

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Effective listening skill requires the listeners to interpret, evaluate, manage, and react as intended according to the aural texts. Many teachers have placed great emphasis on speaking skill in the second half of the 20th century with the notion that having this particular skill constitutes the most important language aspects for communication (Field, 2008). However, it is rather imprudent and misguided to think that it is adequate to master speaking skill alone in language learning and overlook the importance of other language skills, such as listening skill. Through listening, one has a direct link to the language. Hence, listening skill is as important as speaking skill.

As listening skill is established as a vital skill, studies on listening skill and effective listening comprehension have increased over the years. Effective teaching pedagogy has become increasingly important in the learning of active listening and the monitoring of listening comprehension. Dunn (2006) stressed that teachers need to facilitate listening acquisition by helping learners to gain listening encouraging learners to engage whatever they hear with their own experiences. Based on that notion, language learners are believed to possess the capacity to learn and teachers are in the position to support them to develop listening skill in order to become creative and independent listeners. The following subsections present the relevant theoretical framework that identify cognitive processes as the centre of acquiring effective listening skills.

2.2 Cognitive Framework of Listening

There have been numerous attempts to describe the listening process from the birth of behaviourism to the cognitivism and constructivism theories. It is challenging to define the nature of the listening process since the process is intangible. The listening process is basically a conscious biological process, which involves the auditory system that subsequently generates within the mind. In particular, cognitivism was deemed as a major branch of educational theory that focused on the capacity of the mind to learn in this study. The theory which emphasises in the teaching of listening comprehension is known as cognitivism. Cognitivism plays a dominant role in processing an aural input when learners engage themselves in listening strategies to monitor their comprehension level as the role of mental progression is rather active.

Fundamentally, the present study is established within the theoretical framework of metacognition theory (Flavell, 1979) and recommended specific metacognitive strategies by Goh (2008) based on the idea of incorporating metacognitive strategies into the learning process of listening, which was expected to facilitate the adaption of appropriate listening skill strategies among ESL learners. Accordingly, Flavell (1979) described “metacognition” as learners’ knowledge of their cognitive processes and products or any related learning-relevant properties of information. Metacognitive strategies are sequential processes that learners use to control cognitive activities and to ensure that a cognitive goal (e.g., understanding a text) is met. These processes help to regulate and oversee the learning process, including planning and monitoring cognitive activities, and to check the outcomes of these activities. Relevant to this theory, Goh (2008) emphasised the constructive nature of learning and the important role of L2 learners in the learning process,

specifically listening skill. Goh (2008) considered the learners' development process as they gain listening skill. In the initial stage, L2 learners devote extensive resources to process words in streams of speech, but the process of perceiving aural input and interpreting meaning gradually becomes more automatized as they develop their competence over time.

2.2.1 Cognitive theory and language learning

Behaviourism, as the dominant psychological orientation from as early as 1930 (until 1970), influenced the listening process through the audio-lingual method. Behaviourists assess observable behaviours—they view listeners as passive respondents to their environment and ignore the role of “mind” when it comes to the learning process. Listening skill is regarded as passive reception of information and knowledge of the language even though the audio-lingual method has a certain amount of impact until today. Behaviourism was then replaced by “cognitive orientation” during the early 1960s where “mind” was viewed as the central of learning process. According to Vandergrift (2002), since the early 1970s, the work of Asher, Postovsky, Winitz, and later Krashen had emphasised the role of listening as a tool or key factor to understand and facilitate language learning. Thus, listening has emerged as an important component in the process of second or foreign language acquisition.

Accordingly, cognitivism deals with the internal mental processes of the mind, specifically how these processes can be used to support effective learning. These processes involve memory, thinking, reflection, abstraction, motivation, and metacognition (Ally, 2004). The proposed learning model is similar to the working memory of a computer and cognitivists often use terms such as “short-term memory”,

“long-term memory”, and “stimuli”. The role of the mind is given importance in the classroom and the instructor or teacher plays an important duty to activate every learner’s mind to accentuate the teaching and learning process. From a cognitive learning perspective, learning involves the transformation of information in the environment into knowledge that is stored in the mind. Effective learning takes place when existing knowledge is modified by new experience. The main ideas proposed by the cognitive theory include (1) a positive view of development that emphasises conscious thinking; (2) one’s active construction of knowledge; (3) emphasis on the importance of examining developmental changes in children’s thinking; (4) the information-processing theory that offers detailed description of cognitive processes. Among the major ideas in cognitivism, the information-processing theory, schema theory, and metacognition theory were selected to be discussed and reviewed as significant parts of this study given their close link to the process of receiving and processing oral texts.

2.2.2 Cognitive Information Processing model

As discussed, cognitivism revolves around the processes of collecting, adapting, and integrating information. The mind has the ability to synthesise, analyse, formulate, and extract the received information and stimuli in order to produce things that cannot be directly attributed to the given input (Gredler, 1997). With respect to the cognitive theory, learning occurs when the acquired information is processed within the mind. The information-processing theory identifies the internal process of learning and addresses how learners perceive information and knowledge. Basically, the instructor or teacher remains as the manager of providing input, but the learner has to actively plan, organise, and carry out his or her own learning, instead of being a

passive recipient of information (as in behaviourism). The learners use a host of processing strategies, such as cognitive and metacognitive strategies, which facilitate their learning and get the information across communication.

With respect to the cognitive theory, the following important ideas pertaining to human memory and information-processing were highlighted (Clark and Mayer, 2003, p. 35): (1) the human memory has two channels for processing information, namely auditory channel and visual channel; (2) the human memory has limited capacity for processing information; (3) learning occurs through active processing in the memory system; (4) new knowledge and skills must be retrieved from long-term memory which will be transferred into action. Hence, the process of listening is viewed as an active process of the mind and not merely a biological process of hearing. The learners process the input received orally (or recorded) and then retrieve the needed information to answer the listening comprehension questions.

The Cognitive Information Processing model, according to Gagne (1984), is a powerful problem-solving tool for discovering and correcting gaps in the instructional process, providing a deeper understanding of the art as well as the science of teaching the model addresses the issues of rehearsal, auditory and visual channels, attention, elaboration, mental models, schema, and metacognitive skills, including motivation. The working memory is responsible to process and transfer information from the short-term memory to the long-term memory for later retrieval (from the long-term memory). Learners adapt their learning styles and employ relevant strategies to achieve their learning goals. With that, through effective listening skill, learners process the input received via auditory channels and process it in the mind. They retain the relevant information in their short-term memory to comprehend the oral input using certain strategies and later retrieve the information. Important elements of

the oral input and the strategies used are kept in the long-term memory for later retrieval. Thus, teachers can devise their instruction methods according to this model and bridge the instructional gaps.

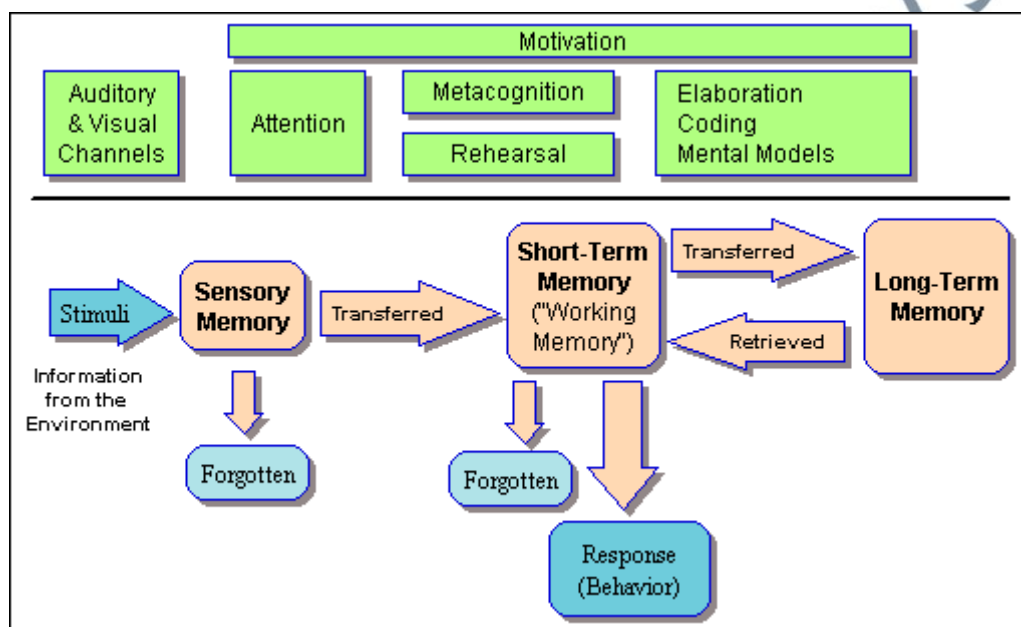


Figure 2.1: Cognitive Information Processing Model (Gagne: 1984)

Source: 2003 Cognitive Design Solutions, Inc.

In this study, the information-processing theory was believed to be closely linked to how learners process the oral input (through listening) using strategies—just like a computer. A computer can be upgraded into a better information-processor by upgrading its hardware and software. Similarly, learners can become better learners through certain changes in the memory and sensory systems (hardware) and by implementing successful rules and strategies (software). The listening skill strategies, in this case, act as “software” that help learners to adjust their learning process of processing and reproducing the acquired information during listening comprehension.

