

**THE EFFECT OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY
INSTRUCTION ON EFL JORDANIAN
UNDERGRADUATES' ACADEMIC LISTENING**

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiv
ABSTRAK	xvi
ABSTRACT	xviii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background to the Study	4
1.2.1 English Education in Jordanian Schools	4
1.2.2 English Education in Jordanian Universities	6
1.2.3 Background to the Problem of the Study.....	7
1.2.3(a) Academic Listening Anxiety (ALA).....	7
1.2.3(b) Metacognitive Awareness in Academic Listening (MAAL).....	9
1.3 Statement of the Problem	10
1.4 Research Objectives	15
1.5 Research Questions	15
1.6 Research Hypotheses.....	16
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	16
1.8 Definition of Key Terms.....	18
1.9 Limitations of the Present Study	19
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	21
2.0 Introduction.....	21

2.1	Positioning FL Listening	21
2.1.1	The Nature of FL Listening	21
2.1.2	Academic Listening vs. Conversational Listening.....	24
2.1.2(a)	Differences in Terms of Degree	24
2.1.2(b)	Differences in Terms of Nature	25
2.1.2(c)	Differences in Terms of Micro-skills.....	25
2.2	Academic Listening.....	27
2.2.1	Academic Listening Comprehension (ALC)	29
2.2.2	Academic Listening Comprehension Performance (ALCP)	31
2.2.3	Learners' Perspectives towards Academic Listening.....	33
2.3	Academic Listening and FL Anxiety	35
2.3.1	Overview on FL Anxiety	35
2.3.2	FL Anxiety Sources.....	38
2.3.3	Academic Listening Anxiety	39
2.3.4	Academic Listening Anxiety Sources	40
2.3.5	Reduction of FL Anxiety and Academic Listening Anxiety	43
2.3.6	Relationship between Academic Listening Anxiety and Metacognitive Strategies	46
2.3.7	Reduction of Academic Listening Anxiety through Metacognitive Strategy Instruction	47
2.4	Academic Listening and Metacognitive Awareness	49
2.4.1	Metacognitive Awareness.....	49
2.4.1(a)	Metacognitive Experience	51
2.4.1(b)	Metacognitive Knowledge	51
2.4.1(c)	Metacognitive Strategy Use	54
2.4.2	Metacognitive Awareness Role in Academic Listening	57
2.4.3	Metacognitive Strategies	62
2.4.4	Metacognitive Strategies Used in Academic Listening	64

2.5	Teaching Listening	66
2.6	Metacognitive Strategy Instruction (MSI)	70
2.6.1	Overview	70
2.6.2	Metacognitive Strategy Instruction in Academic Listening	71
2.6.3	The Metacognitive Pedagogical Cycle	72
2.6.4	Rationale behind Metacognitive Strategy Instruction in Academic Listening	75
2.6.5	Teachers' Role in Metacognitive Strategy Instruction	76
2.6.6	Related Studies on Metacognitive Strategy Instruction	77
2.7	Theoretical Framework of the Present Study	82
2.7.1	The First Component of the Theoretical Framework	83
2.7.2	The Second Component of the Theoretical Framework	83
2.7.3	The Third Component of the Theoretical Framework	87
2.7.4	The Fourth Component of the Theoretical Framework	88
2.8	Conclusion	91
	CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	92
3.0	Introduction	92
3.1	Research Design	92
3.1.1	Research Variables	93
3.1.2	Quasi-experimental Approach	95
3.1.2(a)	Overview	95
3.1.2(b)	Why Quasi-experimental in the Current Research	96
3.1.3	Mixed-method Design in the Data Collection	96
3.1.3(a)	Overview of Mixed-method Designs	96
3.1.3(b)	Overview of Explanatory Mixed Method Design	98
3.1.3(c)	Mixed Method Design in the Current Research	99
3.2	Mixed Methods Sampling	101
3.2.1	Quantitative Sampling	101

3.2.2	Qualitative Sampling	104
3.3	Research Site.....	106
3.4	Data Collection Procedures	106
3.5	Intervention Programme Procedures	109
3.6	Instruments.....	115
3.6.1	The Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS)	118
3.6.2	The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)	119
3.6.2(a)	Characteristics of the MALQ	119
3.6.2(b)	Use of the MALQ in the Current Study	121
3.6.3	Academic Listening Comprehension Test (ALCT)	122
3.6.3(a)	Characteristics of the Audio Test and Questions.....	122
3.6.3(b)	Use of Academic Listening Comprehension Test (ALCT) in the Study	124
3.6.4	Focus Group Interviews (FGIs)	125
3.6.4(a)	Overview	125
3.6.4(b)	Conducting Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) in the Current Study.....	127
3.6.4(c)	Translation of Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) in the Current Study.....	129
3.7	Validation Procedures and Pilot Studies	130
3.7.1	Self-validation and Expert-judgment	130
3.7.2	Pilot Study One	131
3.7.3	Pilot Study Two	133
3.8	Coding of the Focus Group Interviews	135
3.9	Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis	137
3.10	Validity and Reliability in Mixed Methods Research	144
3.10.1	The Internal Validity of the Dependent Variables' Output	144
3.10.2	Qualitative Validity	144

3.10.3	Qualitative Reliability	146
3.11	Ethical Consideration	147
3.12	Summary.....	148
CHAPTER 4	RESULTS	149
4.0	Introduction.....	149
4.1	Findings and Analysis in Relation to RQ 1	153
4.1.1	Results of the Reliability Test.....	153
4.1.2	Results and Analysis of the QUAN Data	154
4.1.2(a)	The First Quantitative Test on Students' Academic Listening Anxiety.....	155
4.1.2(b)	The Second Quantitative Test on Students' Academic Listening Anxiety.....	156
4.1.2(c)	The Third Quantitative Test on Students' Academic Listening Anxiety (Pretest-posttest Comparison).....	157
4.1.2(d)	The Fourth QUAN Test on Students' Academic Listening Anxiety (Pretest-posttest Comparison).....	158
4.1.2(e)	The Fifth Quantitative Test on Students' Academic Listening Anxiety.....	159
4.1.2(e)(i)	Pre-test Correlation.....	159
4.1.2(e)(ii)	Post-test Correlation	160
4.1.3	Results and Analysis of the Qualitative Data	161
4.1.3(a)	Do the Participants Undergo Academic Listening Anxiety?	161
4.1.3(b)	Students' Perceived Causes of Academic Listening Anxiety.....	163
4.1.3(c)	Students' Perceived Effects of Academic Listening Anxiety	167
4.1.3(d)	Students' Ways of Coping with Academic Listening Anxiety.....	169
4.1.4	Summary of Findings Related to RQ1	171
4.2	Findings and Analysis in Relation to RQ 2	172

