Research Article

Metacognitive Skill Exercise and Second Language Acquisition: A Study

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Abstract: Metacognition is the recent buzzing word which is often used to the understanding of English Language Teaching (ELT). Metacognitive skill exercise is now being widely studied as an important factor of Second Language Acquisition. As it is known to many, Second Language Acquisition is not solitary event. It optimises a professional drive in the learners, and at the same time it even involves the mind and its cognition of the same. Metacognition has its various complicated dimensions in the field of psycholinguistics. The investigator of the study has chosen to proceed with some simple metacognitive habits of the learner in typical P.G. classroom settings. This article introduces simple outlines of various layers of metacognitive exercise. This research article secondarily intends to bridge an understanding between Second Language Acquisition and its relation to the cognitive domain of the learners. The investigator of the study further aims to comprehend the apparent relation between metacognitive exercise of the learner and its effects on Second Language Acquisition.

Keywords: Cognitive Domain, Metacognition, Metacognitive Exercise, Second Language Acquisition.

INTRODUCTION:

The globe cannot resist its expansion to a global village as many technological wonders made it so. Rapid extension of communication, network and change invited transformation at every scale. Indigenous language, cultures and ethnicity are greatly disturbed with the importation of new. Some may address this as the perils of globalization. But there is another side of the transformation as a counter opinion equally runs so strongly. Firstly, globalization has opened up unlimited opportunities to the access to knowledge around the world. This wide access to knowledge gets obstructed if it meets language as barrier. In such situation, the quest for learning another language, which is other than mother tongue, has rocketed sky high. Civilization has passed the bad memories of colonization and post-colonial oppression centuries ago. Now a day, people strongly believe in the liberal exchange of everything like knowledge and language. As it is mentioned already, exchange of knowledge is the key to global expansion. Secondly, the medium of knowledge exchange is not set forth by the people who are seeking to enrich the self. Thereby, superior knowledge access gets possible when one learns their language. Thirdly, people are fond of cultivating new habits, manners and cultures. One badly feels the need of swallowing a second language not out of exclusive enthusiasm, but some certain professional needs and drives that work in him. The third important word is professional or professional need which is also reconfigured from superior cultural resources. Earlier language learner was a matter of whim and enthusiasm. Now, globalization has made it a professional and compelling need of the hour. Learning a second language is always a charming experience that set the mind and the drives under some certain regulatory skill exercise. In the last three decades, studies are conducted around the globe to get the true picture of these regulatory skill practices. The present study focuses on the regulatory skill practices like metacognitive exercise and its effects on second language acquisition.

Significance of the Study:

The world may grow old but this offers new habits for cultivation. Second Language Acquisition is the best among the picking of habits. If second language learning is about behaviour or habit cultivation, this raises many such interrogations: What makes one to pick a new language? What happens within when one aims to cultivate a new language? The investigator of the study intends to form an understanding regarding behavioural changes that one experiences during the picking of a new language. Again, this sets some inquisitions like: What does one learn during the learning a new language? Some sets of rules or principles? The present study wants to direct these issues like these. Learning a new language or a second language is always an entertaining journey. This involves many such internal regulatory skill practices like metacognition. The present investigation will spend longer time in addressing the fact if second language learning is a process of internalization of certain newly acquired rules or sets of language learning principles that a learner cultivates first, then sets a standard, and then regularly observes the true execution of these.

Defining Metacognitive Skill Exercise:

