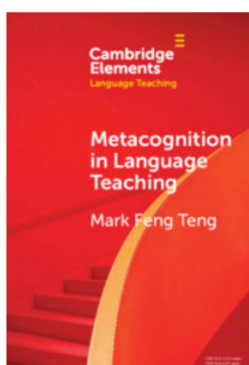# Book Review: Metacognition in Language Teaching By Mark Feng Teng

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The growing emphasis on learner autonomy and strategic learning in second and foreign language education has renewed scholarly interests in the role of metacognition in language teaching. While a considerable body of research has examined metacognition in this context (see, for instance, Haukås et al., 2018), there remains a scarcity of monographs that place metacognition at the core of their inquiry. *Metacognition in Language Teaching – Elements in Language Teaching*, authored by Mark Feng Teng (2025), addresses this gap by offering a focused and accessible exploration tailored to educational practitioners. Aimed at bridging the divide between research and pedagogical practice in applied linguistics, this volume presents a theoretically grounded, yet practically oriented, account of metacognition in second and foreign language instruction, yielding constructive insights for both scholars and classroom educators.

The book is organized into eight succinct sections. The opening section lays a strong foundation by presenting a compelling rationale for foregrounding metacognitive awareness in language education. Drawing from the author's teaching experiences in Macao and robust research background, this underscores the need to close the gap between metacognitive theory and language teaching practice. The author also draws attention to a key gap in language education, observing that while metacognition is well-recognized in educational psychology, it has yet to gain meaningful traction in language teaching, particularly in EFL settings. By reviewing major works in the field (e.g., Goh & Vandergrift, 2021; Haukås et al., 2018; Teng, 2022), the author situates the volume

within current scholarship and underscores its relevance. Despite a noted gap in addressing speaking skills, this element is a timely and valuable resource for language educators seeking to enhance learner autonomy and instructional effectiveness.

Section 2 presents a comprehensive, theoretically grounded overview of metacognition, integrating insights from educational psychology and language pedagogy to clarify its multifaceted nature. The author's reflective narrative from Macao effectively links theory with classroom practice, enhancing accessibility. The chapter also identifies key issues that merit further inquiry, such as age relations, distinctions between cognition and metacognition, and disciplinary inconsistencies. While the author's novel conceptualization makes an insightful contribution, the discussion could be enriched through greater elaboration on its components and pedagogical implications, which would be particularly beneficial for readers new to the field. Overall, the chapter serves as a useful resource for educators and researchers who seek   to deepen their understanding of metacognition across broader and narrower domains.

Extending the discussion into specific language skills, section 3 focuses on reading. It clearly synthesizes how metacognitive knowledge enables learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate comprehension. The chapter effectively links theoretical constructs with pedagogical concerns through guiding questions about what, when, and how to teach strategy use. Its strength lies in bridging theory and practice and problematizing persistent challenges: teachers' limited preparedness to scaffold metacognitive reading strategies, the complexity of sequencing instruction, and age-related differences in metacognitive accuracy. Although the author calls for experimental validation, the inclusion of concrete pedagogical scenarios would further strengthen the book's contribution to future research.

Section 4 provides a substantive exploration of metacognition in writing, framing it as both a cognitive and self-regulatory process. Drawn primarily from East Asian studies, the chapter convincingly demonstrates how strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating shape writing performance. Its synthesis of intervention studies is particularly relevant, highlighting the pedagogical potential of metacognitive training. The discussion of the predictive role of strategies and the long-term impact of interventions is methodologically sound, though a stronger integration of perspectives beyond East Asia would enhance its generalizability. By calling for longitudinal and cross-cultural research, the chapter consolidates earlier discussions and extends the field's agenda in a constructive direction.

In section 5, the focus then shifts to metacognition in listening, which presents a compelling account of metacognitive instruction in this often-neglected skill area. Drawing on frameworks such as Vandergrift's (2004) metacognitive cycle and Goh's (2008) experiential tasks, the chapter provides clear pedagogical pathways and synthesizes a robust body of empirical work emphasizing motivation, learner agency, and teacher's scaffolding. Its strength lies in bridging theory and practice through evidence-based models. However, the discussion offers limited critical engagement on challenges from teacher and curricular aspects. Addressing these limitations would have sharpened its contribution. Nonetheless, the chapter succeeds in highlighting listening skill as a crucial yet underexplored domain of metacognitive research.

Section 6 discusses vocabulary learning by highlighting the role of metacognitive awareness in vocabulary retention, supported by evidence from longitudinal and intervention studies. A notable strength of the chapter is its critique of the overreliance on cognitive strategies and its advocacy for reflective, metacognitive approaches, particularly reflective questioning, as pathways to learner autonomy. While the integration of theory and empirical research is persuasive, the analysis can engage   more critically with pedagogical challenges documented in authentic classroom contexts. Such engagement would have underscored the practical constraints of implementing metacognitive

pedagogy to provide balanced discussion. Even so, the chapter effectively reinforces the importance of metacognitive awareness and reflective questioning in fostering autonomous vocabulary learning, while acknowledging the limitations of fragmented classroom practices.

Complementing the focus on instruction, section 7 turns to assessment. It critically reviews widely used instruments to measure metacognitive awareness (e.g., MAI, SILL, MALQ, MARSI, WSSRLQ), evaluating their psychometric properties and applicability across learner populations. The chapter identifies limitations in the existing tools, such as overreliance on self-report data and limited application to younger learners. To address these gaps, the chapter proposes mixed-method approaches and the development of age-appropriate instruments. As such, this chapter not only synthesizes existing tools but also provides concrete guidance for researchers aiming to more accurately capture metacognitive development in language learning.

Bringing the volume to a close, section 8 synthesizes insights from the preceding chapters and presents a forward-looking vision of metacognitive instruction. It reiterates key pedagogical principles, such as goal setting, reflective practice, and strategic coordination, while placing renewed emphasis on the role of teachers as models and facilitators. Importantly, the section briefly discusses challenges in implementation, particularly for low-proficiency learners, and advocates for explicit instruction and learner-centered questioning. A noteworthy addition is the discussion on the integration of AI tools such as ChatGPT, highlighting how metacognitive awareness influences learners' engagement with generative technologies. This inclusion signals an important direction for future research and practice, as language learning increasingly intersects with AI-driven resources.

As a whole, the chapters provide a coherent and multifaceted examination of metacognition in language education. The book serves as a relevant resource for teacher educators, language instructors, and curriculum developers dedicated to promoting learner autonomy through metacognitive pedagogy. Its principal strength lies in the effective integration of theoretical perspectives with practical strategies, all of which are grounded in empirical research and reflective teaching practice. The accessible prose, enriched with illustrative examples and case studies, enhances its relevance for both novice and experienced educators. The volume contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse on metacognition in language education.

However, a notable limitation of this book is the absence of concrete classroom activities that would enable teachers to translate theory into practice. Including sample lesson plans or instructional templates for metacognitive strategy instruction could have supported educators in designing, implementing, and evaluating lessons across language skills and varied contexts. Equally significant is the limited engagement with emerging technologies. With AI tools increasingly shaping language learning, the absence of discussion on how metacognitive awareness can guide learners in critically and effectively using AI represents a missed opportunity. Bridging these gaps would not only strengthen the book's immediate pedagogical utility for teachers but also position it more firmly within future-oriented debates on technology-enhanced language education.

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