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Metacognitive Self-evaluation Techniques in EFL Classrooms

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Metacognitive Self-evaluation Techniques in EFL Classrooms

Abstract

This study aims to examine whether the use of metacognitive self-assessment helps English as a foreign language (EFL) students to improve their metacognition. The study implemented an intervention technique on 540 students in Grades Four to Nine in a private school in Beirut. Students had to evaluate their performance on English tests in relation to their study skills and preparation. The four EFL teachers included students' study skills self-evaluation statements at the end of the English tests in the first term of 2019-2020 and responded to five questions to evaluate the intervention. Their responses indicated that younger learners were more responsive to the questions than those in the upper grades, and the students who responded were of all performance levels. Moreover, more students responded to the questions with time, and their evaluation of their performance on the tests became more accurate with time. Recommendations to develop the learners' metacognitive skills were made accordingly.

Keywords

metacognitive skills, self-regulated learning, self-evaluation techniques, EFL in Lebanon

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent shifts in education mark the importance of student-centered learning which is a general umbrella that includes among many concepts, students' active learning experiences and the awakening of their learning potential. Student-centered learning gives the learners responsibility for their own learning and encourages them to identify how to be independent, self-regulated learners, and to reflect on their learning. The learners' ability to be aware of one's cognitive processes, also referred to as thinking about one's thinking is known as metacognition (Mercer, Ryan, & Williams, 2012).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

English language teachers often hear their English as a foreign language (EFL) students complaining about their lower-than-expected mark on a test. Some students may report they 'studied well', 'prepared hard', and 'were attentive in the class'. The difference in the students' perception of how well they had prepared and performed on a task and the actual product evaluated by their teacher raises the question about how prepared and ready the students are to undertake an evaluation task and to evaluate their own performance. Such a gap between the students' comments about their own preparation and performance and the actual performance on various tasks show they have difficulties in studying, preparing for tests as well as evaluating their performance. Kamath (2019) claimed that students may identify the difficulties they face in their academic achievement, but their identification of these may not be accurate nor necessarily leads to the development of their effort or strategies to improve their academic learning experiences and maximize their academic potential.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This research study aims to examine the use of EFL students' metacognitive self-assessment technique to develop awareness of study skill techniques expected to lead to the improvement of performance on English tests. Preparing for extensive examinations requires a great deal of independent studying. To succeed, students have to have good self-regulation and study skills, and be aware of their conception of learning, knowledge and their approaches to study. This paper aims to answer the following research question: How do metacognitive self-assessment statements impact EFL students' preparation for English language tests with time? It is hypothesized that when EFL students are subjected to metacognitive self-assessment for a period of time, their awareness of their study skills and thus performance on English language tests will improve.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Metacognition

With the shift towards scaffolding the learners with tools to become more self-regulated in their studies, the study of metacognition is necessary. A simple definition of metacognition is that it is thinking about thinking. Flavell (1976) was the first to use the word metacognition to refer "to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes or anything related to them, e.g., the learning-relevant properties of information or data. For example, I am engaging in metacognition if I notice that I am having more trouble learning A than B; if it strikes me that I should double check C before accepting it as fact" (Flavell, 1976, p. 232). Flavell (1979) identified three domains of metacognition. The first is *metacognitive knowledge*, knowledge of oneself and others as cognitive processors, knowledge and beliefs about what people think they can and cannot do well, and about how and to what extent factors like age, gender, intelligence, motivation, personality and educational background influence learning. Metacognitive knowledge involves *task knowledge*, i.e. an understanding of how a task should be managed and how successful one can be in achieving the goal, and *strategy knowledge*, i.e. beliefs about which strategies are effective to achieve a goal. The second is *metacognitive experience*, a conscious experience- cognitive or affective- that relates to an intellectual venture. And the third is *metacognitive strategies*, the deliberate use of strategies to control one's own cognition. Flavell (1987) later included affective variables and noted that that the different domains of metacognition are often not easy to separate from each other.

