Directed attention: Pre-planning to deal with a learning task and to disregard unrelated distractors; retaining attentiveness while carrying out a task.
iii. Selective attention: Pre-planning to deal with particular features of a language input or circumstantial input that help with doing a task; dealing with particular features of a language input when a task is being carried out.
iv. Self-management: Comprehending any factors that guide in completing a language task successfully and setting out the existence of those factors; managing how one perform in the language in order to utilise one's existing knowledge.
v. Self-monitoring: Examining, confirming, or rectifying one's understanding or performance in a language activity.

vi. Problem Identification: Recognising the central point of a task that requires a resolution or acknowledging a factor that makes a task to be difficult to achieve.

vii. Self-evaluation: Examining how one has done in a language task by comparing it with an internal measure of precision and perfectness; inspecting one's existing language repertory, strategy use, or capacity to do a language task.

viii. Production evaluation: Examining the work one has completed.

ix. Performance evaluation: Forming an opinion about the task that has been carried out.

x. Ability evaluation: Judging the capabilities one has to do a task.

xi. Strategy evaluation: Forming an opinion on the task that has been completed from a strategy use aspect.

xii. Language repertoire evaluation: Making a conclusion on one's knowledge of the language based on word, phrase, sentence, or conception level.

(O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

2.4.2 Empirical Studies on Metacognitive Strategies in Listening

Much research has been done to study the association between metacognitive strategies and listening performance. Research shows that second language listeners who are more skillful in performing listening tasks utilise metacognitive strategies more than the less skillful learners (Bacon, 1992; Goh, 1998, 2000; O' Malley and Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1998, 2003). Some of the recent empirical studies done prove the significant role metacognitive strategies play in second language listening.

In 2013, a study was done by Zahra Ratebi to look at how 60 Iranian students used their metacognitive strategies to perform listening comprehension tasks. The study sought answers to two research questions. The researcher was interested in finding out the total use of metacognitive strategies for each group of the participants so she divided them into low and high proficiency listeners. Their listening proficiency was determined by their scores in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) listening test. Another research question was about the differences in the use of metacognitive strategies among these two groups of listeners. The participants consisted of both male and female learners. They had been enrolled into a language course where they studied English Language as their major. In order to identify the metacognitive strategies the participants used, they had to complete the Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies Questionnaire (MALQ). The results showed that participants used 'problem solving' strategies the most and did not use much of the 'person knowledge' strategies. Although there was no obvious difference between both groups in terms of metacognitive strategies use, the high proficiency group had reported to use 'person knowledge' strategies more than the group with low proficiency. Overall, the study reported that the Iranian learners use limited metacognitive strategies in completing listening tasks. The researcher urged educators to include metacognitive strategies as part of the instruction for listening lessons.

Hassan and Hossein (2013) conducted a study on 64 Iranian students to see if metacognitive instruction aids in the participants' listening sub-skills performance. The researcher wanted to seek an answer to the proposed research question which was whether metacognitive strategies training had an impact on the participants' listening performance. A total of 69 participants did a language test, Key English Test (KET) to determine their proficiency level. Only 64 participants were selected to participate in the

study. The English language proficiency of the participants was pre-intermediate level. The researcher randomly divided the participants into two groups: experimental and control groups. A set of fifteen sub-skills for listening was chosen to be part of the instruction. This selection was based on the list compiled as results of previous research. The participants then did a listening comprehension test which tested on their understanding and the use of listening sub-skills. The experimental group received treatment for a period of 2 months. The treatment group received listening lessons which incorporated metacognitive strategies training. Vandergrift's (2006) suggested metacognitive strategies like planning, monitoring and others were part of the strategy training. The training involved participants' to reflect on their listening performance by using a checklist to monitor their learning. In order to find participants' metacognitive awareness level, they had to respond in the MALQ. At the end of the treatment, posttests were held for both the experimental and control groups to find out whether the metacognitive strategies had impacted their listening performance. The results obtained showed that the two groups scored similarly in the pretest, however, the descriptive analysis done on the posttest scores for both groups revealed that the experimental group performed better with a higher mean score. The findings from this study indicate that metacognitive strategy training is needed as learners need to be able to know how to apply metacognitive listening strategies in listening as they are crucial indicators of successful listening.

In 2014, Roya conducted a study to find out how metacognitive strategy training affects listening performance. For this study, the researcher made the participants sit for a placement test. Based on the results, only 55 participants who marked beginner level were chosen for the study. They were then divided into experimental and control groups, 30 and 25, respectively. To test participants' listening comprehension ability

before the treatment, both groups had to do a listening test taken from the TOEFL test. They also responded to MALQ. The scores in MALQ were useful to indicate their metacognitive strategies awareness level. The experimental group was treated by giving them special metacognitive strategies training based on Vandergrift's list of metacognitive strategies. The control group did not receive any treatment of such strategies. After 1 month of treatment, both groups performed a listening test, also adopted from the TOEFL test and responded in the MALQ for the second time. The results of t-test of the mean scores, 21.64 (experimental group) and 19.38 (control group) for both groups at pretest level revealed that the participants' performance was rather similar with no much difference. However, after the treatment had been done, a descriptive analysis was performed which showed a positive impact of the treatment on the listening performance of the participants in the experimental group. The mean scores were calculated and the experimental group showed an increase (25.58) in the level of metacognitive strategies awareness. The mean score at posttest level for the control group was 19.98. Thus, it was concluded that leaners need metacognitive strategies to do well in a listening task.

Harputlu and Ceylan (2014) did a study on the relationship between motivation, metacognitive strategy use and listening proficiency. A quantitative approach was employed to obtain data from 33 Turkish EFL learners for their motivation level, metacognitive strategies awareness and listening comprehension performance. The participants were English Language majors and aged between 20 and 24. The participants did a listening test taken from the TOEFL test. Then, they responded to the questions in the MALQ and Language Learning Orientations Scale (LLOS). The responses in the MALQ were used to identify the participants' metacognitive strategy use and awareness while doing the listening test. The scores in LLOS were helpful in

determining participants' three different types of motivations: amotivation, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The result displayed a positive correlation between the participants' listening test scores and three MALQ factors, 'problem solving', 'directed attention' and 'planning and evaluation', but they were not significant. On the other hand, the analysis between another two MALQ factors, 'person knowledge' and 'mental translation' exhibited a negative correlation between the variables. The negative correlations explained that successful listeners did not apply 'mental translation' or 'personal knowledge' strategies in listening. Since these factors have been negatively worded, more successful listeners would choose 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for these questions in the MALQ. That had resulted in a negative correlation. Overall, the study provided some empirical findings to show the positive effect of metacognitive strategies on EFL learners' listening comprehension performance.

More recently, Escobar (2015) carried a research to study the impact of metacognitive strategy use training on the ESL/ EFL learners' listening performance. The researcher employed an experimental design to collect data for the study. The study was conducted in a university in Chile. The participants had been enrolled into a language course where they learned a few aspects of the English Language. The participants were chosen from a particular class in the language course as they shared similar proficiency level in the English Language. The participants were grouped into two different groups to serve as experimental and control groups. Initially, there were 25 and 23 participants in the experimental and control groups, respectively. The number of participants had later reduced to only 12 since the rest of them submitted incomplete data. The duration of the study was rather long, 10 weeks and this had resulted in many participants dropping out from the study halfway. A listening comprehension test that suited the proficiency level of the participants was administered at the beginning of the study to both groups. They

also had to complete the MALQ. The teacher employed the Pedagogical Sequence suggested by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) during the intervention to teach listening to the experimental group. At the end of the study, both groups did a listening comprehension test similar to the one they had done for the pretest. MALQ was administered to both groups to elicit the metacognitive strategies awareness level of the participants. To summarise the findings, the experimental group showed a positive increase in mean score for the listening test, explaining that the intervention was helpful. This means that the metacognitive strategies are necessary for effective listening to take place. Also, the experimental group showed an increased level of awareness in their response in the MALQ. They are reported to have developed the use of 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge' strategies more than the other three metacognitive strategies as found in the MALQ. On the contrary, when pretest and posttest scores were calculated for the control group, they showed not much difference in both listening comprehension test and MALQ scores.

These studies have proved the effectiveness of the use of metacognitive strategies to improve learners' listening comprehension performance. The past studies discussed earlier give better insights into the aspect of metacognitive strategies and listening. The metacognitive model employed in the studies form the basis of the current research. Although most of these studies used experimental designs, the current study uses explanatory correlational design. The focus of the current study is to study the relationship between variables rather than exploring metacognitive instruction.

2.5 Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies (MALS) and Second Language Listening

Studies on MALS and second language listening are not uncommon. Although numerous studies have been conducted, the relationship between these two variables remains unique. This is because the results obtained from different studies provide different insights into the matter. It is important to explore the role of MALS in second language listening. In this section, MALS will be discussed in relation to second language listening.

2.5.1 The Significance of Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies (MALS) in Second Language Listening

The concept of metacognition was formed by Flavell (1979). Based on Flavell's concept, Vandergrift and Goh (2012) came up with another framework to express metacognition. They presented metacognition as consisting of three different features: metacognitive experience, metacognitive knowledge, and strategy use. Metacognitive experience refers to the conception or feeling about the thought processes and learning. In order to experience metacognition, a learner needs to acknowledge his thought or feeling about his mental processes and learning. If the learner does not do so, metacognition does not take place. Another aspect of metacognition as proposed by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) is metacognitive knowledge. Metacognitive knowledge is categorised into two: declarative knowledge and stored knowledge. This knowledge can be drawn out from a learner when suitable cues are given during a listening task. The learner will benefit from metacognitive knowledge as it can be used to organise, control and assist his learning processes. Lastly, strategy use is known to be another aspect of metacognitive awareness. From the findings obtained by (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990;

Oxford, 1990), listening comprehension is affected by the use of appropriate listening strategies. When a learner consciously applies a strategy to solve a listening task, he is considered to have strategy knowledge. This particular knowledge is very essential for learners to complete listening tasks. They usually apply these strategies consciously to a particular situation to strive resolving a listening task. There are many listening strategies, however, they have been grouped into mainly three categories (Cross, 2009; Gu, Hu, & Zhang, 2009): cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective listening strategies.

Vandergrift and Goh (2006) defined MALS as the cognitive appraisal or the metacognitive knowledge of perceptions one has about themselves, comprehension of the requirements of a listening task, mental goals, about how to complete a task and the strategies it requires. He divided MALS into five types: planning and evaluation, problem-solving, person knowledge, mental translation, and directed attention.

'Planning and evaluation' refers to a set of strategies that are used by listeners to get themselves ready for a listening task. These strategies also help them to assess to what extent do the efforts taken by them for the listening task is fruitful (Richards, 1990). Strategies that are used by listeners to draw conclusions by means of guessing and to observe these conclusions that were made are called 'problem solving' strategies. 'Person knowledge' strategies are thoughts a learner has about the difficulty of a second language listening task, their ability to evaluate the difficulty present in the listening task and the self-esteem a learner has in second language listening (Sparks and Ganschow, 2001). 'Mental translation' strategies are not popular among proficient listeners and they are strategies they would not use during a listening task (Vandergrift,

2003). Second or foreign language learners often use 'mental translation' strategies when they are unsure of the new terms presented to them in the target language. They then translate these terms in their native tongue or other familiar forms for better understanding before continuing with the listening task. 'Directed attention' refers to strategies employed by the learners to pay attention to and to stay focused on a listening task. For instance, the learner quickly gets back to the listening task once he realises that his mind had deviated away from the task. (Rost, 2002).

In the past, second language learners' performance in listening comprehension was measured based on their strategy use. Past studies focused on the significant role metacognitive strategies play in second language listening comprehension (Bacon, 1992; Mareschal, 2002). Lately, the focus had been shifted to the learners' cognitive appraisal and metacognitive knowledge as means to understand how second language learners perform in a listening task (Vandergrift, 2012). From the last decades, research on the function of MALS in second language listening is an ongoing effort.

