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Metacognition's Effects on Language Acquisition in EFL pupils at the Preparatory Stage

A Research in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the PhD Degree in Education (TEFL)

(EFL Curriculum and Instruction)

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Abstract

This study sought to ascertain how the metacognition theory affected the language development skills of EFL students in the preparatory stage. 40 pupils from the Al Dar El Salam Directorate in the South Cairo District were the EFL pupils. A pre-posttest and a model response were used as the instruments to assess the impact of the suggested program based on metacognition on the development of the necessary language abilities in EFL pupils before and after the program. The study's findings suggested that the metacognition theory had a greater impact on pupils' language proficiency at the EFL preparatory level. The study proposed that, in order to maximize their effectiveness in the field, training programs, workshops, and continual language improvement should be used to improve the language performance of EFL students in the preparatory stage.

Keywords: metacognition, language skills and abilities.

Introduction

One of the most important languages for communication worldwide is English. It is imperative to pay more attention to the EFL skills generally as language skills components because it is crucial to teach the four main skills collectively. Since the middle of the 1970s, learning strategies have been at the forefront of research in EFL learning. Learning strategies are techniques that students consciously select to use in order to understand, remember, and apply information.

An essential cognitive ability that is crucial to language development is metacognition. It relates to one's capacity to consider and consider one's own cognitive processes, including one's learning methods and language comprehension. The development of metacognition can significantly enhance language growth in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in the preparation stage. This study will investigate how metacognition affects language acquisition in EFL pupils in the preparatory stage. First and foremost, it's critical to comprehend how metacognition plays a part in language learning. According to studies, language competency is more easily attained by learners who are more conscious of their own learning tactics and the language learning process (Wenden & Rubin, 1987). Metacognitive skills can help learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to adjust their learning strategies accordingly. This self-regulation can lead to increased motivation and a more effective language learning process.

The development of metacognition can be particularly difficult in the EFL setting. Pupils might not have had the same exposure to the language as native speakers, and they might not have faith in their capacity for successful communication. Nevertheless, studies have demonstrated

that metacognitive techniques can aid EFL students in overcoming these difficulties (Villalobos & Mora, 2018). For instance, pupils who can assess their own knowledge and take into account criticism from peers or teachers are more likely to advance in their language learning. Explicit instruction is one technique to encourage the growth of metacognition in EFL learners. This may entail educating students about various learning techniques, such as goal-setting, tracking progress, and self-evaluation (Cerezo et al., 2018). In addition, teachers can help learners to reflect on their own language learning experiences and identify areas for improvement. This reflective practice can help learners to develop a more holistic understanding of the language learning process. Another way to promote metacognition in EFL learners is through collaborative learning.

Working in groups can give students the chance to discuss their own learning methods and pick up knowledge from their colleagues (Sánchez, 2018). Learners who participate in collaborative learning can also improve their communication abilities, which are crucial for language development. Together, students may increase their self-assurance and sense of control over their education. Technology can aid EFL pupils in developing their metacognition skills. For instance, using digital resources like online forums or language learning apps can give students the chance to connect with other students and reflect on their own learning (Mihaljevi, Djigunovi, & Marinovi-incovi, 2016).

Technology can also give language learners immediate feedback on their proficiency levels, allowing them to track their own development and modify their study methods as necessary. In conclusion, language growth in EFL students in the preparatory stage can be significantly

impacted by the development of metacognition. Learners that have strong metacognitive abilities can self-regulate their learning, reflect on their own language learning experiences, and evaluate their learning strengths and deficiencies. Teachers can encourage the growth of metacognition in their EFL pupils by clear instruction, collaborative learning, and the use of technology. By doing this, students can improve their ability to learn a language and their level of confidence, leading to higher language competency.

Statement of the Problem

The study's issue can be summed up as a large proportion of EFL students in the preparatory stage having issues and difficulty using their English language abilities as well as a lack of performance in language competencies. Therefore, the researcher attempted to investigate how metacognition affected the language skills of the EFL pupils.

