

Mapping metacognitive awareness of Chinese language learners

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ABSTRACT

The role of metacognitive awareness on language teaching and learning have been confirmed by several studies, but the discussions of this topic in Chinese as foreign language are limited. The aim of the present research was to map metacognitive awareness profile of Chinese language learners. Total respondent of this research was 80 Chinese language learners (38 males and 42 females) which comprise secondary students. Convenience sampling technique was employed to select the respondents. Meanwhile, the metacognitive awareness data were collected utilizing Junior Metacognitive Inventory. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive statistic. Mann-Whitney U Test was employed to investigate the significance differences of metacognitive awareness between male and female. The findings showed that 46.25% of Chinese Language Learners have a good metacognitive knowledge, 28.75% fair, 20% very good, 3.75% poor, and 1.25% very lacking. The finding also showed that 40% students have good metacognitive regulation, 36.25% fair, 15% very good, 7.50% poor, and 1.25% very lacking. In addition, between male and female students have no significant difference in knowledge of cognition. On the contrary, regulation of cognition female learners ($Mdn = 32.50$) significantly ($U = 551.000$, $p > 0.05$) better compared to male ($Mdn = 30$).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Metacognition plays important roles in teaching and learning activities for learners. Beach, *et al.* [1] described the metacognition as the main driver of self-regulation. It allows someone to control his or her own learning as it is a system of regulatory that assists person to understand and regulate his or her cognitive performance [2]. The results of metacognition in reflection and evaluation on someone thinking enable someone to change specifically the way (s)he learns [3]. Anderson [3] also assumed that skill to understand and control cognitive process is one of the most essential skills which can be developed in classroom teachers themselves and their students.

Notwithstanding the several metacognitive skills categorizations exist, the most explanations elaborate the skills into two basic classifications i.e. metacognitive knowledge (individual knowledge about the cognition) and metacognitive control processes (the way individual utilizing the comprehension to regulate the cognition) [4]. Jacobs and Paris [5] name these two classifications by self-appraisal of cognition and self-management of thinking. They defined self-appraisal cognition as static assessment regarding one's comprehension on assigned domain and task. Meanwhile, self-management of thinking means the dynamic

features of the way to elaborate the comprehension into action. More detail explored on metacognition in some research reports, there are several studies have been carried out by researchers. They discussed various type of metacognition such as metacognitive skills [6]-[12], metacognitive strategy [13]-[16], metacognitive judgement [17], and metacognitive awareness [18]-[36].

In the context of metacognitive awareness, some researchers discussed it together with various subjects and issues related to teaching and learning. The studies concerning metacognitive in foreign/second language teaching and learning were conducted [35], [27], [23], [24], [30], [20] which investigated metacognitive awareness in students of English as foreign language. Umam, *et al.* [35] traced the relation between metacognitive awareness and students' achievement in listening comprehension. The results revealed that learners' metacognitive awareness does not contribute significantly to their achievement in listening comprehension. Similarly, Dardjito [2] attempted to find the correlation between learners' metacognitive awareness in reading with their reading comprehension. The results show that students' metacognitive awareness in reading does not relate significantly with their academic English in reading comprehension. Xethakis [27] assessed the psychometric of metacognitive awareness inventory (MAI) properties. The results revealed that performance all of measured model instruments did not meet the eligibility of score structures in the dataset as their score were very poor. Hu [23] tried to promote metacognitive awareness of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in writing by using Analytic writing rubric. The findings show that the applied method is effective to rise the students' metacognitive awareness in writing. By using Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory, Al-Mekhlafi [30] investigated the EFL learners' idea about how often they think that they use selected strategy in EFL reading. The findings indicate that students of EFL use three types of reading strategies (i.e. Global Reading Strategies, Problem Solving Strategies, and Support Reading Strategies) frequently. Kasim and Darus [20] explored the awareness of ESL undergraduate regarding metacognitive reading strategies for academic reading. The results reported that 74.4% students are in high level of metacognitive awareness and 25.6% are in a medium level.

Despite a number of investigations conducted on metacognitive awareness and foreign language learning, no investigations have been done to profile the learners' metacognitive awareness of Chinese as a foreign/second language (CFL/CSL). To respond to this, the present study attempts to map the metacognitive awareness profile of Chinese language learners because Chinese language have been used widely in all its diversity with the native speakers in a biggest number over the world [37]. However, the studies concerning CSL/FL education are still limit compared to English as foreign/second language. While at the same time, Chinese language is also international language as it have been admitted as an official language of United Nations [38]. In addition, number of Chinese language native speaker is the biggest over the world and it has been on top two of the most powerful languages after English based on Power Language Index [39]. By conducting the present research, the researchers hope that the map of metacognitive awareness profile of Chinese language learner enrich references and insight on metacognitive awareness in teaching and learning CSF/FL. Moreover, Chinese language teachers may consider the existence of metacognitive awareness in conducting better Chinese language teaching and learning.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Respondents of this study were 80 secondary school students (38 males and 42 females) of Mambaus Sholihin 2, Sumber Sanankulon, Blitar, Indonesia who attended short course of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) which was organized by Language Center of Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The respondents were selected by convenience or opportunity sampling which means they decided to become respondent based on their willing [40].