2.2 Promoting Metacognition in the Language Classroom

Following Flavell's (1979, 1987) three-way framework: the students' person knowledge, task knowledge and strategy knowledge, educators elaborated the notion of metacognition in English language classrooms. Wenden (1987) differentiated between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies. The former is knowledge about one's own learning which includes a person's knowledge, task knowledge and strategy knowledge, and the latter is the general skills that learners use to manage and guide their learning. These include planning, monitoring, and evaluating which are the three components of self-regulated learning. Wenden (1998) referred to domain knowledge, i.e. what learners already know about a subject, which is different from metacognitive knowledge though both are necessary to solve a task. Rahimi and Katal (2012) reviewed the theories and practices of metacognitive knowledge in the field of language learning and reported that "metacognitive learners who take conscious steps to understand what they are doing when they learn tend to be the most successful learners" (Rahimi and Katal, 2012, p.73). Through metacognition, students are believed to think about their thinking which helps them make greater sense of their life experiences and start achieving at higher levels. Most teachers know that if students reflect on how they learn, they become better learners. Learning strategies that work for one subject matter may not be successful in another. With greater awareness of how they acquire knowledge, students learn to adjust their behavior to optimize learning. They begin to see how their strengths and weaknesses affect how they perform. Raofi, Chan, Mukundan and Md Rashid (2013) reported that the metacognitive interventions help learners to improve in language performance and enhance their metacognitive knowledge strategy usage though not significantly. They also identified several factors affecting second language (L2) learners' metacognition: language proficiency, educational level, bilingualism, learning styles, and first language metacognitive knowledge and use. It was implied that since learners' metacognition can be developed through pedagogical interventions, teachers should know its significance in language learning and involve students in activities and process-based lessons leading them to develop their metacognitive knowledge in language learning. Teachers should also focus on teaching language content as well as teaching the ways and processes of learning (Raofi et al., 2013).

2.3 Metacognition and Language Skills

The attempt to raise metacognitive skills among language learners was applied to the learning of English in various skills.

2.3.1 Metacognition and reading / vocabulary

A rich literature is found on the role of metacognition on reading performance. Zhang and Wu (2009) assessed metacognitive awareness and reading-strategy on 270 Chinese senior high school students who are learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The students responded at a high-frequency level to a 28-item survey of reading strategies that were classified into three categories: global, problem-solving, and support. However, though students in general frequently used a wide range of strategies, there was a discrepancy according to their proficiency level, and not grade level. The high-proficiency group was reported to significantly perform better than the intermediate and low-proficiency groups in overall strategy use. Good learners are better at planning for reading, monitoring their comprehension, and selecting appropriate strategies. Moreover, the effective use of global strategies correlated with the students' higher English achievements. The researchers recommended a change in the learning environment towards a richer exposure to English influencing positively their motivation. Moreover, low-proficiency learners can gain from an informed metacognitive strategy training course that helps them to think about their reading processes, identify their weaknesses, and take remedial measures. Zhang (2010) also studied Chinese EFL students who have become trans-nationals as a result of globalization and are pursuing academic studies in English. The study aimed to account for the learner behavior and thinking that are normally reported under the rubric of language learning strategy research.

After interviewing 20 Chinese students about their EFL reading experiences framed within a dynamic metacognitive systems perspective, which has courted criticism recently, he reported a strong relationship between metacognition and successful EFL reading comprehension (Zhang, 2010). Sutiyo and Sukarno (2019) examined the effect of metacognitive strategies on students' reading achievement. A correlation between metacognitive strategies and reading achievement of undergraduate students was reported. The researchers suggested that the students should be helped to increase the understanding of metacognitive to be able to understand English textbooks better. Another study on reading was done by Soto, Gutiérrez de Blume, Jacovina, McNamara, Benson, Riffo and Kruk (2019) who examined relations between performance in reading comprehension and self-reported components of metacognition among middle-school children. With inference questions, the metacognitive strategies of planning and evaluation explained the students' adjustment in reading comprehension. Meta-comprehension accuracy was related to the students' performance at different levels of understanding. Students tended to perform better and manifest greater meta-comprehension accuracy for text-based level comprehension performance than inferential questions. Therefore, the students' judgment of their understanding somehow related to whether they understood the text at a deep or surface level. The students' inferential and text-based comprehension skills emerged without any prompts. Results suggested that metacognitive and meta-comprehension knowledge are parallel to the level of information given in a text, and are related to deeper understanding of texts, i.e. inferential. The researchers suggested that future research on absolute meta-comprehension accuracy should consider different levels of understanding.

As to research in learning vocabulary, a study of young learners' use of second language learning strategies was done by Kolarić (2017). The study implemented a task which included a think-aloud protocol followed by a semi-structured interview. The 15 young learners were reported to possess an awareness of language learning processes and strategies, but do not always know how to use it in order to improve their learning.