Purpose of the study

This study aimed to:

1- Identify the adequate advantages of using metacognition.
2- Indicate the features of the proposed program-based metacognition Development
in EFL pupils in the Preparatory Stage
3- 3-Explore the effect of the proposed program-based metacognition Development
in EFL pupils in the Preparatory Stage

Hypotheses of the Study

1-There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the pre-post-test of the study group (prep. Stage pupils) in overall language performance skills in favour of the post-test.

2-There are statistically significant differences at (0.05) level between the mean scores of the study group (Prep. Stage EFL pupils) on each of the macro and micro–Language performance pre-post-test in favor of the post-test.

Definition of the Terms:

A) Training Program

Bissessar, (2014: p. 39) defined a training program as "any planned program that provides opportunities for professional growth of members for the teaching staff in the school in order to improve the performance of each individual of them in his teaching".

Dayoub & Bashiruddin, (2011: p. 589:590) defined in-service training programs as "a process and a part of continuing education that helps the teacher to gain greater insight into teaching, broaden their knowledge and improve their skills and attitudes".

The training program **in this study** is described as the activities and processes provided for EFL Prep stage teachers employing metacognition to improve their language awareness and hence their teaching.

B) **Metacognition**

1- (Hasselgård 2018) defined metacognition as an awareness of and reflections about one's knowledge, experiences, emotions and learning in the contexts of language learning and teaching.

2- (Harris, Santangelo, & Graham, 2010) defined metacognition as knowledge and awareness of one's self that is made up of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge.

- The evaluation of one's own metacognition processes and performance, which includes self-management, meta mentation, meta-learning, and meta-components, is how the **researcher defines** metacognition.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Background of the study

Here are some related studies to EFL pupils in the preparatory stage:

Ekinci, S. O., & Balaman, U. (2020). The Effects of Graphic Organizers on EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension. International Online Journal of Education and Teaching,**.**

Salimi, F., & Keshavarz, M. H. (2019). The effect of using translation software on EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. International Journal of Language and Literature.

The authors of a study by Kuo et al. (2018) looked into how metacognitive strategy training affected the reading comprehension and metacognitive awareness of EFL learners. The study discovered that training in metacognitive strategies can enhance the reading comprehension and metacognitive awareness of EFL learners.

The authors of a study by Kramsch et al. (2015) looked into how to incorporate metacognitive strategy awareness training into an L2 curriculum. The study discovered that increasing learner awareness and reflection on their language learning activities promotes the growth of learner autonomy .

Author Farahian (2015) evaluated the metacognitive awareness of EFL students who were writing in a different study. The results of the study show that training in metacognitive awareness can enhance writing abilities in EFL pupils.

In a study by Vandergrift et al. (2010), the authors investigated the relationship between second language learners' metacognitive awareness and listening comprehension. The study found that metacognitive awareness is positively related to listening comprehension.

Al-Qahtani, M. (2015). The effect of using interactive multimedia on EFL learners' achievement in grammar. English Language Teaching.

Method

The present study adopted the quasi-experimental design using (one group for EFL pupils' pre-post treatment). The group was taught through a suggested program based on metacognition for Language Development in EFL pupils in the Preparatory Stage. The pre-post language performance test was administrated to the same group before and after the treatment.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of A group of forty EFL pupils of preparatory stage (males and females) who were randomly selected from Dar El Salam directorate – South Cairo district in the academic year 2022-2023. The EFL pupils' group presented the experimental group which was taught by using metacognition program.

Instruments of the Study

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the researcher designed the following instruments:

1. Pre-posttest.

The pupils' language performance test

For the purpose of the current investigation, a pre-post language performance test was created by the researcher. Its purpose was to gauge the first-year preparatory pupils' proficiency in language performance. It was carried out both before and after the program's treatment to assess how well the suggested program, which is based on metacognition, affected teachers' performance in the classroom (see Appendix).

The following processes were considered when developing the pre-posttest:

1. A language proficiency test should have a manageable length and be simple to complete.

2. The test items should, to the greatest extent feasible, be familiar to the students. This signifies that the assignments are comparable to those found in the students' workbook and text book.

