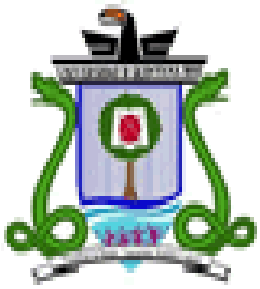

UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

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The use of metacognitive strategies in the listening skill: The case of english language major students at the University of Quintana Roo

TESIS
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ABSTRACT

The development of the listening skill is fundamental in the process of learning a foreign language. It gives students the possibility to reduce confusion and misunderstandings as well as evaluate the information they hear. However, there are many factors that may affect the mastering of this skill; for example, the lack of knowledge about using metacognitive strategies. For that reason, and taking into account my experience as an English language major student, this study aims at demonstrating to what extent English language major students at the University of Quintana Roo make use of metacognitive strategies to develop their listening skill. The results of this investigation would contribute to explain the relevance of these strategies for better proficiency in the listening skill.

The participants in this study were students of the third, fifth, seventh and ninth semesters of the English language major at the University of Quintana Roo, Mexico. The instrument used in this study was a semi-structured questionnaire which was designed considering the four categories of the metacognitive strategies from the study of Vandergrift (1997) and some characteristics of the questionnaire proposed by Dzay (2006) in her listening research introduced at the University of Quintana Roo. The results of this questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS program correlating the four theorized categories of metacognitive strategies with indicator for student's performance. Generalizations were done based on inferential

statistics (t-test, ANOVA and Bonferroni). Moreover, Pearson r was used for simple correlations.

The major findings of this study were that most of the population of the English language major students who participated in this study reported not having received strategy training. In addition, it was noticed that students used more frequently the category of the metacognitive strategies of “planning” and the less frequent category of the metacognitive strategies used by students was “problem identification” and “evaluation”. This may suggest that students have little knowledge about the meaning and utilization of the metacognitive strategies. Another important aspect was that older students used the evaluation category more frequently than younger students. Finally, it was found out that there were not any differences in the use of the metacognitive strategies across the reported levels of English. The findings presented above gave detailed information about the use of metacognitive strategies among English language major students at the University of Quintana Roo; however, further research is required.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and relevance of the study

Listening is a very important skill in learning a foreign language. It is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirements (O´malley & Chamot, 1990).

The mastering of this skill allows students to reduce confusion and misunderstandings and evaluate the information they hear. Despite the importance of the listening skill in learning a foreign language, it was not recognized in the past. One example is the grammar method which was implemented late in the nineteenth century and focused on learning the rules of grammar and their application in translating passages from one language into the other.

It was until 1950 when the Audio-lingual method included the listening skill; however, students only listened to repeat and develop a better pronunciation. Fortunately, beginning in the early 70's, a work performed by Asher, Postovsky, Winitz and, later, Krashen, brought attention to the role of listening as a tool for understanding and a key factor in facilitating language learning.

Talking about the importance of the listening skill in foreign language learners, students whose culture and education includes a strong storytelling and oral communication tradition are generally better at listening comprehension than those from a reading and book-based cultural and educational background. Otherwise, learners whose native language posses the stress and intonation features similar to those of English are likely to have less trouble than the learners whose L1 is based on different rhythms and tones (Underwood, 1989).

Other aspects that make the listening comprehension of a target language difficult is the lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak, not being able to get things repeated, the listener's limited vocabulary, failure to recognize the signals, problems of interpretation, inability to concentrate, established learning habits, irregular pausing, false starts, hesitation, stress and intonation patterns (Flowerdew, 1994).

Taking into account the difficulties that learners face at the time of performing a listening task, it is advisable that they use certain strategies that enable them to reflect on their listening process and learn how to listen. One example are the metacogntive strategies which allow students to analyze the requirements of a listening task, activate the appropriate listening processes required, make suitable predictions, monitor their comprehension and evaluate the success of their approach (Vandergrift, 2003).

Despite the importance of the metacognitive strategies, the knowledge about their use in the listening skill is still vague because attention has been devoted to reading, writing, and speaking. As a result, there has been little research that would clarify the relevance of the use of the metacognitive strategies for a good proficiency in the listening skill.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Knowing that listening is vital to learn a foreign language and that it provides students with input and interaction opportunities, some researcher such as (Engraffia, Graff, Jezuit & Schall, 1999) reported that there are situations in which professors and students of a target language may not emphasize effectively the development of strategies that correspond to the listening skill in an appropriate context. This is also considered as an influencing factor in the mastering of the listening skill.

To the fact that there is not a study related to the use of metacognitive strategies in the listening skill at the University of Quintana Roo, a study was developed to determine if English language major students use these strategies at the time of performing a listening task. Therefore, it is important to mention that the taxonomy of metacognitive strategies proposed by Vandergrift (1997) was used during the realization process of this study. In addition, different definitions of the strategy and metacognition terms presented by some researchers were compared in order to know which of those definitions would be adopted in this study.

1.3 Rationale

Knowing that there is not research related to the use of the metacognitive strategies in the listening skill at the University of Quintana Roo, this study offers important results helpful for teachers, students and educative authorities. Teachers will realize the importance of motivating their students to use the metacognitive strategies at the time of performing a listening task. On the other hand, students will have the facility of using this study to reinforce future investigations related to this topic. Furthermore, the educational authorities could take this information as a reference to conduct more studies related to metacognitive strategies and emphasize the corresponding development in students of the English language programs.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to find out what metacognitive strategies are adopted by EFL students when they listen, what are the least and the most frequently metacognitive strategies used by English language major students in the listening skill, if there is a difference in the use of metacognitive strategies in the listening skill across the reported levels of English, if there is a significant difference in the use of metacognitive strategies between female and male students, if there is a relationship between participant's age and their use of listening metacognitive strategies and if there is a significant difference in the use of listening

metacognitive strategies between students who have received strategy training and those who have not (see pp. 25-28 for further details)

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Definitions of key terms

To date, research in the use of metacognitive strategies is an extensive topic. These strategies can be classified in different ways taking into account the context and knowledge field where they can be applied. For that reason, this investigation topic will be limited to the use of metacognitive strategies in listening skills among students of the English language major at the University of Quintana Roo.

In order to find out a standard meaning and a standard taxonomy of the metacognitive strategies that will be used in this study, an analysis related to these terms will be done. At first, different definitions of the strategy term presented by several researches will be compared, next, the meaning of the metacognition term will be analyzed and finally, some taxonomies and meanings of metacognitive strategies will be studied.

The term strategy has different definitions. It can be defined as actions, plans, skills, techniques and devices. In this analysis reference will be made to some researchers who have proposed different definitions of the strategy term. Some of them say that a strategy is the consequence of a mental process and others say that a strategy can be defined as an action (see table 2.1

Definitions of strategy	
Rubin, J. (1975)	Originally defines strategies as "techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge".
Gagné, R. M. (1977)	Strategies are "skills by means of which learners regulate their own internal processes of attending, learning, remembering and thinking".
Seliger H. (1984)	Seliger claims that strategies are "basic abstract categories of processing" in contrast to tactics, which "evolve to meet the demands of the moment or fluctuate more slowly..."
O'Malley, J., M., Chamot, A., Stwener-Manzanares, G., Kupper, L., and Russo, R. (1985).	Define learning strategies as "any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage retrieval and use of information".
Ellis, R. (1985)	Defines strategies as "plans for controlling the other in which a sequence of operations is to be performed"
Best, J. B. (1986)	Strategies are seen in behavior, but the behavior implies some sort of mental effort. A strategy can therefore be defined as a move, trial or probe designed to effect some change in a problem and provide information by doing so.
Rubin, J. (1987)	"What learners do to learn" as well as "What learners do to regulate their learning"

Table 2.1 Definitions of strategy

According to Rubin (1975) strategies are conceived as techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge. In that way, Gagné (1977) is mentioned in this category by the reason that he assumes strategies as skills by means of which learners regulate their own internal processes of attending, learning, remembering and thinking. It means that Rubin (1975) and Gagné (1977) assume strategies as the result of the internal mental process which

are used to learn something. This same perspective is accepted by Seliger (1984) who expressed that strategies are abstract categories of processing. In addition, Best (1986) suggested that strategies are the consequences of a sort mental effort which help people to look for the best solution to any problem. In short, these researchers agree that strategies are formulated in people's minds and are used to acquire knowledge and solve problems.

There are other researchers who define strategies as actions or plans that people do in order to learn something. For instance, O'Malley, et al. (1985) and Robin (1987) say that strategies are "what learners do to learn" as well as "what they do to regulate their learning". Moreover, Ellis (1985) establishes strategies as "plans for controlling the other in which a sequence of operations is to be performed". In sum, the researchers cited in this paragraph suppose that strategies are all the actions and plans that people perform to learn something.