2.3.2 Metacognition and listening

In relation to metacognition and language listening, Goh (2008) explained the theoretical rationale of a metacognitive approach, identified the principles for carrying out metacognitive instruction, and outlined general instructional objectives and learning activities. She proposed that when teachers scaffold listening practice via metacognitive processes, they help learners learn how to listen. The techniques clarify to novice listeners the processes of how to become skillful listeners. The model shows learners who want to become skilled listeners tangible ways to manage their mental processes for listening. Goh (2008) recommended an expansion of the current approach to engage learners in a wider range of metacognitive activities which should "aim at deepening learners' understanding of themselves as L2 listeners and the demands and process of L2 listening, as well as teaching learners how to manage their comprehension and learning" (192). She referred to a process-based approach to teaching listening as 'metacognitive instruction', which enhances learners' knowledge about learning to listen and their use of effective strategies for managing their comprehension and listening development. A study on the effect of teaching metacognitive strategies on intermediate-level EFL learners' listening comprehension was done by Nosratinia, Ghavidel and Zaker (2015). After subjecting 130 intermediate-level EFL learners to two English tests, 60 were randomly assigned to two experimental groups and two control groups- 15 in each class. The two experimental groups received metacognitive skills training based on Anderson's 2002 model over 18 sessions, after which a listening posttest was administered to the four classes. Findings showed that the two experimental groups who received metacognitive skills training significantly outperformed the other two control groups who did not.

2.3.3 Metacognition and writing

As far as studies on writing, Panahandeh and Asl (2014) examined the effects of planning and monitoring skills on argumentative writing accuracy. Sixty Iranian EFL university students at the intermediate level of English proficiency participated in the study. The experimental group received metacognitive strategies-based writing instruction whereas the control group received the routine writing instruction.

After eight weeks of instruction both groups were post tested. The results showed that there was a positive effect in the experimental group's writing performance. Yazigy (2020) proposed that if EFL students share with their teacher in constructing the rubrics used to assess their writing tasks, they develop self-regulated learning and perform better on the writing task. The two concepts, self-regulation and metacognition, are mirror images of one another, thus the language used to describe them is similar and often overlaps in their definitions (Mannion, 2020; Dinsmore, Alexander & Loughlin, 2008). The participants in the study (Yazigy, 2020) were 78 Grade Ten EFL students in a Lebanese private school. Given a student-written essay, the participants extracted the criteria that could be used to evaluate an essay. Then they responded to a questionnaire about self-regulation and reported that working on the rubric was beneficial in the following tasks, and their performance was better. In conclusion, the literature on metacognition and language learning showed that metacognitive strategies relate to better achievement among learners, and specifically language learners. Based on the literature and research findings in this area, this research study examines the process of raising Lebanese EFL students' awareness of metacognitive skills via self-evaluation statements at the end of English tests, mainly general tests of reading comprehension and grammar.

3. METHOD

The study introduces an intervention to investigate whether metacognitive self-assessment techniques positively influence EFL students' preparation for English language tests with time.

3.1 Participants

Participants in the study were EFL teachers and students in the Elementary Level, Cycle Two- Grades Four, Five and Six- and the Elementary Level, Cycle Two - Grades Seven, Eight, and Nine in a private school in Beirut. The age ranged between nine to sixteen. The EFL teachers were four, two have a degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and three of them have more than ten years of experience. For anonymity and ethical consideration, their initials will be mentioned- MN and CH, at the Elementary Level, Cycle Two, and NN and GA, at the Intermediate Level. The students' native language is Arabic. They study English three sessions every week as a second foreign language- French being the first foreign language and medium of instruction. The students were in three sections per class making a total of 540 as follows:

Table 1: EFL students in Grades 4 to 10

Elementary Level, Cycle Two			Elementary Level, Cycle Two		
Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
106	77	97	92	82	86
280			260		

3.2 Procedure

First, a meeting with the English teachers of these levels was held at the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year to discuss the newly introduced concept: raising students' self-awareness of their metacognitive skills. The EFL teachers brainstormed a few statements to be added at the end of the English tests. These statements served as the base for a bank of study skills awareness statements.

Then the teachers introduced the intervention to the students in their classrooms and asked them to respond to the metacognitive self-assessment statements upon finishing English exams.

The students were aware of what the test included as the questions address the objectives of each unit. The study lasted for four months during which the teachers held frequent meetings to discuss the progress of the intervention and to introduce or adapt statements from the bank.