3. The test's items should be diversified to allow students a variety of chances to demonstrate their proficiency and gauge their level of language proficiency.

The following guidelines were used to construct the test by the researcher, who based it on the following ideas:

1. The textbook and workbook for the students, New Hello 1. 2. The textbook for the teacher, New Hello 1. 3. A review of the prior research on studies looking at the acquisition of EFL language abilities.

4- The procedural goals of teaching EFL skills that are specified in the Ministry of Education's guidelines (2022-2023) for students in first-year preparation classes.

Both the pre-test and the post-test were administered using identical techniques. The purpose of this exam, to assess participants' competency in the English language, was made clear to participants in advance. The key sign of the success

of utilizing a program based on metacognition to increase EFL preparatory stage teachers' language awareness and its efficacy on their students was a comparison between the pupils' results on the pre-test and the post-test. The study's pre-test was conducted at the start of September 2022. The post-test was carried out in the second half of December 2023, about 10 weeks after the intended program had been used.

Description of the test

The test was designed by the researcher. It includes four divisions. The final form of the language performance test according to the jury's suggestions consisted of three main stages; warm-up, main interview, and winding down. The main interview included four parts in the language performance test. The first task aimed at measuring "reading comprehension skills "including five questions, and task two aimed at measuring "language use skills" including ten questions . The third part aimed at measuring " everyday language " included five questions. The fourth part aimed at measuring "writing skills" The score of the test is "**30 marks** " "**one mark"** for each question.

The test stages:

i. **Warm up:** In his stage, the main purpose was to provide pupils with a sense of relaxation which helps them answer the questions. This comfortable atmosphere allowed the examinee to go through the test with ease. It included asking pupils about her name and age.

ii. **Main interview:**

iii. **Winding down:** The Trainee teachers were greeted and thanked by the researcher. In the exam, the three parts aimed at testing the pupils' ability to use language which is suitable to the subject. (See Appendix **B**)

Test validity

Face validity

The jury members have examined the test for appropriateness, relevance, and clarity, as well as for the way the questions are worded. The test was administered to five jury members who had advanced degrees in English as a Foreign Language. They suggested: a) using plain language in all of the enquiries.

b) limiting the questions to 30.

c) The time allowed must be at least 50 minutes long.

Table (6)Correlation between the subscale of the test and its total score

Dimensions	*Correlation*
1. Reading comprehension	0.509**
2. Vocabulary & structure	0.760**
3. Everyday language	0.387*
4. Writing skills	0.738**

* Significant at 0.05 level, ** significant at 0.01 level.

The correlation coefficient between the substances and the overall score of the observation checklist is shown in Table (6) and is significant at the 0.01 level. It ranges from (0.509 - 0.738). The aforementioned findings are reliable indicator data.

The Test Reliability

Owing to the format of the test questions, the suitable method of computing reliability coefficient is Kuder Richardson formula as indicated by different psychometric studies Khalaf and Alshammari (2023) stated that

"Kuder-Richardson formula was utilized to compute the reliability of the test as it is suitable for tests composed of items with binary responses (p. 194). In this study, three subscales of the pupils' language performance test reliability value was 0.793 using Kuder Richardson 21 internal consistency reliability. The reliability of the fourth subscale "writing skills" was computed using Cronbach's Alpha because its response categories were four and the value of Alpha was 0.656.

Table (7) the correlation coefficient between the scores on the test-retest

Sn	Variables	Pearson correlation Coefficient
1	X1_pre , X1_pos	0.921**
2	X2_pre , X2_pos	0.840**
3	X3_pre , X3_pos	0.763**
Total	Xtot_pre , Xtot_pos	0.656**

**** denote to Pearson correlation coefficient is significant at 0.01 level of sig.**
the correlation coefficient between the substances and the total score of the observation checklist ranged from (0.763 - 0.921) which is significant at 0.01 level. The results above are indicators to validity.