2.2.3 Schema theory

Another learning theory that is relevant to understanding how learners can acquire effective listening skills is the schema theory. The schema theory was deemed

as another vital theory (among the main course of the cognitive theory) in this study based on the notion that learners engage prior knowledge and experiences to effectively comprehend the given oral (or written) texts. This theory was deemed relevant in the first section of the instruction in listening comprehension, specifically the pre-listening stage, which involved the activation of background knowledge (on the listening materials) using the planning strategy. Basically, schemata or schema is related to the background knowledge of the learner, data structure of general ideas stored in memory, and the previously acquired knowledge structure (Selcuk, 2011). According to Adams and Bruce (1982), there are three essential types of schemata (to varying degrees) in the case of children, namely (1) knowledge of the world and its conventions, (2) knowledge about the way different types of texts are organised, and (3) knowledge of subject matter content.

The implementation of related cognitive theories in learning advocates the use of schema or mental maps to organise the learning content (Allen, 2007). The significance of schematic knowledge has been widely acknowledged in the foreign language teaching and many studies in the schema-oriented area of ESL were carried out given its close link to the learners' reading and listening comprehension (in acquiring a second language) (Selcuk, 2011). The schema theory is typically used by cognitive psychologists to explain the psychological processes involved in understanding and knowing. This theory has been adapted to facilitate language learning, including enhancing listening comprehension through the activation of learners' background knowledge prior to the listening tasks.

Zeng (2007) posited that the teaching process of listening is related to the information-processing and storage processes, which require the learners to apply their knowledge of the language, background knowledge, and listening material. The

ability to comprehend a listening text is derived through the interaction between the learners and the knowledge they use to understand the content using both top-down and bottom-up processing strategies. Hence, the learners' prior knowledge or schemata have to be activated in order to get them engaged in effective listening using certain strategies, such as metacognitive strategies for listening. Besides that, schemata enable the learners to recognise information (Selcuk, 2011). The familiarity with the passage content facilitates effective L2 listening comprehension (Berne, 2004).

In short, a text, either spoken or written, does not carry any meaning on its own. The comprehension of the text by understanding the words, sentences, and the entire text is an interactive process between the learners' background knowledge and the text. In this case, the learners retrieve or construct the meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge (Selcuk, 2011). The accumulation of schemata contributes to efficient listening comprehension and retention of new listening material (Rumelhart, 1997).

2.2.4 Metacognition theory

The present study emphasised the metacognition theory, a theory which was used to form the metacognitive strategies. The current section will discuss the prior studies pertaining to the metacognition theory and the metacognitive strategies.

John Flavell, the founder of the metacognition theory, was influenced by the work of Jean Piaget (1977). Flavell (1979) recommended the term "metamemory" to describe the processes involved in managing input, storage, search, and retrieval of contents in one's memory. The existence of monitoring and regulation of one's thinking process was heavily emphasised. Flavell (1979) defined "metacognition" as a variety of information-processing activities during the cognitive transaction with the

human or non-human environment. Metacognition is related to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of the related processes in achieving cognitive goals or objectives. The regulation of cognition refers to the metacognitive process or activities that help to control one's thinking or learning (Shraw and Moshman, 1995). Therefore, metacognition is the deliberate or conscious monitoring and regulating one's cognitive and affective processes. Shraw and Moshman (1995) further elaborated that although metacognitive knowledge need not be stable to be useful, the conscious access to such information may actually facilitate thinking and self-regulation.

Accordingly, Flavell (1979) proposed a formal model of metacognitive monitoring that incorporated four classes of phenomena and their relationships: (1) metacognitive knowledge; (2) metacognitive experiences; (3) tasks or goals; (4) strategies or activities. As shown in Table 2.1, the person variable (refers to one's own knowledge about the performance as a learner), task variable (deals with the ability or knowledge on performing a learning task), and strategy variable (deals with the knowledge of using different strategies to complete a required task) were identified as three key variables of metacognitive awareness and knowledge (Flavell, 1992).

Table 2.1: Types of metacognitive variables

Variables	Attributes
Person	How humans learn and process information Individual learning processes
Task	Deal with the nature of the task Processing demands to complete it
Strategy	Knowledge of cognitive and metacognitive strategies Knowledge of when and where to use these strategies

(Source: Flavell, 1992)

Flavell (1992) acknowledged the significance of metacognition in a wide range of applications, which included reading, oral skills, writing, language acquisition, memory, attention, social interactions, self-instruction, personality

development, and education. The metacognition components can be activated either intentionally by a memory search to retrieve specific information or unintentionally by cues in a task situation (Flavell, 1979). Basically, the metacognitive processes can operate consciously or unconsciously and can be accurate or inaccurate. Additionally, the processes may not be activated, when needed, which result in the failure to possess an adaptive or beneficial effect.

The cognitive psychologists often use metacognition to describe learners' ability to assess their own skills, knowledge, or learning. Metacognition reflects one's awareness of his or her own thought process and knowledge. It leads to the selection, evaluation, revision, or deletion of cognitive tasks, goals, and strategies. The metacognitive processes also help learners to make meaning and discover behavioural implications of their metacognitive experiences. In other words, metacognition can be viewed as a built-in monitoring device that regulates one's thought processes and helps one to gear mental mechanism towards goal attainment. This "device" can be used to assist learners through a host of strategies to foster their learning.

Closely related to the metacognitive theory is the metacognitive strategies essentially, metacognitive strategies oversee, regulate, or direct the language learning process. Chamot (2005) recommended several language learning strategies for listening comprehension, such as retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, covert strategies (to exert control), and communication strategies (to convey or receive a message). These strategies are generally divided into cognitive, metacognitive, affective, or social strategies. The learners are able to monitor their listening comprehension effectively when they employ these self-regulated strategies, especially metacognitive strategies, which was further assessed in this study,

specifically on the impact of metacognitive strategies on the listening performance of Malaysian ESL learners in the IELTS listening preparatory course.

Meanwhile, Marrapodi (2006) identified specific strategies on metacognition in the case of reading comprehension: (1) action control processes empower the learners to manage cognitive and metacognitive resources for goal attainment; (2) goal-related cognitions form the basis for the adaptive use of learning strategies, well-timed application of deep processing, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation of how strategies are used and regulated. Basically, learners monitor and adjust their progress (their capability and incapability of learning) during their learning and retrieval processes through the use of metacognitive awareness with respect to their learning goals. Metacognitive strategies act as a guide for learners to monitor their learning towards attaining the required success. The use of appropriate strategies to monitor listening comprehension enables learners to evaluate their own comprehension critically based on the input perceived for retention and the retrieval of necessary information from the raw input.

According to Goh (2008), the use of metacognitive strategies for listening elicits and enhances learners' knowledge of effective listening and strategies to manage and monitor their listening comprehension and development. Cubbilos (2008) also stressed the importance of using effective strategies as a guide to help second language learners who face difficulties in comprehending aural texts despite having the appropriate listening skill in their native language (L1). The transfer of listening skill from L1 to L2 is not automatic and fully depends on the learners' ability to deploy specific coping and compensatory strategies. Learners are able to manipulate the learning materials or apply a specific strategy for a listening task.

The awareness of metacognitive strategies creates a basis for learners to plan and monitor their listening in order to achieve their listening comprehension goals. The teachers must include explicit instruction of using metacognitive strategies in their daily listening lessons to allow the learners to practice effective and creative listening. Therefore, metacognitive awareness, as an essential tool that enhances learning, should be taught explicitly by teachers, especially to learners who are not aware of this strategy. However, Reder and Schunn (1996) and Kentridge and Heywood (2000) argued that metacognitive processes need not operate within one's conscious awareness following the proposed use of conscious monitoring strategies, which have raised certain controversial issues pertaining to the metacognition theory.

According to Vandergrift (2002), learners who employ metacognitive knowledge are said to demonstrate successful listening comprehension when they are able to (1) analyse the requirements of a listening task, (2) activate the appropriate listening processes required, (3) make appropriate predictions, (4) monitor their comprehension, and (5) evaluate the success of their approach. Teaching metacognitive knowledge improves listening comprehension and minimises learning anxiety among L2 learners (Kurita, 2012). Goh (2008) stated that metacognitive instruction potentially heightens learners' awareness of listening and their learning processes through the development of the ability to use strategies appropriately. After all, the instructional-based strategies have been advocated since the 1990s where learners reflect, organise, and alter their own listening process.

Rost (2006) contributed significant impact on the formulation of principles in the instruction of listening skill, which involves the metacognition in processing listening skill—the use of listening skill strategies was introduced as part of a cognitive approach to learning that emphasised metacognition or thinking on the ways

of processing language. Several recent studies also concluded that classroom instruction improves the learners' metacognitive knowledge (e.g., Vandergrift, 2006; Goh & Taib, 2006; Mareshal, 2007). Goh (2008) conjectured that metacognitive knowledge may influence how learners approach a listening task, specifically through planning, monitoring, and evaluating, compared to those who approach listening in an incidental manner. Besides that, Lovett (2008) conjectured that metacognitive skills and beliefs about learning affect the learners' learning and performance. Thus, the delivery of explicit instructions and adequate practice can improve their learning experience.

Vandergrift et al. (2006) suggested that the introduction of listening skill strategies has to be performed explicitly along with the opportunities for learners to identify and explore various strategies and to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used throughout a language course. In fact, learners have the capacity to handle challenging listening tasks and self-motivate to continue to find ways to listen and comprehend more challenging, authentic input. Meanwhile, listening skill strategies that are associated with successful learning can be demonstrated and modelled for less successful learners. As learners encounter difficulties in comprehending listening texts, the instruction on the use of effective strategies enables them to solve their problems and motivate them to listen effectively. These learners, if given explicit instruction and training in using metacognitive strategies, can further improve their listening skill and comprehension.