4.2.1	Results of the MALQ Reliability Test	172
4.2.2	MALQ Items' Coding	173
4.2.3	Results and Analysis of QUAN Data	175
4.2.3(a)	QUAN Data on the Overall MALQ Scores.....	177
4.2.3(b)	QUAN Data on the Individual Constructs of MALQ ...	179
4.2.4	Results and Analysis of Qualitative Data	183
4.2.4(a)	FGIs' Question Five (Benefits of the Intervention)	183
4.2.4(b)	FGIs' Question Six (Most Useful Strategies).....	188
4.2.5	Summary of Findings Related to RQ2	193
4.3	Findings and Analysis in Relation to RQ 3	193
4.3.1	Results of the ALCT Reliability Test	193
4.3.2	Results and Analysis of the QUAN Data	194
4.3.3	Summary of Findings Related to RQ3	197
4.4	Findings and Analysis in Relation to RQ 4	198
4.4.1	Students' Suggestions.....	198
4.4.2	Students' Perceived Strengths of the Intervention Programme	202
4.4.3	Students' Perceived Drawbacks of the Intervention Programme ...	203
4.4.4	Summary of Findings Related to RQ4	204
4.5	Conclusion	205
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS.....		206
5.0	Introduction.....	206
5.1	Overview of Background, Procedures and Results	207
5.2	Discussion Related to Research Questions	210
5.2.1	First Research Question.....	210
5.2.2	Second Research Question	215
5.2.2(a)	Students' Overall Scores in MALQ	216
5.2.2(b)	Students' Scores on Individual Constructs of MALQ ..	220

5.2.2(c) Summary	224
5.2.3 Third Research Question	226
5.2.4 Fourth Research Question.....	231
5.3 Implications of the Present Study’s Findings	233
5.4 Recommendations for Potential Future Research and Pedagogy	235
5.5 Contribution of this Study	237
5.6 Conclusion	239
REFERENCES	241
APPENDICES	

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 2.1	Sources of Difficulty in Second Language Listening	23
Table 2.2	Categories of Strategies Used When Listening to a FL in Academic Settings	30
Table 2.3	Types of Person Knowledge, Task Knowledge, and Strategic Knowledge in EFL Listening by Goh (1997, P.363).....	59
Table 3.1	Study Variables	94
Table 3.2	Lesson Schedule of the Intervention Sessions	113
Table 3.3	Research Questions with Corresponding Instruments	117
Table 3.4	The Details of the MALQ by Vandergrift et al. (2006).....	120
Table 3.5	Specifications of the ALCT.....	124
Table 3.6	Distribution of Interviewees in Three Groups.....	128
Table 3.7	Research Questions, Mode of Data Collection and Data Analysis.....	138
Table 3.8	Procedures in the Quantitative Data Analysis.....	139
Table 3.9	Procedures in the Qualitative Data Analysis.....	140
Table 3.10	Phases of Thematic Analysis.....	143
Table 3.11	Procedures Carried out to Account for the Reliability Criteria as Suggested by Trochim And Donnelly (2001)	147
Table 4.1	The Results of the FLLAS Reliability Tests (Cronbach Alpha)	154
Table 4.2	The Distribution of the Students as per the Anxiety Level at the Pre-test.....	156
Table 4.3	Distribution of Students According to the ALA Level at Pre and Post-test.....	157
Table 4.4	Result of Paired Samples Test on the Variance between Pre and Post-test FLLAS.....	158
Table 4.5	Mean Scores of MALQ according to ALA Levels at the Pre-test Phase.....	160

Table 4.6	Mean Scores of MALQ according to ALA Levels at the Post-test Phase.....	161
Table 4.7	Interviewees' Views on Causes of ALA.....	164
Table 4.8	Interviewees' Views on Effects of ALA.....	167
Table 4.9	Interviewees' Views on Ways of Coping with ALA.....	169
Table 4.10	The Results of the MALQ Reliability Tests (Cronbach Alpha).....	173
Table 4.11	Constructs of MALQ and their Related Items	174
Table 4.12	The Six Reverse-coded Items in the MALQ.....	174
Table 4.13	Statistical Scores of MALQ Constructs in the Pre and Post-test	179
Table 4.14	Interviewees' Perceived Benefits Regarding the MSI Approach....	184
Table 4.15	Number of Occurrences for Strategies as Being Useful in Students' FGIs	188
Table 4.16	Interviewees' Summarised Answers on FGI's Item 6	189
Table 4.17	Interviewees' Perceived Benefits from Specific Strategies	190
Table 4.18	The Results of the ALCT Reliability Tests (Cronbach Alpha).....	194
Table 4.19	The Individual Participants' Results of the ALCT	196
Table 4.22	Interviewees' Suggestions on the Intervention	199
Table 4.23	Interviewees' Perceived Strengths of the Programme	203

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1	Research Procedure of the Present Study 90
Figure 3.1	Causal Diagram as adapted from Neuman (2000)..... 94
Figure 3.2	Explanatory Design: Follow-up Explanations Model (QUAN emphasised)..... 99
Figure 3.3	The Research Procedure in Explanatory Design (Follow- up Explanations Model) 109
Figure 4.1	Linearity between ALA and MAAL 152
Figure 4.2	Linearity between MAAL and ALCP 152
Figure 5.1	The relationship between ALA and MAAL 214
Figure 5.2	The relationship between MAAL and ALCP 231

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALA	Academic Listening Anxiety
ALC	Academic Listening Comprehension
ALCP	Academic Listening Comprehension Performance
ALCT	Academic Listening Comprehension Test
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FGIs	Focus Group Interviews
FL	Foreign Language
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLLAS	Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale
JMOE	Jordanian Ministry of Education
MSI	Metacognitive Strategy Instruction
L2	Second or Foreign Language
LC	Listening Comprehension
MALL	Metacognitive Awareness of Academic Listening
MALQ	Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire
QUAN	Quantitative
QUAL	Qualitative
RQ1	Research Question 1
RQ2	Research Question 2
RQ3	Research Question 3
RQ4	Research Question 4
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TOT	Training of Trainers