The model answer for Language Awareness Test

The researcher a model answer in order to be able to measure some features of language awareness major skills rather in addition to measuring teachers' language skills. The scoring rubric was selected meticulously to assess the participant's scores in the pre–post language awareness test. The total test score was determined by summing the total score of the test items. The model ranged from (1) correct answer to (0) wrong answer

Results and Discussions

Results of Hypothesis 1:

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the pre-post-test of the study group (prep. Stage pupils) in overall language performance skills in favor of the post-test.

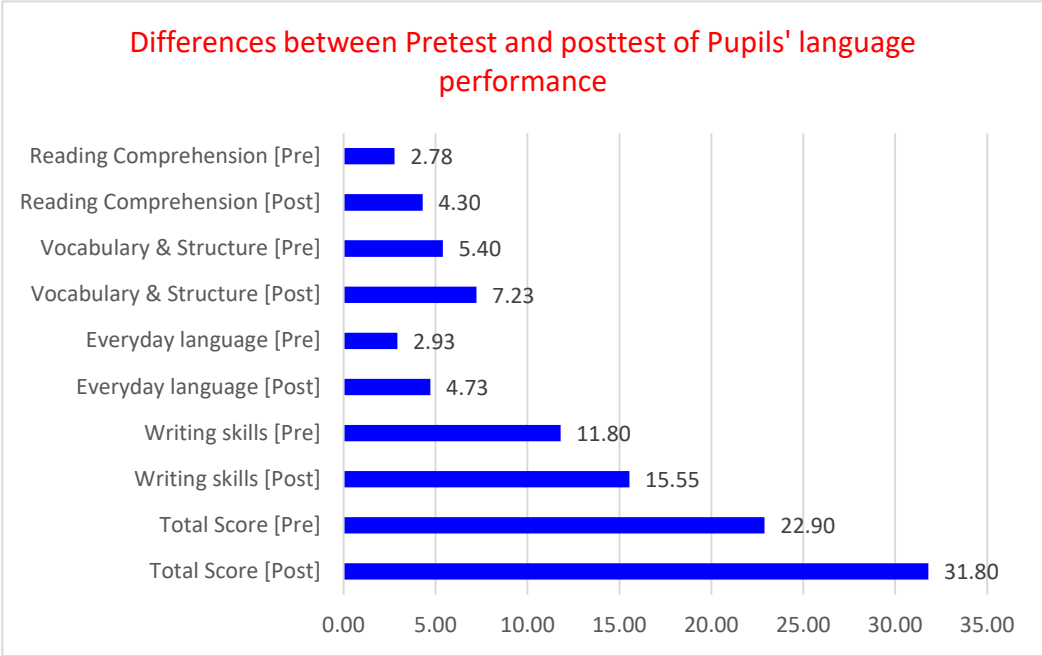
Table (13) T-test differences between pretest and posttest in pupils' language performance test subscales and total score

Subscales	*Time*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*DF*	*T*	*P*	*Cohen's d*
Reading Comprehension	Pretest	2.78	0.42	40	39	-11.89	0.01	1.87
	Posttest	4.30	0.61					
Vocabulary & Structure	Pretest	5.40	0.78	40	39	-9.03	0.01	1.43
	Posttest	7.23	1.14					
Everyday life Language	Pretest	2.93	0.42	40	39	-17.56	0.01	2.78
	Posttest	4.73	0.60					
Writing skills	Pretest	11.80	2.67	40	39	-8.26	0.01	1.31
	Posttest	15.55	1.54					
Total score	Pretest	22.90	2.84	40	39	-15.60	0.01	2.47
	Posttest	31.80	2.09					

Note: Cohen's d Criteria (> 0.631 = small, 0.631 to 1.50 = medium, and ≤ 1.51 = large) (Alwahaibi et al., 2020, p. 246).