2.3 Metacognitive Strategies for Language Learning

Fuller (1996) provided effective learning strategies for learners to use for FL/SL learning. The identified learning strategies were mainly categorised as

cognitive, metacognitive, resource management, or social-affective strategies. The cognitive strategies involve the retrieving, encoding, understanding, and storing of information (Fuller, 1996). Meanwhile, the metacognitive, self-management, self-regulation, or self-direction strategies involve learners to “oversee and manage their own learning”, such as planning, regulating, monitoring, and modifying cognitive processes. The resource management strategies involve the control of resources in terms of time, effort, and support. Accordingly, Chamot et al. (1999) included that metacognitive strategies in a “Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning”, which is further described in the later part of this section. The model was deemed applicable for effective and independent learning of content and language. Hence, the metacognitive strategies, specifically planning, monitoring, evaluation, and problem-solving, were deemed relevant to the present study to evaluate how well these strategies would assist Malaysian ESL learners to acquire listening skill in improving their listening performance.

Learners, without metacognitive strategies, are basically learners without a proper direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishment, and future learning direction (O'Malley, 1985). Through metacognitive strategies, learners are allowed to individualise their language learning experience to become effective learners. The use of metacognitive strategies in the listening process is generally supported as a valuable aid for language learners given its cognitive, social, linguistic benefits. Moreover, the use of metacognitive strategies to facilitate the process and outcome of learning has gained a growing interest in various studies for almost two decades. Numerous studies (e.g., Carrell, 1995; Wenden, 2001; Chamot, 2005) had demonstrated the positive impact of utilising metacognitive strategies in the listening process.

Metacognitive strategies are regarded as high-order executive skills that make use of knowledge on the cognitive processes and regulate one's own learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluating. In the context of listening, metacognitive strategies are self-monitoring and self-regulating activities that focus on both process and product of listening, including the listeners' perception on whether they can comprehend what they listen, their ability to judge the cognitive demands of listening task, and their knowledge of when and how to employ a specific cognitive listening strategy according to the text difficulty, situational constraints, and cognitive abilities (Baker and Brown, 1984).

There are various terms and components of metacognitive processes within the educational context. Metacognitive control can be described as "executive control" (Kluwe, 1987), "metacognitive monitoring" (Nelson and Narens, 1994), or "encoding" (Davidson and Sternberg, 1998), but these processes have similar functions. Metacognitive monitoring identifies the features of an on-going cognitive and affective state or activity (Flavell, 1979; Kluwe, 1987; Nelson and Narens, 1994). In other words, the process provides knowledge on the present state of cognitive endeavour and the transformation (of maintenance or termination) of one's own cognitive state and activities. Besides that, Cooper and Boyd (1996) described monitoring as "executive monitoring", which specifically involves the processes of (1) recognising reasons and patterns (to explain designs, data, and problems), (2) analysing and synthesising (by asking questions that help to analyse and synthesise information or to probe, map, think, and research if the acquired information is new), (3) making connections (by comparing and contrasting to consider different points of view; systematically evaluating different aspects; observing interdependence; generalising, personalising, and integrating new data into current understanding or

practice), and (4) articulating learning (by articulating one's learning in a precise and often concise way, including summarising, paraphrasing, grasping the essence of an issue, illustrating and mapping ideas, putting a complex idea in lay term, and being conscious of one's actions and how they reflect one's thinking at any given moment).

Monitoring is basically divided into "meta-level" (where encoding is controlled) and "object level" (where retrieval is controlled) (Son and Schwartz, 2002). The thought processes at the meta-level refine the "object level" of cognitive activities (Narens, 1994). Son and Schwartz (2002, p. 26) also agreed where metacognitive control can be exercised to toggle study tactics on and off or editing may be done to "... adapt the conditions, operations or standards in the cognitive structure that describe studying". Taking the case of "object level", it focuses on reflecting and assessing the external situation and storing these features in the working memory. Similar to monitoring, evaluation also shares a common function in receiving information retrieved from memory and external conditions (Flavell, 1979; Kluwe, 1987; Hacker, 1998b), which provide information on the possible options for refinement of cognitive and affective states. The monitoring process informs the person of what is known, what is unknown, the demand of the assigned task, and knowledge about the world, the evaluation standard, and strategies relative to the current goal. Meanwhile, the evaluation process relies on the "retrospection" and application of selected criteria (Kluwe, 1987) or the standards for evaluation (Hacker, 1998b) to assess quality. According to Kluwe (1987) and Cooper and Boyd (1996), the metacognitive processes act as synthesisers, analysers, and connectors. These prior studies emphasised both high- and low-level thought processing at the metacognitive level. High-level processes analyse, synthesise, generalise, and integrate the internal cognitive and affective state and/or the external information and experience whereas

low-level processes search the cognitive and affective states and the external situations. The information gained from both monitoring and evaluation is a source for the regulation processes.

Metacognitive control involves conscious and non-conscious regulation or decision that one makes in response to the outcomes of monitoring processes. Reder and Schunn (1996) claimed that metacognition directs the strategies used to solve problems or answer questions. However, Kluwe (1987) argued that a decision made merely determines how to solve a problem without actually solving it, which may not lead to regulatory activity. Kluwe (1987), Borkowski et al. (1990), and Davidson and Sternberg (1998) further elaborated that regulation processes help one to make decision based on the knowledge and appropriate strategies to tackle a task or a problem. According to Kluwe (1987, p. 41-46), there are four types of regulatory decisions, namely (1) “processing capacity” (involves attention, effort, and capacity), (2) “what is processed” (refers to the selection and analysis of a procedure), (3) “processing intensity” (concerns “the frequency, the time allocation, and the strategy shift or modification” when a task is carried out), and (4) “speed of information processing” (involves speed, such as deciding to add certain cognitive operations or skipping certain processing steps in order to complete a task).

Numerous studies across different content areas supported the use of metacognitive control and regulation processes. There are various terms proposed, such as self-directed skills or self-regulatory skills in cognitive psychology, with different categories. For instance, Zimmerman (1998) advocated a cyclical self-regulatory process that involves self-evaluation and monitoring; goal setting and strategic planning; strategy implementation and monitoring; and strategic outcome and monitoring. Meanwhile, Hacker (1998) categorised metacognitive processes into

executive monitoring and executive regulation processes where the former involve decisions that help to identify a task, to check on and evaluate the current progress of the task, and to predict the outcome of that progress whereas the latter direct a regulation of the course of one's own thinking that involves specific decisions that help to allocate resources to the current task, to determine the order of required steps to complete the task, and to set the intensity or the speed to work on the task.

After a decade of continuing research, Chamot et al. (1999) advocated the "Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning", which was developed from an earlier conception of three metacognitive processes, specifically planning, monitoring, and evaluation (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Chamot et al., 1992; Chamot, 1993). Following that, Chamot et al. (1999) further expanded the model, which incorporated four processes, specifically planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation, as well as effective learning strategies (i.e., metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies) in many learning tasks, including FL/SL learning.

The individual strategies for planning process enable one to "organise a concept or principle or learning task in advance, preparing strategies for an upcoming task, and making a plan for the parts, sequence, main ideas, or language function to be used" (Chamot and Kupper, 1989, p. 15). For examples, goal setting, choosing strategies for the task, making predictions, directing attention selectively, making a plan, activating background knowledge, pre-reviewing concepts, and self-management (Chamot et al., 1999). As for the monitoring process, it involves "checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance" (Chamot and Kupper, 1989, p. 15), such as comprehension checking, relating to the background knowledge, checking progress, checking attention, checking strategy use (Chamot et al., 1999), and detecting mistakes (Chamot et al., 1992). Meanwhile, the

strategies in the problem-solving process include inference or elaboration, asking for clarification, trying out alternatives, accessing various resources, and working a problem out in a group, and self-encouragement (Chamot et al., 1999). The evaluation process involves considering the outcomes or success of the learning or performance and determining how successfully a plan is being executed (Chamot et al., 1999) “against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy” (Chamot and Kupper, 1989, p. 15). The involved strategies include checking whether the goal has been met, judging the correctness of predictions or guesses, judging how well the task has been accomplished, judging how much has been learned, assessing strategy use, summarising, and self-assessment (Chamot et al., 1999).

Although the use of cognitive strategies was reported in numerous prior studies, the metacognitive strategies remain widely recognised as the key to success and in differentiating successful learners from less successful learners (O'Malley et al., 1985; Chamot and Kupper, 1989; Chamot et al., 1992; Chamot, 1993; Hallbach, 2000; Intaraprasert, 2004). For instance, Chamot et al (1992) reported extraordinary results in training the elementary and secondary ESL learners with metacognitive awareness to facilitate language skills. The study revealed that learners demonstrated a significantly greater ability to of reflecting their own learning in a classroom. On a similar note, Davidson and Sternberg (1998) claimed the following: (1) less skilled problem-solvers do not have the required knowledge and processing resources for extended global planning; (2) skilled problem-solvers spend more time on planning and exercise more control over the planning process; (3) those with less expertise spend more time in attempting to implement a solution. Although metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive control, and regulation processes are the key to effective learning, these aspects remain overlooked. The absence or ineffectiveness of these

processes results in poor learning performance or unsatisfactory improvement among learners. Assessing these different aspects, specifically the learners' ability to monitor their own cognitive and affective states and situations, to synthesise and analyse information, and to connect and refine knowledge or experience, was deemed worthwhile.