Metacognition is a term that ought to receive special attention in this research project. This term can be associated to diverse knowledge fields, for that reason the different definitions that are in table 2.2 correspond to the point of view of the researchers whose field of study is related to education and psychology. The contribution of these researchers differs in two different positions. Some of them state that metacognition is just only a mental process necessary to successful learning; nevertheless, others hold that metacognition involves a mental process which is complemented with an active participation of learners.

Definitions of metacognition	
Flavell, J. H. (1979)	He conceptualized metacognition as deliberate, planful and goal-directed mental behaviors that are directed toward accomplishing a task.
Bransford, J. D. (1979)	The concept of metacognition emphasizes that both understanding and learning involve mental process that require active learner participation.
Hunt, M. (1982)	Metacognition is that level of mental activity that observes conscious mental process and alters them to make them more efficient and proficient.
El-Hinidi, A. E. (1997)	Metacognition is the cognitive act of thinking about thinking. Students are required to think about their own thinking as they engage in academic tasks
Hartman, H. J. (1998)	Metacognition is vital because it affects acquisition, comprehension, retention and application of what is learned. Metacognition enables learners to exert control or self-regulation over the thinking and learning processes
Dunslosky, J. & Thiede, K. W. (1998)	Metacognition refers to higher-order mental processes involved in learning such as creating learning plans, using appropriate skills and strategies to solve a problem, making estimates of performance, and calibrating the extent of learning
Lin, X. D., Schwartz, D. L., & Hatano, G. (2005)	Metacognition is a critical ingredient to successful learning.

Table 2.2 Definitions of metacognition

Flavell (1979) conceptualized metacognition as deliberate, planful and goal-directed mental behaviors that are directed toward accomplishing a task, this same perspective is taken by Hunt (1982) who expresses that metacognition is a mental activity that makes possible a mental process which enables people to learn. Inside this perspective Hartman (1998)

establishes that metacognition enables learners to exert control or self-regulation over the thinking and learning processes.

On the other side, Brandsford (1979) offers a more complete meaning of metacognition. It is because he says this term emphasizes that both understanding and learning involve mental process and active learner's participation. In addition, El-Hinidi (1979) establishes that metacognition is thinking about thinking and this process is the result of an academic task which needs to be executed by learners. Furthermore, Dunslosky & Thiede (1998) assume that metacognition refers to higher-order mental processes involved in learning such as creating learning plans, using appropriate skills and strategies to solve a problem, making estimates of performance and calibrating the extent of learning. In short, the contributions of the researchers cited in this paragraph agree that metacognition is a process that helps people to learn something and this process involves a mental process and active learner's participation.

As can be noticed, the meanings of metacognition and strategy terms were analyzed. Nonetheless, it is necessary to know how different researchers conceive the meaning of metacognitive strategies. The present analysis will provide this study with the definitions of the terms that will be used as a standard.

The different definitions presented in the following table agree that the use of metacognitive strategies enable people to be good learners. Likewise, these definitions establish that metacognitive strategies stimulate the internal mental process that allows people to plan learning, monitor those actions that they do in order to learn and evaluate how well they have learned.

Definitions of metacognitive strategies	
Flavell, J. H. (1979)	Metacognitive strategies are specific actions used to achieve one's goals.
Osman, M.E., & Hannafin, M.J (1992)	Metacognitive strategies plan, control, and regulate cognitive processes
Graham, S. (1997)	Metacognitive strategies, that allow students to plan, control, and evaluate their learning, have the most central role to play in improvement of learning.
Anderson, N. J. (2002)	Metacognitive strategies ignite one's thinking and can lead to higher learning and better performance.
O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990).	Metacognitive strategies involve both knowledge about learning and control or evaluation over learning.

Table 2.1 Definitions of metacognitive strategies

The analysis of the different concepts presented above and taking into account the objective of this research, gave the possibility to establish the definition presented by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) as the standard one. These researchers establishes that the use of metacognitive strategies allow people to look for the best way to learn. In other words, people learn to learn and become confident in themselves.

Finally, as part of the review of literature of this study different metacognitive strategies presented by different researchers will be compared and analyzed in the following paragraph.

2.2 Analysis of different taxonomies of metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies is a very extensive topic that can be related to different contexts. For that reason it is necessary to know the different meanings and classifications given to this term in order to analyze them and define which one has a close relationship with the particular purpose of this research.

According to Oxford (1990) strategies are divided in two categories: the direct and the indirect ones. The direct category makes reference to those different physical actions that learners do in order to learn. In other words, it makes reference to the actions that learners do in order to be in contact with the target language. On the other hand, the indirect category is related to that internal process that learners do in order to regulate their own learning. For example, when students decide to learn new vocabulary, or when they decide to use a specific method that allows them to learn. Inside the indirect category there are metacognitive strategies whose taxonomy is as follows: Thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring and evaluating one’s progress.

The scheme presented by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) is very similar to the scheme presented above by Oxford (1990). It indicates that strategies are divided in cognitive and metacognitive. Cognitive strategies consist in being in contact with the material to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically or applying a specific technique to a learning task. On the other hand, metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed. To sum up, cognitive strategies presented by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and the direct strategies presented by Oxford (1990) are very similar. Both encourage learners to do something (certain actions) to be in contact with the target language. In addition, the taxonomies of metacognitive strategies presented by both researches agree it is necessary for students to perform an internal process by which they will develop the ability to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning.

This position was followed by Vandergrift (1997), who motivated by the taxonomies presented by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), proposed four metacogntive strategies that efficiently help enhancing learner´s listening comprehension: First, planning refers to developing an awareness of what needs to be done to accomplish a listening task, developing an appropriate action to overcome difficulties that may interfere with the successful completion of the task. Second, monitoring means that checking, verifying or correcting one´s comprehension or performance in the course of the listening task. Third, evaluation conveys the meaning of checking the outcome of one´s listening comprehension against an internal

measure of completeness and accuracy. Fourth, problem identification refers to identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion.

According to the classification of the language learning strategies presented by Rubin (1987) we can find the cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The cognitive strategies are conceived as operations used in learning or problem-solving that need direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. On the other hand, the metacognitive strategies are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning; the taxonomy is as follow: Planning, prioritizing, setting goals and self-management. In short, the taxonomy of metacognitive strategies suggested by Rubin (1987) is very similar to those taxonomies presented by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Vandergrift (1997). They focus on the same purpose that is to encourage learners to identify and make use of those mental strategies that could help them to learn a target language in an efficient way.

Taking into account the objective of this research and the research questions, the taxonomy presented by Vandergrift (1997) was adopted in order to design the main instrument of this study which is a semi-structured questionnaire.

2.3 Review of previous research related to metacognitive strategies

In this section several studies related to metacognitive strategies will be analyzed. This is done with the intention of finding out how this research area has been developed and how this topic has contributed to this field.

2.3.1 Use of metacognitive strategies to achieve effective learning

The adoption of metacognitive strategies has the potential to help students to get significant knowledge. Furthermore, the frequent use of these strategies enables students to be more confident at the time of learning. For instance, Thompson (2008) in his research called "Metacognition: An Intervention for Academically Unprepared College Students" investigated the effects of embedding instruction in using metacognitive skills across the course curriculum on the performance of students identified as being academically unprepared.

This study took place at a small career school located in Pennsylvania. The participants were 45 students the majority of them were African-American females whose age range was 18 -22. This group of people was divided in two groups: A group that received instruction on how to use metacognitive strategies and a group that received regular course instruction. The instruments used to obtain the results were a pre-test that was applied at the beginning of the course and a post-test that was applied at the end of the course. The results revealed that

metacognitive strategies could be learned by excellent and regular students and by students at risk. In addition, it demonstrated that at the beginning of the course the students at risk did not make use of metacognitive strategies and at the end of the course the use of mentacognitive strategies had increased among this kind of students.

Coutinho (2001) in her research called “Self-Efficacy, Metacognition, and Performance” assessed the relationship between self efficacy and metacognition among college students. The participants were 173 undergraduate students (83 women, 89 men, and 1 unspecified) enrolled in an introductory psychology class at a Midwestern University. Only sophomores, juniors, and seniors were included in this study.

The procedure to collect information consisted in providing the participants a survey that comprised a self-efficacy measure and a metacognition measure. Then, participants were instructed to reflect on their classes when responding to the items in order to provide them with the basis for answering questions regarding their learning techniques and study habits. Finally, the result of this study was calculated by using the GPA (Grade Point Average) technique.

This investigation has shown that students provided with metacognitive training and task based training are likely to improve their performance scores much more than students who receive only task-base training. In addition, this study has demonstrated that metacognitive

training, even if administrated for a short time, can improve performance considerably. Finally, this analysis has showed that the relationship between metacognition and performance was fully mediated by self-efficacy. To sum up, this research suggested that students with effective metacognitive strategies also have a strong belief in their capabilities to successfully perform a task.