2.5.2 Empirical Studies on Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies and Second Language Listening

Research in the field of metacognition and second language acquisition gave outbursts to new findings. Past research showed that when learners have high levels of metacognitive awareness, they are better at learning new information (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghodtari, 2006). Many studies have been conducted since then to study the relationship between MALS and learners' listening comprehension performance.

In 2009, Anne and Volker employed mixed methods to look at how listening strategies and MALS affect listening development over a course of time. Although this study was longitudinal, the number of participants was small. Only 4 ESL leaners were studied. The research centralised three research questions however, for the purpose of the current study, only the third research question, its results and findings will be discussed. The third question focused on the development of MALS among the 4 participants over the study period. The current study employs sequential explanatory research design. Similarly, the study conducted by Anne and Volker (2009) employed the same research design. In this way, the researchers collected the quantitative data first and this was followed by the collection of the qualitative data. As part of the quantitative data, the participants answered the questions in the MALQ twice at pretest and posttest levels. Each participant had four listening sessions to complete. These participants had been exposed to similar questions during their listening classes prior to the study. They had some knowledge about listening strategies as they had been taught about it. They also participated in a semi-structured interview to give their insights on their listening strategies used. The responses in the MALQ that indicated the learners' MALS for pretest and post tests were compared. The results showed there was an increase in the awareness levels of the participants. Prominently, two factors of the MALQ showed the highest mean difference and they were 'problem solving' and 'personal knowledge.'

In 2012, three researchers, Mansoor, Sara and Mohsen did a study on 66 Iranian EFL learners to study the relationship between MALS used and their scores in the IELTS test, a high stake English Language proficiency test. IELTS stands for International English Language Testing System. This test is a language requirement test into

undergraduate, postgraduate, and other professional courses in many countries. The participants were divided into low proficiency and high proficiency groups as it was also the aim of the study to look at the difference in the metacognitive strategies used by both groups. The study employed mixed methods design similar to previous studies which required the participants to complete a listening test, MALQ and respond in an interview. The result indicated there was a significant relationship between the two variables studied. The three factors in the MALQ, 'directed attention', 'planning and evaluation' and 'problem solving' showed a positive correlation between variables. 'Mental translation' also showed a correlation however, it was a negative correlation. 'Person knowledge' and listening test score showed no significant correlation. There were differences in the metacognitive strategies used by both groups. This also shows that the level of MALS is different for each group. Overall, it was reported that highly proficient participants mainly used two metacognitive factors and they were 'directed attention' and 'problem solving' to complete the listening test and on the other hand, the low proficient participants used just 'mental translation' factor.

The relationship between MALS and listening comprehension was also studied in 2013 by Ahmed, Sahail and Yousef. The research employed a quantitative design and used convenience sampling to choose its 386 EFL learners from Jordon. From the research, it was found that the participants had only a moderate level of MALS. Among the five MALQ factors, the participants were found to have the highest awareness level for 'problem solving'. When the correlation between the five MALQ factors and the listening comprehension performance were studied, the result showed significant correlation between all four factors of the MALQ except 'mental translation'. Multiple regression analysis was performed to find out the percentage of variance in the listening comprehension test score that was explained by the five MALQ factors. A significant

variance of 56% was explained by 'problem solving', 'planning and evaluation' and 'directed attention' factors. Similar method of data analysis using multiple regression has been employed in the current study to study the association of the MALQ factors and the learners' listening performance.

Wenjing Li (2013) studied 138 Chinese ESL learners to find out about their level of MALS. The research design is similar to that of the study conducted by Anne and Volker (2009) and some others. The researcher used a listening test, MALQ and an interview to collect data. A descriptive statistics analysis of the data and t-test were used to analyse the data. On the whole, the participants possessed a low level of MALS which was 3.6529. Among the five MALQ factors, participants had the most awareness of the 'problem solving' factor. However, the level of MALS varied between the two groups, high-score and low-score groups. This showed that the MALS level do affect participants' listening comprehension performance. The correlation between the two variables, MALS and listening comprehension performance was found to be weak (0.280). Generally, the participants were quite weak in the target language. This explains the weak correlation.

Goh and Hu (2014) studied the relationship between MALS among 113 Chinese ESL learners who were enrolled into an English Language course. The study used a quantitative approach to determine the relationship between three variables; MALS, listening comprehension score, and intrapersonal differences. The researchers used MALQ and a real IELTS listening test paper to obtain data for the study. The data was analysed using bivariate regression analysis to identify any relationship between participants' MALS and their listening test scores. To study the relationship between the

five MALQ factors in the MALQ and the test score, a simultaneous multiple regression analysis was done. Based on the analysis, it was found that the participants had moderate to low level of MALS. This indicates that the participants are aware of some of the listening strategies used during the listening test. There was a positive correlation between the two variables. Out of the five factors, the participants reported to having metacognitive awareness mostly on 'directed attention' and 'problem solving' factors. From the multiple regression analysis, it was found that participants' MALS was responsible for 22% of variance in the listening test.

In a study done by Ali Dabbagh and Mahdi Noshadi (2014), the researchers wanted to seek answers to two research questions. The first question was concerning the impact of metacognitive learning strategy awareness on ESL learners' listening comprehension. The second question looked at the effect of proficiency level and listening comprehension. In the research conducted on 147 Iranian students, the researcher looked at the relationship between learners' proficiency levels and listening comprehension as well as metacognitive strategy awareness level and listening comprehension. The participants did a proficiency test that placed them at three different levels. Then, they did the listening test. Three different listening tests were used as there were three different groups. This was followed by a think-aloud procedure. In this procedure, they had to orally mention about what they were thinking about the strategies they used while listening. MALQ was administered after that. Two-way Anova was used to analyse the data. Although the researchers concluded by saying that proficiency levels affect listening comprehension, it was found that it was not significant in determining learners' metacognitive strategy awareness level. Unlike the result obtained by Vandergrift (2004), the researchers did not find any connection between learners' proficiency level and metacognitive strategy awareness. However, the

researcher identified two factors that were prominent. They were 'problem solving' and 'planning and evaluation'. Participants in a study conducted by Anne and Volker (2009) also showed the awareness in the area of 'problem solving'.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The design of this study and the questionnaire used were based on a theoretical model of metacognition, a construct that refers to thinking about one's thinking or the human's capacity to be conscious of one's mental processes (Flavell, 1979; Metcalfe & Shimamura, 1994; Nelson, 1996). Based on this construct, metacognitive awareness means a form of experience and knowledge that accompany and pertain to any intellectual enterprise (Flavell, 1979: p.906). Everyone has a different level of metacognitive awareness since the level of knowledge varies from one another (Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, & Afflerbach, 2006). By studying the metacognitive awareness level of ESL learners, it will be helpful in identifying whether it affects their listening performance.

In this current research, metacognitive awareness of listening strategies possessed by the learners is defined as the general skills learners use to regulate learning activities as well as handle, manage, and pilot their learning (Brown, 2007). The skills include connecting new to old information, selecting conscious thinking strategies, organising, observing, and assessing thinking processes (Oxford, 2002; Oxford, 2013).

2.7 Research Gap

Many studies have been conducted on assessing MALS among EFL learners. However, not many studies have been conducted on Malaysian tertiary level ESL learners. In this study, Malaysian ESL learners' MALS was assessed and information obtained from this study will contribute to the existing body of literature on MALS employed by ESL learners and how it relates to their listening comprehension performance.

In the context of Malaysian English language teaching, many studies also revolve around the use of learning strategies and its contribution to the success of language learning (Teoh, 2004; Mohamed Amin, 2000). There are also a considerable number of studies conducted by Malaysians relating to learners' metacognitive awareness. An experimental design was used to find out the relationship between MALS among ESL learners in a Malaysian public university (S Selamat & GK Sidhu, 2011). Instruments used include MALQ and an interview questionnaire. The findings from the study suggest that learners need to play an active role in listening by having a high level of metacognitive awareness as a way to overcome difficulties in listening. However, the sample of the study was quite small, only 34 participants. The study recommended for more research to be undertaken in this aspect as it would benefit the learners to be able to communicate effectively.

In a study conducted by Logambal (2013), the researcher found that the experimental group which had been treated or rather been given metacognitive awareness by metacognitive strategies instruction, showed a significantly high score in their listening

test. The researcher also argued that in a MUET preparatory course, the learners are only taught test-taking skills for listening and not useful listening strategies, hence suggested for emphasis to be given on metacognitive instruction.

The current study will contribute to shed some light on this aspect of second language learning in a Malaysian context.

2.8 Chapter Summary

Based on the literature available, it is clear that there is a need to study the relationship between MALS and ESL learners' listening performance among Malaysian ESL learners.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

In Research Methodology chapter, information pertaining to the research design of the study, instrumentation used, validity and reliability of the instruments used, study participants, sampling methods, pilot study, data collection and data analysis procedures and ethical considerations in the study will be discussed in detail.

3.2 Research Design

The explanatory correlational research design was employed in this study, which looked at how two variables, independent and dependent, co-vary with one another (Creswell, 2012). Specifically, the design used in this study was the 'explanatory sequential mixed methods' which is also referred to as a two-phase model (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this design, the quantitative data are obtained first followed by the collection of the qualitative data which will assist in the interpretation of the quantitative data. Therefore, when the data was collected for this study, the listening comprehension test and the MALQ were administered first as part of the quantitative data collection. To obtain qualitative data, interviews were held with the participants. The information gathered during the interview served as the qualitative data of the study. Similar research design was employed by a previous study conducted by Wenjing (2013) to

study the relationship between Chinese EFL learners'MALS and their listening performance.

3.3 Research Instruments

Since this study has employed a mixed method to collect data, there are a number of instruments involved. They include a questionnaire, listening comprehension test and a structured interview questionnaire.

3.3.1 Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)

For the purpose of measuring the participants' level of MALS accurately, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) created by Vandegrift et al. (2006) was used (Refer to Appendix A). Flavell's theory and Wenden's model of metacognition (planning, monitoring, evaluating and problem solving) (1998) were used as the basis to construct this questionnaire. This questionnaire will be useful to identify to what extent one is aware of his listening strategies. The questionnaire consists of 21 items (Refer to Appendix B) and each item is rated using a six-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, partly agree=4, agree=5, 6=strongly agree). When participants get a high score of 6, it shows they strongly agree with the statements. The questionnaire comprises of five components of metacognitive awareness which are problem-solving, planning and evaluation, mental translation, person knowledge and directed attention.

Table 3.1: MALQ Subscales and Items (Goh & Hu, 2014)

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

3.3.1.1 Reliability of MALQ

There were few measures taken to ensure the reliability of the MALQ. The MALQ consists of an instruction for the participants and 21 statements (Vandegrift et al., 2006). The content of the questionnaire is unambiguous and clear for the participants. The language used in the questionnaire is suitable for the participants' level of English Language. There were no jargons or any other complex terminologies used. A standardised procedure was used to administer the questionnaire to the participants. Since the participants were approached in their regular classes and exist as different groups, a consistent and similar procedure was adopted for all the groups during the data collection to ensure reliability. In order to collect reliable set of data, the participants were given briefing on the purpose of the data collection. This was done to make them feel calm and relaxed and reduce their anxiety level before giving their responses in the questionnaire. They were asked to give their actual opinions on the statements found in the MALQ without making any guesses or untruthful opinions. By

taking these measures, the data obtained from this instrument can be considered to have high reliability (Ahmed, Sahail, & Yousef, 2013). The internal consistency reliability of the MALQ was measured using coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1984). The reliability coefficient of the instrument was admissible at .86. Since the value fell within the rangeof ($0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$), the internal reliability is considered to be good (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

3.3.1.2 Validity of MALQ

The validation of the MALQ was done using an exploratory and a confirmatory factor analysis method (Vandergrift et al., 2006). In order to validate the MALQ, a study was conducted on 966 respondents. From the study, it was found that there was a fairly significant relationship between the respondents' listening comprehension potentials and their scores in the MALQ. The study reported that the respondents' MALS explains 13% of the variance in listening comprehension performance. MALQ has been tested and validated after using it on participants from various backgrounds on a large scale.