Adding to that, the pedagogical evidence was found to be in line with the notion that metacognitive instruction assists language learners in what they choose to process their learning and improve successful language learning through metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive instruction was described as "pedagogical procedures that enable learners to increase awareness of listening process by developing richer metacognitive knowledge about themselves as listeners, the nature and demands of listening, and strategies for listening" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012), which was regarded as the appropriate intervention strategy for this study. In the same vein, Goh (2008) highlighted that metacognitive instruction inherently strengthens the learners' awareness and their listening process, which assist them in their choice of learning strategies. Focusing on the demand for metacognitive instruction, it is important that a long-term direct explanation, modelling strategies, and strategies with guided practice are accessible to language learners for them to apply appropriate learning strategies across diverse contexts (Pressley, 2002). Metacognitive instruction in listening can be presented to language learners in different forms, such as through a series of activities that encourage the use of planning, monitoring, and evaluating for a given listening text (Mendelsohn, 1998). By comparing the outcomes of the pre-experimental stage and post-experimental stage, this study assessed the level of awareness on the use of metacognitive strategies and monitored the development of ESL learners in acquiring listening skill through metacognitive strategies. Unlike most

of the previous studies that only focused on the outcomes of the pre-experimental stage and post-experimental stage, this study also assessed the outcomes of the intervention stage in the forms of learners' checklist and learners' group discussions. To date, these metacognitive strategies were not assessed in the case of IELTS preparatory listening course among Malaysian ESL learners.

2.3.1 Prior studies on the use of metacognitive strategies to acquire listening skill

Bozorgian (2014) examined the influence of metacognitive instruction on listening comprehension among low-skilled and high-skilled learners. The study highlighted the difficulties of the teachers in teaching language learners on the listening instruction and improving the listening comprehension in the classroom. This may frustrate the learners, resulting in poorer performance or insufficient attention to listening instruction due to the complicated procedure of listening comprehension. The complexity of listening comprehension may involve several external issues, such as text or content. "Metacognitive instruction" was used to manipulate the process of listening comprehension in order to reduce the complexity of the listening comprehension for the less-skilled learner. Bozorgian (2014) further highlighted "metacognitive" as higher-order thinking that enables understanding, analysis, and control of one's cognitive processes, especially during the time of learning. Since metacognition was viewed as a key function to coordinate the learning comprehension, the study considered it as a valuable part of classroom instruction. The mentioned study, the IELTS listening test was used to examine the listening comprehension of participants in the pre-test and post-test. The participants were prompted to apply metacognitive strategies for listening, namely planning,

monitoring, and evaluation. It is notable that the mentioned study did investigate the performance from the participants in between the pre-test and post-test. The present study however investigated the experimental groups' performance in for a duration of 6 lessons.

The experimental group in this study comprised of 59 Iranian students who were prompted to apply metacognitive strategies for listening, specifically predicting, planning, monitoring, assessing, and problem-solving. The same teacher trained 47 Iranian students in the control group to listen to the similar texts (same number of playback) without any guidance on processing. In addition, the study also conducted a survey that involved a group of 32 Iranian females (of between 18 to 25 years) in the English course where three respondents dropped out from the survey (refused to participate in pre-test or post-test). The results of the pre-test and post-test revealed that the low-skilled learners who participated in the guided methodology benefitted more than high-skilled learners where the former exhibited greater motivation, confidence, and knowledge on the strategies. Furthermore, one of the high-skilled learners even failed to improve in this study. The use of metacognitive strategies was proved to support the low-skilled learners in this small-scale study where these strategies supported them to expand their function memory capability in terms of embracing and retaining more language chunks and to address their listening skill problems in terms of the causes and significance of the problems. This study demonstrated the significance of metacognitive instruction (i.e., planning, monitoring, and evaluation) in supporting and enhancing the listening comprehension of low-skilled learners. The use of these strategies also creates exciting learning environment for the learners. However, Bozorgian (2014) was not able to determine whether the learners reflect on the applied strategies to acquire listening skill due to the exclusion

of problem-solving, which propelled the current study to influence the influence of planning, monitoring, evaluation, and problem-solving on the listening performance of ESL learners within the Malaysian context.

In addition, Fahim and Fakhri Alamdari (2014) compared the outcomes of two different models of metacognitive instruction on the listening performance, which involved 90 intermediary EFL learners (in three groups; between 20 and 26 years of age) in Iran. Following the intervention, the study also conducted an actual test of language proficiency and a listening comprehension test to evaluate their listening performance. The participants in the experimental group one (EG1; $n = 30$) went through a 10-week intervention programme that involved the linear instruction of 10 metacognitive plans, with its focus on planning, monitoring, and evaluation. The participants in experimental group two (EG2; $n = 30$) who were trained through Metacognitive Pedagogical Arrangement for 10 weeks went through an intervention programme that engaged them in an arrangement of tasks to help them enhance their metacognitive awareness on the processes underlying L2 listening through dialogic interactions. The participants in the control group (CG; $n = 30$) who went through a conventional listening instruction programme were taught by the same teacher and attended to the same materials without any directed attention to process. In particular, the CG participants were taught predicting in listening—they were allowed to listen to the same oral texts the same number of times and were not given the opportunities to discuss, estimate, and monitor their comprehension or negotiate plans with their peers in the classroom. In short, there was no conversation of strategy use among CG participants.

The study proceeded to perform a one-way between-group investigation of variance (one-way ANOVA) to compare the listening comprehension scores of the

three groups in this pre-test. Considering the fact that all participants initially demonstrated similar listening performance, the outcomes of the post-test were used to compare the mean scores of the three groups in terms of their listening performance and to calculate the effect of behaviours on each group after the implementation of intervention. The obtained results showed that metacognitive instruction led to a significant variance in the whole listening performance among the participants, which was due to the opportunity they had to learn one metacognitive strategy at a time: (1) the initial stage focused on offering and simplifying the definition of a metacognitive plan and tried to define it in terms of its purpose in a practical sense through some related examples; (2) the subsequent stage focused on relating the metacognitive strategy to the topic of listening activities in the classroom where the participants were prompted to apply the metacognitive plan during their listening activities in the classroom; (3) the third stage highlighted the importance of each specific metacognitive strategy in developing listening skill and the participants were given the same time to rehearse it in the classroom; (4) the final stage included a record for metacognitive instruction where any problems the participants encountered during the intervention of every session were noted. However, Fahim and Fakhri Alamdari (2014) exclusively focused on planning, monitoring, and evaluation (excluded problem-solving) and did not establish the level of metacognitive awareness on the use of metacognitive strategies among the participants. Addressing that, this present study was prompted to evaluate the impact of metacognitive strategies on the listening performance of Malaysian ESL learners in the IELTS preparatory listening course through intervention in order to determine the extent of the influence of these strategies on the listening performance.

Meanwhile, Rahimirad and Zare-ee (2015) explored the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on the listening self-efficacy performance among EFL learners, which initially involved 60 female undergraduates of English literature. They were junior and senior students at the University of Qom in central Iran. In order to standardise the level of proficiency in the English language among the participants, this study employed a sample section of British Council International English Language Testing System—40 participants of between intermediate and upper-intermediate level of English proficiency (scored between six and eight in four modules of International English Language Testing System) were selected. They were between 22 and 29 years of age and had passed at least eight terms in EFL at the institutes with one or two years of English literature study at the university. These participants were divided into treatment group and control group. The participants in the treatment group received metacognitive strategy instruction and an instrument (a survey approach was selected due to its effectiveness and simple administrative process) through an additional class at the university. The questions were in different formats of table completion, classification, form completion, multiple-choice, composition writing, and interview.

The first treatment session (predicting or planning) involved the teaching of the definition and contextualisation (through samples) of the strategies in the listening tasks. Following that, the second treatment session focused on a subcategory of predicting or planning, specifically directed attention and selective attention. The third treatment session involved the strategy of self-management, which is another subcategory of predicting or planning. The next treatment session (monitoring strategy) involved the teacher (after giving the definition of checking to the students) to assist the participants to verify and correct the information they learned.

Meanwhile, the fifth treatment session focused on reflection and evaluation where the participants were prompted to practice performance evaluation, strategy evaluation, and problem identification after the teacher described the definition of evaluation and strategy. Finally, the participants of both groups were required to undergo the same listening self-efficacy questionnaire (post-test). The obtained data of both pre-test and post-test were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (independent t-test) to assess the level of listening self-efficacy between both groups. The results of the analysis demonstrated that the metacognitive strategy instruction exhibited strong influence on several features of English as second or foreign language instruction. The key groups of metacognitive strategies (i.e., predicting, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation) were found to assist the participants on how to make use of their metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation into consciousness. Conclusively, these strategies potentially enhance the perception and awareness of language learners about themselves during the process of listening.

Using the qualitative approach and quantitative approach, Rahimirad and Moini (2015) assessed the challenges faced by Iranian students in listening to academic lectures and the effect of equivalent metacognitive strategies on their listening comprehension during academic lectures in an English for academic purposes (EAP) workshop. This study involved 15 female academic staff (i.e., technicians and instructors) at the computer sites and physics and chemistry labs at the University of Qom, Iran. The participants were irregularly allocated to an experimental group ($n = 8$) and a control group ($n = 7$). The qualitative approach, specifically the interview approach, was employed to triangulate the obtained quantitative results (using the sample of IELTS test) on the challenges faced in listening to academic lectures and to assess the use of planning, directed attention,

monitoring, problem-solving, selective attention, and evaluation in this case among EAP learners. The results of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (independent t-test) revealed no statistically significant variances between the groups ($t = -0.932, p \geq .05$) in the level of listening conception at the outset of the study, but a significant difference between the groups by the end of the metacognitive strategy instruction period ($t = -2.431, p \leq .05$). Besides that, 12 participants perceived their lack of general listening proficiency as the main challenge in comprehending academic lectures. As they encountered the first few unacquainted words in academic lectures, they lose focus and cannot catch up with the rest of the lecture. According to six participants, they were required to multi-task, such as discussing issues, replying to questions, taking notes, assessing or interpreting video slides, and thinking of what to respond during academic lectures, which were also identified as another challenge. Overall, the discussed challenges mostly involved the poor language proficiency and listening skill of students.

