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### **Metacognitive and Social Strategies to Promote EFL learners' Lecture Comprehension**

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#### **Abstract**

This study attempts to explore the challenges that influence academic lecture listening comprehension of Saudi EFL students. Seventy-five students majoring in English participated in the diagnostic stage. In the next stage, 15 students underwent some intervention for 6 weeks where metacognitive and social strategies in teaching were incorporated. Later, the participants were interviewed in a semi-structured setting where they were asked to reflect on the experiment. The major findings of the study indicate that the factors that affect students' listening comprehension pertain to teachers and teaching, students themselves, content of the courses and the program itself. The study recommends a paradigm shift in the teaching methods that focus on metacognitive and social strategies as suggested in the experiment. Furthermore, students' linguistic and communication proficiency should be given special care. Moreover, training the EFL students in academic lecture listening comprehension strategies is highly recommended to be incorporated into the program design.

**Keywords:** Lecture listening comprehension, Content courses, Metacognitive strategies, Social strategies, EFL students.

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## **1. Introduction**

Majority of English degree programs in Saudi universities consist of four years of study that are divided into two phases. In phase one, namely the first two years, the majority of courses are English language skills. In the last two years of the program, the courses are content-based rather than skill-based. They comprise introductory courses to Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Translation, and Literature. While English language skill courses are basically interactive in delivery, content-based courses are delivered in lecture mode. The cognitive gap between skill courses and content-based courses has been manifested in the performance of students in the final-year courses and in their overall performance. The program completion rate at some universities is alarming. For instance, it does not exceed 50% of the students who started the program at King Khalid University's English Department in two consecutive years. Hence, this study aims at contributing to the improvement of higher education teaching and learning quality in Saudi universities which face similar problems.

The researcher of the current study, who has been teaching content courses for eight years, has observed that when the students are given production questions beyond the level of remembering in Bloom's Taxonomy, they depend mostly on memory for their answers. If they are asked about a specific issue about the theory, for example, they write the whole theory verbatim. Such an observation led the researcher to investigate this phenomenon and it was hypothesized that listening comprehension problems possibly lie behind this inaccuracy in performance. This hypothesis is supported by looking into students' notes during the days of final exams. It has been observed by the researcher that, in content courses, the students translate almost every word from English into Arabic when they study their notes in preparation for exams. This strategy training study was designed to determine the effectiveness of rethinking the structure of a lecture (metacognitive teaching strategy) and incorporating peer-discussion and peer-questioning (a social strategy) as an approach to enhance learning from lectures. Involvement in peer discussion following the lecture would presumably further facilitate comprehension monitoring and fill in any gaps in understanding academic lectures. Anderson (2002) states, "the use of metacognitive strategies activates one's thinking and leads to improved performance in learning in general."

## **2. Literature Review**

Lecturing, which involves the employment of all four skills on the part of students in an ideal academic lecture, has become the most widely used method of instruction in higher education. Benson (1994) describes "lecture" as the "central ritual" of university culture. It has been observed by researchers that listening consumes between 40% to 50% of the lecture time (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011). This is a real challenge in content courses classes in an EFL setting, especially when the students' general linguistic and communicative proficiency are inadequate.

English for academic purposes instructional settings require a high level of listening skill (Ferris & Tagg, 1996) as learners should deal with deciphering both content and subject matter in the audio texts. Research at the tertiary level has demonstrated that effective listening comprehension skills are vital for students to achieve academic success (Benson, 1994; Dunkel, 1991; Flowerdew, 1994; Kaplan-Dology, 1994; Strauss, 2002, Vandergriff, 2004). The ability to comprehend material presented in lectures is critical to academic success ... (King, 1991). The challenge in EFL settings is that research has shown that students' listening skills are not developed to the extent that they can productively infer content information from spoken lectures (Khuwaleih, 1999; Mandelsohn, 2002, Olsin and Huckin, 1990; Strauss, 2002). Various studies reviewed by Conway (1982, as cited in Oxford, 1993: 206) showed that insufficient listening skills were a stronger factor in college failure than were poor reading skills and poor academic aptitude. It has been revealed that good listening comprehension contributes significantly to academic success (Jeon, 2007). Listening to lectures is the most essential requirement for EAP learners, which is itself quite a challenging area for most of the