The validity of the MALQ can be confirmed by applying *Standards* proposed by Impara (2010) to establish the validity of the MALQ. The questionnaire was constructed to collect information about learners' level of awareness of their use of listening strategies during a listening activity. Past studies provide sufficient evidence to proof the validity of the information gathered from the MALQ. To find out if an instrument is valid, the scores obtained from the instrument should be tested to determine validity of the instrument used. Based on *Standards*, validity of the MALQ can be confirmed based on the different validity evidence that are present. There are four types of validity evidence that could confirm the validity of the MALQ. They are i) evidence based on response

processes; ii) evidence based on internal structure; iii) evidence based on relations to other variables; and iv) evidence based on the consequences of testing.

Evidence based on response processes refers to the evidence that shows that the participants' responses in a construct (questionnaire) match what is found in the construct itself. From the interviews held with the participants in the past studies (Goh & Hu, 2014; Wenjing, 2013; Roya, 2014) in which MALQ was used, it can be deduced that the items in the MALQ do reflect very similarly to what the participants experience and think. Evidence based on internal structure means there exist an established relationship between the items in the construct and the theory. In this case, the five factors in the MALQ (planning and evaluation, problem-solving, person knowledge, directed attention and mental translation) relate to the concept of metacognition. Next, evidence based on relations to other variables is the evidence that there exist relationships between the items in the construct and other variables. Studies that had identified positive correlations between participants' MALS (which uses MALQ) and listening comprehension test performance will serve as evidence to support that MALQ is a valid questionnaire. Lastly, evidence based on the consequences of testing refers to the proof that the construct makes a difference and becomes beneficial in a certain way. The use of MALQ has been encouraged for second language listening by many researchers (Alavinia & Mollahossein; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012) in their studies. The use of MALQ to test participants' MALS had helped language teachers to understand their learners' listening abilities. Thus, this evidence proves that MALQ is a valid construct to be used in this study. In Chapter 2, past studies (Escobar, 2015; Dabbagh & Norshadi, 2014; Ratebi, 2013) that used the MALQ as their research instrument have been discussed.

3.3.2 Listening Comprehension Test (LCT)

The listening comprehension test used in this study was a past year MUET paper (Refer to Appendix C) which contained 3 parts. There were 20 test items in the paper altogether. It was an objective assessment based on 3 different audios and the types of questions included sentence completion, multiple choice, and short answer. Each correct answer was awarded 1 mark based on the standard marking scheme for MUET.

3.3.2.1 Reliability of LCT

A few steps were taken to ensure that the listening comprehension test (LCT) and the scores gathered from this test are reliable. The LCT chosen was suitable for the participants' English Language proficiency. Although the participants' ages were different from one another, they all fell into the undergraduate category. All of them had sat for the MUET test in the past and had achieved at least a Band 4. Therefore, they were able to cope with the level of English in the LCT. An expert in teaching MUET syllabus and also an examiner for MUET, checked the suitability of the test for the participants. The test items were checked so that they were clear, straightforward and unambiguous. Any instructions found in the test were checked for clarity and also vagueness. The instructions and the format of the test were made very clear to avoid confusion. The question types found in the test were standard types that are commonly used in the MUET listening tests. It is important for the participants to be familiar with the question types (MCQ, short answer, and others) so that they can assure themselves to perform well. Also, it allows for the activation of schemata and builds confidence within them. Since this study concerned the collection of data from 100 participants, the administration of the LCT was standardised for all the classroom visits. The mark scheme used to award marks was also checked by the MUET examiner to ensure a

consistent marking system. The participants were reminded not to write their names or any other personal information except those that were required of them to avoid any possible bias happen. As a measure of tackling discrepancies and to ensure a high inter-rater reliability, the LCT scripts were checked by two examiners who have had experience in examining MUET papers for over 10 years. They had to achieve a mutual agreement if they were to come across any differentiation in opinions. Another step that was taken was to make sure the test environment was condusive. The participants were seated in an exam setting to avoid cheating during the test. Before they begun the test, the participants were explained about the test and they were assured that the test was being conducted entirely for the purpose of the study and will not affect their academic achievement. They were asked to answer the questions to the best they can. By taking all these measures, the LCT can be considered to have high reliability.

3.3.2.2 Validity of LCT

In the past validity of scores from a study will be checked in terms of content validity, construct validity and criterion-referenced validity. However, the method has changed to test for validity by searching for evidence and the use of the test (Thorndike, 1997b). By providing evidence that the test score matches the purpose of the study, validity of an instrument can be measured. In order to give valid results, a few measures were taken when this instrument was used. The test items were checked against the MUET syllabus. In the listening syllabus for MUET, there is a list of listening strategies the students will be exposed to. These listening strategies are introduced to the learners during the listening lesson prior to doing listening tasks. It is important to check if the LCT test reflects such content or otherwise the test becomes invalid. The expert who checked the LCT made sure that the test only tests what is relevant and known to the

participants, for example, the listening strategies needed to complete the test items. Evidence based on the test content such as the MUET syllabus helps to validate the test. Besides, scoring was done accurately to avoid mistakes. Since some of the questions required written answers, the two examiners responsible made sure the scoring was done accordingly.

Validity and reliability of an instrument work hand in hand although in a complicated way. To ensure the validity of the test scores, the scores from the instrument must have reliability. By tackling the reliability issues concerning the instrument, the scores obtained from this study can be considered to have validity.

3.3.3 Interview Questionnaire

Structured interviews were done with the participants using open-ended questions. Since the purpose of the interviews was to get more information from the participants for their responses in the MALQ, open-ended questions were intentionally used. Probes were part of the interview questions to assist in obtaining justification for the reasons given by the participants. There were 8 questions in total in the interview. The questions asked were based on different MALQ items (No.1,3,4,10,11,16,18, 21)(Refer to Appendix D).

3.3.3.1 Trustworthiness of the Interview Data

The terms validity and reliability have been used in the quantitative research for over a century. However, for qualitative research the terms validity and reliability are not

favoured by at least not all but some researchers when they describe their instruments. Some argue that qualitative data has individual uniqueness and cannot be generalised unlike quantitative data. In qualitative research, the term trustworthiness is used to refer to validity or reliability of the instrument or study data. Thus, when carrying out a qualitative research, the researcher can ensure the consistency of the instruments and the accuracy of data by emphasising on four trustworthiness criteria which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Schwandt, Lincoln & Cuba, 2007; Bryman, 2008). Since this study had also employed a qualitative research design, the interviews held with the participants and the data obtained from the interviews will be discussed in terms of their trustworthiness. The following steps have been to taken to ensure the qualitative research has the elements of trustworthiness.

Credibility

The credibility of a qualitative research is defined as the assurance one can have in the truth of the research data (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Macnee & McCabe, 2008). It can be attained by employing a few strategies as follow:

i. Prolonged engagement in research site

To understand participants' cultural context and to build a good relationship with them, a researcher needs to spend his time in the research site (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). In this study, the researcher who is also the person who had conducted the interviews made several visits to meet the participants and their lecturers to explain the purpose of this study. By doing so, the data collected for this study will be free from distortion. The data collected will represent the actual information of the participants. This also helps

the participants feel confident to give more in-depth and sensitive information about themselves since rapport has been established (Krefting, 1991).

ii. Conducting peer debriefing

Peer debriefing involves the researcher presenting his research findings to his colleagues who could give scholarly guidance before arriving at conclusions. This method helps the researcher to reexamine his interpretations of the data after analysis (Guba, 1981). For the current study,the findingswere discussed with some colleagues and their perceptions were taken into consideration before concluding the study. A few experts in the qualitative research studies were also sought to get their views on the way the researcher had interpreted this data.

iii. Triangulation

The use of various research methods, sources, investigators, and theories to get a valid proof is what entails in triangulation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 239). There are four techniques of triangulation (Denzin, 1978): investigator triangulation, data triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation. Only three triangulation techniques which are relevant for this study have been used. Investigator triangulation technique which involves the use of a few researchers to conduct the study was not made part of the study. This qualitative data collection was done only by one researcher to avoid conflicts and also to maintain a consistent data collection procedure. The first technique is data triangulation. This technique involves crosschecking the data obtained from the study with other data sources. The interview data collected in this study was checked against the participants' actual MUET scores for listening, data

obtained from the Ministry of Education of Malaysia and the information gathered from the participants prior to the study. By gathering and analysing various sources of data, the final interpretation of the findings will be more credible and valid. The second technique is theory triangulation. This technique refers to the use of more than one theory or concept to support the study data. The concept of metacognition and second language listening theories form the basis of this study. The underlying principles found in both these concept and theories were studied and taken into consideration before any conclusions were drawn on the study findings. The third method is the methodological triangulation. This technique concerns the employment of a few research methods to collect data. In this current study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been used to conduct the study. MALQ and listening comprehension test were done to collect quantitative data and then interviews were conducted to get qualitative data. By employing a few methods, the research data will be more concrete.

iv. Member checks

Member checks refer to the strategy whereby the analysis of data for example, interview data, is sent back to the participants of the interview in order for them to check its content. This is done so that the content reflects the exact thought and claims of the participants and it is free from any biases of the researcher. Such strategy is very essential to maintain the credibility of a qualitative data (Lincoln &Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). When the participants disagree with the researcher's interpretations of the data, the researcher needs to acknowledge such disagreement and make changes accordingly. In this study, member checks were done with only five participants from the total 10 due to lack of time.

v. Negative case analysis

Any contradictions between information gathered in the study and the researcher's expectations result in negative case analysis (Bitsch, 2005). From the results in this study, negative cases have been identified. There exists a negative correlation between the variables that were studied. However, such finding is not new and can be supported by past studies. The negative case analysis done helps to strengthen the credibility of the research. The negative case in this study is discussed in detail in the Discussion chapter.

Transferability

The extent to which the results of a qualitative study can be transferred to a different context involving different research participants is called transferability. It can be considered as the equivalent of generalisability (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The transferability of the qualitative data can be confirmed by the existence of thick description of data and purposeful sampling method (Bitsch, 2005).

i. Thick description of data

In order to increase the transferability of the research data, the researcher needs to keep a detailed record of the research methods and the context of the study in the form of descriptive data (Li, 2004). This will help future researchers to replicate the study using a different context.

ii. Purposeful sampling

Purposeful sampling refers to the selection of individuals or institutions based on the needs of answering research questions (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Purposeful sampling method was adopted in this research to choose samples for the interview. This sample group represents the target population. Thus, information gathered from the samples can be said unique and have a sense of belongingness to this particular group. Future researchers may transfer this information to analyse a similar set of samples.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the firmness of research findings over time (Bitsch, 2005). Evaluation of findings by the participants, interpretation and future suggestions of the study based on the information obtained from the participants contribute to the dependability of the research data (Cohen et al., 2011; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Dependability of a research data can be achieved by employing a few strategies. This study has applied some of those strategies.

i. Keeping an audit trail

An audit concerns a thorough inspection of the research methods, record-keeping and analysis methods of a qualitative data (Bowen, 2009; Li, 2004). Therefore, the researcher needs to keep the following documents for any future audits that will influence the dependability of the research data: interview notes, raw data, documents and records obtained from the research site, test scores and others (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). For this current study, the researcher has a record of all the documents needed

for an audit. Careful handling of the documents has been practised to ensure the safety of the data.

ii. Code-recode strategy

This strategy refers to the coding of research data twice with some time duration between each coding. The codings are then compared and analysed for differences (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). This allows the researcher to have better comprehension of the research data. This strategy was adopted into the current study. The coding of the interview data was done twice. The coding-recoding of the interview data showed there were no differences between the first and second coding.