The mean score for pupils' language performance skills in the post test, which was (31.80), was higher than that of the pretest, which was (22.90), as shown in Table (9). It also revealed that the grades on the posttest had higher homogeneity (=Std. Deviation/Mean) than the grades on the pretest because of the teachers' use of the metacognition program. It should be noted that table (9) shows a significant disparity in favor of the posttest between the overall mean scores of the pre-posttest and posttest administrations of the language awareness test. At the (0.05) level, the t-value was (-15.60), which is significant. The fact that the effect size d equals 1.96 and is more than 0.80 indicates that it is large. These outcomes demonstrate that the program has successfully helped the teachers to improve their pupils' language performance.

Figure (13) T-test differences between pretest and posttest in pupils' language performance test subscales and total score



The above figure shows a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on the pre posttest for general language awareness abilities in favor of the post one, proving the third hypothesis to be correct.

Results of Hypothesis 2

There are statistically significant differences at (0.05) level between the mean scores of the study group (Prep. Stage EFL pupils) on each of the macro and micro–Language performance pre-post-test in favor of the post-test.

Table (14) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of Reading comprehension subscale

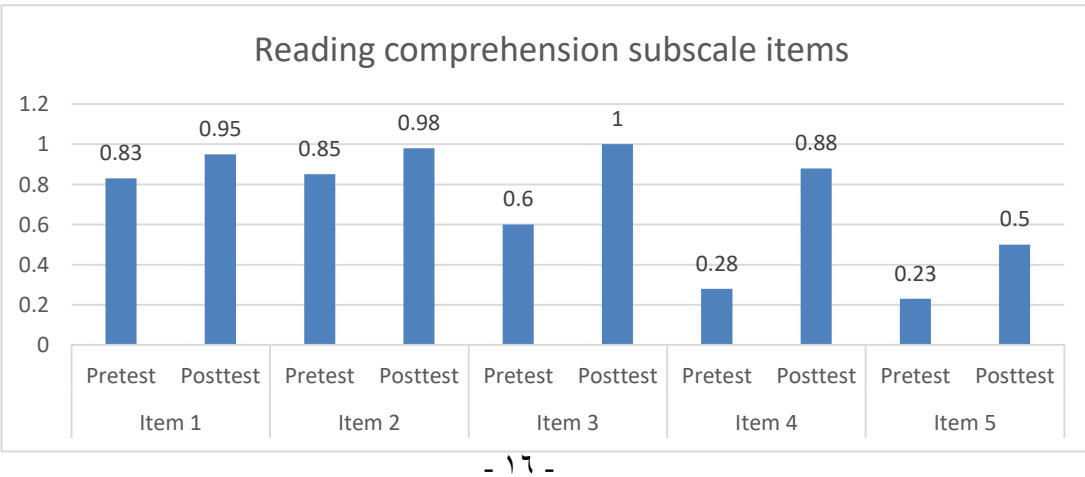
Reading Comprehension	*Time*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*DF*	*T*	*P*	*Cohen's d*
Item 1	Pretest	0.83	0.38	40	39	-2.36	0.05	0.37
	Posttest	0.95	0.22					
Item 2	Pretest	0.85	0.36	40	39	-2.36	0.05	0.37
	Posttest	0.98	0.16					

Item 3	Pretest	0.60	0.50	40	39	-5.10	0.01	0.81
	Posttest	1.00	0.00					
Item 4	Pretest	0.28	0.45	40	39	-7.65	0.01	1.21
	Posttest	0.88	0.33					
Item 5	Pretest	0.23	0.42	40	39	-3.85	0.01	0.61
	Posttest	0.50	0.51					

Note: Cohen's d Criteria (> 0.631 = small, 0.631 to 1.50 = medium, and ≤ 1.51 = large) (Alwahaibi et al., 2020, p. 246).

"There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on each of the macro and micro language performance kills pre-posttest in favor of the posttest," reads the fourth hypothesis. The language performance skills pre-posttest data were statistically processed using descriptive (Means and Standard Deviations) and inferential (t-test) statistics to test this hypothesis. The outcomes of macro language awareness abilities, specifically, reading comprehension skills, are displayed in Table.

Figure (14) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of Reading comprehension subscale



The above figure shows a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on the pre-posttest for pupils' language performance abilities, namely reading skills in favor of the post one, proving the fourth hypothesis to be correct.