students due to their likely inadequate general English proficiency level and difficulties in comprehending and remembering the content of lectures (Huang & Finn, 2009). Kelly (1991) found out that most of the errors in listening comprehension tests of advanced L2 learners are caused by inadequate mastery of lexis. Bamford (2002) examined the repetitions of lexical items as an important element of a corpus of recorded economics lectures, apparently used to aid understanding for foreign listeners.

Among the variables which affect successful lecture comprehension, speech rate has been considered as a key factor in L2 lecture comprehension (Bashtovaya, 2013; Derwing and Munro, 2001; Griffiths, 1990). Flowerdew and Miller (1992) mentioned three comprehension problems that were identified by students in the lectures: speed of delivery, new terminology and concepts, difficulties in concentrating, and problems related to physical environment.

Chen (2005) investigated the barriers to acquiring listening strategies by EFL learners. The findings of her study indicated that the obstacles that cause comprehension failure include learners' affective statuses, their listening habits, information processing capacities, English proficiency, and their belief about listening activities. Flowerdew (1994) argues that the variables which affect successful listening comprehension on behalf of non-native English speaking students range from speed of delivery to specific lexico-grammatical, interpersonal, disciplinary and culture-related characteristics of lecture genre. Yousif (2006) investigated lecture comprehension problems of first-year students listening to lectures in a foreign language content courses classroom. Her study provided an index of linguistic, conceptual, discourse, acoustic, environmental and psychological variables that hinder effective comprehension. Hamouda (2013) investigated listening problems encountered by EFL students at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia and found that accent, pronunciation, speech rate, insufficient vocabulary, different accent of speakers, lack of concentration, and anxiety were the major listening comprehension problems in a listening course.

Flowerdew and Miller (1995; 1996) demonstrated the effect of culture on L2 comprehension. It may be difficult for learners coming from different cultures to understand humor used by the English-speaking instructors.

Khalidi (2014) investigated EFL students' difficulties and strategy use when processing lectures of linguistics at the section of English at Tlemcen University. The main findings indicated obstacles related to lack of content schemata, lack of formal schemata, the lecturer's fast rate of speech, in addition to what the students referred to as teacher's method.

The current study attempts to fill the gap of exploring and remedying academic listening comprehension challenges in a Saudi higher education setting where content-based courses are introduced with lecturing as the major mode of course delivery.

### **3. Method**

The methodology used varied in the major stages of research. A questionnaire was used in the diagnostic stage and a semi-structured interview was employed at the end of the intervention stage. The new teaching style itself comprised an important part of the research design. This methodology is explained below in detail after the major research questions of the study.

#### **3.1. Research Questions**

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most prominent challenges that hamper listening to academic lectures in the English program of King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia?
2. What is the impact of using metacognitive and social strategies on lecture comprehension in the English program of King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia?

### **3.2. Participants**

Seventy-five male students majoring in English participated in the first diagnostic stage. All are in the third and fourth year in the English program at King Khalid University and are doing content courses at the time of the study. These courses are in Linguistics, Applied Linguistics and Literature. In the next stage during which intervention took place, 15 male students underwent the experiment for 6 weeks. The course they were studying during the experiment was Applied Linguistics 1, which deals with theories of first and second-language acquisition and learning.

### **3.3. Instrument**

The instrument used in the first stage was a diagnostic questionnaire based on similar previous studies that focused on identifying academic listening comprehension problems from a students' perspective. It is a five-point Likert scale questionnaire that consists of 41 items in Arabic (to rule out any comprehensibility issues) aimed at exploring the possible reasons behind deficiency in utilizing the academic lecture optimally in content courses. At the end of this questionnaire, an open-ended question was annexed to elicit some additional special causes of comprehension problems based on their own experience. In the next stage, the tool of data collection was a semi-structured interview in Arabic to make students at ease after the intervention period. Questions were prepared in advance. It is believed that semi-structured interviews can provide reliable and comparable qualitative data. The interview questions were meant to elicit students' reflections on the experience of using meta-cognitive strategies to aid comprehension of academic lectures in content courses.