Confirmability

The extent to which other researchers agree and affirm the research findings is called confirmability (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). This strategy will help strengthen the fact that the interpretation of the data reflects the data itself and not the researcher's own imagination (Tobin & Begley, 2004). There are three ways to achieve confirmability of a research data: audit trail, reflexive journal and triangulation. Both audit trail and triangulation have been discussed in the earlier section. This section will discuss the use of a reflexive journal to promote confirmability of the research data.

i. Reflexive journal

A reflexive journal is a collection of documents by the researcher to help with the interpretation of the research data, data planning and to reflect on them (Wollendorf &

Belk, 1989). The researcher has to keep both electronic and non-electronic information securely. In the current study, the researcher has made an effort to keep a reflexive journal which includes video-recording of the interviews, interview transcriptions, interview notes and participants' information.

3.4 Participants of the Study

In any research, it is crucial to choose participants who are representative of the population of people whom the researcher wants to study. This simply means that the participants selected for the study should have typical characteristics of the individuals of the total population. In order to establish this, the target population must be first identified from a larger population. The selection of study population depends entirely on the research questions and objectives of the research. Once the target population which holds similar characteristics has been identified, the sample for the study must be chosen. A sample refers to a smaller unit of the target population which the researcher could use to study and make generalisation about the target population. Since this study employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs, the sampling methods vary for both the designs. Also, a few criteria were taken into consideration when choosing the sample for the study.

3.4.1 Sampling Criteria

The target population of this study was the Malaysian ESL learners. From the target population, the sample group was derived. The participants for this study were chosen based on some sampling criteria: nationality, age, ethnicity, English language proficiency, education level, and gender.

Since the study concerns Malaysian ESL learners, only Malaysian students were allowed to be part of the study. The international students present in the classes where the study was conducted were told that they do not need to be part of the study. The age of the participants for this study had to be between a particular range (19 to 25 years) without much deviation. Next, since Malaysia has many ethnicities (Malay, Indian, Chinese and Indigenous), the participants had to be representative of the entire population. Any ethnicity, provided they were Malaysian could be part of the study. The English language proficiency was a controlled variable. Only participants who scored a minimum Band 4 in MUET could be part of the study. The researcher wanted to get participants who were enrolled into their undergraduate programmes. This is because all undergraduate students would have already completed the MUET test before enrolling into their programmes. They would have had experienced learning listening skills and been exposed to the requirements of the MUET listening test. Lastly, the study welcomed both male and female participants to show representation of Malaysian ESL learners. Based on these fundamental criteria, the participants for this study were chosen.

The participants were 100 Malaysian ESL learners from a private university. The participants' age ranged from 19 to 28 years. Members of different main ethnicities (Malay, Indian, Chinese and Indigenous) in Malaysia were present among the participants and they consist of male and female.They are English as a second language learners and have been introduced to the language at an average age of four. All the participants had obtained a minimum Band 4 in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) before being enrolled into the undergraduate programmes. Thus, their language proficiency is a controlled variable. Participants were chosen based on their

performance in their Malaysian University Entrance Test (MUET) listening component to ensure homogeneity.

3.4.2 Sampling Method

This research employed two different types of sampling methods to select the participants for this study. For the quantitative study, the researcher used simple random sampling method (Creswell, 2012). This method is an example of a probabilistic sampling approach. For the qualitative study, homogeneous sampling method was employed. This method is a type of purposeful sampling done for qualitative research.

3.4.3 Research Sample for Quantitative Study

Participants were chosen based on simple random sampling. By using this probability sampling approach, the researcher ensured that the samples, in this case the Malaysian private university ESL learners were representatives of the target population which are the Malaysian ESL learners. The participants were chosen randomly from different classes. Most of the classes had about 20 to 30 students. So a total of 100 students were chosen from these classes.

3.4.4 Research Sample for Qualitative Study

Purposeful sampling is carried out for qualitative research studies in order to learn about the central issue with more depth (Creswell, 2012). This involves the researcher to carefully examine the individuals or groups that is ‘information rich’ and can contribute to better comprehension of the occurrence in the research. There are many strategies

that can be employed to do a purposeful sampling. In this research, the homogeneous sampling strategy was adopted to identify the participants for the qualitative study. Ten participants from the study sample for the quantitative study were chosen. These participants are homogeneous in a few ways because they have similar characteristics and they are part of the sample, and also the target population. By studying them, the researcher will be able to describe the sample with depth and this can contribute useful information for the study. However, the data obtained from the qualitative study cannot be generalised as they have individual uniqueness.

3.4.5 Demographics

In this study, the unit of analysis was the Malaysian ESL learners in a private university. There were 100 participants who took part in the study by completing a listening comprehension test and a questionnaire. Three demographic items were added into the questionnaire: gender, age, and race.

Table 3.2: Demographical Information of the Participants

Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender		
Male	11	11
Female	89	89
	100	
Age		
15-19	9	9
20-24	85	85
25-30	6	6
	100	
Ethnicities		
Malay	16	16
Chinese	54	54
Indian	28	28
Indigenous	2	2
	100	

Based on Table 3.2, the gender constitution of the participants had some disparity with 89 or 89% female participants and only 11 or 11% male participants. The ages of the participants were categorised into three categories based on range. There were 9 participants whose age fell between 15-19 years. Next, 85 % or rather the majority of participants fell between 20-24 years range. Another 6 participants fell into the category of 25-30 years. This showed that most of the participants were adult learners. Since Malaysia is a multiracial country, race of the participants was also considered as an important element of consideration. In this study, 54% of the participants were Chinese, 28% were Indians, 4% were Malays and 2% or 2 participants were indigenous.

3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with some Malaysian ESL learners who were also representative of the target population. Five participants took part in the pilot study voluntarily. The MALQ and listening comprehension test were administered to them.

The purpose was to check if the language used in both the instruments were suitable. The MALQ score calculated showed the participants had low level of MALS. The listening test was conducted to check its suitability for the sample group. The participants for the pilot study who also had a minimum Band 4 in MUET performed moderately in the listening test. From the pilot study, there exist some positive relationship between the MALQ and the listening comprehension test scores. Some adjustments were done in terms of administration of the instruments for the actual study participants.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

There are three parts to data collection (Cresswell, 2012), the first is identifying the samples for the study (Refer to 3.4 Participants of the study), followed by obtaining permission and finally, gathering the data through questionnaire and other means.

3.6.1 Quantitative Data Collection

The listening comprehension test took place first before the MALQ was distributed. The setting of the classroom followed the conventional exam setting to ensure participants did not copy one another. This is to maintain the authenticity and reliability of the data. The participants were assured that the test scores will only be used for the purpose of the study and not as part of their course assessment. By letting the participants know this, the researcher wanted to make sure that they are not under anxiety while doing the test as it would affect the reliability of the data. Participants would be able to perform better in the listening test if they were more relaxed (F Xu, 2011). Total duration of the test was 30 minutes, following the standards of MUET. The test which consisted of 20

test items weighed 20 marks. An audible and well-functioning sound system was used to play the audio recording so that the participants could listen to it clearly. Commonly practised MUET standards were observed during the administration of the test. For this, a MUET invigilator who has had experience in administering this test was appointed. The test papers were then collected before the MALQ questionnaire was distributed.

After the completion of the listening test, the researcher distributed the MALQ to the participants by hand. They were given 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Extra time was given to thoseneeded to complete the questionnaire. There was a short instruction on the questionnaire form at the top of the page for the participants to read before responding. The instruction was worded using simple intelligible language for ease of understanding and to avoid ambiguity. The instruction functioned as a brief guide for participants to answer the questionnaire.

3.6.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Ten participants who represented ten percent of the total sample were randomly selected to be interviewed. The interview sessions were video recorded with the consent of the participants. Video recording was done so that the participants' lip movements can facilitate the transcription process. Interview data was very valuable as it helped to interpretthe quantitative data. The one-on-one interview approach was employed to collect the qualitative data. Although this approach took up some time, it was an effective way of acquiring insightful information from the interviewees. Since almost all of the samples chosen for the interview could converse well in the English Language, this method of interviewing was suitable (Creswell, 2012).

3.7 Data Analysis Method

In this study, research data was collected from three different sources. Data was collected from the listening comprehension test, MALQ and interview. Firstly, the quantitative data was screened through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 to check for any entry inaccuracies, outliers and normality. The Boxplot was used to look for outliers. In order to check the normality of the data, the mean, standard deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis were calculated.

In order to answer the first research question (1) What is the level of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies among Malaysian ESL learners?, the mean and the standard deviation of the MALQ was calculated. A descriptive analysis was done through SPSS. The mean score will help to determine the overall level of MALS possessed by the participants. The standard deviation value will allow the researcher to understand the different levels of MALS among the participants.

The interview data was used to substantiate the data from the MALQ. Qualitative data that was obtained from the structured interview was transcribed. The transcription was done manually. The transcribed data was then coded for identification of patterns or regularity. A thematic approach or the conventional content analysis approach of coding was employed. The unit of analysis for the coding included words, phrases and sentences. The codes that were extracted from the transcript were checked by an expert in qualitative analysis. Qualitative codes help to interpret data, where they form a regular pattern that would enable us to capture the significant elements of a research study (Saldana, 2013). Since the study concerned learners' opinions and reasons, the

linguistic elements of their spoken language were not coded as they were not the focus of the study.

For the second research question (2) Is there a connection between Malaysian ESL learners' metacognitive awareness of L2 listening strategies and their listening performance?, Pearson Coefficient Correlation technique was used.

Finally, the third research question (3) In what ways do the factors in the MALQ, which represent the different features of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies, associate with the learners' listening comprehension performance? was analysed through a multiple regression analysis. To examine statistical significance of the results, a one-way repeated measure, ANOVA was used. The Beta value for the data was calculated to compare the contribution of each independent variable. Part Correlation Coefficients analysis was also performed to study the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The research questions for this study and the analysis methods have been summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Summary of Analysis Methods

No.	Research Question	Analysis Method
1.	What is the level of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies among Malaysian ESL learners?	Descriptive Statistical analysis & Hand analysis (Creswell, 2012)
2.	Is there a connection between Malaysian ESL learners' metacognitive awareness of L2 listening strategies and their listening performance?	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
3.	In what ways do the factors in MALQ, which represent the different features of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies, associate with the learners' listening comprehension performance?	Multiple Regression Analysis

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Before the data was collected, permission was obtained from the university (Refer to Appendix E) to allow the study to be conducted in their premise and as well as to use their students as the research subjects. The participants gave their consent before taking part in the study by signing a letter of consent. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study to avoid confusions or assumptions. The purpose of the study was spelled out to the participants also to motivate them to participate genuinely in the study. This was done after a quick self-introduction by the researcher. They were

assured that any information collected pertaining to them or the university will be kept confidential and was for the purpose of the study. With the signing of the consent letter, the participants had agreed to be part of the study and to adhere to any rules and regulations of the study during the period of the study. Once the permission was sought, the data collection process began. A total of 100 participants who represented the target population were approached in their regular classes. A few appointments were held with the lecturers who were teaching the participants to schedule a suitable slot for the data collection to take place.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research design employed, population and sampling, data collection procedure, validity and reliability issues and data analysis procedure for this study. This study adopted the mixed methods to achieve its objective. The data analysis includes a descriptive analysis, Pearson coefficient correlations method, and multiple regression analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter is organised into two sections. The first section introduces the analysis of the preliminary exploration of data and methods used to screen them. The next section explores the research questions opposed to the supporting analysis. The objective of this research is to study the relationship between metacognitive awareness of listening strategies of Malaysian ESL learners and their listening comprehension performance.

To achieve the objective of the study, the researcher applied some statistical tests including Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression to analyse the data. In Chapter four, the findings of the study are outlined and discussed.