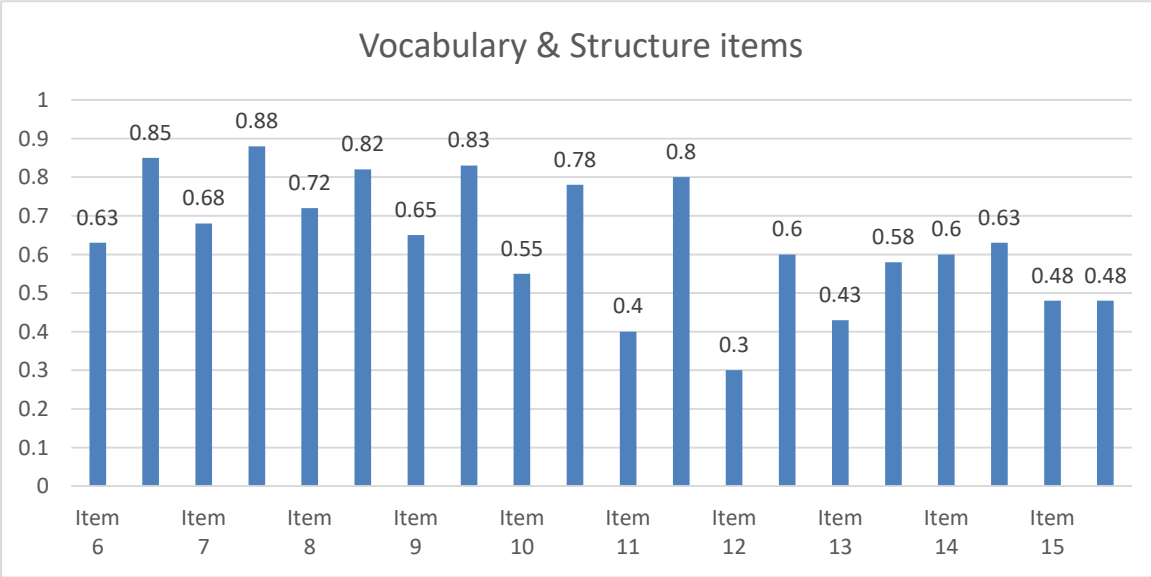
Table (15) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of vocabulary & Structure subscale

Vocabulary & Structure	*Time*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*DF*	*T*	*P*	*Cohen's d*
Item 6	Pretest	0.63	0.49	40	39	-3.37	0.01	0.53
	Posttest	0.85	0.36					
Item 7	Pretest	0.68	0.47	40	39	-3.12	0.01	0.49
	Posttest	0.88	0.33					
Item 8	Pretest	0.72	0.46	40	39	-2.08	0.05	0.33
	Posttest	0.82	0.39					
Item 9	Pretest	0.65	0.48	40	39	-2.88	0.01	0.45
	Posttest	0.83	0.38					
Item 10	Pretest	0.55	0.50	40	39	-2.68	0.01	0.42
	Posttest	0.78	0.42					
Item 11	Pretest	0.40	0.50	40	39	-5.10	0.01	0.81
	Posttest	0.80	0.41					
Item 12	Pretest	0.30	0.46	40	39	-4.09	0.01	0.65
	Posttest	0.60	0.50					
Item 13	Pretest	0.43	0.50	40	39	-2.62	0.01	0.41
	Posttest	0.58	0.50					
Item 14	Pretest	0.60	0.50	40	39	-1.00	0.32	0.16
	Posttest	0.63	0.49					
Item 15	Pretest	0.48	0.51	40	39	0.00	1.00	0.00
	Posttest	0.48	0.51					

"There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on each of the macro and micro language performance kills pre-posttest in favor of the posttest," reads the fourth hypothesis. The language performance skills pre-posttest data were statistically processed using descriptive (Means and Standard Deviations) and inferential (t-

test) statistics to test this hypothesis. The outcomes of macro language awareness abilities, specifically, language use skills, are displayed in Table (6).