Metacognition is a very popular and widely used buzzword in the field of psycholinguistics. *Collins Dictionary* defines metacognition as "thinking about one's mental processes". *Merriam Webster* notes metacognition as a kind of "awareness or analysis of one's own learning or thinking processes". John Flavell coined the term 'metamemory' in 1970. Later, he conducted groundbreaking research on metacognition. Flavell defined metacognition as "knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena". Flavell and his followers made extensive researches in the field of metacognition. In course of the ground breaking studies, they invited coinages like metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences. John Dunlosky and Janet Metcalfe (2009) reported that "metacognitive experiences are those cognitive tasks, and are most closely aligned with metacognitive monitoring". Matt Jarvis (2005) added some important dimensions of metacognition. He quotes that Metacognition involves both knowledge of cognitive processing (how am I thinking about this?) and the conscious monitoring of that processing (would it be better if I thought about this differently?). During 1985, Flavell reported three types of metacognitive knowledge: Personal knowledge, Task Knowledge and Strategy knowledge.
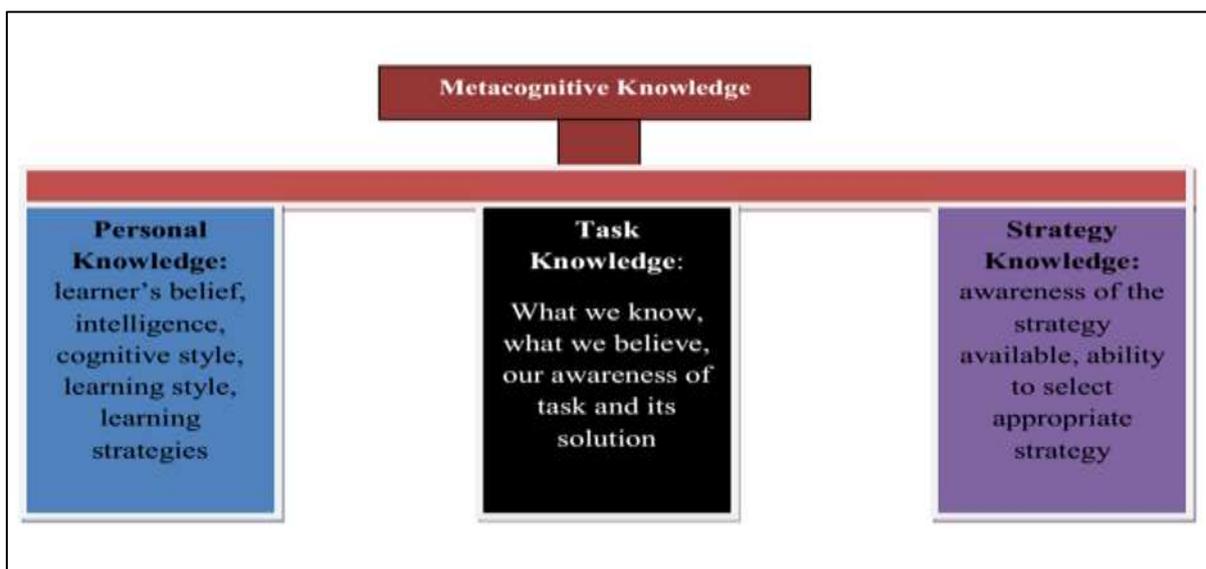
Flavell's idea of metacognitive knowledge and its all three dimensions can together be termed as metacognitive exercise. He never separately used the used term metacognitive exercise. For the present study, the researcher has decided to proceed with all three dimensions of metacognitive knowledge which we can call here, for the time being, as metacognitive exercise.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

A traveller without destination never reaches the same. The investigator of the present study has some certain objectives which are stated below:

➢ To get an idea of new language learning principles in ordinary classroom setting.
➢ To understand how learners set it as regulatory principles and abide by these.
➢ To examine if these language learning principles can be read as metacognitive exercise.
➢ To explore the possibilities if these language learning metacognitive skill exercise can be regularized.
➢ To develop certain strategies so that this language learning metacognitive skill exercise can sustained for long.

➢ To critically note that if these language learning metacognitive skill exercise can be perfected over a period of time.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The investigator in the present study has configured some research question to directly address the problems:

➢ Does language learning involve metacognitive skill exercise?
➢ Can this metacognitive skill exercise be called regulatory principles?
➢ Is it possible to conduct language learning metacognitive skill exercise in ordinary classroom setting?
➢ Is language learning metacognitive skill exercise is a habit formation?
➢ How is language learning metacognitive skill exercise set as regulatory self-guiding principles?
➢ Does language learning metacognitive skill exercise make new language picking easy and possible?
➢ Which are the language learning metacognitive skill exercises that can be improved and sustained in ordinary classroom setting?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Literature review is a must-to-do thing in research checklists to get into the right pathway. Serious studies on metacognitive skill use started in the 1970s. But the classroom level application of the metacognitive skill practices gained importance in the last decades. Goh (1997) reported that among the four major parameters of second language learning the listening skill was recorded with improving graph among the learners who were maintaining diaries. The study also reveals that through diary writing the learners were having clear ideas on second language listening and strategies of second language listening which are broadly counted as metacognitive awareness. This proposes that through diary writing and other secondary activities, the metacognitive skill of the language learners can be enhanced. Hyte (2002) conducted a study to investigate the effects of a metacognitive language learning strategy training program that was based on computer-assisted language learning. The study reported a positive effect of computer-assisted language learning program on the metacognitive strategy application of fast learners. Karbalaei (2011) examined the importance of metacognition on the reading comprehension of the learners. The study reported that the readers' metacognitive awareness level had significant impact upon their reading comprehension. The study also revealed that in the application level metacognition had larger implication than it was assumed to be. Lavasani (2011) closely examined the language learning strategies of the learners on their second language learning process. The study showed that language learning strategies have significant and positive effect on the communicating competence of the learners. The study further recorded that the teacher with better academic knowledge and application can ensure stronger metacognitive strategy implementation among the learners. Rahimi (2012) reported that metacognitive strategy awareness has significant relation on the foreign language learning. The study noted that metacognitive awareness enables the learners to apply cognitive resources better with effectiveness. Raoofi et al. (2014) investigated an empirical research on metacognition in the language learning. The study reported that 'metacognitive interventions have the possibility to promote' the language learning performance. The study mentioned roles of other related factors that ensure the success of metacognitive strategy awareness during language learning. Knoph (2017) studied the relation between language learning and metacognitive in regard to classroom settings. The study reported the immense possibility that metacognition and metacognitive strategy awareness both on the part of the teacher and learner can secure better language learning experience. Kolarie (2017) investigated metacognitive strategy awareness among the young learners of English. The study summed up that young learners of English language have the sufficient level of metacognitive strategy awareness but they do not know the proper time to use the same.