Likewise, Mohammad et al. (2016) highlighted listening skill as the most difficult and obscure language skill, which promoted the study to conduct a survey to assess the impact of metacognitive strategies on the academic listening performance among 22 Linguistics postgraduate students (of between 22 and 33 years of age; native Arabic speakers) in Yarmouk University, Jordan given the limited number of studies on listening skill at the tertiary level, especially among postgraduate students and the significance of assisting the education providers in their effort to improve the level of understanding on academic listening activities. These respondents who were within their first three academic semesters were in the same education course and studied the English language for at least eight years prior to the completion of Bachelor's degree. These respondents had completed listening tasks as part of a

language proficiency test prior to their enrolment as postgraduate students. The survey was conducted in a regular classroom at Yarmouk University where the selected respondents were believed to provide more reliable and experimental answers. The respondents were fully aware of the purpose of the study and ensured that their participation was not mandatory and their answers were kept strictly confidential.

Five potential subscales of initial expectations were recorded. Firstly, the mental translation recorded the lowest average score of 3.66, which was deemed moderately favourable because, in order for language learners to acquire effective listening skill, they should practice mental translation as minimum as possible. This may be due to the way they were used to when they had to memorise words verbatim in middle school. Secondly, planning and evaluation recorded an average of 3.88, which indicated that the participant's behaviour is inconsistent with the findings of the questionnaire. On the contrary, the dependence on this very important scale cannot have a negative effect on students' metacognitive behaviour, thus affecting the actual performance of the listening task. The personal knowledge of respondents recorded an average of 4.10, which indicated a normal range of academic listening tasks and good consistency among the respondents. The fourth repeated strategy group was associated with directed attention with an average score of 4.37. Under the action of the factors, the strategies that let the directed attention when someone is going through a difficult time, do not give up. Lastly, the most important strategy was the ability to solve the listening skill problems with an average score of 4.84, which may be a positive indicator of metacognitive behaviour among the respondents.

On the contrary, both teacher instruction and teacher feedback were found to be strongly connected to the reliance on background knowledge, which implied that the more a teacher offers feedback and background knowledge after the students'

listening practice, the more likely these students would re-apply knowledge. Besides that, there was also an important connection between teacher feedback and the strategies of recall, guessing, and after-class communication. Teacher instruction demonstrated a relatively higher degree of connection with recall, guessing, self-encouragement, and after-class interaction, which indicated that the more instructional actions from the teacher that motivate students, the more likely the students would apply the strategies of recall, self-encouragement, and after-class interactions into use. Since the listening task is typically a one-off practice, the listening material used is completely different each time, which results in students not caring much about their learning experience in the listening process. This study also found that academic listening strategies were inverse with low self-efficacy. In other words, students are likely to maximise their control over the demanding listening practice because they may be pressured by the mid-term and final listening tests. Hence, even the question is beyond their listening skill during the first play, the students would slowly find a solution to manage the practice after listening for the second or third time. Finally, researchers found that if there are no theoretical or empirical foundations it will lead to the prediction of a close relationship between task significance and listening strategies, such as guessing after-class interfaces.

These studies on English listening skill strategies demonstrated outstanding results and findings based on samples of different age, grade, profession, and cultural backgrounds, but the identified gaps in these studies should be appropriately addressed. The low-score group demonstrated the propensity to misjudge the use of certain strategies and materials. Besides that, most of the prior studies did not employ random sampling strategy or a small sample was gathered. There was also a lack of pre-test scores in the experimental stage. The reported results and findings were

inadequate to address the listening strategy instruction as most studies focused on the comparison of two low-level strategies, specifically memorisation and cognitive strategies; in other words, the depth of these studies was inadequate. The comparative studies of Interlingua listening strategies remain scarce. Furthermore, studies on strategy training involved a relatively short training time even though the complete grasping and flexible application of these strategies is relatively a long-term and systematic project. The continuous validation of long-term results and findings is highly necessary.

Basically, listening strategies are related to the thoughts or activities that the language learners often practice in the process of listening (Huajie and Zhi, 2017). Listening skill strategies are the dynamic branches of learning strategies, as the studies on listening skill strategies have become a specific field of study to the extent of metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, socialised and effective strategies, strategy-training, strategy-guiding, strategy-instruction, and various other strategies. In recent years, with the constant efforts of scholars at home and abroad, studies of listening strategies be likely to extravagant in depth and length, which reveals on research matters, research areas, research approaches, research questions, and more. Listening skill strategies are more of an inner thinking activity, which is difficult to measure through direct observation. Most studies within the Western context engaged with the learners' self-description, such as oral reports, diaries, surveys, and computer automatic tracking, to explore listening skill strategies. Oral reports in the form of self-report allow learners to conduct observation and report on the procedure of listening and the use of listening skill strategies whereas oral reports in the form of audio thinking require the learners to dictate their thoughts during the process of completing the assigned listening tasks. The latter form exposes the thinking process

in listening comprehension and the learners' feeling and inspiration. Meanwhile, diaries (or logs) record learners' personal experience, which provide direct information on the development of listening skill and metacognitive awareness in relation to the listening skill strategies. The most commonly used approach is the survey approach. For example, the "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning", which involves a total of 50 questions, measures six aspects of memory, connectiveness, compensation, metacognitive, emotional control, and socialisation. The survey can be used to test language learning strategies, including listening skill strategies, using a standardised measure of five-point scale (i.e., "never true of me", "usually not true of me", "somewhat true of me", "usually true of me", and "always true of me"). On the other hand, computer automatic tracking, with the application of computer technology in language study, is primarily used for the service of learners' language processing programme under the machine situation, language learning processes, and the strategies used in other relevant resources. This approach has the advantages of having little interference to the learners' personal data and the records collecting procedure. However, the collected data are more balanced which can be carried out in the condition when the students do not know what they are really doing. Secondly, the approach effectively reduces the effect of artificial factors and making the information more precise and consistent.

2.3.2 Learners evaluation and perception of self-metacognitive strategies

Several prior studies had demonstrated that language learners are able to self-assess accurately. Munoz and Alvarez (2007) reported moderate to high correlation between teachers' and learners' self-evaluation and the positive attitude on self-assessment in the use of metacognitive strategies. On a similar note, Chang and Chang

(2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of self-metacognitive strategies in engaging learners to reflect on their perception on specific problems encountered as well as the use of listening strategies and strategic knowledge in the metacognitive instructional process. The development of metacognitive listening knowledge in enhancing ESL listening strategy instruction was deemed worthy of consideration (Chang and Chang, 2014). Likewise, Oxford (1990) elaborated that the more motivated the learners are, the more frequently they make use of learning strategies, and vice versa. Following the completion of a task, metacognitive engagement assists learners to decide the appropriateness of the acquired information, knowledge, or learning and the need to discard or link them with the existing or stored knowledge for future use. Effective high-level metacognitive engagement occurs when the acquired knowledge is retained, which enhances the possibility of transfer of learning across content domains (Dole and Sinatra, 1998). However, studies on these aforementioned areas, specifically within the context of listening skill among ESL learners in the IELTS listening preparatory course, remain scarce, which propelled the current study to evaluate the impact of metacognitive strategies on the listening performance of ESL learners in the IELTS listening preparatory course within the Malaysian context.

Previous studies indicated that proficient listeners often use more metacognitive strategies compared to those who are less proficient (Anderson, 2003). This entails a better understanding of texts allows learners to be more successful academically. In addition, the need to comprehend listening texts has also become very significant among language learners. Moreover, listening has gained a growing interest among researchers. For instance, Anderson (2003) assessed the use of metacognitive strategies for listening among ESL learners with the use of Online Survey of Listening Strategies (OSLS), which revealed no difference between the

group that used global listening strategies and the other group that used support listening strategies and the higher use of problem-solving strategies among ESL learners. Similarly, the study by Jaengsaengthong (2007), which also made use of OSLS as means of data collection, demonstrated that ESL Thai learners used problem-solving more often than global and support strategies. Pookcharoen (2007) also reported similar findings on the use of problem-solving. Besides that, O'Malley et al. (1985) had documented promising findings of training learners to employ metacognitive strategies in academic listening and speaking practices. In addition, Kasper (1997) reported a significant relationship between metacognitive strategies and ESL writing performance, particularly the effectiveness of strategy knowledge in improving the learners' language proficiency.

2.4 Listening Skill Problems among English Language Learners

The ultimate goal of teaching and learning at the tertiary level in Malaysia is to equip learners with the ability and capacity to take charge of their own learning. The English language is regarded as the most important foreign language within the Malaysian academic curriculum. However, studies on the level of English language skills among Malaysian students at high schools and the tertiary level revealed that the desired level of mastering English language skills was not met. The focus on memorising was reported to be the cause of this unsatisfactory achievement at the tertiary level. The conventional teacher-controlled curriculum approach still overrides the teaching and learning process in schools and universities. Teachers and lecturers transfer knowledge and experiences to their students with the aim of helping them to pass examinations. The core roles of students are merely listening and taking notes where the information gained during lectures are perceived solely to answer

examination questions. For instance, Mohana and Shamara (2012) found that both MUET candidates and teachers perceived listening skill as the least important skill in the preparation for the language examination in Malaysia—as a result, these students did not feel the need to practice their listening skill since the total score for listening comprehension is lower than the total score for other language test components. Consequently, the vital skill of listening is often overlooked compared to reading and writing skills.

ESL learners express the need to be an effective listener in order to attend lectures or meetings, make presentations, and handle negotiations. The listening skill plays a vital role in such situations; it is highly relevant and often required for most careers (Richards, 2008). Despite that, the existing curriculum for the English language at the tertiary level does not satisfy the requirements at the workplace (Wiriyachitra and Keyuravong, 2002; Pradupongse, 2004). The lack of listening skill is not surprising given the limited number of units available in the language—where only a few of the units are compulsory for the language learners in other content domains for most universities, including regional universities. Moreover, inadequate practice of the listening skill also results in poor listening skill where the contemporary and general approach would entail of conventional lesson formats, focusing on the mastery of different items of the language and practice through controlled activities (e.g., memorisation of dialogues and drills, the use of pair work activities, role play, group activities, and project work) (Richards, 2008). Hence, the pressure to change the teaching and learning of the English language at the tertiary level was demonstrated in numerous studies.