Coutinho (2001) and Thompson (2008) agreed that students provided with metacognitive instruction improved their academic performance considerably. On the other hand, it was demonstrated that metacognitive strategies can be learned by successful and unsuccessful students. To conclude, both studies established that students with metacognitive training are able to obtain a significant knowledge and are more confident at the time of learning.

2.3.2 Use of metacognitive and cognitive strategies

The adequate use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies allows learners to acquire significant knowledge. According to O´Malley et al (1985), metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed", whereas cognitive strategies involve "interacting with the material to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically, or applying a specific technique to a learning task". This means that cognitive and metacognitive strategies have a strong relationship in the process of learning.

To comprehend better what was stated previously, Correa, Castro, & Lira (2004) developed a study called “Descriptive Study of the Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies Used by Introductory Students of the Teaching Program at Bio-Bio University” The purpose of this investigation was to determine the cognitive and metacognitive strategies that first year students studying teacher education at Bío-Bío University used in their learning situation.

The approach of this study was quantitative and the procedure to collect data was the application of a learning strategy scales instrument which refers to the acquisition, coding, recovery and processing support of the information (ACRS), based on the authors Sánchez & Gallego (1994). It was applied to twenty students.

The conclusions revealed that there was a high percentage of students that managed metacognitive strategies what was very promising for their cognitive development. These students were gradually using techniques that allowed them to leave the mere memorization and make use of their creativity.

The presented study proved that cognitive and metacognitive strategies had a strong relationship. The use of metacognitive strategies enabled students to develop the cognitive strategies. This means that students who use metacognitive strategies at the time of leaning are more capable of designing and performing certain actions that will help them to get significant knowledge.

2.3.3 Use of metacognitive strategies in listening

The development of the listening skill in foreign language learners is quite important because it provides students with the necessary information to improve other skills such as speaking. As Rost (1994) points out, listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, learning cannot begin. Also according to Bulletin (1984), listening is one of the fundamental language skills. It is a medium through which children, young people and adults gain a large portion of their education, their information and their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values and their appreciation. However, this is a challenging job, firstly because the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intention, retain and interpret this within the immediate as well as larger socio-cultural context of the utterance (Wipf, 1984).

Taking into account the importance and complexity of the listening skill in foreign language learners, many researchers agree that the development of this skill can be effective if students make use of the metacognitive strategies. The frequent use of these strategies will make students high proficient listeners. One example about this is the study presented by Imhof (2000) who agreed that the frequent use of metacognitive strategies enabled students to be confident at the time of listening and to get good results. The main objective of his study was to determine the efficiency of metacognitive strategies in authentic listening situations.

A total of 42 education students participated. All of them were regular attendants of a listening class. Completing self observation tasks and keeping a listening log were part of the course requirements. During class sessions, participants were informed about listening strategies and asked to apply them in two authentic listening situations. They obtained self-observation logs which guided them through the listening situation, collecting comparative data for the perception of listening process in the natural and treatment condition.

Based on the results, some metacognitive strategies such as interest monitoring, asking pre-questions, and elaborative techniques were found to substantially facilitate listening. Listeners reported that they processed the material more open-mindedly and more comprehensibly. They also said that these strategies supported allocating and sustaining attention, intensified understanding, and improved information retention.

In the same way there was another study that proved that the use of metaconitive strategies helped students to have a better performance at the time of listening. The title of this quasi-experimental study was “The Effect of Metacognitive Strategy Training on the Listening Performance of Beginner Students”. It was developed by Coskun (2010) whose main objective was to research the effect of metacognitive strategy training on beginner level students’ English listening performance. This study was developed in an English preparatory school of a Turkish State University. The participants were 40 beginner level students whose age was between 17 and 21. These students were divided in two groups the experimental group that

received five weeks of metacognitive strategy training embedded into a listening course book and the control group that did not receive the metacognitive strategy training.

The instruments used to provide the metacognitive strategy training to the experimental group were the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) and the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). The first one was used with the purpose of developing a lesson plan and a check list that were adapted for each listening task to make sure that during the training course activities (tasks) the professor was following the steps of the model. On the other hand, the MALQ questionnaire was used to discuss with students in reference to each listening task to keep student's metacognitive strategy awareness fresh throughout the training and to help learners to use, identify and develop learning strategies in a systematic way.

In addition, a pre-test and a post-test were applied to the forty students. These tests were taken from the test booklet of the listening course book. The pre-test was applied at the beginning of the five weeks of metacognitive strategy training and the post test was applied at the end of the training course.

The results of the pre-test revealed that both groups were homogeneous in terms of their listening performance at the beginning of the training course. On the other hand, the post-test revealed that the mean of scores of the experimental group were different from the control

group. In other words, the experimental group surpassed the control group in terms of listening performance at the end of the five weeks of metacognitive strategy training.

As can be noticed, the researcher mentioned before agrees that the lack of the use of metacognitive strategies in listening do not allow students to be good listeners. In the same way, the results of this research revealed that students who used metacognitive strategies intensified understanding and improved their ability in information retention. Taking into account the benefits of the use of metacognitive strategies, it would obviously be necessary to incorporate the metacognitive strategies into the curriculum design of the regular listening teaching programs to help students become more effective listeners.

2.3.4 The most frequent metacognitive strategies used by successful and unsuccessful listeners

Chan (2005) conducted a study oriented to determine the metacognitive strategies EFL listeners use when they listen. Also a comparison to state the differences of metacognitive strategies between proficient and less proficient listeners was developed. In this qualitative study there were eight Chinese college students from the Department of Applied Foreign Language at a University of Taiwan. Participants were divided in high proficient listeners and less proficient listeners based on their scores of a listening test (General English Proficiency

Test, GEPT). The data collection was based on the immediate retrospective verbalization, written recall protocol and semi-structured interviewing.

The transcribed data from immediate retrospective verbalization were analyzed based on the four categories of metacognitive strategies from the study of Vandergrift (1997). As for written recall protocol the data were scored taking into account the pausal unit system of Johnson (1970). Finally, a semi-structured interview was based on an interview guide which served as a checklist to ensure that all relevant topics were included.

The results indicated that proficient listeners used more metacognitive listening strategies of “planning”, “monitoring”, and “evaluation” than less proficient listeners. However, less proficient listeners used more metacognitive listening strategies of “problem identification” than proficient listeners did.

On the other hand, Yang (2009) made an investigation into metacognitive strategies employed by English listeners in an EFL setting. In this study, the differences in the use of metacognitive strategies between successful and unsuccessful listeners were analyzed. The subjects chosen for this study consisted of 160 English sophomores with an average age of 20. They were from four classes of a Chinese University and were divided in two groups: The top group classified as successful listeners and the bottom group as unsuccessful listeners. The data was collected in the subjects’ own classroom using the following instruments: The listening section of Test

Majors Grade 4 (2007) which was provided by the National Testing Service of China. The second instrument was a written and self-designed questionnaire with references to the questionnaires of Su (2003), Wen (1996) and O' Malley and Chamot´s classification of Metacognitive strategies (2001). For analysis of the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were used in order to determine: 1) The metacognitive strategies used by the subjects, 2) the differences in the use of metacognitive strategies between successful and unsuccessful listeners.

The results of the study revealed that successful listeners frequently used direct attention, self-management, selective attention, functional planning and evaluation. Unsuccessful listeners regularly applied selective attention and direct attention. This proved that unsuccessful listeners seriously lacked in using metacognitive strategies.

In summary, the comparison between the research results of Yang (2009) and Chan (2005) proves that it is not possible to say exactly which are the most metacognitive strategies frequently used by high and less proficient listeners. This is because each research was conducted by different taxonomies of the metacognitive strategies. However, it was easy to determine that students who use more metacognivie strategies are classified as high proficient listeners.

Taking into account the information of the different research explained above and my experience as an English language major student at the University of Quintana Roo, it seems that listening is a skill that represents a challenge among students of this major in the University of Quintana Roo (UQROO). For that reason, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ-1. What are the metacognitive strategies used by English major students before, during and after listening to texts?

RQ-2. What are the least and the most frequent metacognitive strategies reported by English major students when listening to texts?

RQ-3. Is there a significance difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies across the reported levels of English?

RQ-4- Is there a significant difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies between female and male students?

RQ-5. Is there a relationship between participants' age and their use of listening metacognitive strategies?

RQ-6. Is there a significant difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies between students who have received strategy training and those who have not?