Rathnyake (2018) examined requisite metacognitive elements and its input through the exploration of language learner's cognitive characteristics. The study revealed the presence of metacognitive strategies among the learners through their feelings and judgements. The summary of the literature review poses positive and immense possibilities that are yet to be explored.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Population of the Study:

All the P.G. Students of Department of English of Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University of Purulia, West Bengal of the academic session 2017-2019 are considered as the population of the study.

Sample and Sampling:

The investigator for the present study random selected 34 students (N=34) as the sample of the study. Among them, 21 were female and 13 were male from odd and even semesters (Female=21 & Male =13).

Development of the Tools:

For the present study, the researcher developed a pool of some ten questions regarding metacognitive exercise that covered almost all the important dimensions of metacognitive knowledge as recommended by Flavell. The investigator designed these following questions to meet a scheduled interview:

1. Do you deeply think before you approach a reading passage?
2. Do you believe strongly that you can successfully solve the passage?
3. Do you think that you have enough intelligence to work out the given passage?
4. Do not you think that your learning style is unique from others?
5. Are you aware of the seriousness of the task?
6. Are you aware of what you are reading?
7. Is your confidence enough to solve the given text?
8. Do you think that you have strategy to solve the text?
9. Do you think that you are able to select appropriate solving strategy?
10. Are you confident to execute the strategy as it requires?

Collection Procedure:

As it was programmed earlier, a scheduled interview was arranged. The investigator completed the scheduled interview in four separate sessions. Each respondent was given 15 minutes for answering these scheduled questions. Each subject was minutely observed and questioned. Their response were recorded in due manner. The investigator of the present study accommodated this interview sessions on the weekend so that the respondent does have the burden of their classroom task. Almost a month was invested to complete this interview. Later, the response sheet of

each respondent was separately collected for further study.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:
Q.1 Do you deeply think before you approach a reading passage?

Among 34 respondents, almost each one, irrespective of male or female, responded that they have developed a habit of thinking deeply before approaching a text or a passage. Around 11 respondents reported that earlier they had the fear before they approach any passage in English. They further mentioned that this kind of fear was extreme when they were at elementary level. This interview further reveals that this fear of approaching English passage was very common among the students who studied in Bengali medium schools. The interview also disclosed that the more they spent time with English passage the more their confidence grew.

Q.2 Do you believe strongly that you can successfully solve the passage?

This was the second interrogation in the scheduled interview. Almost everybody responded positively that they believe that they can successfully work out the passage. When they were further interrogated how can they be so confident in solving the problem? Around 23 respondents reported that they had gained the confidence from their classroom level motivation and practices. The interview also displayed that the confidence and believe arose out regular practice and classroom level motivation. So, the metacognitive personal knowledge related to belief and confidence is greatly controlled by exercise and motivation.

Q.3 Do you think that you have enough intelligence to work out the given passage?

The scheduled interview revealed various reactions during the asking of this third question. Surprisingly, it was noted that almost all male respondents reported that they have enough intelligence to solve the given passage. On the other hand, 14 female respondents out of 21 replied in affirmation. The rest of the female respondent were confused and did not show any remarkable reaction. The investigator digs the matter further. The male participants who responded positively were asked if they can articulate anything on intelligence. Only two responded had the clearer perception of intelligence whereas other male respondents replied positively that they have enough intelligence to work out any English passage only to save their self-esteem.

Q.4 Do not you think that your learning style is unique from others?

The fourth question of the interview was regarding their learning style. The respondents were puzzled when they were mentioned learning style. The interviewer thought it fit to explain them further. When the coinage 'learning style' was simplified, the respondents were comfortable in their reply. Around 7 male respondents answered that they generally get into the matter and comprehend the same. We can call this healthy digesting. On the other hand, majority of the female respondents replied that they learn something simply the committing the same into memory. When memorization fails, they frequently write on exercise book, and thus become comfortable with the matter. The interview reports that the male learners have habit of understanding level learning style whereas the female learners have memory level learning style. The study further discloses that the male student have unique learning style whereas the female learners are traditional in learning style.