4.2 Data Preparation

Before being analysed, the data was first entered into SPSS version 22, and checked for entry inaccuracies, outliers, and normality.

4.2.1 Outliers

Observing for outliers was the first step in data preparation. Outliers refer to any data that are noticeably different from the other data. Osborne and Overbay (2004) stated that, outliers can be caused by many reasons including human error in data collection, documenting, and data entry.

The Boxplot was used to identify any outliers in the data collected for this study. After rectifying data entry inaccuracies, only five cases out of 100 were found as outliers (Figure 4.1). The researcher regarded them legitimate cases based on the sample size (large sample) and decided to retain them.

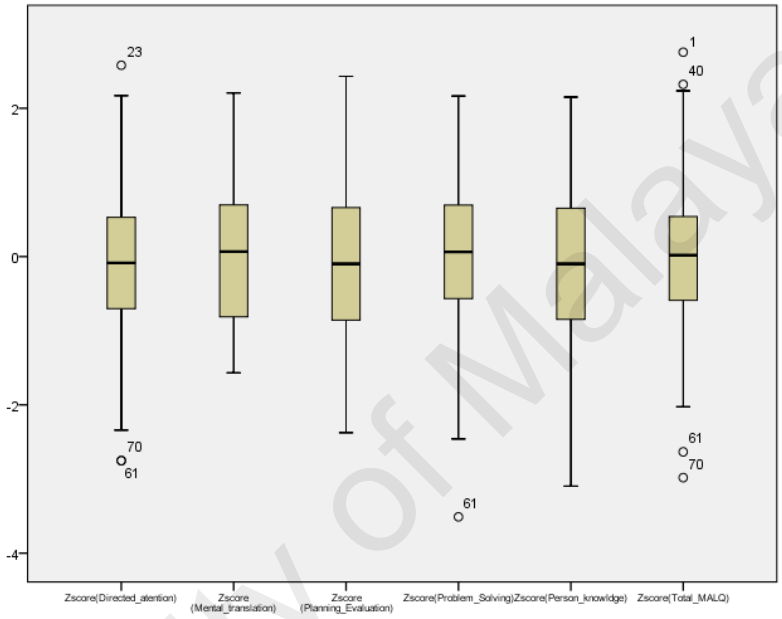

Figure 4.1: Outliers of the Variables of the Study

4.2.2 Normality Assumption

Coakes (2005) pointed out that normality assumption is a significant test that furnishes a multivariate analysis. There are two popular statistical methods for determining normality including Skewness and Kurtosis. The symmetry of a distribution is decided by Skewness and Kurtosis, which mirrors peaks in a distribution (Stevens, 2002). For this study, the tests of normality as exemplified in Table 4.1 below indicate that the data are normally distributed.

Table 4.1: Tests of Normality of the Variables

	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
MALQ	100	82.29	11.50	-0.035	0.846
Directed attention	100	15.71	2.43	-0.086	0.588
Mental translation	100	9.23	3.97	0.034	-0.966
Planning Evaluation	100	20.39	3.95	-0.116	-0.401
Problem solving	100	25.7	4.75	-0.296	0.847
Person knowledge	100	11.26	2.66	-0.373	0.374
Listening	100	15.09	2.94	-0.96	1.065

The results indicate that all Skewness and Kurtosis indicators are within a suitable range of ±2.0 (Kline, 2010). Based on the table, the Skewness of all items is from -0.96 to 0.034 in the data set and the Kurtosis of the data set is from –0.966 to 1.065. Thus, it can be deduced that the assumptions of normality is met.

4.3 Research Question No.1 -What is the level of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies among Malaysian ESL learners?

4.3.1 Quantitative Analysis of Research Question No.1

Descriptive analysis using the SPSS was performed to calculate the mean score and standard deviation for the MALQ scores. The mean score for MALQ is 82.29 which indicates the level of MALS to be moderately high among Malaysian ESL learners. The standard deviation for the MALQ scores is 11.50. This shows that individual participant's level of MALS vary quite greatly.

From the five factors in the MALQ, participants have been found to use two of the factors more than the others. They are 'problem solving' (25.7) and 'planning and

evaluation' (20.39). The highest mean score is achieved by 'problem solving' (25.7) followed by 'planning and evaluation' (20.39), 'directed attention' (15.71), 'person knowledge' (11.26), and finally the least mean score is achieved by 'mental translation' (9.23).

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics Analysis

	N	Mean	SD
MALQ	100	82.29	11.50
Directed attention	100	15.71	2.43
Mental translation	100	9.23	3.97
Planning	100	20.39	3.95
Evaluation			
Problem solving	100	25.7	4.75
Person knowledge	100	11.26	2.66
Listening	100	15.09	2.94

4.3.2 Qualitative Analysis of Research Question No.1

This research question was also answered through a qualitative approach. Interview sessions were held with ten of the participants. The interview transcripts (Refer to Appendix F) were coded and analysed for themes (Refer to Appendix G). Following is the result obtained from the analysis of the interview data. There were eight questions asked based on eight items in the MALQ. The results will follow the order of the questions asked in the interview.

For MALQ item one, the question was "What sort of plan do you usually have in your mind before starting to listen?" As response, eight out of ten participants agreed that they would have a plan in their mind before starting to listen. Half of them mentioned that they would try to understand the keywords in the question before listening. Two

participants said they would understand the question first prior to listening. One participant said activation of schema would be done.

For MALQ item three, the question was “Give one reason why do you find listening in English is more difficult than other skills.” A total of seven out of ten participants agreed that they find listening more difficult than other skills. Three different reasons where derived from the analysis. Three participants said that pronunciation makes listening challenging. Another three said that since there is no repetition or lack of repetition, they find listening difficult.

For MALQ item four, the question was “How does translation help you to listen better?” Only half of the participants agreed and all of them said that translation helps with comprehension.

For MALQ item ten, the question was “How does comparing similar texts help to make you a better listener?” Only three participants agreed that comparing similar texts help them with listening. This is because they could make relation between texts.

For MALQ item eleven, the question was “How does translating key words help you listen better? Since items four and eleven are related to translation, the responses were exactly the same. Only five out of ten participants agreed that translating keywords helps them with comprehension during a listening task.

For MALQ item sixteen, the question was “At which point of a listening activity do you usually give up? Why?” Only one participant agreed and mentioned that when it involves paraphrasing words to form an answer, the participant gives up. The reason given was that it was time-consuming.

For MALQ item eighteen, the question was “How often do you do word by word translation? Does it affect your listening performance or otherwise?” All of the participants disagreed which means that none of them would do a word by word translation.

For MALQ item twenty-one, the question was “What sort of goal would you have in your mind as you listen?” Eight out of ten participants reported to have a goal as they listen. Two of them said they would pay attention to specific details. Another three mentioned that their goal was to try to understand the message of the listening audio. Two participants said the only goal they had in their mind was to fulfill the task by answering the questions.

Some emergent themes were identified from the analysis. They will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.4 Research Question No.2- Is there a connection between Malaysian ESL learners’ metacognitive awareness of L2 listening strategies and their listening performance?

4.4.1 Quantitative Analysis of Research Question No.2

Pearson Coefficient is an appropriate measure of relationship between variables. The correlations between the variables in the model are provided in the table labelled Correlational Matrix between variables (Table 4.3). The table shows to what extent does each independent variable correlates with the dependent variable. 'directed attention' (0.05), 'mental translation' (-0.29), 'planning & evaluation' (0.09), 'problem-solving' (0.17), and 'person knowledge' (-0.11) are correlated with listening score which is the dependent variable of the study. The results show that subscales 'mental translation' (-0.29) and 'person knowledge' (-0.11) are negatively correlated with the dependent variable. Hence, it can be concluded that 'mental translation' subscale seemed to have the most significant relationship with the listening score (-0.29).The lowest correlation exists between 'directed attention' subscale and the listening score at (0.05).

Table 4.3: Correlational Matrix between Variables

	Listening	DA	MT	PE	PS	PK
Listening	1					
Directed attention	.059	1				
Mental translation	-.299	.064	1			
Planning & evaluation	.098	.282	.218	1		
Problem-solving	.174	.324	.437	.357	1	
Person knowledge	-.116	.192	.146	.209	.162	1

Note : * p<.0005

DA= Directed attention
MT=Mental translation
PE=Planning & evaluation
PS=Problem solving
PK=Person knowledge

4.5 Research Question No.3-In what ways do the factors in MALQ, which represent the different features of metacognitive awareness of listening strategies, associate with the learners' listening comprehension performance?

4.5.1 Quantitative Analysis of Research Question No.3

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the extent of the relationship between variables. To identify whether there exists a relationship between subscales of MALQ and the listening comprehension score, the researcher has to evaluate the model. The result found in Table 4.4 below shows that 0.225 of the variance in the dependent variable which is the listening comprehension test score is explained by the five variables, 'directed attention', 'mental translation', 'planning and evaluation', 'problem solving', and 'person knowledge'. In other words, 22.5% of the listening comprehension scores is explained by the five subscales of the MALQ.

Table 4.4: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.474[a]	**.225**	.183	2.660

a. Independent Variables: (Constant)Person knowledge, Mental translation, Directed attention, Planning & Evaluation, Problem solving

b. Dependent Variable: Listening Score

Next, to assess the statistical significance of the result, it is necessary to look at the table labelled ANOVA (Table 4.5). This model reaches the statistical significance

F (5,94) = 5.45 Sig. = .000; when p<.0005).

Table 4.5. ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	192.863	5	38.573	5.450	.000[b]
	Residual	665.327	94	7.078		
	Total	858.190	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Listening Score

b. Independent Variables: (Constant), Person knowledge, Mental translation, Directed attention, Planning and evaluation, Problem solving

It is crucial to note which of the variables in the model contribute to the prediction of the dependent variable. This information can be found in Table 4.6. It is necessary to look at the standardised coefficients to compare the different variables. The values for each of the different variables have been converted to the same scale so that they can be compared. The figures are presented in the table. In this study, the researcher is interested in comparing the contribution of each independent variable. Therefore, the Beta values have been used to make the comparison.

From the Beta column, the largest Beta value can be determined. In this case, the largest beta coefficient is 0.463, which is for 'mental translation'subscale (Table 4.6). This means that this variable makes the most significant contribution in explaining the dependent variable, when the variance explained by all other variables in the model is controlled for. The Beta value for 'directed attention' scale is the lowest relatively (0.037), indicating that it made the least contribution.

For these variables, it is essential to identify the value in the column marked Sig. This indicates whether these variables are making a statistically significant contribution to the equation. This depends on which variables are included in the equation and how much overlap is there among the independent variables. Based on the above considerations, the variables 'mental translation' and 'problem solving' are making a

significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. Also, it can be concluded that the variables 'person knowledge', 'directed attention' and 'planning &evaluation' are not making a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable.