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS)
- Appendix B The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)
- Appendix C Focus-Group Interview Questions
- Appendix D Consent Form (a sample)
- Appendix E The Background Questionnaire (a sample)
- Appendix F Focus Group Interview Protocol
- Appendix G Personal Details and Qualifications of the Experts' Panel
- Appendix H Answer Sheet of the Academic Listening Comprehension Test
- Appendix I Lesson plan of Training the Instructor
- Appendix J Description of the Researcher's TOT Programme
- Appendix K Schedule of the Intervention Programme
- Appendix L A Sample Listening MSI Lesson
- Appendix M A Sample of MSI Material Presented to the Instructor
- Appendix N Coding of Students' Reflections on FGIs' Q2
- Appendix O Coding of Students' Reflections on FGIs' Q3
- Appendix P Coding of Students' Reflections on FGIs' Q4
- Appendix Q Coding of Students' Reflections on FGIs' Q5
- Appendix R Students' Reflections on FGIs' Q6
- Appendix S Students' Reflections on FGIs' Q7
- Appendix T Researcher's Certificate of TOT
- Appendix U Details of NorthStar Units Used in the Intervention Programme
- Appendix V FLLAS Descriptive Statistics at the Pre-test
- Appendix W FLLAS Descriptive Statistics at the Post-test

Appendix X MALQ Descriptive Statistics at the Pre-test

Appendix Y MALQ Descriptive Statistics at the Post-test

**KESAN INSTRUKSI STRATEGI METAKOGNITIF TERHADAP
PENDENGARAN AKADEMIK DALAM KALANGAN MAHASISWA
BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA ASING DI JORDAN**

ABSTRAK

Aktiviti mendengar telah dikenal pasti sebagai satu wahana komunikasi yang penting dalam persekitaran akademik. Walau bagaimanapun, kebolehan mendengar oleh pelajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Asing (Foreign Language (FL) lazimnya tidak diajar melalui instruksi formal dan terserah kepada pelajar sendiri untuk menguasainya. Disebabkan tanggapan ini, pelajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Asing dilaporkan 1) memperoleh skor yang rendah dalam Prestasi Kefahaman Mendengar secara Akademik (Academic Listening Comprehension Performance (ALCP), 2) mengalami tahap Kebimbangan Mendengar secara Akademik yang tinggi (Academic Listening Anxiety (ALA); dan 3) menguasai Kesedaran Metakognitif dalam Pendengaran secara Akademik (Metacognitive Awareness in Academic Listening (MAAL) pada tahap yang rendah. Oleh itu, penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji keterlaksanaan Arahan Strategi Metakognitif (Metacognitive Strategy Instruction (MSI)) untuk 1) menurunkan tahap ALA pelajar; 2) meningkatkan tahap MAAL pelajar; dan seterusnya 3) menambahbaik ALCP pelajar. Secara khusus, satu program intervensi MSI telah dilakukan yang menasarkankan satu kumpulan "intact" yang terdiri daripada 34 orang mahasiswa, kesemuanya perempuan, yang telah mendaftar kursus Mendengar secara Akademik dalam sebuah universiti di Jordan. Program intervensi MSI telah dirancang dan dilaksanakan dalam 9 sesi selama sembilan minggu; dan impaknya dinilai secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Secara kuantitatif, pengkaji menggunakan tiga instrumen iaitu: (1) Skala Kebimbangan

Mendengar dalam Bahasa Asing (Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS)); (2) Soal selidik tentang Kesedaran Metakognitif dalam Pendengaran (Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)); dan (3) Ujian Pemahaman Pendengaran Akademik (ALCT). Ketiga-tiga instrumen ini telah digunakan sebelum dan selepas program intervensi melalui rekabentuk praujian dan pascaujian. Secara kualitatif, pengkaji menggunakan kaedah Temuramah Kumpulan Fokus (Focus Group Interviews (FGIs)) melalui rekabentuk pascaujian. Secara keseluruhan, data yang diperolehi daripada FLLAS, MALQ, ALCT dan FGIs dianalisis dan ditriangulasi untuk menentukan bentuk tema yang terhasil berkaitan ALA, MAAL, ALCP peserta dan kaitannya dengan cadangan peserta tentang MSI dalam kemahiran mendengar secara akademik dan keterlaksanaan berkaitan dengannya. Dapatan daripada kajian menunjukkan keputusan yang positif dan konsisten tentang penggunaan MSI dalam kemahiran pendengaran akademik. Tambahan lagi, 14 orang pelajar yang ditemuduga telah berupaya membentangkan beberapa cadangan untuk dipertimbangkan dalam program MSI yang mungkin berpotensi dilaksanakan pada masa hadapan. Kesimpulannya, penyelidikan ini dianggap penting kerana telah memperlihatkan satu pandangan yang bernilai tentang MSI khususnya dalam konteks universiti di Jordan; dan menyediakan beberapa prinsip untuk melaksanakan program MSI pada masa hadapan. Oleh itu, pelajar, guru dan penggubal kurikulum perlu sedar bahawa kemahiran pendengaran akademik dalam pengajaran FL tidak boleh terus dilihat sebagai satu kemahiran yang pasif; namun sebaliknya, kursus mendengar secara akademik perlu turut melibatkan MSI yang jelas merupakan satu komponen yang penting.

THE EFFECT OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY INSTRUCTION ON EFL JORDANIAN UNDERGRADUATES' ACADEMIC LISTENING