Listening skill—treated as a minor skill—has taken many years to be established as what it deserves in the second and foreign language learning today in

the teaching profession (Segunda, 2012). It is either embedded in teaching conversation skills or included as an introduction to teach other language skills, such as reading or writing. Furthermore, most teachers tend to focus on the product of listening in terms of listening test scores, rather than the process of listening (e.g., how to mentally process the oral text) (Mohana and Shamara, 2012). According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), teaching the listening skill is driven towards listening for details, listening for gist, predicting, listening selectively, or making inferences, which reflect the emphasis on the product of listening—every activity becomes a test score for the evaluation of listening skill, rather than teaching these learners to grasp the social and cognitive nature of developing and using the listening skill.

Renukadevi (2014) described the listening skill as a receptive skill that is first developed in the consciousness of the language. Through listening itself, the sound, rhythm, intonation, and stress of the language can be improved and language learners are able to comprehend the magnificence of the language and gain the skill to communicate effectively through the development of pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax and the understanding of the messages conveyed based on the tone of voice, pitch, and accent. With the highest percentage of participation in an effective interchange of information, listening is a language forerunner. However, listening can be relatively challenging for language learners because the listening skill is related to the corresponding sub-skills of receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. The challenge to gain effective listening skill frustrates and pressures language learners, as it engages the interpersonal style and informative style of communication in which they have to keenly partake. When it comes to teaching the listening skill, the language learners are aided in getting themselves

familiar with listening behaviour in various situations, diverse input, and listening objectives.

However, most of the recent conventional and mainstream teaching approaches do not exclusively focus on teaching a particular skill in ESL. These approaches often include the listening skill as part of an integrated approach that progresses to other language skills. For instance, Communication Language Teaching (CLT) is related to linking different language skills (e.g., speaking, reading, and listening skills) in a connected syllabus that reinforces and combines one's skill with other skills in communication and self-autonomy learning with tolerance for errors to build communication competence and opportunities to improve language accuracy and fluency based on the principle that these language skills simultaneously occur in actual circumstances (Richards, 2008). In this case, the listening skill component is described as a micro skill where recognition of both key verbal and non-verbal signals during communication. On the other hand, the "natural approach" by Krashen (1985) was also introduced based on the notion that the subconscious process of acquisition is perceived more superior to direct classroom instruction (Krashen, 1985). Accordingly, the method nurtures the cognitive state of learners through conditioning through the exposure to the language itself and a conducive learning environment. This approach first hones the learners' listening skill under Stage 1 of the pre-production stage where listening skill is emphasised to learn, develop, and gain comprehension of the language.

According to Field (2008), there are several reasons as to why teachers prefer to teach other language skills, compared to listening skill, which contribute to the listening skill problems among language learners:

i) Competence

Effective listening skill is invaluable to language learners. Communication is a two-way dialogue where it would be not possible to start a conversation without listening skill. Teaching language learners to develop listening skill equips them to practice autonomous learning in the real environment (Field, 2008). Most language learners have poor language command to communicate in the targeted language. Thus, they eventually avoid interaction using the language. The incompetency in the language negatively affects communication and demotivates language learners to use the targeted language.

ii) Intangibility

According to Field (2008), listening is seen as a passive skill that takes place in the mind of language learners. Unlike other language skills, the listening skill is not tangible enough to be analysed (such as speaking and writing skills) or manipulated by teachers (such as reading skill). The difficulty to achieve demonstrable or tangible results challenges the language learners in gaining effective listening skill. The circumstances are made worse by the exam-oriented education system, which emphasises on achieving excellent scores—becoming an expert listener is not the goal. Furthermore, teachers who are bogged down with the task of creating a class of high achievers may select teaching strategies according to the scores awarded for a specific skill or subject. For instance, the listening component in the MUET test carries the least percentage of scores compared to the reading and writing components. The teachers also encounter difficulties in teaching listening skill if they do not have the required expertise to engage with listening skill

strategies in the classroom. Hence, it is imperative that the teaching and learning environment should be given appropriate attention.

iii) Learners' concerns

The learners' perception of their language needs determines how the listening skill should be emphasised since most language learners perceive listening skill, compared to other language skills as their most insecure and difficult aspect in language learning (Graham, 2006). Furthermore, listening comprehension is often perceived as unimportant due to the poor recognition in the overall score of the language test they are accustomed to (Graham, 2006). Besides that, the authenticity of listening materials in the classroom is another problem in language learning. If a stretch of speech is not understood the moment it is heard, it is extremely hard to relive it in memory. The failure of matching speech to words under the pressure of time at the basic level often leads to a loss of confidence, demotivation, and insecurity, especially if the teacher fails to address these problems and students' concerns (Field, 2008).

Abbas and Mohammad Reza (2011), identified seven distinct listening skill problems among language learners: (1) the inability of learners to control the speaker's speed of delivery; (2) the restricted number of recording being replayed in the classroom without considering if the learners comprehend the individual segments of the listening passage; (3) limited vocabulary that distracts the learners' flow of listening (as they stop to think of the meaning of difficult vocabulary, resulting in missing out the next segment of the listening passage); (4) the failure to recognise formal and informal discourse markers in the speakers' speech where formal discourse markers are more obvious compared to informal discourse markers in spontaneous situations that comprise of vague signals (e.g., pauses, gestures,

increased loudness, a clear change of pitch, or different intonation patterns that can easily be missed, especially by learners with lower level of proficiency); (5) the lack of contextual knowledge (because the sharing of mutual knowledge and common content makes communication easier; hence, the failure to connect with the implied meanings of the aural texts and content may cause confusion and misinterpretation by learners with different cultural background); (6) the difficulty of maintaining concentration to listen and grasp conversations in a second or foreign language (as it requires an enormous amount of effort to interpret the meaning); (7) die-hard listening habits of learners, such as word-by-word translation (when learners fail to translate a certain word, they are discouraged by the failure, resulting in problems of grasping the conversation). Additionally, Goh (1997) further examined specific factors that influence the language learners' listening comprehension, which involved 40 Chinese ESL learners. The study subsequently listed 20 factors that were then categorised into five key characteristics: (1) text; (2) listener; (3) speaker; (4) task; (5) environment. The text- and listener-related factors included vocabulary, prior knowledge, speech rate, type of input, and speaker's accent, which were then acknowledged as the main problems of ESL learners in listening comprehension.

On the other hand, Manjet (2016) identified four types of challenges faced in the academic listening practices, which involved international graduate students, specifically (1) listening comprehension, (2) language and culture barriers, (3) inadequate use of technology in lecturing, and (4) lack of discipline content knowledge. Firstly, the international graduate students encounter difficulties to grasp the accent of lecturers and students in conversational activities, resulting in demotivation and embarrassment. Secondly, the language and culture of the local place adversely affect their attempt to acquire listening skill. Moreover, the lecturers

who are not proficient in the English language may also affect the international graduate students' language comprehension on the information conveyed by the lecturers. Thirdly, lecturers do not make full use of the technology during their lecture due to the lack of technological expertise in using e-learning portal or incompetency in presenting and delivering the information effectively. Lastly, the lack of discipline content knowledge affects the international graduate students' language comprehension during lecture. Manjet (2016) further identified two main factors that lead to these challenges—improper discipline content knowledge to understand the meaning of the words and the accent among the lecturers.

In short, listening is a complex auditory and mental synchronisation that requires critical thinking where the language learners must be able to translate one's speech into their own language and mental construct. As the speech rate gets faster, they have to pay more attention to the lexical and grammar processing and less attention on the interpretation of the meaning. They are likely to miss parts of the text and consequently fail to understand the message (Buck, 2001). Although they may know the individual words, they may fail to comprehend the general ideas of the texts. It appears plausible that ESL learners demonstrate good understanding of all the words in text, but still fail to grasp the main points (Olsen, 2004). Listening comprehension has not been much of a problem for native speakers and highly proficient ESL learners, but it is inevitable that learners at the lower level of proficiency encounter listening skill problems. Hence, the use of listening skill strategies to comprehend aural communication among ESL learners, especially of those with lower proficiency, is clearly essential (Abbas and Mohammad Reza, 2011). As the listening skill strategies may appear as the “problem-solving tools” in listening comprehension, ESL learners should also be motivated to listen and monitor their

listening comprehension via these strategies in order to address their listening skill problems and improve their listening comprehension even when they may be less proficient in the English language.

2.5 Listening Skill Strategies for English Language Learners

Vandergrift (2002) described listening as an invisible mental process where listeners have to discriminate between sounds, understand the vocabulary and grammatical structure, interpret stress and intonation, and retain and interpret the words within specific socio-cultural context of the utterance. The listening skill in ESL is generally divided into specific methodological framework. Top-down strategies are more of a listener-based approach where the listener taps into the background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. The background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Top-down strategies include (1) listening for the main idea, (2) predicting, (3) drawing inferences, and (4) summarising. On the other hand, bottom-up strategies are more of a text-based approach where the listener relies on the language in the message, specifically the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up strategies include (1) listening for specific details, (2) recognising cognates, and (3) recognising word-order patterns. On a similar note, Renukadevi (2014) also categorised the listening skill strategies as top-down strategies and bottom-up strategies where top-down strategies focus on the core concept of listening and expecting, drawing implications, and reviewing, while the bottom-up strategies focus on particular facts while listening and identifying word-order patterns.