As can be noticed, RQ-1 makes reference to the metacognitive strategies that English language major students use in the listening skill; thus, through the results of this investigation we aim to know what metacognitive strategies are used by students before, during and after listening to texts. RQ-2 and RQ-3 deal with the frequency of use of metacognitive strategies. Through these questions it is pretended to identify the metacognitive strategies that are most or least frequently used by English language major students and how different the metacognitive strategies are applied by the English language major students of different levels. RQ-4 and RQ-5 are concerned with the use of the metacognitive strategies in the genre and age of the participants and it is aimed to find out if there is significant difference in the use of metacognitive strategies among male and female students and how different the metocognitive strategies are applied by English language major students of different ages. Finally, RQ-6 deals with the use of listening metacognitive strategies between students who have received strategy training and those who have not. It is aimed to make a comparison among trained and not trained students.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

The following chapter describes the characteristics of the students who participated in this study. Moreover, it will be described how the instrument used to collect data was developed and how it was applied to the participants. Finally, it will be explained how data were analyzed.

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were students from the third, fifth, seventh and ninth semesters of the English language major at the University of Quintana Roo, Mexico. They were taking the levels that can be observed in table 3.1:

Number of students	Semester	English course
51	Third semester	English II
44	Fifth semester	English IV
30	Seventh semester	English VI
34	Ninth semester	English VIII

Table 3.1 Distribution of students by semester and English course [1]

According to the information taken from the on-line system of the University of Quintana Roo "Portal SAE" in Autumn 2010 semester, there were one-hundred and ninety-six English

[1] For the purpose of this thesis, English courses will be treated as English levels

language major students who took different English language courses. However, it was impossible to apply the instrument to the whole students due to the fact some of them got enrolled in the course and never attended classes. As a consequence, the instrument was applied to one-hundred and fifty-nine students: sixty-one men who represent 38.4 per cent of the population and ninety-eight women who represent the 61.6 per cent. This information is illustrated in figure 3.1.

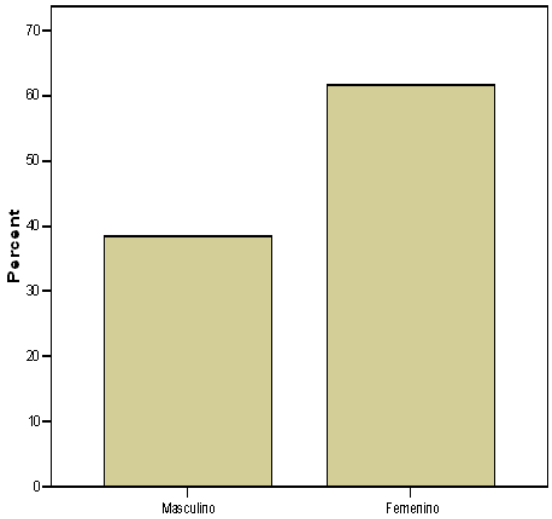

Figure 3.1 Gender

32.1 per cent of the total population took English II, 27.7 per cent took English IV, 18.9 per cent took English VI and 21.4 took English VIII. Figure 3.2 presents the different English language levels.

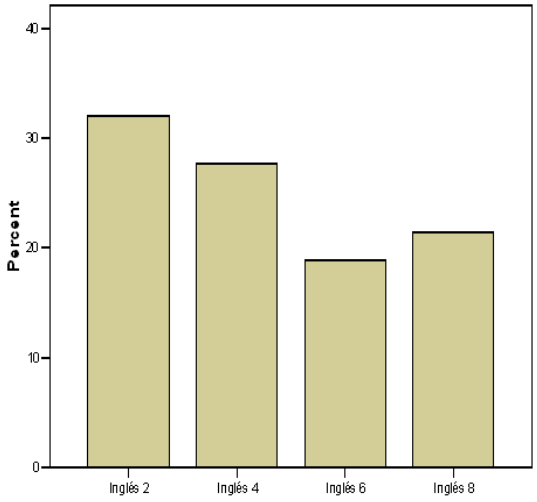

Figure 3.2 English levels

In figure 3.3 it is demonstrated that the average age of the population is 21.9 years old with the exception of six students who were thirty, twenty-nine who were nineteen and two students who were eighteen years old.

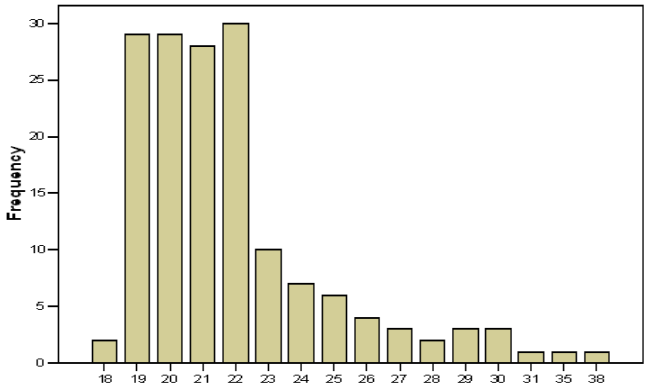

Figure 1.3 Students' age

Referring to the first language it can be observed in figure 3.4 that 97.5 per cent of the students speak Spanish as their mother tongue and 2.5 per cent speak Maya.

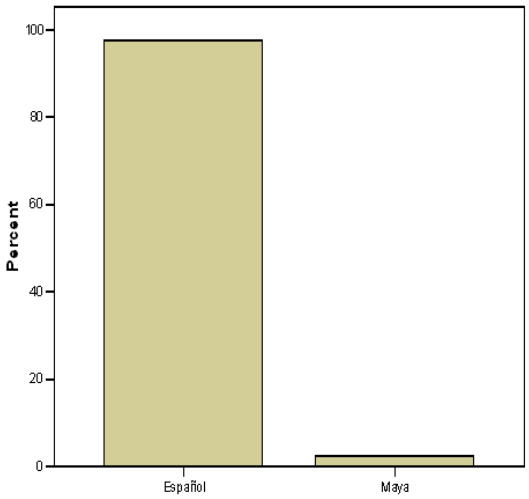

Figure 3.4 First language

In addition, 32.7 per cent of the students reported receiving strategy training and 67.3 reported the contrary. This information is illustrated in figure 3.5.

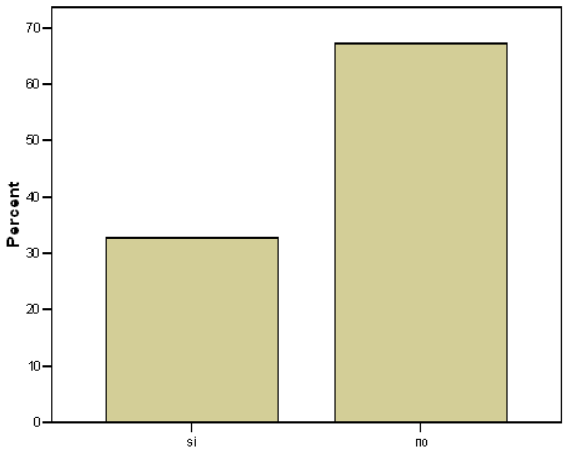

Figure 3.5 Strategy training

In relation with how students feel by learning English as a foreign language, most of the students expressed that they enjoyed learning. Figure 3.6.

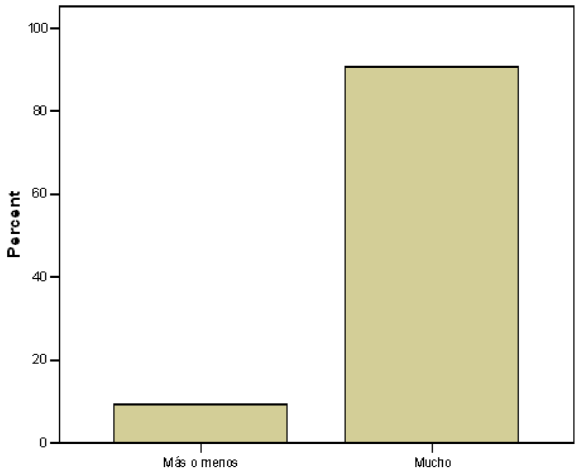

Figure 3.2 Enjoy learning English

The participants in this study were students of the different English language level courses offered at the University of Quintana Roo. A total of one hundred and fifty-nine students participated; sixty-one men and ninety eight women. This indicated that women were more interested the in studying English as a foreign language. Another important aspect was that most of the students were in their twenties which is the average age of regular students who are at the university. Furthermore, it was observed that 32.1 percent of the students were taking English II, 27.7 percent of the participants were taking English IV, 18.9 percent were taking English VI and 21.4 were taking English VIII. Finally, most of the students reported that they had never received strategy training. It would be interesting to further explore the reasons for this result, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

3.2 Instrument

The instrument to collect data was a semi-structured questionnaire and a Likert scale was used. It included the four categories of the metacognitive strategies taken from the study of Vandergrift (1997) and the layout of the questionnaire proposed by Dzay (2006) in her *listening research* conducted at the University of Quintana Roo. This instrument contained thirty eight statements which allow students to report the strategies that they used at the time of doing a listening activity. It contained two sections. Section A which was focused to determine if students make a plan at the time of listening, if students make a monitoring when they listen, if students make an evaluation of their listening performance and if students were able to identify the problems that they faced at the time of listening. Section B was adapted to identify personal information of the students.