ABSTRACT

Listening has been recognised as an essential tool for communication in academic settings. Successful academic listening, in turn, has been found to be correlated with successful use of listening metacognitive strategies. Nevertheless, many Foreign Language (FL) students were reported to command only a limited repertoire of listening metacognitive strategies. Due to this misapprehension, FL students have been reported to 1) gain low scores in their academic listening comprehension performance (ALCP); 2) experience high levels of academic listening anxiety (ALA); and 3) command low levels of metacognitive awareness in academic listening (MAAL). Therefore, this study investigated the viability of metacognitive strategy instruction (MSI) in 1) decreasing students' ALA; 2) increasing students' MAAL; and thus 3) enhancing students' ALCP. Specifically, an MSI intervention programme targeted 34 Jordanian EFL undergraduates, all of whom were female students registered in an intact group of academic listening course at a Jordanian state university. The MSI intervention programme was planned and implemented with 9 sessions over nine weeks; and its impact was measured quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively speaking, the researcher used three instruments: (1) the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS); (2) the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ); and (3) an Academic Listening Comprehension Test (ALCT); three of which were administered before and after the intervention programme in a pre/post-test design. Qualitatively speaking, in turn, the researcher used post-test Focus Group Interviews (FGIs). On the whole, the data from

the FLLAS, MALQ, ALCT and FGIs were analysed and triangulated for emerging themes related to participants' ALA, MAAL, ALCP, and finally related to participants' suggestions about MSI in academic listening and the viability thereof. These sources of data showed relatively consistent positive results and positive perceptions of MSI. Moreover, the 14 interviewees were able to present a variety of suggestions to be taken into consideration in potential future MSI programmes. Overall, the key findings of the present study suggest that MSI holds promise for more successful listening pedagogy. Therefore, students, teachers, and curriculum designers should be aware that FL listening should not remain to be perceived as a passive skill; instead, academic listening courses should include explicit MSI as an integral component.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Among other languages, English emerged as the predominant medium of communication worldwide and has become a language that is not only used by the native speakers of English language; instead, English is a language that is resorted to by the whole world. As Tassev (2015) points out, English language has been considered as a lingua franca that has removed the barriers among individuals, societies, cultures and nations in the age of globalisation.

According to Crystal (2012, p. 3), some languages such as Arabic, German, and Russian are spoken in many countries; nevertheless, such languages did not achieve a ‘special status’ like that of the English language. Crystal (2012) uses the term ‘special role’ or ‘special status’ throughout his research to refer to a language that is taken up by various countries; for instance, English language is given a ‘special status’ in almost half of the world countries (around 70 countries) such as Ghana, India, Singapore and Vanuata. Such countries give a global language, such as the English language a ‘special role’ among their communities although those countries may have no native speakers of that language. A given language can be given this ‘special role’ in two cases. The first case is when a particular language is employed as an official language of communication in fields such as government, law courts, multi-media, and education. The second case is when a particular language has been given a priority in foreign language teaching of a specific country.

In the Arab World, English language learning has been considered important and prestigious especially after the Second Gulf War (Zughoul, 2003). In Jordan, for instance, English language is the major foreign language widely taught at different educational stages which encompass schools, colleges and universities all over the country (Bani-Khaled, 2013). Moreover, English language is viewed as crucial to the advancement of countries in economic, educational and technological domains (Tahaineh & Daana, 2013). According to Hamdan and Hatab (2009), the importance of English language in Jordan is evident through many manifestations and domains; for instance, English language proficiency has become a precondition for employment for many public and private sector employers in Jordan.

Worth noting is that several studies on the teaching of EFL in Jordan have proved that most of the Jordanian EFL students find it challenging to learn the English language (Abdo & Breen, 2010; Al-Sawalha, 2016). For instance, Al Masri and Al Najar (2014) affirmed that Jordanian schools' students face difficulties in learning English as a foreign language due to different reasons. This could be justified by the fact that Jordanian EFL students generally focus on achieving high grades rather than learning the language itself (Abdo & Breen, 2010). Another justification which is related to the learners' learning strategies was presented by Ababneh (2015) who investigated the deployment of individual learning strategies among Jordanian EFL undergraduates. The respondents were 135 Jordanian EFL learners who studied English language and Translation at a public university i.e., Yarmouk University. The findings of the research suggested that the majority of the respondents were moderate users of the individual learning strategies; specifically, 77.8% claimed to use individual learning strategies only "sometimes".

EFL learners need effective listening comprehension skills in order to obtain access to oral content in their academic classes which are presented in EFL (Carrier, 2003). In addition, listening to EFL merits further investigation because aural input plays a crucial role in mastering a foreign language; it also merits further investigation because- compared with the remaining language skills- there are fewer insights about the listening comprehension process and about the way it is learnt (Goh, 1997). In the worldwide academic context, listening to English language is a skill that is often seen as a source of frustration for a large number of EFL learners (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). Furthermore, it is evident that EFL students encounter challenges in Academic Listening Comprehension Performance (ALCP) more than in the remaining academic English language skills such as academic reading, and academic speaking (Vandergrift, 2004). Those challenges can be justified, among other reasons, based on the fact that academic listening is usually left to learners themselves to learn how to listen. Therefore, academic listening has been referred to as the least well taught skill (Amin, Aly, & Amin, 2011; Vandergrift, 2004).

Furthermore, many variables were suggested to have either a positive or a negative correlation with ALCP. The current study, thus, addresses two variables argued to correlate with ALCP. These two variables are Academic Listening Anxiety (ALA) and Metacognitive Awareness in Academic Listening (MAAL). ALA in this study refers to the anxiety of university students during listening to EFL; MAAL, in turn, refers to listeners' awareness of strategies used in the process of listening to the language input.

1.2 Background to the Study

1.2.1 English Education in Jordanian Schools

Education in developing countries, including Jordan and Arab countries, is suffering from a crisis for a variety of reasons. These reasons include structural reform policies, political instability, unemployment among the young people, and a brain drain. In the case of Jordan, it is one of the smallest economic powers in the Middle East region; consequently, approximately 15% of the population are reported to live below the poverty line. To improve its economy, Jordan depends on hiring highly skilled workers to work in industrial sectors (Alsheleh, 2016). Consistent with these efforts, the Jordanian Ministry of Education (JMOE) became aware that advancement of the population can be achieved through professional development of teachers and higher education of students as a basic step to prepare Jordan to interact with future world economic powers that are knowledge-based. Similarly, the JMOE has deemed the acquisition of English by Jordanian students as crucial to economic and educational advancement in Jordan (Samak & Tawfik, 2006).

English language was the first foreign language to be instructed to students in Jordan (Drbseh, 2013). According to Hamdan & Hatab (2009), teaching English as a foreign language in Jordan dates back to the early 1920s with the foundation of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan (the name of Jordan before its independence from the British colonisation). To start teaching English language in Jordan, Alsheleh (2016) states that Jordan depended on a few of international establishments (such as the United States Agency for International Development).

English language was taught only in a limited number of schools, introduced to students in just one hour per week, and taught by teachers of other subjects because there were no teachers of English language in Jordan. Nowadays, English language is taught in Jordan by English language professionals, which means that only English language major graduates are allowed to teach English language at the public schools. The number of English language teachers increased from about 22 teachers in 1962 to thousands of teachers in 2013 (Drbseh, 2013).