To obtain data from the learners, junior metacognitive awareness inventory (Jr. MAI) developed by Kim, *et al.* [31] was utilized as instrument of data collection. Validity this instrument was confirmed using Chi-square test, Tocker-lewis index, comparative fit index, and root mean square error of approximation in which the values were 494.84; 0.89; 0.91; 0.05 respectively. This instrument is also reliable with the Cronbach alpha 0.64. Meanwhile, all items of the instrument are appropriate for secondary school graders as were proven by Kim, *et al.* [31] who implemented the instrument on sixth to 12th grades as the subjects. The researchers translated language of this instrument which is written in English to Indonesian language. By doing so, respondents' misunderstanding that might be caused by language gap could be minimalized as the respondents were Indonesian learners. Before fulfilling the Jr. MAI, the researchers explained to the respondents that the answer they gave would not affect to their report of academic scores. Thus, they could give their answer freely and honestly based on their real condition. However, the purpose of this action was to obtain data which can describe a real metacognitive awareness of the learners. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis by calculating the percentage of score items which classified

based on Jr. MAI categorizations, i.e. metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. Furthermore, the data were also analyzed using Man-Whitney U Test/Wilcoxon sum of ranks test [41] to know whether between male and female learners' metacognitive significantly different or not.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

The data obtained from students' answers of Jr. MAI comprises metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation as the contained factors in the items correspond to both of them [31]. The score data from Jr. MAI were classified into five levels, namely very good, good, fair, poor, and very lacking. The score of every learner was graded by referring to the certain criteria as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria of metacognition classification

Criteria	Category
0–19.99	Very lacking
20–39.99	Poor
40–59.99	Fair
60–79.99	Good
80–100	Very good

3.1.1. Metacognitive knowledge

The score data of metacognitive knowledge obtained from Jr. MAI were analyzed in order to get the percentage of metacognitive knowledge level. The analysis results indicate that Chinese language learners have metacognitive knowledge in various level i.e. 37 (46.25%) learners have a good metacognitive, 23 (28.75%) learners have a fair metacognitive, 16 (20%) learners have a very good metacognitive, and three (3.75%) learners have a poor metacognitive, and 1 (1.25%) learner has a very lacking metacognitive as shown in Figure 1. Furthermore, to investigate the difference between metacognitive knowledge between male and female learners, Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4. The analysis results of Man-Whitney U test showed that male learners' knowledge of cognition (Mdn=32) compared to female learners' (Mdn=33) was insignificantly different ($U=607.000$, $p>0.05$).

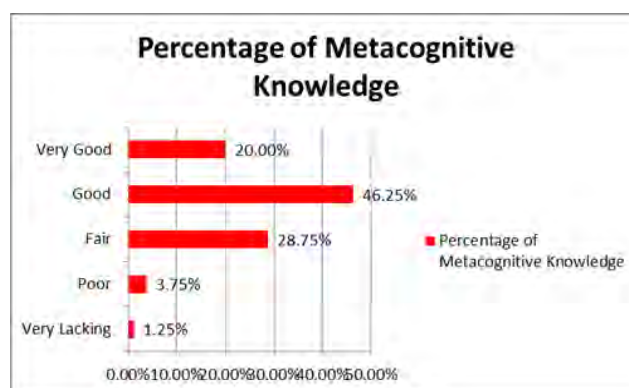


Figure 1. Percentage of CFL learners' level of metacognitive knowledge

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U Test result of metacognitive knowledge difference between male and female learners

KoC	
Mann-Whitney U	607.000
Wilcoxon W	1348.000
Z	-1.846
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.065

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

Table 3. Median analysis result

KoC		
N	Valid	38
	Missing	0
Median		32.00

a. Gender = Male

Table 4. Median analysis result

KoC		
N	Valid	42
	Missing	0
Median		33.00

a. Gender = Female

3.1.2. Metacognitive regulation

The researchers not only analyzed data of metacognitive knowledge to get the percentage but also data of metacognitive regulation. The result of analysis are displayed on Figure 2.

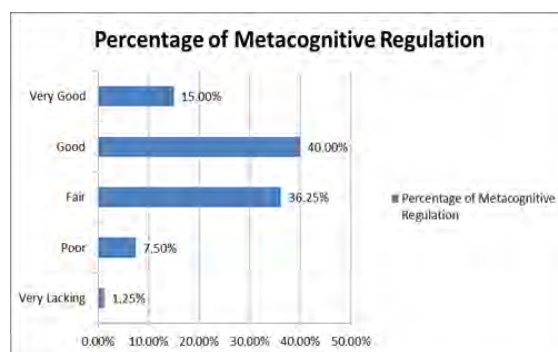


Figure 2. Percentage of CFL learners' level of metacognitive regulation

The analysis results show that 40% (32) learners' metacognitive regulation is in a good level, 36.25% (29) is in fair level, 15% (12) is in very good level, 7.5% (6) is in poor level, and 1.25% (1) is in very lacking level. Not only on metacognitive knowledge, Mann-Whitney U test was also applied to analysis the difference metacognitive regulation between male and female learners. The results of the analysis are served on Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7. The analysis results of Man-Whitney U test showed that regulation of cognition of male students (Mdn= 30) was significantly different ($U= 551.000$, $p>0.05$) compared to female students' (Mdn= 32.50).