The main purpose of this instrument was to find out what metacognitive strategies were adopted by EFL students when they listen, what the least and the most frequently metacognitive strategies were used by English language major students in the listening skill, if there was a difference in the use of metacognitive strategies in the listening skill across the reported levels of English, if there was a significant difference in the use of metacognitive strategies between female and male students, if there was a relationship between participants' age and their use of listening metacognitive strategies and if there was a significant difference

in the use of listening metacognitive strategies between students who had received strategy training and those who had not. [2]

3.2.1 Pilot study

With the purpose of validating the questionnaire, it was applied to twenty six students. These students were taking English at the Language Center of the University of Quintana Roo. Among the aspects that had to be modified there were ones related to the length of the questionnaire. For that reason, an analysis of the items was done and the original instrument that contained forty eight items was reduced to thirty eight. Referring to the instruction section, some modifications were done in order to make it more comprehensible.

3.3 Procedure

What follows is a description about how data was collected step by step. First, the on-line system of the University of Quintana Roo "Portal SAE" was consulted to look for the number of the different English language courses that were offered at the University during the Autumn 2010 semester, the number of students enrolled in each course, the number of the classroom and the name of the professor. During the review of the on line system it was

[2] Students who participated in the pilot study were not considered in the main study.

observed that there were one hundred and ninety six English language major students who were taking different English language courses. In addition, the different hours in which these students took their English classes, were identified. Then, permission was asked of each English language professor to apply the questionnaire in the last fifteen minutes of their classes. Moreover, the professors were asked about the number of students who regularly attended classes.

Finally, I organized my time to apply the questionnaires by myself [3] in order to guide students in the answering of the questionnaires. Referring to the number of the questionnaires it was applied to one hundred and fifty nine students, ninety eight women and sixty one men. The rest of the students were enrolled in the course but never attended classes.

3.4 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data. Generalizations were done based on inferential statistics (t-test, ANOVA and Bonferroni). Moreover, Pearson r was used for simple correlations. What follows is a description of how the data were gathered and then analyzed.

[3] I decided to administer the questionnaire by myself in order to control variables during the application.

At first, it was given a numerical value to each answer of the questionnaire[4]. The answers were codified as follows: The answer *Casi nunca* (almost never) was given the value of 1, the answer *Raras veces* (rarely) was given the value of 2, the answer *Algunas veces* (sometimes) was given the value of 3, the answer *Casi siempre* (almost always) was given the value of 4.

In the part of personal information there were answers that did not get a numerical value. However, in questions that made reference to the level of English it was given a numerical value to each level. It is important to clarify that in the same section, question 35 got (1) if the answer was yes and (2) if the answer was no. Once all the data had been codified, they were initially computed in the Excel program to be exported later in the statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS).

During this chapter, the characteristics of the population who participated in this study and the process done to validate the instrument used to collect data were described. Besides, the methodology followed to apply the instrument to English language major students was presented. Moreover, this chapter contained detailed information about how the data analysis was done and what software was used to relate and compare the information reported by the students.

[4] The items of the questionnaire were classified into strategies used before, during and after listening to texts; this process was validated by the thesis committee.

The main objective and the six research questions which comprise this study were answered through the analysis and the interpretation of the tables and charts that were created by the SPSS program. The explanation and analysis of each variable will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter the results of the analysis of each research question will be described in a detailed way. Different tables were created by using inferential statistics (t-test, ANOVA, Bonferroni and Pearson r) to illustrate the frequency, correlation, and differences in the use of metacognitive strategies among English language major students.

4.1 Research questions

RQ-1. What are the metacognitive strategies used by English major students before, during and after listening to texts?[5]

According to the analysis it was observed that before listening students reported that they used the metacognitive strategies found in table 4.1.

[5] An analysis was done to know what metacognitive strategies should be used before, during and after listening. In addition, the tables that contain the information about the use of the metacognitive strategies reported by the participants were ordered in descending frequencies.

Metacognitive strategies used before listening	N	Media
Trata de tomar una actitud que permita se concentre durante la actividad que va a realizar	159	2.72
Antes de empezar a escuchar, lee cuidadosamente las instrucciones de la actividad a realizar	159	2.70
Antes de escuchar un audio texto en inglés se fija en el titulo	159	2.65
Evita cualquier tipo de distractores para concentrarse solamente en lo que va a escuchar	159	2.64
Se siente con la capacidad de empezar y terminar la actividad	159	2.52
Evita sentimientos apáticos que pudieran interferir durante la actividad a realizar	159	2.31
Antes de escuchar trata de recordar lo que conoce sobre el tema	159	1.91

Table 4.1 Strategies used before listening[6]

The strategies mentioned above correspond to the planning phase, which are the actions that students perform before listening. Inside this category, it was found that students declared to have an attitude that allow them to pay attention and get concentrated during the listening activity that they are going to do. Furthermore, students reported read instructions carefully, pay attention to the title, avoid getting distracted and emphasize their attention in what they were going to listen to.

Referring to the metacognitive strategies that students used at the time of performing a listening task, the following metacognitive strategies mentioned in table 4.2 were reported.

[6] The information of the questionnaire used to collect data was validated by three supervisors.

Strategies used during listening	N	Media
Al escuchar el audio texto hace una revisión para determinar si está cumpliendo con lo que se le ha pedido hacer	159	2.59
Trata de relacionar las palabras que conoce con la intención de determinar o aproximarse a su significado	159	2.57
Durante la ejecución del audio texto verifica que lo comprendido tenga coherencia con lo que se está escuchando	159	2.53
Cuando escucha el titulo se imagina la temática de lo que se trata	159	2.51
Evita abandonar la actividad antes de que esta termine	159	2.35
Relaciona lo que sabe sobre el tema con lo que está escuchando	159	2.35
Mientras escucha identifica si es un relato, una conferencia, una conversación o una descripción	159	2.31
Toma en cuenta ciertas expresiones y sonidos que se producen durante la ejecución del audio texto	159	2.30
Cuando escucha relaciona aspectos específicos como el acento, el tono de voz y palabras clave con la temática de la que se está hablando con la finalidad de comprender mejor	159	2.25
Mientras escucha el audio texto asocia el sonido de las palabras que conoce con el contexto de la conversación	159	2.24
Al escuchar el audio texto, deja de lado los sonidos de ambientación y se enfoca mayormente en la idea principal	159	2.14
Al escuchar el audio texto, parte de su atención la enfoca a los sonidos de ambientación (ruido del contexto) pues considera que eso le ayudará a comprender mejor	159	1.94
Cuando escucha el audio texto relaciona las palabras con algunas características de las personas que están hablando; por ejemplo edad, género, profesión, estado de ánimo etc.	159	1.91
Al escuchar el audio texto toma nota de ciertas palabras para posteriormente relacionar su sonido con otras similares.	159	1.77

Table 4.2 Strategies used during listening

In this phase students informed that at the time of performing the listening skill, they made a review to monitor how they were accomplishing the activity task. In addition, students reported that they related know words with the purpose to infer what the conversation was about. Moreover, students established that at the time of listening the title they tried to imaging the topic of the listening conversation. Furthermore, students reported that they

avoided leaving the listening task before it finished, took into account certain characteristics emitted during the listening such as accent, environmental sounds, if it was a tale, a conversation or a description. Finally, students stated that they focused their attention in the main idea.

Making reference to the metacognitive strategies that students used after listening, the information in table 4.3 was described.

Metacognitive strategies used after listening	N	Media
Al terminar de escuchar el audio texto confirma si logró llevar a cabo la actividad.	159	2.70
Después de escuchar el audio texto puede calificar como fue su desempeño durante la realización de la actividad. Por ejemplo, si fue bueno, regular o malo.	159	2.26
Después de escuchar hace una reflexión para determinar si logró su objetivo de comprensión.	159	2.22
Al final del la actividad identifica cuales fueron sus debilidades al tiempo de la realización de la actividad.	159	2.21
Toma en cuenta los errores cometidos durante la actividad con la intención de buscar posibles soluciones en situaciones similares.	159	2.14
Después de escuchar el audio texto analiza la manera como realizo la actividad.	159	2.05
Al final de la producción del audio texto toma nota sobre aquellos aspectos que no le permitieron realizar un buen trabajo.	159	1.45

Table 4.3 Metacognitive strategies used after listening

In terms of the strategies that students use after doing the listening skill, it was reported that they made a review to confirm if they have accomplished the listening task. In addition,

students stated that at the end of the listening activity they reflected upon and made an evaluation about their performance.