In 1999, according to Alsheleh (2016), teaching English as a foreign language in Jordan was mandated by royal decree to start at all private and public schools beginning from first grade (at the early age of six). Since then, the English language curriculum that is taught at the Jordanian public schools has been called Action Pack. Action Pack series was recommended and chosen by the Committee for Curriculum and School Textbooks through conferences of education development held in the country (Al-Ghazo & Smadi, 2013). Action Pack curriculum is accredited by the JMOE to be presented to students at all the Jordanian public schools from Grade One till Grade Twelve. Action Pack focuses mainly on English language grammar, vocabulary, and functional language practice (Al-Ghazo & Smadi, 2013).

Furthermore, as Drbseh (2013) argues, the general policy adopted by Jordanian decision makers and educationalists is to assign considerable efforts to teaching English language in the Kingdom of Jordan at the school and university level. Al Masri and Al Najjar (2014), for instance, affirm that the acquisition of English language itself is seen by the JMOE as crucial to the economic and educational enhancement in the country. Ultimately, the unique position of English language at the Jordanian

schools has led to a wider spread at the University level; on the account that schoolteachers in Jordan must be holders of a university degree.

1.2.2 English Education in Jordanian Universities

Higher education in Jordan started in the 1960s with the first public university in the Country; namely, University of Jordan. By the year 1990, the first private university in the country was established. Nowadays, higher education in Jordan offers fifty-nine different programmes at the undergraduate level, twenty-two doctoral programmes and sixty-one master's programmes all in more than nine different faculties. Moreover, higher education in Jordan affords fifty-nine international programmes for the undergraduate students, and sixty-one for the graduate students in different faculties. In Jordan, the overall number of students is more than 1.5 million students at both school and university levels, with a ratio of over one third of the population (Alsheleh, 2016).

At the tertiary education level, English language is widely taught at the Jordanian universities. The first department of English Language was established in 1962 at the University of Jordan. Since then, English language has been officially recognised as the medium of instruction in all of the science and medical faculties (Hamdan & Hatab, 2009). In 1985, the number of English language departments in Jordan reached 3. Nowadays, all of the 11 state universities and 17 private universities include a Department of English Language per se, and some of those departments offer postgraduate programmes in Translation, Linguistics, Literature, and Teaching of English as a Second Language (Alsheleh, 2016).

As Hamdan and Hatab (2009) reiterate, all the universities in Jordan demand all students of all schools to pass two general advanced courses of English language as a condition for graduation of the undergraduates. These two courses focus mainly on communication skills and English language grammar. In addition, every applicant for a postgraduate programme must have an English language proficiency qualification (e.g. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Jordan's National Test of English Language) depending on the faculty applied to. In brief, these facts explain the increasing value of English language at the Jordanian universities' context.

1.2.3 Background to the Problem of the Study

Jordanian undergraduates have been reported to find various difficulties when engaged in courses that are taught in English language (Bani-Khaled, 2013). Specifically, the current study addresses Jordanian undergraduates' difficulties which are related to listening in EFL; and addresses an approach which is argued to overcome these difficulties. The first difficulty addressed is that Jordanian undergraduates undergo ALA (Al-Qudah, 2007). The second difficulty is that Jordanian undergraduates are reported to have a poor level of MAAL (Al-Jamal, 2007). The third difficulty, consequently, is that Jordanian undergraduates achieve low scores in their ALCP (Obeidat & Abu-Melhim, 2008). These three difficulties are detailed below.

1.2.3(a) Academic Listening Anxiety (ALA)

There exists a kind of consensus among EFL researchers (Aida, 1994; Gorji, Rezaei, Aminbeidokhti, & Mohammadyfar, 2017; MacIntyre, 1995) that anxious students' performance is not as high as less anxious students' performance in Foreign

Language (FL) skills. Moreover, MacIntyre, Noels, and Clément (1997) contend that Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) can be a serious problem, as apprehensive students usually underestimate their FL abilities. Consequently, apprehensive students usually avoid participation, avoid making guesses, and skip FL classes.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that FL anxiety can have a facilitating function in the language learning processes (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Rezaabadi, 2017). Specifically, several studies found positive relationships between FL anxiety and second or foreign language achievement (Chang, 2010; Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977). Chang (2010, p. 362) refers to this kind of anxiety as ‘a facilitative anxiety’ or ‘attention’; and argues that anxiety involves a kind of tension which is needed to create the motivation to learn.

Instead of measuring overall anxiety in a FL, Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) argue that it is rational to go in depth and measure anxiety in specific skills. This procedure helps find which skill is more anxiety provoking and helps relate the skill to its respective task performance. In the EFL literature, foreign language learning anxiety is argued to have three components: anxiety related to performance tests, related to fear of negative evaluation and the last component is related to communication apprehension; listening apprehension, in turn, is a part of communication apprehension (Atashneh & Izadi, 2012). The term of listening anxiety, as X. Zhang (2013) argues, refers to FL anxiety that is particularly connected with FL listening situations. In the same vein, students with FL listening anxiety are usually reported to have low proficiency in listening to the given FL. Therefore, many researchers like X. Zhang (2013) argue that FL listening anxiety needs to be taken into account and treated in order for FL listeners to reach the maximum comprehension

possible. Section 2.3.5 in the next chapter cites various approaches on alleviating FL listening anxiety as proposed in the literature.

1.2.3(b) Metacognitive Awareness in Academic Listening (MAAL)

Listening comprehension is seen as a challenge for both EFL students and EFL teachers. Such feeling may result in frustration, low performance in listening, or inadequate attention paid in the classroom. These deficiencies, as Lynch (2011) contend, can emerge as a result of the complex nature of a FL listening. One suggested method to decrease the complexity of listening comprehension for FL listeners is to make use of metacognitive strategy instruction (MSI) as a strategy-based approach; this approach is believed to increase students' MAAL and thus facilitate and transform the process of FL listening comprehension (Goh, 2008). By this approach, instructors can increase students' awareness of the need to deploy metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluation (Goh, 2000, 2002; Vandergrift, 2004).

In other words, MSI not only has the ability to enhance the listening performance of FL learners, but also assists instructors to reconsider the way listening skill should be taught in the classroom. This can be accomplished, as Goh (2008) maintains, by paying attention to the listening process more than to the listening product. This, in turn, helps FL students have a deeper perception of the FL listening demands and the listening process; and helps FL students learn how to regulate their own listening comprehension. This proposed approach, however, is still inadequately employed in most FL classrooms, particularly in the EFL context in Jordan.