Q.5 Are you aware of the seriousness of the task?

Seriousness of the task was the key word of fifth question in the scheduled interview. The study revealed that the 13 female students irrespective of their capacity or intelligence mentioned that whenever they come across English passage they get serious and alert. This interview did not have scope to check the past performances of the female students, but as their narration goes they show adequate seriousness to English passage. On the other hand, among 31 male respondents, only 5 reported that they show ample seriousness to English passage. When the reason was interrogated, they mentioned that they believe that good score in English language will give a final push to their career advancement. Other male respondents were not willing to state the reason behind their lack of seriousness.

Q.6 Are you aware of what you are reading?

Perhaps, this was the most alarming question of the interview. Almost all the respondents reported that they are all aware of what they read. At this juncture, the respondents were also asked the frequency of reading of single passage. They reported that they read a single passage 7 to 9 times a day. This refers to the fact that though they are aware of what they read but their comprehension power may be slow.

Q.7 Is your confidence enough to solve the given text?

Confidence to solve is another important key word regarding metacognitive exercise. 10 out of 21 female respondents mentioned during the interview that they have enough confidence to approach any passage in English and to solve it. The rest of the female respondents were heisted to deliver anything. On the other hand, all the male respondents showed ample confidence in solving any passage in English. What they mentioned at last was that they require sufficient time to solve the same. During the course of this interview, the investigator closely recorded the response time of each respondent. The female respondents took lesser time to respond than their male counterparts. This delayed response on the part of the male respondents

clearly indicates that they lack balanced operational and definitional knowledge of metacognition.

Q.8 Do you think that you have strategy to solve the text?

The respondents positively answered that they have strategy to solve the given text. But what happened with all of them that they were not in condition to define their strategy knowledge. They frequently mentioned that when text will be supplied to them the strategy will automatically appear to them. The study showed that the respondents did not have definitional knowledge regarding problem solving strategy, but they can apply when occasion calls.

Q.9 Do you think that you are able to select appropriate solving strategy?

The eighth question of the interview was regarding the ability to select appropriate solving strategy. The female respondents all agreed that they have ability to select appropriate solving strategy. They also mentioned that they do this on the basis of the previous experiences. They also mentioned that they do not try anything new. Rather, they went on repeating the strategy with which they familiar as well as comfortable. In contradiction to this, the approaches of the male respondents were surprisingly different. In familiar circumstances, they repeat their old strategy to solve problem whereas in unfamiliar circumstances, they experiment with new strategy to solve problem. The study yields that male students are more innovative in connection to apply problem solving strategy than their female counter parts. The study further reveals that the male students are risk takers whereas female students are risk averse in regard to the selection of appropriate problem solving strategy.

Q.10 Are you confident to execute the strategy when requires?

In the final question of the scheduled interview, almost every respondent was individually asked if they were familiar with metacognition or metacognitive strategy knowledge. Surprisingly, all replied in negation. So, the study reveals that the respondents do not have either definitional knowledge of metacognition or metacognitive strategy or word level familiarity with these terminologies. All the female respondents answered in affirmation that they can execute right metacognitive strategy when it requires. On the other hand, the male respondents provided a mixed response. Some five male respondents positively responded that they know how to apply metacognitive strategy accordingly.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Though metacognition and metacognitive knowledge were remote terminologies for the respondents, the study revealed that almost all the respondents were acquainted with the usage of the same. The investigation further reported that in regard to personal knowledge of metacognition the female students showed higher enthusiasm and confidence. The awareness level regarding metacognitive task knowledge and strategy knowledge were almost equal among male and female respondents. Irrespective of male and female, all showed that their operational knowledge of metacognition and metacognitive exercise were higher than their definitional knowledge. The study also yielded that female respondents were traditional and risk averse in term of their metacognitive strategy application whereas the male respondents were innovation and open minded in term of their metacognitive strategy application and innovation. The male students were innovative as well as risk-takers.

CONCLUSION:

In the final observation, this can be stated that if the confidence level of the learners is supported and encouraged properly and regularly, their metacognitive personal knowledge can be boosted. Secondly, the students who are lacking definitional knowledge of metacognitive task knowledge and strategy knowledge, if supported properly, they can perform better. Thirdly, as the female respondents were less innovative, this can also be worked on. If they are properly provided the definitional as well as operational knowledge and freedom, they can equal the male respondents, and sometimes they can exceed their male counterparts. Finally, metacognitive strategy selection is a great issue both for male and female learners. In classroom setting, if such metacognitive strategy selection exercise is done on periodic basis, this can also be improved. The investigator of the present study concludes that the second language acquisition is positively related to metacognitive task knowledge and strategy knowledge. This can be worked on in regular classroom setting if the classroom teacher has the good wishes to do so.

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