### **3.4. Procedures**

As the goal of the study was to identify academic listening comprehension problems and try to find out a solution to this problem, the identification stage was allotted for eliciting the subjects' agreement/disagreement regarding the problems mentioned in the literature of EFL students' lecture comprehension problems as well as the problems assumed by the researcher and course instructor based on his experience in teaching. The participants were given sufficient time to fill out the questionnaire. After this diagnostic stage, the results were analyzed and were found to be classified under these categories: problems caused by teaching quality and teachers, problems caused by the students, and problems associated with the English program itself. Guided by the impact of metacognitive strategies training on EFL academic listening comprehension (Selamat & Sidhu, 2012; Pan, 2014; Selamat & Sidhu, 2011; King, 1991), the researcher decided to make changes in the style of teaching by training the students on structured lectures and incorporating new teaching strategies and techniques. The fifty-minute lecture was divided into three parts: 30 minutes for presentation and discussion of the lecture content, 10 minutes for peer discussion and the last 10 minutes were allocated for a quiz on the lecture. This intervention lasted for 6 weeks followed by a semi-structured interview with 15 students who participated actively during the intervention period. The interviewees were asked to reflect on the experiment and its impact on enhancing their lecture comprehension.

## **4. Data Analysis**

For the sake of the identification of listening comprehension challenges faced by the learners in this study, simple frequency of distribution calculation was employed. Only the challenges that were identified by 35% of the participants and above were included in the analysis. Therefore, out of 42 causes of listening comprehension failure, only 16 were considered most serious. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the semi-structured interviews.

## 5. Results

To answer the first question of this research, the factors that EFL learners' think they hamper lecture comprehension are categorized under four types, namely teachers and teaching, students, content, and academic listening training. These factors will be discussed in this section in detail.

### 5.1. Teachers and Teaching

Under this sub-category, the students agreed with different statements which hold teachers and the quality of their teaching responsible for the comprehension problems they face during academic lectures of content courses. The majority of the participants agree that they feel bored after 20 minutes; 61% of them feel that their comprehension challenge is attributed to teachers' pronunciation; another 61% of the subjects state that their answers during exams depend basically on their translation of lecture content rather than on understanding from lectures; 58% of the students in this study think that English accent variation of their instructors influences their comprehension; mere lecturing as a mode of teaching is considered by 58% as a factor that affects lecture comprehension. Delivery speed, lack of checkpoints to ensure comprehension, and lack of interaction during lectures are some other factors that can cause academic comprehension failure.

**Table1.** Teachers and teaching quality as reasons behind lecture comprehension problems

Reasons behind the lecture comprehension problem	Frequency of agreement (N=75)
1. Boredom after 20 minutes of the lecture	71%
2. Difficulty of understanding English pronunciation of some teachers	61%
3. My answers during exams depend basically on personal translation of content rather than understanding from lectures.	61%
4. Variation in English instructors' accents influences my comprehension	58%
5. Lecturing is the commonly used style of teaching	58%
6. Speed of teachers in talking during lectures	46%
7. Instructors do not get feedback about whether we understand or not	46%
8. Teachers do not use interactive style of teaching. They rather talk alone throughout the lecture.	41%

## 5.2. Students

The second category is related to the students' attitude, habits, level of proficiency, etc. as reasons for lecture comprehension problems. The most striking answer by the majority of students (71%) is noticed in their frank agreement with the statement that asks whether they attend lectures basically to avoid deprivation in the final exams. Students' weakness in their linguistic proficiency is considered by 46% of the participants as an important factor in academic lecture comprehension breakdown. 45% of the study subjects agree with absent-mindedness as a cause for comprehension problems. Some students are absent-minded during lectures perhaps due to the style of teaching discussed above and probably because they usually do not have early nights before coming to lectures, a fact that is supported by 35% of the participants. The background knowledge of students in content courses is considered by 39% of the students a reason for suffering academic lecture comprehension problems.