Table 4.6: Coefficients Correlations

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	13.034	2.186		5.962	0			
	Directed attention	-0.045	0.12	**0.037**	-0.376	**0.708**	0.059	-0.039	**-0.034**
	Mental translation	-0.343	0.076	**0.463**	-4.528	**0**	-0.299	-0.423	**-0.411**
	Planning evaluation	0.076	0.075	**0.102**	1.016	**0.312**	0.098	0.104	**0.092**
	Problem solving	0.23	0.068	**0.372**	3.38	**0.001**	0.174	0.329	**0.307**
	Person knowledge	-0.136	0.104	**0.123**	-1.305	**0.195**	-0.116	-0.133	**-0.119**

a. Dependent Variable: Listening Score
b. Independent Variables: (Constant), Person knowledge, Mental translation, Directed attention, Planning and evaluation, Problem solving

Another useful information in the coefficients table is the Part Correlation Coefficients (Table 4.6). It indicates that the total variance in the dependent variable is explained by that variable and how much R square would drop if it has not been included in the model. In this study, the 'directed attention'factor has a Part Correlation Co-efficient of 0.03 indicating that 'directed attention' explains 0.3% of the variance in total listening scores. For 'mental translation', the value is –0.411, indicating a contribution of 4 per cent to the explanation of variance in listening. For 'planning & evaluation', the value is 0.092, indicating a contribution of 0.9% to the explanation of variance in listening. For 'problem solving', the value is 0.307, indicating a contribution of 3 per cent to the

explanation of variance in listening. Finally, for 'person knowledge', the value is -0.119, indicating a contribution of 1% to the explanation of variance in listening.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The fourth chapter presented the results obtained from the analysis conducted on the data collected for the three research questions proposed in the study. The first research question sought an answer to the level of MALS possessed by the Malaysian ESL learners. The results revealed that on an overall, Malaysian ESL learners have moderately high level (82.29) of awareness of their metacognitive listening strategies. The analysis also showed that the level of MALS varies for the five MALQ factors. The participants of the study showed the highest level of metacognitive awareness for 'problem solving' strategies, followed by 'planning and evaluation', 'directed attention', 'person knowledge' and lastly 'mental translation'. Interviews held with the participants contributed to some insights into the reasons behind the participants' responses in the MALQ.

The second research question was aimed at identifying the correlation between the participants' MALS and their listening comprehension performance. The results indicate that there is a weak correlation between participants' level of MALS and their listening score, 'directed attention' (0.05), 'mental translation' (-0.29), 'planning &evaluation' (0.09), 'problem-solving' (0.17), and 'person knowledge' (-0.11). However, all five subscales in MALQ have some form of correlation with the dependent variable. There is a positive correlation between three factors in the MALQ and the participants' listening comprehension scores. Two other factors have a negative correlation with the listening comprehension scores. It can be deduced that 'mental

translation' factor has the highest correlation (-0.29) with the dependent variable, which is the listening comprehension scores.

Lastly, the third research question sought the answer to the association of the five MALQ factors with the participants' listening comprehension performance. The quantitative analysis of the data showed that the five MALQ factors are responsible for the achievement in the listening comprehension performance. A percentage of 22.5% of the listening comprehension scores is contributed by the five MALQ factors.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Overview

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be discussed by relating them to the previous studies and other available information on MALS and listening comprehension performance. The discussion of the main findings in this research will be based on the three research questions proposed by the researcher at the beginning of the study.

5.2 Discussion of the Main Findings

This study was carried out using Malaysian ESL learners as samples. It was the objective of the study to examine the relationship between Malaysian ESL learners' MALS and their listening comprehension performance. Since listening skill is a crucial skill for communication, it would be important to study it especially for successful second language acquisition. The analysis has been done based on the three research questions of this study. The findings are supported with information obtained from past studies and related theories.

5.2.1 Level of Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies among Malaysian ESL Learners

Based on the descriptive analysis, the Malaysian ESL learners' mean score for MALQ is 82.29. The score represents a moderately high level of MALS among Malaysian ESL learners. Participants who participated in this study were ESL learners. Thus they have

been exposed to the conventions of the language like grammar, oral and aural skills and others. The medium of instruction for all their university courses is the English language. Not only that, English is used widely, especially in urban areas in Malaysia for various purposes which include education, administrations, services, telecommunications and many more. There are many opportunities for these participants to use the language and they are not restricted in any ways to use it. The frequent usage of the English language had strengthened their knowledge of the language and possibly made them quite competent in the language.

Since the participants are surrounded by a community that uses the English language to converse very frequently, the participants would have naturally learnt the language, besides learning it at school, and improved in all the four aspects of the language- reading, writing, listening and speaking. During a communication process, most of the time is spent on listening (Mendelson, 1994). Given listening is an operative process which concerns decoding and creating meaning from verbal and non-verbal information (Nunan, 1998), the participants would have had learnt to use listening strategies effectively due to their years of exposure to the language (Coskun, 2010). Overtime, these participants would have had employed metacognitive listening strategies to enhance their listening skills (Oxford, 2002). Some of the skills include planning, evaluating and controlling the listening process.

The moderately high level of MALS can also be explained by the fact that these participants have been taught listening strategies at school and also at university level. Although metacognitive awareness was not emphasised in the school syllabus, other forms of listening instruction had prepared these participants for their language test,

which was MUET. Participants' responses in the MALQ and interview prove that they are conscious of the use of listening strategies. The MALQ scores indicate that participants do have some form of MALS when they do a listening task. The findings from this study are supported by research conducted by Christine Goh (2014) on 113 ESL learners in Singapore. The study reported a moderate level of MALS among its participants. The data also inferred that the study participants were aware of the challenges they faced during their listening processes. Since both studies employed ESL learners and the setting of the study is based in countries where English serves as one of their main languages, it can be concluded that ESL learners generally have a moderate to high level of MALS. However, this is also influenced by their exposure to and use of the English language.

Another study that was conducted using EFL learners (Rahimi and Katal, 2012) also reported a similar result. The participants of the study were Iranian EFL learners. They showed a moderate level of MALS based on the analysis of their responses in the MALQ. Although ESL and EFL learners have a number of distinguishable features, they can still be said to share some similarities. Some experts even argue that the three concentric circles (Figure 5.1) of English proposed by Braj Kachru (1985) are becoming less distinctive in nature. This is to say the lines between the three circles, Inner Circle (native speakers of English), Outer Circle (ESL learners) and Expanding Circle (EFL learners) are becoming thin. Malaysian ESL learners fall under the Outer Circle whereas the Iranian EFL learners are part of the Expanding Circle. However, with globalisation and many other factors, ESL and EFL learners seem to share more similarities now than they used to. If ESL and EFL learners are treated as one entity (non-native speakers of English language), then it can be deduced that both ESL and EFL learners have

moderate to high level of MALS. Some other studies using EFL learners have reported similar findings as well (Shirani Bidabadi and Yamat, 2010, 2011).

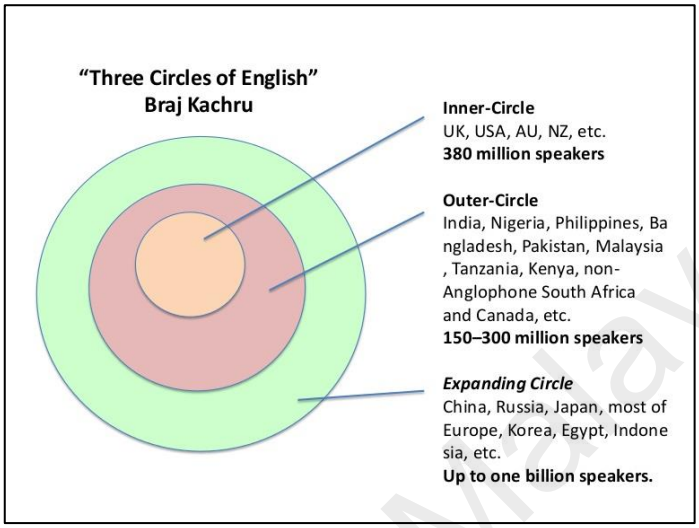

Figure 5.1 Braj Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of English

On the contrary, in a study conducted in China using ESL learners (Wenjing, 2013), the level of MALS reported by the Chinese learners was low. Although Wenjing described the participants as ESL learners, it is believed that the Chinese learners may actually be EFL learners. It could have been a misinterpretation by the researcher. These participants were not English-majors but in fact were taking up Japanese and others subjects as their major. Despite their exposure to the English language, the Chinese learners' MALS is low. This could be a result of an overall shallow knowledge in the English language. In countries like China, where Chinese language is used very dominantly, it restricts the use of any other languages for example, the English language. This explains the reason why although the participants may have been exposed to the language at a young age, they are still not competent in the language. Thus, it can be concluded that the result obtained from the MALQ is supported by the

existing literature although there may be some differences in the research procedures between the past studies.

The Malaysian ESL learners who participated in this study may on the whole have a high level of MALS, however the standard deviation calculated using a descriptive analysis show that there exist significant amount of variations among the individual levels of MALS. The standard deviation for the MALQ scores is 11.50. Different participants responded differently in the MALQ and the interview. The results showed some variations in the level of MALS between individual participants. To understand better, it is worth to explore the participants' responses on the five factors in the MALQ. The highest mean score was calculated for 'problem solving' (25.7) followed by 'planning and evaluation' (20.39), 'directed attention' (15.71), 'person knowledge' (11.26), and lastly, 'mental translation' (9.23).

'Problem solving' strategies in listening seem to be popular (M= 25.7) among the participants. These strategies are used in many ways. Participants tend to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the text using the words known to them. They compare what is known about the topic and what is understood from the text. Experience and knowledge are also used to help with comprehension. When the participants realise something is incorrect, they would adjust their interpretation. Besides guessing meaning of words using words they know, they also use the general idea of the whole text to arrive at meaning of words. When guessing meaning of words, they may also rethink everything that they had listened toso that the meaning constructed is logical.

Next, participants also have awareness of the use of 'planning and evaluation' (M=20.39) strategies for listening. They reported to making some plans in their mind regarding the way they are going to listen. This is usually done before they begin listening. From the interview, it was found that the participants would do different kinds of planning before starting to listen. They will attempt to understand the key words contained in the question to prepare them for the listening task. Understanding the requirement of the question is also a strategy they would employ before listening. This strategy is useful to direct their focus on the requirement of the question and enable them to relate to the audio when they listen to it later. Another interviewee also mentioned that planning before listening helps with activation of schema. Identification and understanding of key words in the question for instance, is an example of schema activation activity. When the participant studies the key word, he or she will try to make a connection between their prior knowledge and the key word. With such planning being done, when the participant listens to the audio, the content of the audio text becomes more relatable. Another 'planning' strategy that participants used was to think of similar textswhich they have listened to before listening. When asked how that helps with listening, an interviewee said that comparing similar texts help to create relation between the texts, thus improving understanding. Besides that, participants also agreed to having a goal in their mind before they start to listen. During the interview, some of the participants shared the kinds of goal they would usually have in their mind before starting to listen. They would pay attention to specific details, try to understand the message of the text and one interviewee said the only goal in her mind was to fulfill the task. On the whole, by planning before listening, participants are more confident they can perform better than without making any plans. As part of the 'evaluation' strategy, the participants agreed to thinking back after they had completed the listening task and reflecting on what they can do differently next time. Also, when they are listening, some

of them would ask themselves if they are contented with the level of understanding of the text. By doing such evaluations of their listening processes, they can ensure that the listening task is successful.

The next metacognitive strategy that was used by the participants to listen was 'directed attention' (M=15.71). Under the category of 'directed attention', participants agreed to focus harder on the listening text when they find it challenging. Besides that, some of them agreed to the fact that when their mind wanders during the listening activity, they would redirect their attention immediately on the listening task. Some of them also mentioned that they would get back on track when they realise that they had lost concentration. Lastly, although not many agreed that they would give up and stop listening when the listening task gets too challenging, some actually did report that they would surrender and discontinue listening at some points. During the interview, it was learnt only one out of ten participants said she would give up when she does not understand what is being listened to. When asked at which point she would usually give up, she told that she gives up when paraphrasing of sentences is required in order to answer the question. According to the interviewee, she gives up because paraphrasing while listening is challenging and can be time-consuming. On the whole, the participants demonstrate some level of awareness of the use of 'directed attention' strategies while listening.

The Malaysian ESL learners show rather low level of metacognitive awareness of 'person knowledge' (M=11.26). 'Person knowledge' strategies refer to the listeners' thoughts about the difficulties faced during a listening task and their ability to analyse these difficulties and their self-esteem in second language listening (Sparks &

Ganschow, 2001). It has the fourth lowest mean score. The analysis indicates that the participants have little knowledge about their self-efficacy and capability to assess the challenges in a given listening task. This provides evidence that self-efficacy and metacognitive knowledge work hand in hand (Vandergrift, 2005). Low awareness of 'person knowledge' indicates that the participants were not given opportunities to appraise their own strengths and weaknesses in their English language classes. These students had experienced conventional teaching methods which did not allow for participants' self–appraisal (Rahimi and Nabilou, 2009). From the interview data, it was found that some admitted that listening is difficult due to pronunciation. Not only that, they find it challenging because they only listen to the audios once in most cases. The lack of repetition hinders their understanding of the listening audios, thus making listening a difficult activity for them. This evidence proves that their knowledge of their self-ability is low and they are less aware of the ways to curb the challenges faced during a listening task.