The study by Azmi (2015) identified the personal purposes of learning English and assessed language learning strategies for reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills as well as grammar within the Malaysian context, which involved seven ESL teachers and three postgraduate English-major students. The use of dictionary in comprehending the literal meaning of certain English words and increasing the number of vocabulary repertoire was identified as one of the language learning strategies among ESL teachers. Reading various types of materials nurtures reading skill. Apart from the natural talent to write effectively, adequate and continuous writing practice was identified as another language learning strategy to form good patterns and structures of sentences, such as blogging on a regular basis in different genres (e.g., personal experience, poems, or academic writing) or effective drilling as cognitive learning strategy. Meanwhile, speaking and listening skills were described as part of an interactive process of switching the information and conveying the messages. For instance, storytelling experience—where learners can learn the language in an innovative and relaxing manner. The right questioning technique in storytelling can stimulate collaborative discussion among the language learners. Another identified language learning strategy in this study was listening to English songs, which can be conveniently performed at any time without specific timeframe. The elements of language and music are precisely well-tied together in the brain processing in terms of rhythm, pitch, and symmetrical phrasing, which stimulate the language learning process given the strong connection between these two core domains. As for learning grammar, interaction in a stimulating “implicit” classroom was identified as another useful language learning strategy since the process of learning grammar is often perceived as unexciting. The language learners may recognise their own grammar errors if the utterances appear strange to them. With

that, they can do the study and figure out the right way of using the intended grammar form.

Unlike the prior study by Azmi (2015), Cahyono (2015) specifically described the significance of listening skill, reviewed some of the challenges in research and teaching of EFL listening skill, and discussed the means of teaching listening skill in an FL context. The study presented an overview of how teaching listening skill is conducted and how listening skill is nurtured within the Indonesian context. Apart from speaking, perusing, and writing skills, the listening skill was deemed as an essential aptitude for the acquisition of FL, which prompted this study to further assess the listening process based on the psychological theory. Accordingly, the information in the short-dated memory can be retained longer through rehearsal (either memorisation or elaborative practice). Intensive listening materials (e.g., CD, tapes, and hard disk), which contain different types of texts (e.g., news, academic texts, and stories) with different presentation methods (e.g., scripted or prepared materials and unscripted or natural discourses), are easily accessible in the language laboratory or classroom. In intensive listening, the students generally listen to the materials at the same time; if the students do not wear headset, the voice quality would not be the same for all students. The factor that promotes the success of listening instruction lies in the media used to present these listening materials.

The study revealed different aspects of teaching listening skill in EFL: (1) the incorporation of teaching listening skill in EFL as a major part of the educational modules of instructive foundations; (2) the implementation of listening activities with the purpose of enhancing learners' listening skill. Listening skill in EFL can be instructed discretely as a specific course, particularly in the language department of colleges, with certain course names (e.g., Listening course or Listening

Comprehension course). In this case, listening skill can be taught in a discrete course due to the critical needs to listen to different genres of conversation in the English language. Listening skill in EFL can also be taught in an incorporated path alongside other dialect aptitudes in terms of speaking, perusing, and composing skills. As requested by the 2006 School-Based Curriculum, the teaching of listening skill more often than not happens in concentrated courses, either in the English department of colleges or in specific projects that are arranged by any private courses or in an optional school. The resultant outcomes of the study in terms of the scores obtained in three different cycles (i.e., primary, secondary, and third cycles) demonstrated the enhanced capacity of students to acquire listening skill, which reaffirmed the learners' ability to comprehend the message and enhanced their listening cognizance if they were given the opportunity to listen repetitively within their space. Hence, the proposed standard methodology of teaching the listening skill in EFL was to expose learners to the listening materials and assign them listening tasks that are related to the substance or etymological highlights of the listening materials.

On the other hand, Manjet (2016) identified three specific strategies to address the challenges faced in the academic listening practices among international graduate students, which were (1) enculturation in the graduate study environment, (2) expectations of lecturers, and (3) the role of the international graduate students. Most of the international graduate students highlighted that the increase of opportunity to experience graduate study environment results in higher success of comprehending information and familiarise with the accent and pronunciation of lecturers and other students. Moreover, the lecturers should also deliver their lecture in proper speaking and pronunciation of the English language. Lecturers need to be sensitive towards international students who are weak in comprehending the language spoken and

motivate them with tolerance to build a good relationship with these students. Apart from establishing clear instructional plans prior to accepting international students, the university should provide speech training for the lecturers to enhance their presentation skill. With that, the university would be able to sustain the multifaceted nature of the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students for successful academic listening practices. Most importantly, these students should also put in more effort and patience to overcome the challenges in the academic listening practices.

According to Xiaoli Bao (2017), listening skill strategies are evidently among the most important factors to promote the process of listening comprehension. This empirical study assessed the use of listening skill strategies in a survey among randomly sampled 174 non-English majors and 35 English lecturers from the English department in a university, which revealed various factors that contribute to the improvement of listening comprehension in the English language. The number of the articles on listening skill strategies was rather limited. The distributed questionnaires were broadly similar in content, which comprised of background questionnaire and listening strategy questionnaire.

The survey revealed three major findings on the use of listening skill strategies. Firstly, the listening skill strategies used by non-English majors were at the medium level where cognitive strategies were mostly used, followed by metacognitive strategies, and lastly, social-affective strategies. Secondly, the listening skill strategies instructed by English lecturers were also at the medium level where the frequency of the application of media-cognitive strategies, the frequency of the application of non-cognitive strategy is the highest, while the frequency of the application of cognitive and social/effective strategies is equal. Thirdly, the listening skill strategies instructed by lecturers and the use of listening skill strategies used by students in this study were

positively correlated. However, lecturers appeared to attach equal importance on the application of cognitive strategies and social-affective strategies even though students put less emphasis on the use of social-affective strategies. This study highlighted the significant role of English teachers or lecturers in helping language learners to enhance their listening skill strategy consciousness and the frequency and range of application of listening skill strategies, especially social-affective strategies, as well as the need to explore productive teaching strategies.

Meanwhile, Kazemi and Kiamarsi (2017) explored the listening skill strategies used by students in the intermediate group and advanced group and assessed the relationship between their choice of listening skill strategies and their language performance. The tasks used for advanced group were based on TOEFL test whereas the other tasks for intermediate group were based on a book ("Four Corners") that was used in Yasouj language institutes. The descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the students' listening skill strategies, as revealed through the think-aloud protocol technique and the EFL listening comprehension test. The information obtained from the think-aloud protocol technique was qualitatively assessed using content analysis.

The overall results revealed that the participants in both groups often used their native language to help with EFL listening comprehension. Only two of the participants in the advanced group used social-affective strategies, which indicated that the use of such strategies was not notable in this group. The majority of the participants in the advanced group employed a wide variety of listening skill strategies, especially the use of metacognitive strategies in controlling and monitoring their listening comprehension. Although both groups demonstrated awareness of different listening skill strategies, most of the participants in the intermediate group

employed cognitive strategies (e.g., repetition, resource, note-taking, deduction, and translation), followed by social-affective strategies. The proficiency level of listening between both groups appeared to be connected to the number of listening skill strategies they employed. Besides that, the study also found that their choice of listening skill strategies were related to their language performance although the use of listening skill strategies did not guarantee success in listening comprehension. Instead, the use of listening skill strategies reflected the capability of participants to actively solve their listening skill problems.

Additionally, Sulaiman et al. (2017) quantitatively aimed to assess the different listening skill strategies of ESL learners, specifically P.I.S.A (predicting, inferring, and selective attention), which involved 60 USIM students in their foundation year. These selected students, who enrolled in ESL courses, demonstrated intermediate level of English competency and were exposed to the English language from the elementary level to high school (11 years). Using the percentage and mean scores, their responses were analysed, which revealed that majority of the respondents agreed of forecasting the listening items from what they previously know (58.0%); thinking their own language (76.6%); using knowledge and personal experience (88.4%); using the main indication of the text to guess the meaning of the words (93.4%); making use of each passage as the key to grasp the whole conversation (86.7%); having a listening plan (80.0%); listening to the tone of the important parts (76.6%); adjusting their explanation when it is not correct (81.7%). In other words, ESL learners are also aware of the use of core ideas in answering listening questions and the intended meaning of a particular conversation.

The study further highlighted the importance of making the knowledge of the meaning for each passage as the main element in the teaching of the listening

component. However, only 6.7% agreed of forecasting what will come next whereas 39.0% indicated that unclear words do not render their understanding in a conversation. Hence, predicting, inferring, and selective attention in listening comprehension appeared to be pragmatic means among ESL learners in their listening test. ESL learners can use their prior knowledge in facilitating their understanding of the listening content. However, thinking in their native language potentially influences the ESL learners' ability to grasp a specific listening item.

Through a case study, Shian and Yunus (2017) assessed the perception of teachers and students on the use of audio clips to develop listening skill in a rural Chinese National-type primary school (SJKC—*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina*) in Saratok, Sarawak (East Malaysia) where digital facilities and internet connection are lacking in most parts of the state. Prior to the actual study, a pilot test on the self-developed audio clip and listening task was conducted among Year 3 students on the topic “My Hero” from the textbook to ensure its face validity. Six audio clips of between two and four minutes and collateral listening tasks were developed based on the Year 4 SJKC English textbook using the review from the subject teacher as a guide, including the aspects of audio speed and speaker tune. The audio clips were recorded using a mobile phone and task sheets were created using Microsoft Word. Three units in the textbooks were covered and the listening tasks comprised of four types of instructions: (1) listen and circle the correct answers; (2) listen and fill in the gaps; (3) listen and sequence the stories; (4) listen and indicate “True” or “False”. Afterwards, 36 Year 4 students participated in the listening tasks over the course of six weeks using the audio clips and task sheets. For every listening task, the two subject teachers provided vocabulary lessons in advance or evoked responses from the students on the topic to prepare them for the listening tasks. They played the audio

using a mobile phone and a speaker, while the students were required to complete the listening tasks. The audios were played two to three times according to the needs of students. The teachers then discussed the answer of the listening tasks as a class or through peer-checking.