1.2.3(c) Academic Listening Comprehension Performance (ALCP)

Recently, researchers have begun to explore the impact of MAAL on FL learners' Listening Comprehension (LC). Some of those researchers such as Maftoon and Alamdari (2016) found that students' listening comprehension varies in part due to their level of MAAL. Such studies concluded that EFL learners are supposed to demonstrate a high benchmark of MAAL in order for the learners to perform better in listening tasks (Amin et al., 2011). As Vandergrift and Goh (2009) argue, using questionnaires and strategy-oriented discussions can heighten FL learners' MAAL and thus indirectly improve their listening performance.

A part of the current study, therefore, is dedicated to affirming the hypothesis that MAAL has a positive correlation with students' ALCP. Another part of the current study is dedicated to affirming the hypothesis that MAAL has a negative correlation with students' ALA.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The inadequate academic listening ability of university students can hinder their success and progress in their courses of English as a FL, and thus can affect their academic achievement (Gorji, et al., 2017; Jeon, 2007; Saito & Samimy, 1996). This in turn may have a negative effect on their future postgraduate studies and future careers as well.

In the FL learning literature, FL listening has received less adequate research investigation than the remaining three language skills: reading, writing and speaking

(Guan, 2014; Manjet, Pandian, & Kaur, 2015; Vandergrift & Goh, 2009, 2012). This can be justified by the argument that listening is problematic and to the argument that it is usually an intangible and a non-observable product (C. Liu, 2009; Manjet, Pandian & Kaur, 2015; Siegel, 2013). This means, for instance, that even when ESL students nod their heads at their teachers, this action does not necessarily mean that they understand as much information as it might appear (C. Liu, 2009). Another reason for having only few studies on FL listening is that listening was considered by many researchers as a passive language skill that is acquired indirectly with time through repeating and practising listening; therefore, some researchers believe that there is no need to explicitly teach FL listening (Chou, 2016; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Guan, 2014; Kaur, 2014; Rost, 2013; Vandergrift & Goh, 2009).

In the Jordanian universities' context, teaching the listening skill is left with a secondary importance when compared to the remaining language skills such as speaking. For instance, university students are usually evaluated based on written tests rather than oral tests; an approach that has left EFL learners in Jordan weak in their academic listening skills (Abdo & Breen, 2010; Al-Jamal, 2007; Al-Qudah, 2007).

Furthermore, lecturers of EFL listening courses in Jordan do not explicitly instruct students on how they should listen; rather, those listening courses tend to be only for assessing students' listening comprehension performance (Al-Qudah, 2007). Therefore, Jordanian undergraduate students find it difficult to comprehend EFL in academic context; and most of them have no experience or background on how to comprehend texts spoken in English language (Al-Jamal, 2007; Hmeidan, 2018). It is worth noting that, according to Mendelsohn (2006), a distinction has to be made at the

practical level between teaching listening and testing listening, otherwise, students would find it challenging to figure out how to listen effectively.

A few factors are proven worldwide to impact ALCP; those factors have to do with the text, the speaker, and the listener (Lynch, 2011). ALA and MAAL are among the listener-related factors which are not highlighted in the Jordanian literature about ALCP (Al-Jamal, 2007). According to Vandergrift & Goh (2012), the low level of MAAL means less awareness among FL students about the impact of using metacognitive strategies on ALCP. Moreover, there is a causal relationship between ALA, MAAL and ALCP (Golchi, 2012), but there have been no scholars to date in Jordan who took into consideration this relationship in their EFL listening research especially in the genre of academic listening. Few scholars have addressed this relationship only through correlational studies, not through causative arguments. Consequently, the present study aims to investigate this lacuna in the literature.

The low level of metacognitive awareness during the handling of different genres of listening to foreign languages has been proven to negatively impact students' overall ALCP (Vandergrift, 2004). Al-Alwan, Asassfeh, and Al-Shboul (2013) maintain that students' MAAL is not incorporated as an essential part in academic listening courses and tasks at the Jordanian universities. Therefore, the Jordanian undergraduates are not aware and do not know how to approach academic listening tasks such as listening to lectures (Al-Jamal, 2007).

Jordanian undergraduates find it difficult to comprehend speech delivered in English language by their instructors who speak English as a FL. In addition, they also find it difficult to comprehend tape-recorded speech delivered by native speakers of

English language. This fact has been affirmed by a few researchers at certain Jordanian universities (Al-Alwan et al., 2013; Al-Jamal, 2007; Al-Qudah, 2007; Khuwaileh, 1999). In this vein, none of the previous Jordanian studies on academic listening adopted an intervention programme to guide learners how to deploy metacognitive strategies (an aspect of the metacognitive awareness) in their ALCP; a gap which this study aims to address.

According to Foss and Reitzel (1988), ALA can clearly impede the comprehension of spoken texts. Moreover, some scholars such as Chang (2010) found that there is a negative correlation between FL listening anxiety and the listening comprehension level of FL learners. In addition, X. Zhang (2013) found that FL listening anxiety has the ability to influence FL learners' listening performance. In the Jordanian context, Jordanian undergraduates are not aware about how to overcome their anxiety when confronted with academic listening input delivered in English language (Al-Jamal, 2007). Therefore, this kind of anxiety should be treated in order for EFL learners to reach a better level of comprehension. Nevertheless, based on literature search conducted, it can be concluded that no researchers ever have documented any attempts (i.e. intervention programmes) to alleviate the ALA of Jordanian undergraduates.

The avoidance of learning English language shows that EFL learners undergo anxiety towards the language (MacIntyre et al., 1997). In the Jordanian context, in a study carried out by Malkawi (2010), 50% of respondents did not want to learn English language because they think it is difficult. Moreover, in a research carried out by Zreagat (2012), the researcher concluded that 70.62% of Jordanian EFL university students experience FL classroom anxiety. However, Malkawi (2010) and Zreagat

(2012) did not provide sufficient consideration to the impact of anxiety on individual EFL skills such as EFL listening. Therefore, it seems reasonable to target individual skills, to target different populations like other public universities, to use different data collection instruments, and to find links between the results and different variables such as metacognitive awareness, as this variety might lead to deeper and richer results.

