

The Improvement of English News Listening Comprehension with Metacognitive Strategy

Xiaofeng Li

Changchun University of Science and Technology, Changchun, China

Abstract: English listening comprehension is a fundamental way of receiving information in English language interaction. For university students who are going to face the competitive international arena after graduation in this rapidly-developing world, the ability of English listening is very crucial in the multinational communication. English news, different from the daily-used language, is with great linguistic style in vocabulary, grammar, sentence, structure. As the carrier of culture, English news contains and conveys abundant information embodying the corresponding countries' traditions, current events, social phenomena etc. Thus English news listening is an effective way of enhancing the university students' listening ability as well as the cultural knowledge. This essay probes into the use of metacognitive strategy----the measures taken by learners when they manage their study in their own study process, to help students improve English news comprehension.

Keywords: English News, Metacognitive Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

English listening is the primary channel of inputting information in English language while it has been neglected by many university students compared with the other skills enhancement such as reading, writing. Many students consider that "listening ability will develop automatically through exposure to the language and through practice of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation." (Hedge, 2002). For years, the studies on the development of listening comprehension instructions have made little progress, methods used in English-listening class do not belong to methodologies. In this essay, the metacognitive strategy is explored to improve the students' English news listening comprehension.

2. THE DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Metacognitive strategies are the methods and measures that learners use to manipulate their own learning. "Metacognitive strategy is an execution strategy in higher level, including planning, monitoring and evaluating the whole learning process. It is used for controlling

cognitive process, and guaranteeing that it can achieve cognitive goal ultimately. These can adjust and monitor the whole learning process” (Brown&Yule, 1983:83).“Metacognitive strategy is the process of thinking and learning, which includes study plan and process of monitoring the learning and evaluating the whole process and result after learning activities.” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). We can conclude that metacognitive strategy is the approaches and actions taken by learners when they manage their study in their own study process.

3. THE APPLICATION OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH NEW LISTENING

According to O’Malley & Chamot’s classification method, metacognitive strategy can be divided into three categories: planning strategy, monitoring strategy and evaluation strategies. During the English new listening, three stages can be divided into with the use of different categories that metacognitive strategy have--- pre-listening stage (planning strategy), while-listening stage (monitoring strategy), and after-listening stage (evaluation strategy).

In the pre-listening stage, the following planning strategies can be used. Firstly, Teachers should guide the students to use selective attention strategy to achieve the best effect, allocating their attention reasonably. Different from the other listening materials, the density of English news is so tremendous that it contains almost no repetitive and redundant information, requiring the students fully absorbed in the listening process in case the important information should slip away incautiously. Secondly, since English news has the striking feature that covering different aspects of social life, the teacher should input the background knowledge of the relevant news to be heard, enlarging the students’ scope of the knowledge and make them more confident and less nervous in the coming listening with the understanding of corresponding settings. Thirdly, the teacher can guide the students to speculate the content of the English news during listening comprehension process by inferring, reasoning and guessing the subsequent part of the news with relevant background on the minds, transferring the students’ role from passive information receiver to active speculator to enhance the listening comprehension.

The while-listening stage contains the monitoring strategy, in which the students can monitor their own listening process to make timely correction when encountering difficult problems. It includes the monitoring of understanding degree of listening materials, using different listening techniques, keeping the attention focused, and applying the selective attention, etc. Above all, the students should practice the ability of adjusting and concentrating important information of the English news. When distracted by the unrelated interference factors such as the failure to catch the meaning or encountering the new words or complex sentences, the students should draw the attention back to the main idea of the news instead of wasting time and attention on the difficult points. Secondly, the students should focus on the key words and the lead of the news item, which is the first sentence that briefly introduces the content of the paragraph. Thus the students can predict the following material with a good

mastery of the core and prominent idea, enhancing the accuracy rate of listening by manipulating its process. The teacher can train the students to locate the information that is relevant with the theme, making the listening process more purposeful. Browsing options and questions earlier previously is another way to guess the primary idea of the English news.

In after-listening stage, the strategies of self-monitoring and self-assessment should be applied, which can be called the evaluation strategy, referring to the “process that learners review their learning, such as, how did he perform when finishing a language task (Nunan,1996: 60).”The students should be encouraged to record the missing point and understanding mistakes in the listening process and correcting it through repetitive listening and reading the scripts. There are worthwhile points that the students can reflect on: whether they have consciously adjust or concentrate their attention during listening; whether they have used the background knowledge, other clues to do prediction in the context?; whether they linked the news information with the knowledge and speculation that they had?; whether they have made any progress in the listening comprehension?; what measures should be taken to strengthen the listening skills of English news? Through the self-monitoring and evaluation process mentioned above the students will immediately identify their weak points and make remedy to make progress in listening comprehension.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, metacognitive strategies can be applied in the English news listening through analyzing the characteristics of English news and exploring its discourse rules. By employing planning strategy, monitoring strategy and evaluation strategy which are the main categories of metacognitive strategies during the different stages of English news listening process, the university students’ listening comprehension ability will be enhanced effectively.

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