Figure (15) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of vocabulary &



Structure subscale

The above figure shows a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on the pre-posttest for pupils' language performance abilities, namely language use (vocabulary and structure) in favor of the post-one, proving the fourth hypothesis to be correct.

Table (16) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of Everyday life language subscale

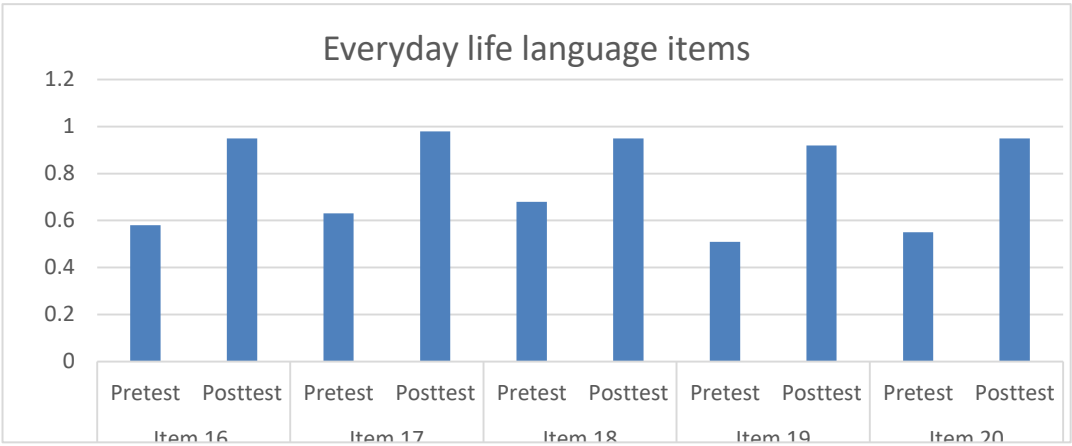
Everyday life language	*Time*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*DF*	*T*	*P*	*Cohen's d*
Item 16	Pretest	0.58	0.50	40	39	-4.84	0.01	0.76
	Posttest	0.95	0.22					
Item 17	Pretest	0.63	0.49	40	39	-4.58	0.01	0.72
	Posttest	0.98	0.16					
Item 18	Pretest	0.68	0.47	40	39	-3.85	0.01	0.61

	Posttest	0.95	0.22					
Item 19	Pretest	0.51	0.51	40	39	-5.14	0.01	0.82
	Posttest	0.92	0.27					
Item 20	Pretest	0.55	0.50	40	39	-5.10	0.01	0.81
	Posttest	0.95	0.22					

Note: Cohen's d Criteria (> 0.631 = small, 0.631 to 1.50 = medium, and ≤ 1.51 = large) (Alwahaibi et al., 2020, p. 246).

"There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on each of the macro and micro language performance kills pre-posttest in favor of the posttest," reads the fourth hypothesis. The language performance skills pre-posttest data were statistically processed using descriptive (Means and Standard Deviations) and inferential (t-test) statistics to test this hypothesis. The outcomes of macro language awareness abilities, specifically, everyday language skills, are displayed in Table (16).

Figure (16) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of Everyday life language subscale



The previous figure shows a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on the pre-posttest for pupils' language performance abilities, namely everyday language skills in favor of the post one, proving the fourth hypothesis to be correct.

Table (17) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of writing skills subscale