**Table 2.** Student-based reasons behind lecture comprehension problems

Reasons behind lecture comprehension problem	Frequency of agreement (N=75)
1. Attendance to avoid deprivation in final exams	69%
2. Weakness in linguistic proficiency	47%
3. Absent-mindedness during lectures (Concentration)	45%
4. Insufficient background (schemata) knowledge	39%
5. Late nights before coming to lectures	35%

## 5.3. Content

The participants in this research expressed their concern about the huge quantity of content they receive in fifty minutes time which is the duration of most of the academic lectures in Saudi higher education. 66% of them consider the amount of information they are required to grasp in one lecture beyond their comprehension capacity. Moreover, 43% of the subjects face the difficulty of understanding the English of content courses textbooks. This concern validates the weakness in students' language proficiency factor discussed above and their resort to translation of textbooks from English into Arabic in order to understand the content.

## 5.4. Program

One of the basic challenges of listening to academic lectures is related to training in academic listening. 37% of the study participants claim they were not trained how to be good listeners in academic lectures. Though English programs at Saudi universities train students on general listening skills, special training in academic listening does not exist.

The second major question of the present study attempts to explore the impact of using metacognitive strategies on lecture comprehension in an EFL learners' setting. After the identification of the potential causes of academic listening problems, the researcher conducted an experiment based on metacognitive and social strategies with an aim to maximize comprehension possibilities. According to Oxford (2003) "...strategies imply conscious movement toward a language goal." The goal of employing such strategies is enhancing academic listening comprehension. After six weeks of this experiment (see procedures in the method above) the students were asked to reflect on the experience and how they benefitted from the new structuring of the academic lecture (30 minutes for presenting the lecture, 10 minutes for students' peer discussion and peer questioning, and the last 10 minutes for a quiz). The majority of the students find the experience very useful in enhancing comprehension. Very few students do not like the experience due to some personal reasons. The results presented here will be explained in the discussion section below.

## 6. Discussion

The results of the study will be interpreted in the discussion section below. The discussion will attempt to provide interpretations to the factors affecting lecture listening comprehension and explore how the metacognitive strategies adopted by the researcher can contribute to enhance lecture listening comprehension.

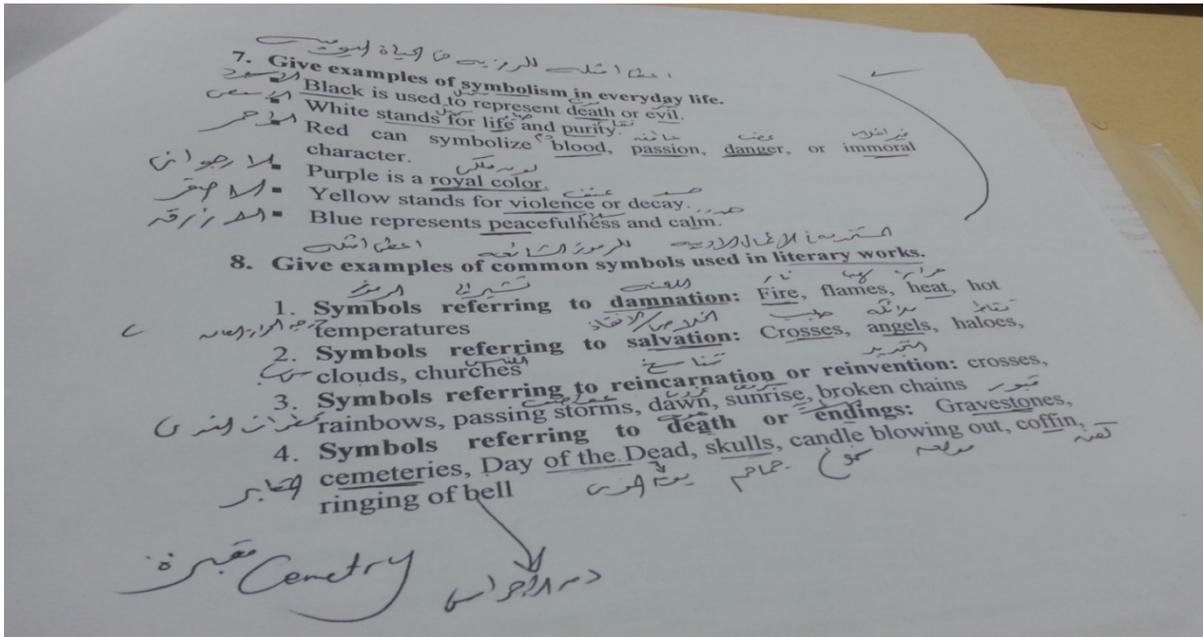
### 6.1. Factors Affecting Lecture Listening Comprehension

