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## Book Reviews

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### **Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action**

*Larry Vandergrift and Christine C.M. Goh*

New York: Routledge, 2012, 315 pages

Listening in a second language (L2) is often described as an individual, passive activity, and consequently, L2 teachers provide their learners with limited instruction on how to develop L2 listening skills. However, listening is a highly active cognitive process that requires explicit instruction. In *Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action*, Larry Vandergrift and Christine C.M. Goh present a comprehensive metacognitive approach to listening instruction that draws on the tenets of sociocultural and cognitive theories of L2 development. Their overarching aim is to bring metacognition to the forefront of L2 listening instruction, operationalized as “the ability of learners to control their thoughts and to regulate their own learning” (p. 5).

The textbook, designed primarily for future L2 teachers, is thematically organized into three parts. Part I presents the historical and theoretical backgrounds of L2 listening research. Following a brief overview of previous orientations to listening instruction, the authors build on a learner-oriented approach and propose a holistic, metacognitive approach (Chapter 1). They then discuss the cognitive processes at work during L2 listening (Chapter 2) and subsequently introduce their metacognitive model of listening comprehension (Chapter 3). Part I concludes with a discussion of social and cognitive factors that affect success in listening comprehension (Chapter 4). Part II provides empirical support and practical suggestions for implementing a metacognitive approach. The authors focus on *metacognition in action* (Chapter 5), which stipulates that learners must think and act on their cognition individually and in collaboration with their peers. The authors then introduce a pedagogical sequence (Chapter 6), which includes planning, monitoring comprehension, problem-solving, and evaluation of approaches/outcomes. Readers will benefit from pedagogical recommendations such as self-directed and guided pre- and post-listening activities that extend beyond the classroom (Chapter 7). Part II concludes with the application of metacognition in action to the instruction of micro listening skills (Chapter 8) as well as within larger pedagogical sequences: task-based listening (Chapter 9) and extensive listening (Chapter 10). In Part III, an in-depth overview of recent and future areas of research regarding the use of

multimedia is presented (Chapter 11). Finally, building on the notion that formative and summative assessment practices are complementary (Chapter 12), process and product-oriented assessment tasks are introduced.

Overall, this textbook is a valuable contribution to the field of L2 teacher education in the area of listening instruction. Drawing on past and present approaches to listening instruction, the authors propose a learner-oriented metacognitive approach that actively engages learners in the process of becoming self-regulated and self-reliant L2 listeners. Readers will become familiar with principles of sociocultural theory in addition to cognitive approaches and will thus be in a position to develop individual and collaborative tasks that foster critical metacognitive skills such as predicting, verifying, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating progress.

The authors draw extensively on current and relevant research that supports the content and ideas for their approach. For example, over the last two decades, researchers in the field of second-language acquisition (SLA) have demonstrated the positive effect of task-based instruction in L2 learning. In Chapters 9 and 10, the authors draw explicitly on task-based approaches to illustrate how to use pedagogical tasks and extended listening projects to foster learners' ability to interact in authentic settings. In addition to introducing a wide range of meaning-centered, goal-oriented tasks with real-world relationships, the authors discuss elements to consider when selecting tasks as well as how to scaffold tasks before and after the listening process. These ideas can serve to bridge a perceived gap between research-oriented SLA and L2 teaching pedagogy.

The 12 chapters that comprise this textbook follow a format that engages the reader and fosters reflectivity and critical thinking throughout: an approach that is in line with their pedagogical model. Each chapter begins with an authentic classroom-based scenario that reflects the chapter's focus, along with pre-reading reflective questions. Each chapter concludes with a summary, discussion activities, and additional readings. Readers with limited classroom-based experience will benefit from the numerous tasks and worksheets provided. In addition, the authors encourage readers to reflect on their beliefs and assumptions about L2 listening instruction (Prologue), which are later revisited and discussed in the light of the contents of the book (Epilogue). This short, yet effective reflective exercise encourages future teachers to engage in reflective practices about pedagogy, a practice that needs to be fostered in teacher education programs.

*Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action* is a great resource to be used in teacher education programs as well as by current teachers who may be less familiar with explicit and structured metacognitive listening instruction in their classroom. Given the central theme of this text, it may be difficult for teacher educators who are teaching general methodology courses to adopt this book, as the listening instruction focus

may be too specialized. Despite this caveat, I strongly recommend that educators include this book as required reading in future methodology courses, as it draws on current research and socio-cognitive perspectives of language instruction. It is imperative that future teachers have an extensive knowledge base about how to teach L2 listening skills because listening ability is a core skill that can guarantee learners' success in an L2. In sum, this book is a great teaching resource for preservice and inservice teachers seeking to foster reflective and metacognitive skills in L2 learners.

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### *The Reviewer*

Caroline Payant is an assistant professor in the MA TESL Program at the University of Idaho. Her research examines cognitive and sociocultural aspects of language acquisition with a focus on interaction through collaborative tasks. Caroline received her MA from the Universidad de las Américas Puebla and her doctorate in Applied Linguistics from Georgia State University.