3.3 Instruments

Based on the theories, studies and recommendations for the development of metacognitive skills, this study's intervention comprised two instruments. The first is a variety of metacognition self-evaluation statements added at the end of English tests for students to reply to. The tests were general tests including reading comprehension and vocabulary, and Grammar quizzes. The writing skills had another intervention in the upper grades, the development of rubrics, which is examined in Yazigy (2020). The tests were considered the best means to include the self-evaluation statements, as they are the main mean of assessment that all students have to sit for. Some statements were suggested in a general meeting prior to the initiation of the intervention. They served as the basis for other statements that were adapted for the different purposes of the tests during the term. The statements are presented in the following two tables according to the level: Elementary Level- Cycle Two (Table 2) and Intermediate Level (Table 3).

Table 2: Elementary level Cycle 2- Metacognitive self-evaluation statements

Grade 4	I think I did: great/very good good not really good
Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand the 'present simple' lesson: very well well not really well Using present simple and present continuous is: Easy a bit hard difficult Self-evaluation: I totally understand this lesson It's confusing I paid attention in class: very well well not really well I studied at home: very well well not really well
Grade 6	<p>The easiest exercise was: _____ The most difficult exercise was: _____ I think I did: great good fair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think I understand this lesson: very well well not really The quiz was: easy difficult I can do better next time if I: pay attention in class prepare more Mixing between present simple and present continuous is: easy a bit hard difficult I understood this unit's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary part: very well well not really well - Grammar part : very well well not really well

Table 3: Intermediate level metacognitive self-evaluation statements

<i>Grade 7</i>	The quiz was hard/ easy to complete: I could have done better if...
<i>Grade 8</i>	This quiz was (easy / challenging / very hard) to complete because ... I could have done a better job if ...
<i>Grade 9</i>	Rarely Sometimes, Always Justify can identify the different parts of speech. I can use modals correctly to express ability, possibility, prohibition... I know which present tense to use to talk about habits, plans, and recently completed actions.

The second instrument is a set of five questions emailed to the EFL teachers at the end of the intervention to respond to. The questions were as follows.

1. What is the percentage of students who responded to the statements?
2. Who are the students who responded to the statements- average, above average, or below average?
3. Did more students respond with time, i.e. in the later tests?
4. Did the students' responses to the metacognition self-evaluation questions reflect their performance on the English tests as reflected in their marks, or they thought they did better than they scored?
5. What are the most common comments, factors or reasons students gave for their performance- whether they thought they did well, or if they felt they could have done better, e.g. attention in class, study at home, difficult material?

A note was added at the end for teachers to include any suggestions or recommendations to make this intervention succeed better in the future, for example, at what age or grade level it should start, should students have an orientation session at the beginning.

4. FINDINGS

In the frequent meetings, the EFL teachers often noted that the technique of responding to self-evaluation statements was new to students and not all of them were responding to the statements. Some students found it difficult to think of the answers or options, others found it difficult to report the reasons, and others may have lacked the motivation to respond. So in the coming opportunities, the teachers guided the students to respond more responsibly to the statements at the end of the English tests. At the end of the intervention, the teachers' evaluation of the intervention came as follows. In response to the first question about the percentage of students who responded to the statements, the two EFL Elementary Cycle Two teachers, MN and CH, reported that around 95% of the students responded to the questions. However, the response of older students at the Intermediate level was less- 40% according to the two respective teachers. NN explained that at the beginning of the intervention in the year, many students thought of the self-evaluation as an exercise or as a bonus question. She wrote, "very few students (20% of the class) read it well, and answered it properly", i.e. as reflected in their scores on the test.

In response to the second question, CH reported that the students who responded to the statements were usually the ones below average but sometimes above average students totally forgot to fill this part. She added, "the only students who skipped answering were those who forgot, didn't pay attention to the self-evaluation part, or did not have time to continue their test/quiz." MN explained, "the ones who did not answer are those who are usually slow and did not have the time to finish their test and those who discarded or forgot to answer- a minority." However, at the Intermediate level, "the serious and relevant self-evaluations were limited to average and above average learners" who gave elaborate evaluations, according to GA.

In response to the third question whether more students responded in the later tests with time, the Elementary Cycle Two teachers assured that the students became familiar with the statements with time. MN confirmed that the majority of the students were responsive, but that was after a month and a half of asking them after each test. "At this age, students are very expressive and almost have no filter; they are able to express honestly how they felt about the evaluation". She illustrated that a student once told her that they liked how there were pictures in dictation and vocabulary tasks, which made it easier for them to visualize the words.