In general terms, students reported that they had used some of the metacognitive strategies before, during and after listening. However, they stated that there were some important strategies that they did not use; such as taking notes about those aspects that did not allow them to conclude successfully the listening task or trying to remember what they knew about the topic before listening. For that reason, it seems to be that students need to receive training in the use of the metacognitive strategies.

As Thompson (2007) in his research called “Metacognition: an Intervention for Academically Unprepared College Students” whose purpose was to investigate the effects of embedding instruction in using metacognitive strategies across the course curriculum on the performance of students identified as at-risk, he found that after six weeks of metacognitive instruction students used more frequently the metacognitive strategies which allowed them to control their own learning process. This result may indicate that students who receive strategy training are able to use certain strategies that could allow them to plan, monitor and evaluate the actions that they perform to get knowledge. On this basis, it can be suggested that metacognitive strategy training can somewhat help students to be more successful in language learning.

RQ-2. What are the least and the most frequently metacognitive strategies reported by English major students when listening to texts?

The answer to this question was approached taking into account two important aspects. At first, it was determined the categories of the metacognitive strategies that students used most and least frequently. Then, each category was analyzed in a detailed way pertaining to the metacognitive strategies that students used when listening to texts.

Table 4.4 describes the reported frequency of the use of the metacognitive strategies by categories. [7]

Categories	N	Mean
Planning	159	2.4422
Monitoring	159	2.2974
Evaluation	159	2.1220
Problem_ID	159	1.9329

Table 4.4 Frequency use of the categories of the metacognitive strategies

As can be noticed the most frequently category of the metacognitive strategies that students reported using was “planning” and the least frequent was “problem identification”. This result may be due to that the majority of the students reported having a positive attitude at the time of starting the listening activity[8]. This result is related to the study of Imhof (2000) who found

[7] The metacognitive strategies used in this table and in the questionnaire were classified according to the work of Vandergrift (2007), who identified four categories: Planning, monitoring, evaluation and problem identification.
[8] See results of question number 10 of the questionnaire used in this study.

that only students who frequently used the metacognitive strategies got good results at the time of listening. Nevertheless, as students rarely used the strategy of problem identification, it would be impossible for them to reflect and look for the solutions that could allow them to improve their performance in the listening skill. This means that English language major students at the University of Quintana Roo should be provided with metacognitive strategy training to be able to use these strategies at the time of performing a listening task. Table 4.5 describes in a detailed way the most frequently metacognitive strategies that students declared to use when listening to texts.

Most common metacognitive strategies used by students	N	Mean
Trata de tomar una actitud que permita se concentre durante la actividad que va a realizar	159	2.72
Antes de empezar a escuchar, lee cuidadosamente las instrucciones de la actividad a realizar	159	2.70
Al terminar de escuchar el audio texto confirma si logró llevar a cabo la actividad	159	2.70
Antes de escuchar un audio texto en inglés se fija en el titulo	159	2.65
Evita cualquier tipo de distractores para concentrarse solamente en lo que voy a escuchar	159	2.64
escuchar el audio texto hace una revisión para determinar si está cumpliendo con lo que se le ha pedido hacer	159	2.59
Trata de relacionar las palabras que conoce con la intención de determinar o aproximarse a su significado	159	2.57
Durante la ejecución del audio texto verifica que lo comprendido tenga coherencia con lo que se está escuchando	159	2.53
Se siente con la capacidad de empezar y terminar la actividad	159	2.52
Cuando escucha el titulo se imagina la temática de lo que se trata	159	2.51

Table 4.5 Most frequently metacognitive strategies used

In table 4.5 it was possible to detect the most common metacognitive strategies that students reported to use at the time of listening. Firstly, students stated that they try to maintain an

attitude that allows them to be concentrated in the listening activity. In addition, they always read instructions, paid attention to the title with the intent to have an idea about what they were going to listen to. Furthermore, students reported that they avoided getting distracted and made a constant monitoring to check if what they had comprehended had a relationship with the listening task activity. Moreover, they reported that they did not quit the activity. On the contrary, they stated that they finished it and waited at the end of the listening activity to confirm if they had carried it out with the demands of the listening activity. This means that participants in this study reported to perform actions that correspond to the monitoring category at the time of listening which is positive because it indicates students discovered by themselves that being in constant monitoring will give them more possibilities to accomplish successfully the listening activity. Please refer to table 4.6 to see in a detailed way the least frequently metacognitive strategies that students mentioned to use at the time of listening.

Metacognitive strategies	N	Mean
Al final de la producción del audio texto toma nota sobre aquellos aspectos que no le permitieron realizar un buen trabajo.	159	1.45
Al escuchar el audio texto toma nota de ciertas palabras para posteriormente relacionar su sonido con otras similares.	159	1.77
Antes de escuchar trata de recordar lo que conoce sobre el tema	159	1.91
Cuando escucha el audio texto relaciona las palabras con algunas características de las personas que están hablando; por ejemplo edad, género, profesión, estado de ánimo etc.	159	1.91
Al escuchar el audio texto, parte de su atención la enfoca a los sonidos de ambientación (ruido del contexto) pues considera que eso le ayudará a comprender mejor	159	1.94
Después de escuchar el audio texto analiza la manera como realizo la actividad	159	2.05
Toma en cuenta los errores cometidos durante la actividad con la intención de buscar posibles soluciones en situaciones similares	159	2.14
Al escuchar el audio texto, deja de lado los sonidos de ambientación y se enfoca mayormente en la idea principal	159	2.14
Al final del la actividad identifica cuales fueron sus debilidades al tiempo de la realización de la actividad	159	2.21

Table 4.6 Least frequently metacognitive strategies reported to use

In table 4.6 students declared not to take into account those aspects that did not allow them to perform satisfactorily in the listening activity. For example, they reported that they did not take notes of the new vocabulary and they did not make an effort to relate known words with the topic of the listening activity. In addition, it was reported that students rarely analyzed their performance in the listening activity which means that students did not have the ability to identify the real problem that did not allow them to accomplish satisfactorily the listening task. Consequently, participants hardly ever look for possible solutions to reinforce their weakness at the time of listening.

As could be observed, students at the University of Quintana Roo, seem not to feel motivated to do extra activities after classes that could help them to improve their listening skill; for example, they declared not to take notes of the new vocabulary which might be interpreted that students do not consider as important the necessity to look for definitions and examples related to the new vocabulary that could be useful for them in the future. In addition, the participants stated that they did not make an analysis about how their performance was during the listening activity which means that they did not seem to consider the reflection as a medium to look for the solutions of the problems found at the time of listening.

Taking into account the information reported above, it was realized that undoubtedly English language major students at the University of Quintana Roo need to develop more metacognitive strategies. For that reason, it is suggested that students should take

Metacognitive strategy training during their first semesters at the university. This would prepare them to have a better control of the knowledge and become more active in overcoming listening difficulties.

RQ-3. Is there a significant difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies across the reported levels of English?

To determine if there was a significant difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies across the reported levels of English, ANOVA and Bonferroni were used. At first, the analysis was done taking as a reference the categories of the metacognitive strategies. The result of the analysis demonstrated that there were not significant statistical differences in the use of listening metacognitive strategies across the reported levels of English. This information differs from the results of some studies where advanced students used more metacognitive strategies than introductory or sophomore students. One example of this was Chan (2005) in his study developed in a department of Applied Foreign Language at the University of Taiwan in which he found that advanced students used more metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

Table 4.7 shows that there was no significant difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies across the reported levels of English.

Categories of the metacognitive strategies	Levels of English	N	Mean
Planning	English 2	51	2.4766
	English 4	44	2.4091
	English 6	30	2.4590
	English 8	34	2.4186
	Total	159	2.4422
Monitoring	English 2	51	2.2997
	English 4	44	2.3117
	English 6	30	2.4238
	English 8	34	2.1639
	Total	159	2.2974
Evaluation	English 2	51	2.1882
	English 4	44	2.1045
	English 6	30	2.1467
	English 8	34	2.0235
	Total	159	2.1220
Problem_ID	English 2	51	1.9281
	English 4	44	1.8864
	English 6	30	1.9778
	English 8	34	1.9608
	Total	159	1.9329

Table 4.7 Use of the metacognitive strategies across the reported levels of English

On the other hand, the statistical analysis done of the different metacognitive strategies helped to determine that there was a significant difference in the use of metacognitve strategies among second and fourth English language level students and among the eight and six English language students.