Moreover, in a study by Al-Qudah (2007), university students reported 53 barriers to effective listening to lectures among which anxiety and stress were ranked 13th. A study by Al-Sawalha (2016) is the sole research conducted on ALA in Jordan. It was conducted at a Jordanian private university among third year undergraduate students, and the aim was to measure the participants' ALA and investigate students' perceived methods of reducing their level of ALA. However, the study's analysis could not demonstrate a connection between academic listening tests' scores and students' level of ALA, and could not find significant differences in students' ALCP based on their level of ALA. Moreover, the study's limitation did not consider an intervention programme to decrease students' ALA.

Students' ALA can contribute to making students' attention prone to distraction and consequently can affect the overall ALCP; this is justified by the fact that anxiety can make students underestimate their competence and self-confidence (Arnold, 2000; Graham & Santos, 2015; Vogely, 1998). Furthermore, listening anxiety was argued to affect the kind, range and number of strategies that are deemed crucial to the listening tasks (Goh, 2002; Golchi, 2012; M. Liu & Thondhlana, 2015). As a result, if ALA is not addressed it would have negative effects on EFL learners' MAAL and ALCP.

To reiterate, EFL students might perform well in their personal communicative skills; but perform poorly in academic listening tasks (C. Liu, 2009). In the case of Jordan, undergraduates were claimed to be unable to fully comprehend speech delivered in English language, to have a high level of ALA, and to have a low level of MAAL. Therefore, this research is an attempt to investigate in more depth Jordanian undergraduates' difficulties in academic listening tasks.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the present research are intended to:

- (1) examine the effect of MSI on Jordanian undergraduates' EFL academic listening anxiety.
- (2) determine the effect of MSI on Jordanian undergraduates' metacognitive awareness in EFL academic listening.
- (3) determine the effect of MSI on Jordanian undergraduates' EFL academic listening comprehension performance.
- (4) investigate the respondents' perceptions of the intervention programme to be considered when creating a guideline on MSI for EFL academic listening.

1.5 Research Questions

- (1) To what extent does MSI affect Jordanian undergraduates' anxiety over EFL academic listening?
- (2) To what extent does MSI affect Jordanian undergraduates' metacognitive awareness in EFL academic listening?

- (3) To what extent does MSI affect Jordanian undergraduates' EFL academic listening comprehension performance?
- (4) What are the respondents' perceptions of the intervention programme that can be taken into consideration when creating a guideline on MSI for EFL academic listening?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

- (1) MSI sessions embedded in academic listening tasks can alleviate Jordanian undergraduates' ALA.
- (2) MSI sessions embedded in academic listening tasks can promote Jordanian undergraduates' MAAL.
- (3) MSI sessions embedded in academic listening tasks can enhance Jordanian undergraduates' ALCP.
- (4) MSI sessions embedded in academic listening tasks can promote Jordanian undergraduates' ability to reflect on their experiences in ALC and on metacognitive strategy use.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study aims at increasing the awareness about the significance of MSI in 1) mitigating EFL academic listening anxiety, 2) raising metacognitive awareness in academic listening, and 3) improving academic listening comprehension performance. Specifically, the study can help university students realise the usefulness of metacognitive strategies in their ALCP. Moreover, the study will increase student's awareness about the impact of ALA on the ALCP; thereby, they will try to overcome such kind of anxiety to reach an optimal comprehension of their academic listening

tasks. Ultimately, such results can help cultivate strategic listeners and autonomous learners.

Furthermore, lecturers in the Jordanian higher education can benefit from the study by reconsidering the pedagogy they use in teaching academic listening. Specifically, academic listening lecturers may approach academic listening skill as a skill to be learnt, rather than a skill only to be tested, and therefore as an interactive skill rather than merely a passive skill. As a result, it is hoped that this study will be able to change the method by which lecturers and undergraduates would approach EFL academic listening courses and tasks.

The findings of the study can also yield significant implications and insightful suggestions to curriculum developers and syllabus designers in the Jordanian Higher Education. Specifically, the study can be a useful reference in developing and selecting academic materials which incorporate strategic listening in a way that develops and facilitates students' ALCP in EFL. This is especially valuable when we come to recognise that successful academic listening leads to successful academic education (Caplan & Stevens, 2017).

Above all, this study aims at designing a guideline for conducting MSI which may be able to guide similar future studies. This guideline will be particularly useful as it will be based on an empirically tested programme; and therefore, the guideline will have a degree of reliability. Therefore, it is supposed to save effort and time of EFL lecturers and researchers when teaching metacognitive strategies that are necessary at the level of university education.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

This section outlines the definitions of terms used throughout the study.

1.8.1 Metacognitive strategies- "specific procedures or actions to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-regulated, more effective, or more transferable to new situations" (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 89).

1.8.2 Metacognitive strategy instruction in listening- teaching listening through a sequence of activities that encourage the strategies of planning, monitoring, evaluating, and avoiding mental translation (Goh & Taib, 2006; Vandergrift, 2006).

1.8.3 Metacognitive awareness- "planning and consciously executing appropriate actions to achieve a particular goal" (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001, p. 432). As it concerns listening, it is listeners' awareness of the main types of metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring and evaluation) used in the process of listening to the language input (adapted from Goh & Taib, 2006).

1.8.4 Academic listening- listening to academic and communicative content that occurs during language proficiency courses and skill-based courses presented to university students in English as a FL, "usually involving the integration of listening with content learning, classroom interaction, note-taking, discussion with peers, reports and presentations, and test-taking" (adapted from Rost, 2013, p. 311).

1.8.5 Academic Listening anxiety- a state of nervousness and fear that accompanies academic listening tasks. This state is believed to lead to poor performance by wasting energy that should be used for processing the task at hand (Xu, 2011).

1.8.6 Academic Listening Comprehension (ALC)- a process that requires a university student to use strategies available to him/her in order to understand what is said by a speaker during an academic task. This term is adapted from previous studies conducted by Graham and Santos (2015) and Mubenga (1988).

1.8.7 Academic Listening Comprehension Performance (ALCP)- a process in which university students have to demonstrate (on a listening comprehension task) their practical command of acquired skills that are required in Academic Listening Comprehension. This definition is adapted from McNamara (1996).

1.8.8 English as a Foreign Language (EFL)- the status of English language in Jordan as being used in limited contexts, and not spoken or used in the daily life communication of Jordanians (Zreagat, 2012).