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U Test result of metacognitive regulation difference between male and female learners

RoC	
Mann-Whitney U	551.000
Wilcoxon W	1292.000
Z	-2.385
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.017

a. Grouping variable: Gender

Table 6. Median analysis result

RoC		
N	Valid	38
	Missing	0
Median		30.00

a. Gender = Male

Table 7. Median analysis result

RoC		
N	Valid	42
	Missing	0
Median		32.50

a. Gender = Female

3.2. Discussion

The result of present research showed that metacognitive awareness most of Chinese language learners are fair, good, and very good, either in knowledge of cognition or regulation of cognition as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. This finding does not support prior study conducted by Erlin and Fitriani [22]. They found that students' metacognitive ability which is self-cognitive awareness including in it, are low. Masoodi [19] also investigated metacognitive awareness of Iranian and Lithuanian university students. The results indicated that both of these universities' students have different level of metacognitive awareness. A medium

level has been detected in Iranian students, while metacognitive of Lithuanian students indicated in a low level. Aljaberi and Gheith [42] also found that students of Petra University have medium level of metacognitive thinking.

Concerning gender difference, the analysis of learners' metacognitive awareness using Mann-Whitney U test shows that both of male and female have insignificant difference in knowledge of metacognition as shows in Table 2. On the contrary, result analysis on regulation of cognition was significantly different. Female learners were better compared to male learners as shown in Table 5.

The report of prior studies on metacognitive difference between male and female showed inconsistent results. Some of results revealed that either male or female students have a significant different in their metacognitive. For instance, the finding research was conducted by Misu and Masi [29] reported that metacognitive awareness of female students is better than male students. The difference of metacognition between male and female also found by Ciascai, *et al.* [9]. Their research revealed that the differences emerge on dimensions of metacognitive knowledge.

In contrast, other studies showed that male and female have no significant difference in metacognitive. Such as finding of several studies [6], [12], [18], [29]. Garzón, *et al.* [6] and Nunaki, *et al.* [12] found that between man and women have no significant differences in metacognitive skills (cognition knowledge and cognition regulation). While Hashempour [18] found that between male and female translation students did not different significantly in metacognitive awareness and self regulation. The result of the present study is in line with the first group researches in the context of metacognitive knowledge, as the result analysis of metacognitive knowledge between male and female learners indicate insignificant difference.

In terms of metacognitive regulation, the present research finding indicates that metacognitive regulation of female learners better than male. However, the exist differences between male and female learners in their metacognitive regulation is in accordance with studies conducted by Panda [21] and Panchu *et al.* [36] as they found the differences in male and female metacognitive as well. Panda [21] found that male students better in metacognitive regulation compared to female while female students better in metacognitive knowledge than male. Panchu, *et al.* [36] revealed that female students have better metacognitive regulation than metacognitive knowledge, whereas the male students better in metacognitive knowledge than metacognitive regulation. Nevertheless, Panchu did not explain which one is better between male metacognitive regulation or metacognitive knowledge compared to female. In addition, Abdelrahman [32] found that metacognitive of female students is higher than male. He did the comparison in general without mentioning in which part female metacognitive is higher than male.

In a nutshell, the finding of this research regarding metacognitive regulation between male and female learners supported the aforementioned researches in term of the presence of differences between male and female in metacognition. Nonetheless, instead of supporting the prior mentioned researches, in the context of comparison metacognitive regulation between male and female, this research result is in contrast to research finding of Pancu, *et al.* [36]. Even so, the results of present study deserve to be considered in carrying out foreign/second language teaching and learning particularly in Chinese language.

4. CONCLUSION

By using junior metacognitive inventory developed by the researchers, Chinese language learners who joined course attended by Language Center Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang have various differences in level of metacognitive awareness, either in metacognitive knowledge or metacognitive regulation. In addition, the collected data analyzed by Mann Whitney U Test indicate that between male and female learners do not different significantly in metacognitive knowledge. In the contrary, their difference in metacognitive regulation is significant since female learners is better than male. These results provide additional reference and insight in metacognitive awareness especially in foreign language/second language teaching and learning i.e. Chinese language. Furthermore, these results possible to support teachers to conduct better teaching and learning as they can use them as reference and take them into their consideration to prepare teaching and learning plan. However, additional research is needed in order to confirm the result and even enrich the profile.

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