Stategies	English Level	N	Mean	ANOVA Results
Mientras escucha identifica si es un relato, una conferencia, una conversación o una descripción	English 2	51	2.49	(F=2.805, df=3,155, p=.042)
	English 4	44	2.07	
	English 6	30	2.43	
	English 8	34	2.26	
	Total	159	2.31	

Table 4.8 Differences in the use of the metacognitive strategies

As can be noticed in the table 4.8, students of the second English language level reported that at the time of listening they focused more in identifying what they were going to listen to (if it was a conversation, a tale, a conference, a description or a discourse) than students of the fourth level. This information indicated that students of the second English language level used more frequently the metacognitive strategies than level four English language students (2.49 vs 2.07). In addition, another difference was observed between students of the six and eight English language level. It could be observed that English VI students tend to pay more attention in what they were going to listen to than English VIII students (2.43 vs 2.26). Finally, another difference found was given between English II students and English VIII. It could be observed that English II students focus more their attention in what they are going to listen than English VIII students (2.49 vs 2.26).

RQ-4- Is there a significant difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies between female and male students?

To answer this research question t-tests were used to determine the difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies between female and male students. At first, an analysis was done using the different categories of the metacognitive strategies used by male and female students. See table 4.9.

Group Statistics

Categories of the Metacognitive strategies	Genre	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Planning	Male	61	2.4388	.31789
	Female	98	2.4443	.33385
Monitoring	Male	61	2.2576	.43551
	Female	98	2.3222	.44533
Evaluation	Male	61	2.1311	.45149
	Female	98	2.1163	.52400
Problem_ID	Male	61	1.9071	.68077
	Female	98	1.9490	.72645

Table 4.9 Categories of the metacognitive strategies used by male and female students

The results of this analysis demonstrated that there was not a significant difference in the use of the metacognitive strategies between male and female students. The frequency of the use of metacognitive strategies is the same between male and female students.

Then, an examination was done by analyzing the sub-categories of each metacognitive strategies which revealed that there was a significant difference of (t=2.313, df=157, p=0.22) in the use of the metacognitive strategies. Table 4.10 describes that men reported to feel more confident from beginning to the end of listening activity.

Metacognitive strategy	Genre	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test
Se siente con la capacidad de empezar y terminar la actividad	Male	61	2.67	.569	t=2.417, p=.017
	Female	98	2.43	.689	

Table 4.10 Capacity from beginning to the end of listening activity

According to the result found in which men feel more confident from beginning to the end of the listening activity it is necessary to explain that this result should be treated with caution because it comes from a descriptive investigation. For that reason, it can be suggested that this result may be used for future experimental and qualitative research[9].

[9] However, other researchers have found that men appear to be more worried about the results that they are going to obtain and women express more interest in applying different strategies that could allow them to get a deep knowledge Dapelo (2006). Also, men have reported that they feel prepared to star and conclude a listening g activity. Fuente (2001)

RQ-5. Is there a relationship between participants' age and their use of listening metacognitive strategies?

The analysis done using the categories of the metacognitive strategies indicated that there was a positive correlation between student's age and their use of the metacognitive strategies. The correlation found was (r=.214) in which older students reported using more frequently the evaluation category than younger students. The results are presented in table 4.11.

		Age
Age	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	159
Planning	Pearson Correlation	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.530
	N	159
Monitoring	Pearson Correlation	.118
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.139
	N	159
Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.214(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007
	N	159
Problem Identification	Pearson Correlation	.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.090
	N	159

Table 4.11 Correlation between student's age and their use of the metacognitive strategies

Figure 4.1 illustrates more clearly that older students used more frequently the evaluation category of the metacognitive strategies.

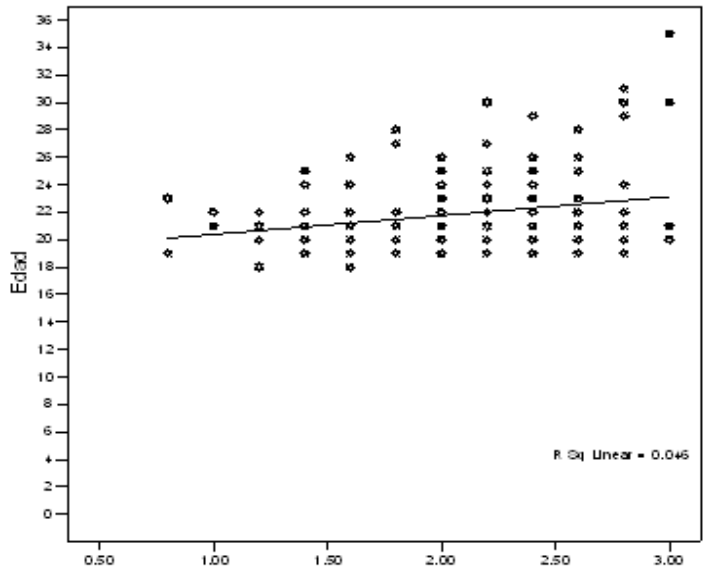

Figure 4.1 Evaluation category used by older students

To determine the answer to this question the use of the sub-categories of the metacognitive strategies (Pearson r) was used. The result was a correlation of (r=.213). In this analysis older students reported making an evaluation of their performance at the time of the listening activity more frequently than younger students. This information can be illustrated through figure 4.2

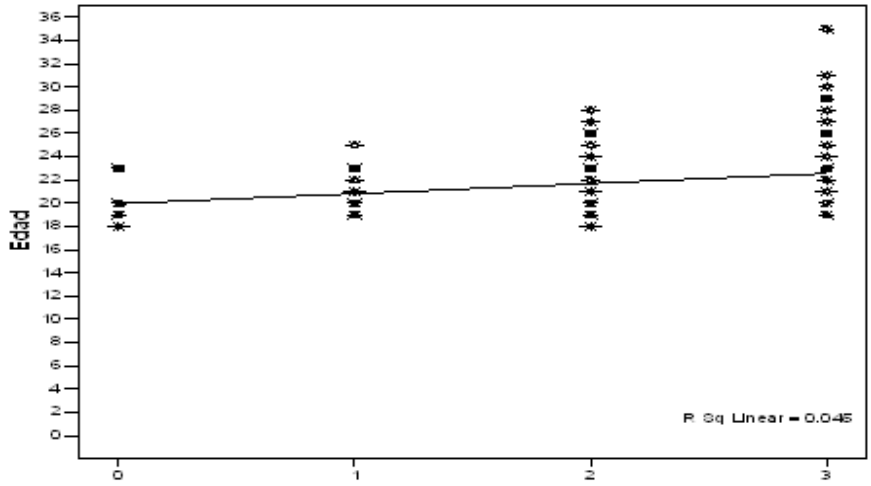

Figure 4.2 At the end of the listening activity can you make and evaluation about how was your performance at the time of listening

According to the information in which older students reported to perform more frequently an evaluation about how their performance was at the time of listening, it could be noticed that there is a relationship between participants' age and their use of listening metacognitive strategies. Older students appear to use more frequently the evaluation category of the metacognitive strategies maybe because they have more experience another important reason could be that metacognition tends to improve with age (Coutiho, 2007). This indicates that older students are more aware on reflecting and evaluating the activities done to obtain significant knowledge.

RQ-6. Is there a significant difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies between students who have received strategy training and those who have not?

To answer this research question t-tests were used to determine the difference in the use of listening metacognitive strategies between students who have received strategy training and those who have not. The results revealed that there was not a notable difference in the use of these strategies between trained and non-trained students which can be appreciated in table 4.12 below.

	Ha recibido entrenamiento formal sobre el uso de estrategias para escuchar en inglés	N	Mean
Planning	Yes	52	2.4793
	No	107	2.4242
Monitoring	Yes	52	2.3242
	No	107	2.2844
Evaluation	Yes	52	2.1115
	No	107	2.1271
Problem Identification	Yes	52	1.9551
	No	107	1.9221

Table 4.12 Difference in the use of the metacognitive strategies between trained and not trained students

The general results of this investigation indicate that most of the students seemed not to be motivated to use the metacognitive strategies at the time of performing a listening task. In addition, it could be observed that the majority of the students reported not having received

metacognitive strategy training which means that this kind of training should be included with more emphasis in the curriculum design of the English language major.

In this chapter, the six research questions formulated were fully described and explained as the main core of this thesis. Several results were discussed and supported with the relevant literature. The most important findings, limitations and suggestions of this study will be presented in the following concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

As it was stated in the introduction the main purpose of this study was to determine if English Language major students at the University of Quintana Roo used the metacognitive strategies at the time of listening. In this chapter a summary of the major findings will be presented; then, some aspects about how this study could benefit students and professors will be described; finally, suggestions to improve the quality of future research related to the use of the metacognitive strategies in the process of learning a foreign language will be presented.