At the Intermediate level, NN reported that at the beginning of the year, a lot of students thought that if they answered it, they would get some extra points. However, later on, the percentage of 20% of the students who responded rose to around 80%, and half of the students who completed the evaluation, answered 'properly'.

In response to the fourth question, whether the students' responses to the metacognition self-evaluation questions reflect their performance on the English test as reflected on their marks, MN reported that "the students took the self-assessment seriously, they tried to answer as truthfully as they thought they performed." CH reported that the students' self-evaluation "became more accurate with time for many reasons. First, she had to tell them that they have to answer in a serious manner and that their mark has to reveal their answer in the self-evaluation. And second, the students became more familiar with the procedure and became able to self-evaluate their work. For those who thought they did better/worse than they scored, this can be related to: a lack or excess of self-confidence, fear of saying they didn't do well, fear of considering they did well because they under-estimate their capabilities, and some of them did it on purpose thinking that this is funny."

At the Intermediate level, NN reported that "the students who did well, would say that it was easy for them because the explanation was very good, they paid attention in class, they asked for some clarification, they did the exercises, they prepared well at home. And others who didn't do well, would say that they didn't prepare or study enough." GA reported that in Grade Eight previous tests, less than 30% completed the self-evaluation area effectively. She added "the students who are above average and average are the ones who had chosen the most accurate answers compared to the result on their tests. In a couple of cases in Grade Nine (4/86), the test-takers positive comments were quite opposite to their poor marks. Other comments were somewhat vague as the test-takers didn't specify the difficulty faced in a specific section of the test, or simply limited to circling a reason for a better performance. GA illustrated that a particular above average student answered he did "not really good" although he had a good mark; through a follow up, it became clear that it was because "he was afraid to have made mistakes (like in previous tests) that cost him points although he knew the answers." Around 4% of the students who answered the assessment thought they had done better than what they actually scored.

In response to the fifth question, the most common reasons given by the Elementary Level, Cycle Two students was that they could have done better if they "studied more at home" and "paid more attention in class". MN elaborated that two students tried to explain the reasons, but after a follow up discussion directly after the tests, "some students confessed to not studying at home since they thought the test was on another day while a few others (mostly those below average) complained that they had trouble understanding the question in an exercise or two." At the upper level, the most recurrent reasons given were the need to pay more attention in class/ participate more effectively in class and to review schoolwork at home.

As to the recommendations for future intervention, MN believed that it is important to start metacognitive self-assessment in Grade Three or even before. She suggested it starts orally in Grades Two and Three but written at the end of tests at the end of the year in Grade Three. MN wrote that she was not able to start the intervention in Grade Two because she met with them only twice a week, so it was hard to test them; testing priority was given to the other subjects with a limited number of tests daily. She added that she worked on metacognitive self-assessment orally in Grade Three this year, "once I took the tests back, I asked them to show me with a hand gesture (like- hand up) or (dislike- hand down) how they felt about specific questions regarding the test (e.g. was the test easy, did you understand the text, were the pictures clear, can you get a 7/10, more, or less...)" However, KH expressed a contrary opinion as to when such an intervention can be introduced. She suggested that it can start in Grade Four in the middle of the year, and it will become more accurate in Grade Five. Awareness resulting from this self-evaluation can be achieved in Grades Six and higher levels.

The EFL teacher at the Intermediate level NN recommended the same procedure she used this year, "during the distribution of every quiz or test, I would take five minutes, just to explain about the self-evaluation, and how it reflects their work". GA suggested teachers "can remind them before the test, during the test, toward the end of the test, plus allocate time for the Self-Evaluation". She added "an orientation session, along with frequent repetition of the importance of filing the Self-Evaluation, would surely coax the test-takers to complete it." She added some technical hints in the presentation: the word 'directions' can be printed in a larger font than that of the test and the questions, the addition of a visual attraction such as a picture or a funny sign, and changing its header to a more catchy one: *Now, Let's think about our performance!*

In conclusion, the teachers' responses and evaluation of the intervention showed that the younger students were more responsive to the technique than older ones at the beginning, the level of proficiency did not affect how responsive the students were, the progress of the intervention in time gave way to a larger number of students to respond and for the responses to reflect the performance. Students explained that they could do better if they paid more attention in class and if they prepared better for the test better at home.