Finally, the lowest mean was calculated for 'mental translation' strategies (M=9.23). 'Mental translations' strategies are commonly used by weaker listeners. These are the strategies good listeners would avoid (Vandergrift, 2003). The statements for 'mental translation' strategies in the MALQ include 'I translate in my head as I listen' and 'I translate keywords as I listen'. Most of the participants have disagreed to these statements and this explains the low mean score achieved for 'mental translation' strategies. From the analysis, it can be deduced that most of the participants do not use 'mental translation' strategies to complete a listening task. However, some of the participants who have agreed to those statements have some justifications to make. They found that by translating, they are better at comprehending the demands of the question. Also, translation of keywords helps them to understand the context effectively.

Although it was found that some of the participants do translation of keywords into their mother tongue, none of the interviewees agreed for doing word by word translation. They said that it is time-consuming and theywould totally avoid such strategy.

5.2.2 Relationship between Malaysian ESL Learners' Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategies and their Listening Comprehension Performance

Overall, the results show a weak correlation,'directed attention' (0.05), 'mental translation' (-0.29), 'planning & evaluation' (0.09), 'problem-solving' (0.17), and 'person knowledge' (-0.11)exists between participants' MALS and their listening score. However, all five subscales in MALQ have some form of correlation with the dependent variable. This is supported by previous studies (Li, 2013; Goh & Hu, 2014).

MALQ factors, 'directed attention' (0.05), 'planning and evaluation' (0.09) and 'problem solving' (0.17) show positive correlation with the listening comprehension test scores. This is to say that when participants apply strategies associated with these factors, they score better in the listening test. Strategy such as learning to focus on audio in order to get the answers falls under 'directed attention'. From the interview, it was found that 9 out of 10 participants disagreed to the statement that said they would give up and stop listening if they encounter difficulty while listening. This proves that most of them employ a listening strategy that helps them to stay focused in their listening. Some of the participants agreed on the use of some strategies under 'planning and evaluation'. During the interview, some interviewees reported that they would pay attention to keywords before starting to listen (MALQ Item 1). They would also attempt to make relation of similar texts. After reading the questions in the listening text, they would try to recall previously learnt text or vocabulary. By doing so, they activate their

schemata before beginning to listen (MALQ Item 10). It was also noted that 8 out of 10 interview participants had a goal in their mind before starting to listen. One of them said, "My goal is just to understand the gist." This tells that they do have some planning skills in order to listen effectively. 'Problem solving' is another factor in the MALQ which showed a positive correlation. This factor is the second in the list for having a correlation of (0.174) after 'mental translation'. Some of the strategies under 'problem solving' include guessing meaning of words using contextual clues, adjusting understanding of text while listening, and comparing context of text with one's own knowledge. Participants have agreed to having used these strategies during the listening test.

Positive correlation exists between 'directed attention', 'planning and evaluation' and 'problem solving' factors and the participants' listening comprehension performance. It proves that the participants who responded with 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' in the MALQ actually did well in the listening comprehension test. Past research conducted showed similar results (Mansoor, Sara & Mohsen, 2012). The results of past research showthat a positive correlation exists between the three factors and the LCT scores.

The MALQ factors, 'mental translation' (-0.29) and 'person knowledge' (-0.11) displayed a negative correlation with the dependent variable. Most of the participants have disagreed to some of the statements on strategies under 'mental translation'. They disagreed to the statements which asked if they do translation while listening. Although some of them agreed and admitted that translation helps them to comprehend better, most of them denied that translating words especially word by word helps with listening. One of the interview participants found translation as a time-consuming

activity and would not do it. Next, for strategies under 'person knowledge', most of the participants had also disagreed to the statements that stated 'listening in the English language is challenging for them'. In the interview, some of the participants mentioned that listening in the English language gets difficult for them only if they cannot understand the speaker's pronunciation otherwise, they do not find it a demanding skill as opposed to writing. The negative correlation is a result of having very low score in the MALQ but a high score in the listening comprehension test. Since many participants responded with 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' for items for statements under the MALQ factors, 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge', this had resulted in a low score for these factors. However, the participants performed well in the listening comprehension test which also indicates the use of other strategies for listening. When the low scores in the MALQ were correlated with the high score achieved in the listening test, a negative correlation was obtained. It shows that these participants do not really use 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge' as their listening strategies. Since this study was conducted in a Malaysian private university where the medium of instruction is English, it is understood that the students have some good command of the language which doesn't require them to translate the target language into their mother tongue frequently while listening. The correlation between 'person knowledge' and listening test score is moderate although they are negatively correlated and this can be explained by the fact that these participants have been exposed to the language from young. They have had learnt English language for an average of 15 years. Not only that, they do not find listening too challenging because they use the language very frequently to hold social conversations. Since Malaysia is a multicultural country, the English language serves as the medium of communication in many contexts. Thus, the participants have much exposure to this language and can listen to and understand English language text rather easily. On the whole, 'mental translation' is seen to have

the strongest correlation with listening comprehension score compared to all the other MALQ factors.

In the past studies (Harputlu and Ceylan, 2014; Mansoor, Sara, & Mohsen, 2012) conducted, negative correlation was achieved when 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge' factors were correlated with the listening test scores. This indicates that the participants in those research studies were proficient listeners. They responded 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' for statements under 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge' factors in the MALQ. Strategies under these two factors are usually avoided by less skillful listeners. Since the participants were quite proficient they did well in their listening comprehension test, however, their scores for 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge' in the MALQ were low, (-0.29) and (-0.11), respectively. Low MALQ scores and high LCT scores resulted in a negative correlation. Similarly in this study the participants mostly disagreed to the statements on 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge' factors, however their scores for the LCT were higher. Many of them disagreed to do 'mental translation' strategies because it is time-consuming. The participants in this current study are Malaysian ESL learners who have been revealed to theEnglish language at a very young age.

In Malaysian schools, the English language is taught using various teaching methods. With the advancement of computers and sophisticated Information and Technologies tools(ICT), the English language teaching and learning has seen a shift in paradigm. However, in many schools, the conventional and mundane methods of teaching the English language still remain. In these schools, language teachers often use 'mental translation' strategies to teach a second language. Although this method has been

criticised by many scholars and educators, some continue to resort to them as an easy means of teaching a second language. This method has been found to be very useful especially for learners who are struggling to learn English. In national type schools in Malaysia, the Chinese language or Tamil language serve as the medium of the instruction. Almost all the subjects in the school curriculum are taught in their first language. So, translation is a favourite way of learning a second language as it is easier to understand texts or vocabulary when they are translated into the first language.

On the other hand, in many other schools in Malaysia learners are constantly reminded by their language teachers to avoid doing translation as it does not push them to master a particular language. Also, some teachers are also afraid of the misinterpretations learners often make when they translate second language phrases or sentences into their first language. There is a high chance of learners not actually getting the actual meaning of the text. So, more proficient learners would consciously avoid translating words into their mother tongue. However, the habit may still remain with the weaker ESL learners and they may be more prone to depend on the translation.

Although the participants of this study are Malaysian ESL learners, they may have come from different streams of educational systems in which teaching methods are different from one another. Therefore, the 'mental translation' strategy is used by participants who have already been habituating it for some time. At the same, this strategy could be something proficient participants have been steering clear of which resulted in many of them disagreeing to the statements under 'mental translation' strategy. On the whole, the negative correlation between 'mental translation' and LCT scores shows that these

participants are quite skillful and they avoid translation when doing a listening comprehension task.

In order to comprehend how MALS influences ESL learners' listening performance, it is worth to make relation between the participants' MALQ scores and their listening test scores (Marco et al, 2007). The study conducted by Goh and Hu (2014) found that participants who scored high in the MALQ also achieved high score for the listening comprehension test. However, the study concluded that the correlation between the two variables as being weak. In contrast, in this current study the participants' mean score in the MALQ is high but an overall mean score for the listening test is low. It shows that although many of them responded with 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' in the MALQ, indicating a high level of MALS, contradictorily they did not do well in the listening test.

Even though previous study supports the fact that having MALS helps with the use of metacognitive strategies while listening and hence build confidence (Liu and Goh, 2006), it has not been proven in this case in a clear way. In this current study, it has been found that what participants had claimed in the MALQ does not totally reflect on their listening comprehension test scores. This could be due to the ineffective use of metacognitive strategies during the listening task. Although they may claim that they have MALS, they do not in deed have the knowledge of metacognitive strategies which are skills needed to plan, control and assess one's own learning (Wenden, 1998; Brown, 2007).

Listening comprehension process is complicating and is not only affected by participants' MALS. The process is often influenced by various other factors like participants' level of motivation, age, distinctive learning styles and gender. From the findings for RQ1, it was found that on the whole, the participants have a moderately high level of MALS. However, in the listening test their mean score was not very high indicating that they did not do well. It could be the result of the level of difficulty of the listening test itself. The standard deviation proves that the listening test scores vary quite greatly between participants.

5.2.3 Association between MALQ Factors and Malaysian ESL Learners' Listening Comprehension Performance

From the results obtained from the multiple regression analysis, it can be agreed that the five MALQ factors, 'directed attention', 'person knowledge', 'mental translation', 'problem-solving' and 'planning and evaluation' explain 22.5% variance in the dependent variable. This means that metacognitive awareness of listening strategies play a significant role in predicting the result of the listening comprehension test. This finding is supportedby a previous study (Goh & Hu, 2014).

The finding of this current study also supports the claim that learners can develop strategies and metacognitive knowledge about listening through a process-oriented approach (Graham & Macaro, 2008; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Second language learning is also referred to as an agent-based process whereby the learning process relies on learners or individuals (Dornyei, 2009). The variance of 22.5% found in this study supports the fact that second language learning must be treated as having individual goals. In other words, it is noteworthy that second language learning is a complex and

long process in which the learners' achievement varies from one another (Harputlu & Ceylan, 2014). This individual difference is defined as 'personal baggage' which individuals carry to a language classroom that will affect the way learning takes place (Cohen, 2010). This 'personal baggage' is said to range from factors like gender, age, personality, aptitude, anxiety, motivation, beliefs, attitudes, learning strategies and learning styles (Cohen, 2010).

This study showed there is variance of 22.5% that is explained by the five MALQ factors apart from all other factors that may contribute to the listening comprehension performance. Therefore, excellent or poor performance in listening comprehension cannot be solely associated with MALS. There could be other reasons such as affective factors that affect the way learners feel about their second language listening process (Goh & Hu, 2014).

5.3 Chapter Summary

Overall, the study conducted show that Malaysian ESL learners have moderate to high level of MALS. This is a result of their exposure to the language at an early age. Most of the participants do not use 'person knowledge' and 'mental translation' strategies as they are considered strategies used by less-skilled learners. However, there some of them who still rely on translations and find listening in the English language challenging. This is explained by the lack of exposure to the strategies for listening. Although the metacognitive awareness level was high among the participants, they did not do so well in the listening test. This suggests that there are other factors that are responsible for their listening comprehension. It was found that 22.5% of the listening comprehension test score is explained by the five factors in the MALQ. This

demonstrates that although the relationship between the two variables in this study is weak, there is evidence that listening comprehension performance of the Malaysian ESL learners is influenced by their metacognitive awareness of listening strategies.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Overview

This chapter will draw conclusions on the study that has been conducted. In this chapter, the implications of the study will be discussed. Based on the limitations present and the findings of this study, some recommendations are put forth for future research.