5.1 Summary of major findings

According to the information collected by the questionnaire, it was observed that students at the University of Quintana Roo reported not knowing the meaning and utilization of the metacognitive strategies. This may be due to that most of the population reported not having received strategy training. Furthermore, it was noticed that students used more frequently the category of the metacognitive strategies of “planning” because students reported to read instructions, pay attention to the title, relate known words and avoid resigning from the listening activity; however, it was stated that participants did not take notes of new vocabulary, they did not feel motivated to make an analysis to know how was their performance at the time of listening.

In addition, students reported not to look for possible solutions to reinforce their weakness at the time of listening. This information revealed that the less frequent category of the metacognitive strategies used by students was problem identification and evaluation. This indicates that students at the end of the listening activity do not reflect about how well they used the strategies and what else they could do. According to Anderson (2002) when students are unable to use all of the metacognitive strategies at the time of listening it results complicated for them to reflect through the cycle of learning and judge how well they are using the strategies they have chosen.

Talking about the relationship between participants´ age and their use of the metacognitive strategies, it was reported that older students used more frequently the evaluation category than younger students. This result could be attributed to the fact in which it is stated that metacognition improves with age (Coutiho, 2007). Referring to the significant differences in the use of the metacognitive strategies between students who have received strategy training and those who have not, the results revealed that there were not considerable differences in the use of the metacognitive strategies.

In general, this study revealed that English language major students at the University of Quintana Roo seem not to have developed the competences to use the metacogntive strategies. The results analyzed above reported that students should learn how to plan, monitor, and evaluate a listening task. It can be suggested that students should be motivated by their

professors to identify the problem that did not allow them to perform properly the listening task. Furthermore, it is important to mention that professors and students should receive strategy training with the purpose of developing the metacognitive strategies in their academic and daily life.

5.2 Limitations of the study

The results of this study were relevant; nevertheless, experimental research and qualitative studies are required in order to further explore how students adopt and develop these strategies that they reported to use at the time of listening.

Another limitation of the study was related to the number of the students who answered this questionnaire. It was expected to apply this instrument to the whole population of the English language major but it was not possible because some of students got enrolled in the course and never attended to classes.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

Taking as reference the results of this investigation in which it was found that there was no difference in the use of the metacognitive strategies at the moment of listening between trained and not trained students, it would be of interest for future research of making an analysis of the

different courses that were offered to students who were classified as trained. This is with the objective to know if some of these courses were designed to teach students about the use of the metacognitive strategies and to have reference to say if students really received training about the use of these strategies.

On the other hand, knowing that in this study data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire in which it was detected that planning was the most frequently category of the metacognitive strategies used by students, for a future study, it is suggested to use apart from the questionnaire other methods such as thinking aloud, retrospective verbalization and interviews that could allow students to describe the actions performed at the time of listening.

Having as reference that no studies that investigate about the use of learning strategies at the University of Quintana Roo are dedicated to analyze the use of the metacognitive strategies in the listening skill, it can be suggested that more research needs to be developed in this area. In addition, it would be important to do other studies about the use of the metacognitive strategies in other English language skills such as reading, or writing.

In conclusion, planning, monitoring and evaluating the constant actions that people do for learning is the best way to conceive a significant knowledge (Vandergrift, 2007). For that reason, it is expected that this study could be used as a reference to motivate students, professors and general researchers to investigate more about the benefits of using

metacognitive strategies in the process of learning. I addition, the questionnaire applied to the participants of this study could be used by educators as a previous diagnostic to find out if their students use or not the metacognitive strategies.

5.4 Pedagogical implications

This study is the first one at the University of Quintana Roo attempted to investigate the use of the metacognitive strategies among English language major students in the listening skill. This study could be considered as part of empirical evidence related to the use of metacognitive strategies in the process of learning a foreign language.

Language teachers can benefit from this study. They will find out important information about the advantages of using metacognitive strategies. For example, in this document they will find data about the most and least frequent metacognitive strategies applied by English language major students which can be used as a reference to know more about the actions performed by their students at the moment of listening. In general, professors could use the results of this study to implement different teaching methods with the objective of motivating their students to use metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, the results of this study will probably inspire would-be teachers of English to do more research about the strategies that foreign language major students could use to improve their listening skill.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

USO DE ESTRATEGIAS METACOGNITIVAS EN LA COMPRENSIÓN AUDITIVA

El objetivo de este cuestionario es conocer la manera en como los estudiantes de la licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa llevan a cabo un ejercicio de escuchar en inglés. Es decir que es lo que hacen durante una actividad de comprensión auditiva.

Instrucciones

Lea cuidadosamente las oraciones y escoja una respuesta marcando con ✔ una sobre la línea de la opción que más aplique a lo que hace cuando escucha un audio texto en inglés. Los datos que se obtengan serán utilizados de manera confidencial y solamente para fines investigativos.

1.- Antes de escuchar un audio texto en inglés se fija en el titulo

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

2.- Cuando escucha el titulo se imagina la temática de lo que se trata.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

3.- Antes de escuchar trata de recordar lo que conoce sobre el tema

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

4.- Antes de empezar a escuchar, lee cuidadosamente las instrucciones de la actividad a realizar.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

5.- Evita cualquier tipo de distractores para concentrarse solamente en lo que voy a escuchar

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

6.- Trata de relacionar las palabras que conoce con la intención de determinar o aproximarse a su significado.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

7.- Mientras escucha identifica si es un relato, una conferencia, una conversación o una descripción.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

8.- Cuando escucha relaciona aspectos específicos como el acento, el tono de voz y palabras clave con la temática de la que se está hablando con la finalidad de comprender mejor.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

9.- Toma en cuenta ciertas expresiones y sonidos que se producen durante la ejecución del audio texto.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

10.- Evita sentimientos apáticos que pudieran interferir durante la actividad a realizar.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

11.- Se siente con la capacidad de empezar y terminar la actividad.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

12.- Evita abandonar la actividad antes de que esta termine.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

13.- Trata de tomar una actitud que permita se concentre durante la actividad que va a realizar.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

14.- cuando escucha el audio texto relaciona las palabras con algunas características de las personas que están hablando; por ejemplo edad, género, profesión, estado de ánimo etc.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

15.- Relaciona lo que sabe sobre el tema con lo que esta escuchando.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

16.- Al escuchar el audio texto toma nota de ciertas palabras para posteriormente relacionar su sonido con otras similares.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

17.- Mientras escucha el audio texto asocia el sonido de las palabras que conoce con el contexto de la conversación.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

18.- Durante la ejecución del audio texto verifica que lo comprendido tenga coherencia con lo que se está escuchando.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

19.- Al escuchar el audio texto hace una revisión para determinar si está cumpliendo con lo que se le ha pedido hacer.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

20.- Al terminar de escuchar el audio texto confirma si logró llevar a cabo la actividad.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

21.- Después de escuchar el audio texto analiza la manera como realizo la actividad.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

22.- Después de escuchar hace una reflexión para determinar si logró su objetivo de comprensión.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

23.- Después de escuchar el audio texto puede calificar como fue su desempeño durante la realización de la actividad. Por ejemplo, si fue bueno, regular o malo.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre___

24.- Al escuchar el audio texto, parte de su atención la enfoca a los sonidos de ambientación (ruido del contexto) pues considera que eso le ayudará a comprender mejor.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre___

25.- Al escuchar el audio texto, deja de lado los sonidos de ambientación y se enfoca mayormente en la idea principal.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre___

26.- Al final del la actividad identifica cuales fueron sus debilidades al tiempo de la realización de la actividad.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

27.- Al final de la producción del audio texto toma nota sobre aquellos aspectos que no le permitieron realizar un buen trabajo.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

28.- Toma en cuenta los errores cometidos durante la actividad con la intención de buscar posibles soluciones en situaciones similares.

Casi nunca_____ Raras veces_____ Algunas veces_____ Casi siempre_____

Datos generales

29.-Matricula: _____

30.Edad:_____

31.-Genero: _____

32.- Lengua materna _____e idiomas que habla en casa (si aplica) _____

_____

33.- Tiempo de estudio de la lengua inglesa (en toda la vida): _____ años y meses _____

34.- Nivel de inglés en que se ubica: Inglés I___ Inglés II___ Inglés III___ Inglés IV___ Inglés V___ Inglés VI___ Inglés VII___ Inglés VIII___

35.- Ha recibido entrenamiento formal sobre el uso de estrategias para escuchar en inglés. Si_____ No___

36.- Tipo de curso y cuando:

_____

_____

_____

37.- Disfruta el aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa.

Poco_____ Más o menos_____ Mucho_____

38.- Considera su desempeño en la habilidad de comprensión auditiva:

Deficiente_____ Regular_____ Bueno_____ Excelente_____