Answers to the first question of this study are associated with the cognitive processing phase of meaning construction and the obstacles that make comprehension difficult. Boredom is a common phenomenon during lectures that are not engaging. Sparks (2012) argues that "... a student who is bored cannot focus attention to engage in the class activity. A dry lecture style or an uninteresting topic might trigger boredom." The fact that the majority of the participants in this study feel bored after 20 minutes in a lecture is a sufficient indicator that boredom is the major challenge and it seems to be connected with most other factors discussed in this research. The difficulty of understanding some teachers' pronunciation caused by variation in individual accents and/or speech rate during lectures is claimed by the EFL students of this study to hinder lecture comprehension. EFL students at King Khalid University are taught by instructors belonging to 13 different nationalities coming from different backgrounds (Arabs and Non-Arabs), namely Algerians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Saudis, Sudanese, Syrians, Yemenis, Americans, Bangladeshis, Indians, Pakistanis, Romanians, and South Africans. In an investigation of listening comprehension problems encountered by Saudi EFL students, Hamouda (2013) states that "variety of accents causes difficulties to students in listening comprehension since they do not have enough exposure to different accents." This finding is also in line with Rahimirad and Moini (2015).

The speed of lecture delivery is another important factor in lecture comprehension. According to Hamouda (2013), the number one problem that the students viewed as obstructing to their comprehension was undoubtedly the pace of speech rate. Griffith (1990) claims that the speed of delivery requires a great deal of work in a restricted time, and that comprehension is significantly better at the lowest speech rate and worse at the highest rates. Quick speech rate means great amount of information processing within a short period of time which is a challenge by itself, particularly when the students exhibit obvious signs of weakness in their linguistic proficiency. For listeners with controlled (not automatic) processing, comprehension will suffer. As speech becomes faster, they will not have sufficient time for processing everything. Word recognition is one of the most salient features of difficulty for L2 listeners (Rost 2005). Native English speaking instructors pose a potential comprehension threat to EFL learners, who are rarely exposed to native English accents outside the classroom.

When students agree that their answers during exams depend basically on personal translation of content rather than understanding from lectures, this is an indicator of a severe lecture comprehension problem. The picture below provides evidence of how many EFL students depend heavily on L1 as a learning strategy to understand literature content.

*A picture showing how much of translation into Arabic in content courses is practiced by Saudi EFL students at King Khalid University.*



The picture above is an illustration of this behavior captured from a student handout. Such behavior does not encourage students to concentrate more during the lecture as they believe that translation facilitates learning, which is not always true.

Monologic lecturing is reported by 58% to be a potential source of comprehension problems. Morell (2004) emphasizes that "Interactive lectures play an important role in improving comprehension and in enhancing communicative competence in the English language for EFL university students taking content lecture courses." Participatory lecturing will help in eliciting students' feedback about the lecture and will create an interactive environment that enhances lecture comprehension.

As for the factors involving students, interest is the most prominent factor to be investigated. 69% of the participants agreed with the statement that says "I attend classes basically to avoid deprivation from sitting for the final exams." Compulsory attendance in higher education does not always improve academic achievement. According to Clair (1999), "The empirical research findings of the relationship between class attendance or attendance policies and academic achievement are equivocal." Students who attend lectures mainly to avoid deprivation in the final exams are not motivated to listen for comprehension.