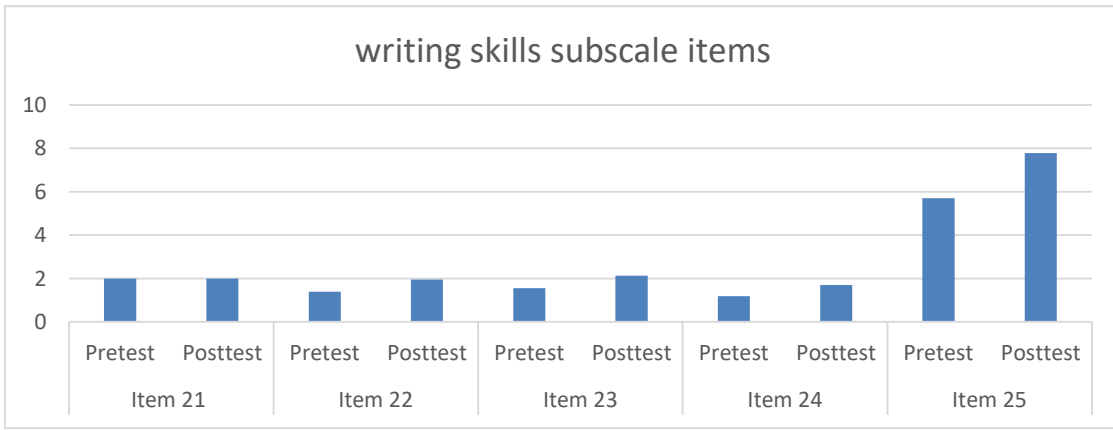
Writing skills	*Time*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*DF*	*T*	*P*	*Cohen's d*
Item 21	Pretest	2.00	0.00	40	39	--	--	--
	Posttest	2.00	0.00					
Item 22	Pretest	1.38	1.75	40	39	-2.06	0.05	0.33
	Posttest	1.95	0.22					
Item 23	Pretest	1.55	0.50	40	39	-5.72	0.01	0.90
	Posttest	2.13	0.46					
Item 24	Pretest	1.18	0.81	40	39	-3.28	0.01	0.52
	Posttest	1.70	0.46					
Item 25	Pretest	5.70	0.69	40	39	-20.01	0.01	3.16
	Posttest	7.78	0.77					

Note: Cohen's d Criteria (> 0.631 = small, 0.631 to 1.50 = medium, and ≤ 1.51 = large) (Alwahaibi et al., 2020, p. 246).

"There is a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on each of the macro and micro language performance kills pre-posttest in favor of the posttest," reads the fourth hypothesis. The language performance skills pre-posttest data were statistically processed using descriptive (Means and Standard Deviations) and inferential (t-test) statistics to test this hypothesis. The outcomes of macro language awareness abilities, specifically, writing skills, are displayed in Table (6).

Figure (17) T-test differences between pretest and posttest of writing skills subscale

The following figure shows a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study group (EFL teachers) on the pre-posttest for pupils' language performance abilities, namely writing skills in favor of the post one,



proving the fourth hypothesis to be correct.

Discussions

According to the aforementioned findings, there is proof that the suggested metacognition program had a significant impact on the language proficiency of students in the EFL preparatory stage. This is supported by the statistical analysis that was previously given, which contrasted the research group's results on the pre- and post-administrations of a language performance test using a t-test. The researcher attributed these findings to the study group's teachers using a metacognition program. The participants regarded the metacognition training to be efficient and helpful. This is in line with the findings of other studies that shown the beneficial effects of metacognition programs on enhancing the language proficiency of EFL students (e.g., Ekinici S.O. & Balaman U. 2020, Salimi F., Keshararz M.H. 219), Kuo et al. 2018, Kramsch et al.

According to the literature review, researchers generally agree that metacognition processes and procedures improved language skills in EFL prep stage students. The students' increased understanding also helped them actively learn oral language. The researcher discovered that most students' replies were strongly held after studying and interpreting students' views on employing metacognition as a learning strategy and its impact on their language proficiency. This showed that employing metacognitive techniques improved students' language proficiency. Therefore, it can be said that adopting metacognition will help EFL students improve their language skills more than using traditional teaching methods.

. **Conclusion:**

One could draw the conclusion that metacognition is crucial for the teaching of language skills. The study's findings from a theoretical and imperial perspective revealed that metacognition enhanced and developed the language skills of the EFL students. Additionally, this study demonstrated that teachers are interested in implementing metacognition in the classroom. Additionally, this study showed that teachers were more enthusiastic about implementing metacognitive techniques in their classrooms to help students improve their language proficiency.

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