In addition, semi-structured interview sessions were subsequently conducted and the responses were recorded, transcribed, and analysed according to the emerging themes. The study revealed that the teachers were highly receptive towards the use of audio clips during the listening tasks. The teachers even revealed that the audio clips, compared to the teacher's voice, were better at capturing the students' attention. Besides that, the perceived ease to use of the audio clips using the mobile phone was also explored where both teachers agreed on the convenience of using the audio clips, but it may put weaker students at a disadvantage. Nevertheless, the teachers supported the advantage of using the audio clips in long term. Moreover, the students were also in agreement with the teachers' perception of using the audio clips to develop listening skill. The students further revealed that their learning experience become more fun and interesting and they were more focus on the assigned tasks when their teacher made use of audio clips. Both teachers and students identified the main challenge in the listening tasks was the audio speed. The study found that the students asked to listen to the audio clips several times before they were able to complete the listening tasks. Conclusively, this study acknowledged the frequent use of audio clips in the language classroom.

On the other hand, Norazean et al. (2017) quantitatively assessed the perception of students on the use of audio clip and video clip for their listening assessment using the Visual-Auditory-Kinaesthetic (VAK) questionnaire. The study involved 150 first-semester university students with equal level of ability. In

particular, these students were given a set of listening assessment using an audio clip in the first session. In the second session, a video clip was used for them to complete the same set of listening assessment. The study proceeded to perform descriptive statistics and inferential statistics on the obtained data using IBM SPSS. Based on the obtained results of analysis, the use of video clip in the second session was deemed more realistic and functional than the use of audio clip for the listening assessment. Furthermore, the use of video clip was found to ease the completion of listening assessment for the participants. The study proved the acceptance of the use of video clip as a new listening strategy. In terms of the level of test difficulty, the study found that some of these participants highlighted the need to conduct language assessment with respect to their language skills. Considering that the students are more acquainted with the conventional method (the use of audio clip) from the elementary level to tertiary level, the study highlighted the need to explore the use of video clip for listening assessment.

Adding to that, Othman and Vanathas (2017) examined the influence of topic familiarity on the listening comprehension among 34 students of middle-level English proficiency (between 18 and 21 years) and various cultural backgrounds (from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, China, Tanzania, Botswana, Kenya, and Malaysia) in a private tertiary institution in Malaysia, specifically on how far certain parts of the language are likely to be affected by topic familiarity. The listening component of English 0211 course was delivered at least once per week and tested in both mid-term and final examinations. The participants were required to sit for the placement test in their first English lesson in order to determine their level of proficiency. The listening passage was entitled “The Keys to Advertising”, which was taken from a workbook for this course. Multiple-choice questions were used where there was only a single correct

answer for each question. These participants were given another placement test using the same workbook with three different listening passages, which were modified to fit their level of proficiency. Following that, the same listening passage of “The Keys to Advertising” was used in the post-test and the participants had to answer the same questions as in the pre-test. The average score in the pre-test was 13.23 with a standard deviation of ± 2.35 where the lowest score was 7, while the highest score gained was 16. As for the post-test, the mean score was 16.06 with a standard deviation of ± 2.03 where the lowest score was 11, while the highest score was 19. In other words, there was a marked advancement in their listening scores with a significant difference at 0.01 level. This significant improvement in the post-test was ascribed to the topic information that the subjects obtained from the treatment lessons. The participants were not able to determine answers to the comprehension questions as they confronted difficulties in the form of new vocabulary and advertising ideas. As they tried to overcome these difficulties, the process of understanding the text was affected; thus, they were not able to recognise the main ideas and information in the lecture in order to answer the comprehension questions. In this study, topic familiarity allowed the participants to successfully identify the facts and details of the advertising techniques as well as the details that supported these main ideas.

Besides that, Sumarsih (2017) performed pre-test and post-test to evaluate the impact of shadowing technique on the listening performance of students through an experimental research design, which involved 60 university students in the control group and experimental group (30 university students in each group). These randomly selected participants (from a total of 180 university students), of between 17 and 19 years of age, were in their first academic semester and had to undertake Listening course. Among the four language skills, listening skill was deemed as the most

important language skill in this study as this skill is the first stage of learning a language before the language learners can speak, read, or write. In other words, listening skill is the key to master the other language skills. The study selected “Focus on IELTS New Edition” book (version 2010) because (1) the listening materials presented in this book include different levels of difficulty, (2) these participants are expected to be English teachers upon graduation, and (3) the test items in the official IELTS test demonstrated adequate reliability. The obtained results were analysed using t-test and ANCOVA, which revealed the significant impact of shadowing technique on the students’ listening performance. The mean scores between both groups were significantly different where the participants in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group in terms of listening skill. The study successfully demonstrated the appropriateness of shadowing technique for EFL learners to acquire listening skill based on the basis that the steps of obtaining and learning the language are, in fact, systematic and contextual.

Apart from that, Ayu (2017) assessed the experts’ theories and research evidence on how the students’ listening skill can be improved using Youtube videos, which revealed important points on the strategies to address challenges of teaching the listening skill. Prior to the use of YouTube videos in the classroom, 69 second-year students who joined English courses rarely accessed the internet to learn English language. With the internet access, the students often accessed the social media. Accordingly, most of these students (78.26%) accessed YouTube for entertainment purpose with only a minority (4.35%) accessed websites that were related to educational materials; 43.48% believed that YouTube was interesting; 46.38% found that the use of YouTube videos was relevant to the subject learned. The study revealed that these students perceived the use of YouTube videos helped them to

improve their level of proficiency in the English language, especially in terms of their speaking and listening skills. They believed that the use of YouTube videos enhanced their knowledge since they can replay the videos. Evidently, the use of YouTube videos potentially improves the learners' speaking and listening skills and expands their vocabularies; provides endless information and authentic learning resources; enhances the analytical and other learning skills; increases participation and motivation of students in the classroom; attracts the students' attention and sparks enjoyment in learning. The use of YouTube videos, which are visually engaging, clearly has an advantage of assisting language learners to improve their language skills, especially listening skill. The use of YouTube videos should be appropriately implemented in the classroom for language learning.

Rafie et al. (2016) assessed the relationship between the cultural intelligence (CQ) and IELTS listening performance among Iranian EFL learners. These 60 advanced learners were between the age of 19 and 24 years and native speakers of Persian. Their major was homogenous in nature. The study involved the IELTS listening test paper and 20-item test paper with four-factor CQ Scale. There were 40 questions in four parts with a number of recorded conversations for the IELTS listening test paper, which recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.912. Each correct item was assigned a score of one. Meanwhile, the test paper of CQ scale involved a five-point Likert scale with a total score of between 41 and 101. It took nearly 10 minutes for the learners to complete the test. The Persian version of CQ items, which recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, was employed in the study to prevent any misunderstanding on the items. The administration of both instruments was managed in two sessions. In the first session, the test served to standardise the proficiency level of the respondents in coding their answer sheet, as they would apply the same code in

the second session. In the second session, the IELTS listening test was administered in the language laboratory. The respondents had to listen to four recorded conversations. After each conversation, they were required to answer a set of questions. The completion of the listening test took nearly 60 minutes. The study demonstrated that effective listeners were aware of their own and others' cultural assumptions and values, intentionally planned for the multicultural settings, and reflected and subsequently modified their mental models. Apart from metacognitive competence, motivational CQ was found related to the listening performance of EFL learners. Besides that, learners with high motivational CQ demonstrate the propensity to demonstrate interest, confidence, and adaptability for cross-culture. In other words, effective listeners are motivated enough to face challenges, difficulties, and welcome social conflicts and contrasts. In an increasingly multicultural world, the enrichment of cultural awareness leads to better performance in the English classroom. The cultural intelligence and conception of listening were strongly related, which may benefit and encourage teachers, researchers, and policymakers to integrate these lessons to increase the EFL learners' cultural intelligence for enhanced listening performance. In other words, cultural awareness delivers more effective communication skills within a foreign context as well as in real life situations.

In short, the problems faced by language listeners are similar around the globe when it comes to listening a second or foreign language. It is crucial that teachers help language learners to recognise these listening skill problems before they can effectively help these learners to deal with these problems. Teachers play a significant role in guiding language learners throughout the process of listening in order to motivate them to gain knowledge on listening and take control of the progress of their listening skill. Focusing on testing the listening comprehension through listening

activities would create anxiousness and adversely affect the development of metacognitive strategies among learners (Vandergrift, 2002). The listening skill in ESL needs to be consciously developed without imposing the threat of evaluation on the learners. Teachers should change their perception of teaching the listening skill and assisting the learners in using monitoring strategies to deal with their incompetence in listening comprehension. The use of metacognitive strategies is believed to guide not only learners to achieve listening comprehension, but also help the teachers to support their students in listening comprehension, which reaffirmed the need for this study to evaluate the impact of metacognitive strategies on the listening performance of ESL learners.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework of the study as well as the concept of metacognition, which provided this study the fundamental underpinning aspects of metacognition and metacognitive strategies. The reviewed studies mainly focused on the areas of listening skill, but studies that focused on the listening skill of Malaysian ESL learners in the case of IELTS listening preparatory course remain scarce. Hence, this study was prompted to evaluate the impact of metacognitive strategies on the listening skill of ESL learners in the IELTS listening preparatory course within the Malaysian context. Addressing the gaps and recommendations of prior studies, the study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Previous studies indicated the positive effect for ESL learners who obtain better listening skill acquisition and also an overall positive feedback. The subsequent chapter describes the methodology used in this study.