1.8.9 Jordanian Undergraduates- Non-native speakers of English language from Jordan, who have completed their high school education in Jordan or other Arab countries, and are enrolled as first-degree students in different programmes in the Arts and Science faculties at the research site university (Zreagat, 2012).

1.9 Limitations of the Present Study

A variety of precautions were taken before gathering the data in this study. Nevertheless, the findings of the current research should be understood as only suggestive of trends and patterns; due to the limitations of the present research, and due to the human limited abilities inherent to reporting the covert processes underlying FL listening comprehension. Thus, although the present research empirically supported the usefulness of MSI in EFL academic listening classes, the results cannot

be generalised to all FL learners from different contexts and cultural backgrounds. Specifically, the present research has a number of limitations which are discussed below.

First, the participants in this study were university students; therefore, the results cannot be generalised to school students. Second, for opportunistic reasons, all the participants had single gender (female). Specifically, the researcher had met the course instructor far before the beginning of the semester; and thereby neither the researcher nor the instructor could identify the number or gender of the registered students in the targeted section. Another limitation is that, for availability reasons (see QUAN Sampling section 3.2.1), the participants were not selected based on listening proficiency level; rather, they were heterogeneous in terms of their listening proficiency level. The final limitation of the study is that although the efficiency of MSI was measured with a post-test conducted immediately after the intervention, the researcher failed to conduct a delayed post-test. Thus, there is no evidence that the usefulness of the intervention would have been long-term.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The present chapter reviews the literature related to the current research. First, the nature of listening skill is discussed along with the major listening dichotomies; namely: conversational listening and academic listening. Then, a discussion of listening strategy types is presented. This is followed by a sub-section which reviews the difference between teaching listening and testing listening with the focus of this study being on listening instruction. The next section discusses the theories of Metacognitive Strategy Instruction (MSI), Academic Listening Anxiety (ALA), Metacognitive Awareness in Academic Listening (MAAL), and Academic Listening Comprehension Performance (ALCP). Then, there is a sub-section on the connection between ALA and MAAL. At the end of the chapter, the theoretical framework is presented along with literature that is related to the current study.

2.1 Positioning FL Listening

2.1.1 The Nature of FL Listening

Listening is argued to be a very individual FL activity since each FL student employs his own listening processes and makes his own inferences. In addition, a hallmark of successful listening comprehension is one in which a FL listener processes speech automatically; and in which a FL listener does not make heavy demands upon his/her attention. This kind of successful listener is referred to, by Goh (2005, p. 76), as ‘expert listener’. According to Goh, this kind of FL listener can also reflect on factors which may affect ALC.

In the same vein, Vandergrift (2004) maintains that FL listening is the least explicit among the four language skills; and therefore, Vandergrift describes FL listening as the most difficult skill to learn. At a later stage, Vandergrift (2007, p. 203) reassured that listening has a "covert nature" and can hardly be observed. Moreover, FL listening skill often engenders frustration for many FL learners (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). This attitude about underestimating listening has left listening as the least understood FL skill (Manjet et al., 2015), and has made learners feel most uncomfortable with listening among the other language skills (Graham, 2006). As Amin et al., (2011) maintain, listening has been the most misrepresented language skill and hence the least well taught.

There is a kind of consensus in the literature that EFL learners suffer from various weaknesses in their FL listening comprehension (e.g., Tran & Duong, (2020)). In this regard, many explanations were suggested by a couple of researchers. For instance, Nunan (1991) had enlisted four sources of difficulties related to the process of FL listening comprehension; these challenges are related to the speaker, listener, content and support. Furthermore, lack of systematised focus on FL listening by societies, immature instruction methodologies, ineffective listening strategies, and learners' insufficient vocabulary were later suggested by S. Wang (2010) to contribute to poor listening ability. Empirically speaking, postgraduate students in Manjet et al., (2015) reported their perceived listening challenges; these challenges included understanding classmates' accents, understanding lecturers' accents, and identifying differing views/ideas. Last but not least, Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002, p. 191) distilled (from Buck, 2001: 149-151) a few difficulties that are mostly found when listening to a foreign language, the table 2.1 below illustrates these difficulties.

Table 2.1

Sources of Difficulty in Second Language Listening

Main Category	Sub-category	Individual difficulties
Input Characteristics	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Speech rate. * Unfamiliar accent. * Number of speakers. * Similarity of voices. * Use of less frequent vocabulary * Grammatical complexity. * Embedded idea units. * Complex pronoun reference.
	Explicitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Implicit ideas. * Lack of redundancy.
	Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Events narrated out of natural time order. * Examples preceding the point they illustrate.
	Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Unfamiliar topics. * Number of things and people referred to. * Unclear indication of the relative importance of protagonists in the text * Shifting relationships between protagonists. * Abstract content.
	Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of visual or other support.
Task Characteristics	Tasks tend to be more difficult when they require...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Processing of more details. * Integration of information from different parts of the text. * Recall of gist (for example, writing a summary) rather than exact content * Separation of fact from opinion. * Recall of non-central or irrelevant details. * A delayed response, rather than an immediate one.

Adopted from Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002, p. 191).

Ultimately, based on the researcher's observation through the literature, FL learners can overcome most of the aforementioned problems depending on the amount of practising listening to a FL inside and outside classroom.

2.1.2 Academic Listening vs. Conversational Listening

It is worth noting that academic listening can be considered as a different genre from general listening to a foreign language. Richards (1983) was the first to make a distinction between skills that are related to conversational listening and skills that are related to academic listening. Flowerdew (1994) then elaborated on the differences and grouped them in terms of degree and in terms of nature; these differences are summarised by the researcher and enlisted below:

2.1.2(a) Differences in Terms of Degree

Academic listening and conversational listening differ in terms of 1) degree of background knowledge; 2) degree of relevance; 3) degree of turn-taking occurrence; and 4) degree of directness.

First, the degree of background knowledge indicates that listening to lectures requires a specific kind of background knowledge which is related to the field of the lecture topic; whilst in conversational listening listeners need a more general degree of background knowledge. Second, the degree of relevance involves the ability to distinguish between what is relevant and what is not relevant as an essential skill while listening to lectures. Third, the degree of turn-taking occurrence indicates that turn taking in conversational listening is essential whilst in academic listening it only occurs when a lecturer asks his students to speak, answer, comment, or ask questions. Fourth and finally, the degree of directness means that the content of academic discourse mainly depends on conveying ideas (propositions), whilst general conversations depend more on indirect speech acts.