5. DISCUSSION

The answer to the research question: how do metacognitive self-assessment statements impact EFL students' preparation for English language tests with time? is: 'positively'. The teachers manifested knowledge of the significance of raising students' awareness of metacognitive skills. And the students showed interest in discussing their preparation and study as self-regulation techniques through their written comments and discussion with their teachers. At the beginning of the intervention, younger learners responded to the questions more than those in the upper grades. This may reflect their respect for the teachers' instructions and responsibility towards their duties. The fact that more students responded to the questions with time, and their evaluation of their performance on the tests became more accurate reflect the success in using this intervention to raise students' awareness and knowledge of the skills they need to perform better on the English language tasks. Moreover, the students' responses to the questions about the factors that played a role in their performance showed that they were able to reflect on the factors that affected their performance, whether positively or negatively. The findings of this research study are parallel to those reviewed in the literature. Namely, Rahimi and Katal (2012) reported that metacognitive learners who plan to understand what they do while they learn are more successful than others, and Weil, Fleming, Dumontheil, Kilford, Weil, Rees, Dolan, and Blakemore (2013) reported that metacognition developed significantly with age. The findings also agree to those of Raofi et al. (2013) who reported that that metacognition seems to predict language performance, and Zhang and Wu (2009) who reported that the effective use of global strategies correlated with the students' higher English achievements. Moreover, the findings of Zhang (2010) who reported a strong relationship between metacognition and successful EFL reading comprehension, and Sutiyatno and Sukarno (2019) who found a correlation between metacognitive strategies and reading achievement are similar to the findings in this study. Moreover, Soto et al. (2019) reported that students tended to perform better and show greater meta-comprehension accuracy for text-based level comprehension performance than inferential questions.

6. CONCLUSION

The study aimed at introducing the practice of self-evaluation of study skills and preparation for English tests to 540 Lebanese EFL students in Grades Four to Eight in the first term of 2019-2020. The four EFL teachers included self-evaluation statements at the end of the English tests for the students to respond to, and they evaluated the process via answering five questions. Based on the students' responses and the teachers' evaluation of the intervention process in this research study and the findings in the literature, a number of recommendations can be made. It is recommended that students are made aware of the importance of developing metacognitive skills, such as study skills and preparation for exams.

This can be made directly by the teachers explaining the use of developing skills such as being attentive in class, participating in discussions, reviewing the material covered in class regularly, putting a schedule for reading and reviewing, asking the teacher for help when they need to, going through the marked notes on their exams, redoing tasks and correcting errors. Chamot (2005) suggested that "explicit instruction is far more effective than simply asking students to use one or more strategies and also fosters metacognition, students' ability to understand their own thinking and learning processes" (Chamot, 2005, p.123). This process can be adapted according to the learners' age and level, and the content of the lesson and skills covered. The guidelines can be derived from Flavell's (1979, 1987) three-way framework of metacognition: the students' knowledge of one's cognitive processes and of others', knowledge of an intellectual task, and strategy use to guide cognition.

Another foundation can be Wenden's (1987, 1988) knowledge about one's own learning-identified as metacognitive knowledge, the learners' skills used to guide their learning- the metacognitive strategies, and the learners' knowledge of the subject- domain knowledge. Besides the EFL teacher's overt guidance, having written standards in the form of self-assessment rubric or checklist for students to fill in upon finishing a task will help them evaluate it before handing it in (Yazigy, 2020). This research was limited to the study of developing metacognition among EFL learners in six grade levels in one school in Lebanon. The awareness intervention was via English tests of general reading comprehension and grammar. The evaluation of the process was for one term only and through the teachers' perceptions. It is suggested that further research covers a larger setting, i.e. schools in different area, higher level grades, and an English medium of instruction classes. Following research over a longer period of time can examine closely the relation of the students' awareness of metacognition to their performance.

Metacognitively aware learners have strategies for finding out what they need to do. The use of metacognitive strategies stimulates the learners' thinking and can lead to a deeper learning and improved performance. Thus, teachers should help language learners to understand and control cognitive processes (Anderson, 2002). When teachers support the students' abilities to reflect on, monitor, and evaluate their learning strategies, students become more self-reliant, flexible, and productive. Moreover, students develop their capacity to evaluate options, and rely on reflective strategies to recognize their difficulties and attempt to rectify them (Price-Mitchell, 2015).

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