The other major sources of academic listening comprehension problems in an EFL setting according to the data collected in the present study are the students' weaknesses in their linguistic proficiency as well as their insufficient background knowledge or the relevant schema for the lecture they listen to. Lecture comprehension is said to be a decoding process. It is a process of constructing meaning and interpreting what the spoken language is about. For comprehension to take place both bottom-up processing and top-down processing are required. Due to students' weaknesses in linguistic proficiency and communicative competence, they spend much time at the bottom-up processing stage trying to decode the spoken messages at the phonemic, lexical and syntactic levels only. Spoken discourse requires automatic processing in order to be comprehended (Rost, 2005). On the other hand, top-down processing emphasizes the prominence of background knowledge already possessed by the learners in making sense of the information they hear (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011). Prior knowledge can facilitate learners' attempt to grasp the received information by connecting the familiar with the new. Significant lack of such knowledge can hinder their efforts to comprehend.

Difficulty in concentration is one of the problems EFL students in this study believe they face. They agreed with the statements of absent-mindedness (45%) and insufficient sleep the night before the lecture (35%).

This finding is also confirmed by Flowerdew and Miller (1992). The students in this study reported similar problems in their diaries such as, "I sometimes aware [sic] of myself in day-dreaming and I failed to catch up with the new teaching points; It is hard to concentrate in the lesson with only one mode of stimulus i.e. lecturing; I did not sleep well the night before so I cannot pay much attention in this lecture, etc." A student who lacks concentration in class due to sleepless nights and many other reasons, including the ones this study has highlighted, will definitely encounter a lecture comprehension difficulty.

Although a human mind has the capacity to store a huge amount of information, not much of this input can be transferred into intake. The subjects in this study might be right in their claim that they receive too much information, which is beyond their comprehension capacity for one class. Instructors in the EFL programs at Saudi universities are guided by a course syllabus in which the content to be covered every week is specified. They are required to submit course reports at the end of every semester where they have to mention whether they managed to teach the stipulated content. No research has been conducted to find out whether the amount of content EFL students receive in three months' time which is the actual teaching period, suits their comprehension capacity. The same data elicited from the students in the current research shows that they complain not only about the quantity of content but also about the conceptual level of the English of the content courses they take.

The last reason for comprehension difficulty is a direct accusation that the program fails to train the students on proper academic listening strategies. Wilson (2014) argues that "Explicit instruction on cognitive strategies that can help students learn *how* to learn may have a positive impact on both academic performance and classroom management by emphasizing that students are in charge of their own behavior and learning." Explicit strategy training would assist EFL university students in developing their listening skills and improve their lecture-listening comprehension (Moradi, 2012). The participants in the current research take four general EFL listening courses. There is no emphasis on training the students on academic lecture listening comprehension, which is very crucial to any higher education program as the literature indicates.

## **6.2. Metacognitive and Social Strategies Adopted to Enhance Lecture Listening Comprehension**

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define three steps to use as strategies when developing a teaching task. First, the task is planned. This planning gets participants engaged with the material. Next, the task is monitored which allows participants to examine, regulate, and manage their comprehension. In the final step, participants self-evaluate task comprehension. These steps can address the fact that short-term memory requires time to process the sensory input we receive. Students are not sponges and cannot immediately "absorb" new information. They should be given short breaks throughout the lecture to review their notes and ask questions. A short break that includes students' questions can also give the lecturer an opportunity to assess student understanding and adjust the remaining part of the lecture if needed (Reis, 2014). Metacognitive strategies in lecture mode instruction are attempts to plan, check, monitor, select, revise and evaluate during the teaching-learning situation to enhance the learning process and maximize lecture comprehension. The instructor divided the lecture into three parts: part 1 for content presentation; part 2 for reciprocal discussion and questioning among students in pairs; and part 3 for assessment of students' gain from the lecture. The students were informed of this lecture structure that lasted for 6 weeks. Then their perceptions of attitude towards this intervention were explored in semi-structured interviews. Below are some of the transcribed responses of the students after the six weeks experiment with the new style of teaching that focuses on metacognitive and social strategies to promote lecture comprehension:

The students reported that the new method of teaching "is very effective", "increases lecture comprehension", "provides an opportunity for effective communication", "helps in directing our focus towards the lecture, urging us to follow the teacher and concentrate, identifying important points of the

lesson, making students more lively, increasing lecture comprehension." A student added, "If all teachers follow this method, I would have graduated earlier." Further benefits reported are that "students' attention is raised; they are kept alert throughout the lecture; they must take notes, provided that students get marks for the quiz." Morell (2004) argues that interactive lectures play an important role in improving comprehension and in enhancing communicative competence in the English language for EFL university students taking content lecture courses.

This method has also been reported to assist the students in their study. They can now make "just quick revision before midterm and final exams", "revising lessons before exams have become easier" because comprehension is better with this style of teaching. The social strategy of pair or group discussion was liked by the participants. They state that "it helps in getting rid of fear and shyness. In this case, discussing with a classmate is better and more reassuring for students. Students' way of thinking is different from teachers' way of thinking; you may miss something that your classmate caught; it increases communication and socialization among students; students share with the teachers their job." King (1991) believes that in most cooperative learning groups, each learner participates to the extent possible so that collaboratively the group reaches a level of understanding and accomplishment not possible by any individual group member. Generally, this method of teaching "improves students' interest in the course"; "helpful if the lecture time does not exceed 25 minutes" and "there must be a quiz after discussion otherwise it will turn into mere gossip." These findings confirm Selamat & Sidhu, (2011) whose study reveals that the students perceive the metacognitive strategy instruction training helpful in improving EFL lecture listening skills and in enabling them to be more effective in extracting information from lectures.

On the other hand, a few students did not like the experience. One student said, "It does not help me. It is not important." Another student said, "It is not important. I am used to discussing things with myself." A third participant preferred the discussion time to be with the teacher, not with the peers. One student expressed his doubt about the success of this method because of the social barriers that exist between students. The researcher agrees with this student's concern as it has been observed through experience of teaching in the EFL setting at King Khalid University that the degree of socialization among students is weak and relationship among students is formal.

## **7. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The present study has investigated the factors affecting lecture listening comprehension in an EFL setting at King Khalid University and the metacognitive and social strategies adopted by the author/instructor to enhance his students' listening comprehension to lectures. The factors that affect students' listening comprehension pertain to teachers and teaching, students themselves, content of the courses and the program itself. It is very obvious from the data that the teaching methods followed are generally based on lecturing and characterized by little interaction, speed of delivery, variation in English accents used by teachers of different backgrounds, etc. All these factors have contributed to a challenging learning environment, where comprehension of lectures becomes a problem to EFL learners. The metacognitive and social intervention designed to help students overcome these challenges proved useful and effective. The students voiced clearly the cognitive benefits they gained from this lecture design.

The study findings call for the following recommendations:

- A paradigm shift in the teaching methods currently followed by instructors is mandatory and focusing on metacognitive and social strategies as suggested in the experiment conducted by the researcher can contribute to expediting this shift.
- Furthermore, students' linguistic and communicative proficiency should be given special care. The first four semesters that train EFL students on English language skills should be reviewed for quality and effectiveness in achieving the English program stated outcomes. It has been observed that the level of

students' English does not qualify them to do well in processing content courses of Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, and Literature which they usually start taking from level five and above after completing the skill courses.

- In addition, it is highly recommended that these strategies for training the EFL students in academic lecture listening comprehension should be incorporated into the program design so that their implementation becomes mandatory.
- Periodic evaluation of program design and delivery can guarantee the quality of teaching and learning and consequently the quality of programs products.
- Training students on effective learning strategies are necessary in such environments and it has proved its effectiveness in improving students' performance (Martinez, 2006).
- English programs need to reconsider their recruitment policies by hiring highly-qualified professors and providing comprehensive orientation to the new faculty.

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