6.2 Implications of the Study

The results from this study have arrived at a few implications. This study suggests the use of MALQ as a means to measure second language learners' MALS. Next, this study suggests a shift in paradigm for language teachers. There are also some implications for the second language learners and they will be discussed here.

6.2.1 Implication No.1- The Use of MALQ in the Listening Lessons

MALQ was constructed in 2006 by Vandergrift. This questionnaire has been used by many researchers over the decades to understand language learners' metacognitive appraisal when they do a listening task. In the past, metacognitive awareness was studied using qualitative methods like interviews and observations. Personal diaries were also used as a way to understand the MALS possessed by the language learners. Since MALQ has been validated and its use has continued to obtain reliable results, language teachers are urged to use this instrument to measure language learners' MALS. By using this questionnaire frequently in the classroom, the responses learners

make in the MALQ will help to monitor the development of listening comprehension skill among the second language learners.

Since the MALQ consists of five categories of metacognitive strategies- Directed Attention, Person Knowledge, Planning and Evaluation, Problem Solving and Mental Translation, language learners can use MALQ to know their ability in the use of these strategies. Each category of strategy has a few statements that are used by the language learners to think about their mental processes that take place during a listening process. They guide language learners to appraise their knowledge and the use of those metacognitive strategies. By reflecting and thinking upon those statements, the language learners' awareness of metacognitive listening strategies increases. When MALQ is used continuously to monitor and evaluate the listening process, the learners can develop learner autonomy (Wenden, 1991). This is because by evaluating their own cognitive processes, they will become matured and more independent about their learning.

Besides MALQ, there are other methods that have been used to measure MALS possessed by language learners. These instruments are rather new and may not be as reliable and valid as the MALQ. Although MALQ will be an ideal instrument for learners to do self-appraisal of the metacognitive strategies used during a listening process, any other equivalent instrument that is reliable is suggested to be used for the same purpose. Ultimately, the learners would benefit from the exercise of doing a self-check of their thought processes.

6.2.2 Implication No.2- English Language Teaching and Learning

Thorn (2012) put forth a few misconceptions of language teachers in a listening lesson. Many language teachers tend to believe too much in the use of listening comprehension practice in order to enhance learners' listening abilities. It is argued that such practice is only helpful in improving learners' listening capabilities in general and does not guarantee that the learners can become effective listeners. Another misconception by most of the language teachers is that listening skill can be mastered by getting learners to focus on key words and stressed content words in an audio text. The key words and stressed content words are crucial for a listener only if the listener is able to recognise those words. The study on key words and stressed content words was previously carried out with native speakers of the English language. Native speakers used key words as a way of understanding the audio text by ignoring all the other words that came along in the audio because those words were only used to prepare for what will be said next. In other words, native speakers recognised the key words and those that are not and paid less attention to the latter. Since they are competent in the language, by simply understanding the key words and stressed content words they are able to create meaning out of any audio texts. However, this may not work the same way for the second language listeners.

It seems clear now why second language learners have difficulties with listening comprehension. This is due to some of the misconceptions language teachers often have about teaching listening skills to second language learners. By understanding the use of different strategies to teach listening skill, language teachers need to change their approaches in teaching listening. They need to first be aware that listening is an active and resolute process of creating sense of what is heard (Helgesen, 2003). Therefore

language teachers should be more selective in their approaches to teach listening skills to second language listeners.

Based on the findings from the interviews conducted, it was found that some of the learners found listening as a challenging activity. The different accents and pronunciations used by the interlocutors in an audio are some of the reasons why listening becomes hard for some of the listeners. Listening does not take place effectively since they have these problems to deal with. Since these situations can occur frequently in a language classroom, language teachers need to be more sensitive towards the struggles of their language learners and address these issues to help them listen better. In this case for instance, the language teacher has to introduce the learners to different varieties of the English language. They need to also know the cultural use of the language in different contexts and the use of localised words in the English language. By taking steps to expose them to the language frequently, it increases the effectiveness of the use of 'person knowledge' strategies when doing a listening task. The learners will have more awareness of these strategies as they have been trained to use them for listening. Not only that, knowing and understanding a few different types of accents or pronunciations used by the English language speakers will ensure that the learners are more confident about their listening process. They will be able to recognise, criticise and evaluate words or phrases that they hear and build meaning easily. Language teachers are requested to identify the common areas in which language learners find difficult when it comes to listening and work it out to assist in the listening comprehension process.

As what John Field (2008) suggests, listening is referred to as decoding and meaning-building processes. Language teachers are therefore urged to view listening as an active mental process and not merely as an activity for getting 'Yes' and 'No' answers. Checking one's understanding and self-monitoring for consistency are examples of meaning-building processes that are vital for language learning to take place. It is worthy to make alterations to the process of teaching and learning listening skill so as to suit the metacognitive approach as a way of learning listening skills. By allowing the learners to be continuously aware of their mental processes, more effective learning is sure to take place.

Lastly, the study found that the participants lacked awareness of 'mental translation' and 'person knowledge' strategies. Language teachers should discourage learners from doing word by word translation. 'Mental translation' strategies are used by less-skilled learners and they hinder them from becoming confident in a particular language skill as they become too dependent on translation. These strategies may be introduced to less-skilled learners at the beginning stage but it should not be made a habit. In order to enhance 'person knowledge' strategies, language teachers must ensure that the learners are able to evaluate their own abilities concerning listening. Focus must be given to these and other strategies to help learners to become better listeners.

6.2.3 Implication No.3- Malaysian ESL Learners

From the responses in the MALQ, it was found that most Malaysian ESL learners have a moderate to high level of MALS. This shows that they are able to evaluate their mental processes when they do a listening task. They are aware of the demands of the listening task since they are able to demonstrate a high level of awareness of the

metacognitive strategies. It is important for learners to do this self-appraisal which has effect on their performance in listening. Instead of treating learning as a mere regurgitation, it is time for learners to realise there is more to learning. By doing self-checks and monitoring their learning processes independently, they will become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. All learners are urged to 'pause' and do a check on what is happening beyond their usual learning process. Most of the time, learners are not taking time to examine the strategies they are using to do a listening task. They do not have the time to weigh the strategies they use for language learning. This study suggests that although the results show that Malaysian ESL learners have a moderate to high level of MALS, learners are advised to be more aware of the metacognitive strategies they apply for listening. By doing so, they can improve their listening skill quickly.

Although the Malaysian ESL learners demonstrated a moderate to high level of MALS, it was surprising to know that the mean score for their listening comprehension test was low. The correlation between the MALQ scores and listening comprehension test was weak. This shows that even though the participants may have high level of MALS, it does not reflect in their listening comprehension performance. It suggests that Malaysian ESL learners may have the awareness but they do not use the metacognitive strategies for listening effectively during a listening activity. Having awareness of the metacognitive strategies alone does not help with language learning. For instance, the participants may be aware of 'directed attention' strategies (eg. I try to get back on track when I lose concentration) however they may not use it appropriately during a listening task and this may result in a poor listening performance. Second language learners have to understand each and every metacognitive strategy thoroughly and use it accordingly

for any given listening task. Language teachers have to play their roles by introducing and teaching these metacognitive strategies in their lessons.

It is worthwhile to take a look at the definitions for metacognition. Based on Flavell's concept of metacognition (1979), Vandergrift and Goh (2012) drew another framework for metacognition. They divided metacognition into metacognitive experience, metacognitive knowledge, and strategy use. Metacognitive experience is the feeling one has about their thought processes and learning. Metacognitive knowledge is categorised into two: declarative knowledge and stored knowledge. This knowledge can be drawn out from a learner when suitable cues are given during a listening task. Lastly, strategy use is another aspect of metacognition. Listening comprehension is affected by the use of appropriate listening strategies (Oxford, 1990). This particular knowledge is very essential for learners to complete listening tasks. They usually apply these strategies consciously to a particular situation to strive to resolve a listening. Therefore, it can be deduced that the participants in this study had metacognitive experience and metacognitive knowledge however, they lacked strategy knowledge. This explains the reason for the high mean score for MALQ but an overall low mean score for LCT. It is suggested that second language learners make effort to learn the different metacognitive strategies involved for effective listening to take place. Having strategy knowledge alongside other metacognitive knowledge will definitely aid language learning.

Another implication of this study is that although the participants' MALS did not affect the listening test scores surpassingly, it is worth to note that the former do have influence on the latter in some ways. From the multiple regression analysis, it was found that all five factors of the MALQ are responsible for the listening test scores. This

current study focused on second language listening but there are many other studies that tested metacognitive awareness and other language skills like reading (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). The research that focused on reading skillsis a proof that metacognitive awareness is not only helpful in increasing performance for listening but it will also have positive effect on other language skills. Therefore, language learners should work towards improving their metacognitive awareness of not only listening strategies but also other language skills like reading, writing and speaking.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Studies

The participants in this study are representative of the target population but due to the small sample size, generalisation of the study findings must be made carefully. This study focused on university students in a private university in Malaysia. It is recommended for future research to be done on a nationwide scale focusing on both private and public universities and colleges. Also, the age range for the participants in this study is from 19 to 28 years. More research needs to be done using different age groups that include young, young adults and even adult ESL learners in Malaysia. Although the participants who took part in this study have the English language qualification of a minimum Band 4 in MUET, it does not guarantee that they all have the same proficiency in the language. Amongst them, there may be less-skilled and more-skilled listeners. It is suggested for future researchers to consider standardising the participants' language proficiency level by getting them to do a language proficiency test just before the study is conducted. This can ensure a more homogeneous group of participants. It is also recommended to conduct more studies on the MALS between less-skilled and more-skilled Malaysian ESL learners. These studies can bring about new findings that are different from the one obtained from this current research.

Past studies show that learners' MALS have an effect on their listening comprehension performance. The studies confirm that there is a strong correlation between the two variables, metacognitive awareness of listening strategies and listening comprehension performance. However, the current study found only a weak correlation between the variables. There is a need to examine the nature of the listening test and any other variables that could influence the results of the study. The type of listening test chosen for the study is crucial. The content of the listening test must be appropriate and relevant for the participants. The content and the language used in the audio text must suit the participants' current proficiency level. By ensuring all of this, perhaps different results can be expected. With regards to listening test again, it is recommended for future researchers to use IELTS listening test to replace MUET. Both these tests are high-stake tests that are used in Malaysia to measure the learners' English language proficiency. By using different tests, different results can be expected and this can give more information about the metacognitive awareness possessed by the learners.

Besides that, from the analysis of the findings it was found that the participants have metacognitive knowledge but they lacked strategy knowledge. More research is required to study the connection between metacognitive experience, metacognitive knowledge, strategy knowledge, and listening comprehension performance. Not only that, most of the past studies focused on metacognitive awareness and its effect on second language listening comprehension. It is suggested that more research has to be done on how development of metacognitive awareness can be encouraged. This is sure to have some significant pedagogical implications.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data for this study. The data that has been collected to answer the research questions came mainly from the quantitative measures. There is a need for more qualitative data that could give more insights into this study. Future research can focus on obtaining more qualitative data that can help give a better understanding of Malaysian ESL learners' MALS. Not much research has been done on Malaysian ESL learners to study these two variables- MALS and listening comprehension performance. It is recommended for more research to be carried out to study these variables.

Lastly, due to some of the limitations in the present study, generalisation could not be possibly made. However, the findings from this research will definitely contribute some insights into Flavell (1979) and Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) concept of metacognition. New studies could replicate this present study and use different contexts to learn further about Malaysian ESL learners' MALS.

6.4 Chapter Summary

This study has some implications that are worth looking into. The use of MALQ in the listening lessons has been highlighted alongside with some suggestions for teaching and learning second language listening. Some recommendations have been given to shed light on the area of MALS in future research. There needs to be more research carried out to understand Malaysian ESL learners' MALS.

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