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THE ROLE OF LISTENING SKILLS IN THIRD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MANDARIN LEARNERS

Nur Syifaa Md Tahir[1], Lee Chai Chuen[2*], Nadrah Zainal Abidin[3]

[1] Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah Branch, Malaysia
Email: syifaa@uitm.edu.my
[2] Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah Branch, Malaysia
Email: lcc76@uitm.edu.my
[3] General Studies Department, Politeknik Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah, Malaysia
Email: nadrah@polisas.edu.my
[*] Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

Third language (L3) acquisition, particularly of Mandarin, involved complex cognitive and linguistic processes; however the role of listening remains insufficiently examined within L3 Mandarin learning. Although significant research has been dedicated to L2 acquisition, relatively little has focused on the impact of listening on L3 learning and even less, L3 learning of tonal languages. This conceptual paper aims to fill this gap by introducing a framework that aims to explain the interaction of cognitive, linguistic and pedagogical factors that lead to the development of communicative competence in Mandarin as an L3. In particular, it draws from recent theories of language transfer, cognitive load and the input hypothesis to illustrate the intellectual process of listening as essential to decoding information from an aural source, processing cognitive resources, and differentiating tonal elements. Main findings show that learners' first (L1) and second language (L2) exert cross-linguistic influence that affects tone perception, and non-tonal language speakers experience more difficulty. In addition, the current teaching methodology mainly focuses on speaking and writing, which affect the learners' capability to perceive Mandarin tones accurately. These instructional approaches are crucial in enhancing listening proficiency through scaffolding, metacognitive strategies, and technology-enhanced tools. The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications, providing educators and those involved in the design of curriculums with evidence-based recommendations on how to incorporate listening as part of L3 Mandarin teaching. Addressing these lacunae, this study adds to the wider discussion surrounding multilingual education, but also reinforces the myriad ways academics, policy makers and students might work together to better L3

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Mandarin learning outcomes. Proposed future research and directions for practice. The study of listening-based pedagogies should be further explored using longitudinal studies and capitalizing on digital technologies to develop initial pedagogical training and optimize instruction.

Keywords:

Third Language Acquisition (L3), Listening Skills, Mandarin Learning, Cognitive Load Theory, Cross-Linguistic Influence

Introduction

Acquisition for the third language (L3) is one of the most substantial areas of study in the field of multilingualism, since we are currently living in a globalised world where it is likely that people have to encounter multiple linguistic environments in their life. Listening, being one of the four language learning skills, is critical to improving language learning in any target language. Most of the time, the holistic approach has not been highlighted in the literature, therefore leading to fragmentation of experimental work in this domain. As they note, bilingualism to multilingualism introduces cognitive and linguistic complexities that demand insight into the nature of how learners extend their existing linguistic repertoire to additional languages. However, among this backdrop of numerous languages, there are languages that are more available and stand out based on the linguistic dimension type than others. One of such candidate for exploration is the Mandarin Chinese due to its tonal linguistic quality, logographic writing system, and rising establishment as an international lingua franca (Zhang & Li, 2022). This is one of the most interesting aspects of L3 Mandarin acquisition, that L3 students must learn good listening; due to petrifying amount of sound in Mandarin (there are basically four pronunciations for one syllable), L3 listeners need good auditory processing to the ability to recognize the sounds of Mandarin and identify the subtlety of the sound differences in phoneme (four subtlety differences in sound, tones).

I won't attempt to summarize the theoretical implications for L3 acquisition here except to say that it is a topic of significance. Listening is considered an active process that involves decoding, creating (a.k.a interpreting), and storing auditory material (Vandergrift & Goh, 2021), the thought is that it is not merely a passive receptive skill. For Mandarin, for example, where tones correspond to different meanings, this process is increasingly relevant because mistaking one tone for another may lead to essential semantic differentiation. Moreover, aside from academic capacity building, the ability to speak Mandarin also has practical implications as mastery of the language is advantageous for local and global markets in terms of economic, cultural or diplomatic engagement (Wang et al., 2023). Despite its evident importance, literature on how listening skills contribute to the acquisition of Mandarin as a third language in particular, is scarce. In the featured paper, we therefore conceptualize the relationship between listening ability and L3 Mandarin acquisition in a listen-blooming framework. Moreover, a framework will also be construed, by incorporating suggestions from the recent studies regarding the already existing literature within these areas in the latter part of this study, extracting the ways to optimize the listening skills for the further facilitation of their L3 Mandarin learning.

While there is an increasing attention to multilingualism and L3 acquisition, few research have addressed how listening skills support L3 learning in general and the role of tonal features specifically in L3 Mandarin. To date, most research into the potential consequences of

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listening is related to its role in the acquisition of second language (L2), e.g. (Field 2018; Révész et al. However, in line with (2021), they place importance on auditory processing while developing phonological awareness and later on comprehension. These results are not always adequately problematic in terms of their implication for L3, considering the distinctive cognitive and linguistic challenges posed by the learning of a third language. For example, the transfer effects of L1 and L2 on L3 learning have been explored in previous studies (De Angelis, 2021; Falk & Bardel, 2022), but the role of listening proficiency as a mediator in this process, particularly in L3 learning involving totally different phonological systems such as the one in Mandarin, has been greatly overlooked. Additionally, existing teaching approaches for Mandarin at L3 level understates both listening and pronunciation skills meant to develop adults' tonal and lexical awareness (Zhang & Li, 2022). This trend continues with the work of Chen and Yang (2023), who identify the need to consider listening in more detail, presenting a framework specifically designed for L3 Mandarin acquisition, yet omitting listening as an L3 aspect. This gap emphasises the lack of a conceptual framework in the literature that pays particular attention to the nature of listening as an integral feature of L3 acquisition (Tu, 2022). Filling this gap is vital to not just further explore the theoretical insights, but also on the insights that might inform the best practices for teachers and curriculum developers. With no well-defined framework for this new approach to pedagogy, teachers run the risk of under-heating the listening construct as a vehicle for L3 improvement and, consequently, contribute to a stunted overall communicative competence in Mandarin as a L3 for their learners.

This paper proposes a theoretical framework to understand the key role of listening abilities in third language acquisition of Mandarin Chinese. Specifically, it aims to expand the current understanding by combining insights from cognitive linguistics, second language acquisition research, and language pedagogy to develop a model where interactions between auditory processing and third language learning can emerge. Central topics explored include the challenges of acquiring a tonal language like Mandarin, cognitive mechanisms underlying listening comprehension, and transfer effects from previously learned languages on a third language listener's proficiency. Drawing from recent work by Vandergrift and Goh and De Angelis, the paper puts forth a novel conceptual model positioning listening as paramount for third language Mandarin acquisition. Consequently, this contributes not only to theoretical knowledge but offers practical implications for educators and curriculum designers seeking to maximize listening-focused instruction. The paper has three main objectives: 1) to review research on third language listening in multilingual contexts, 2) to identify factors impacting third language listening comprehension, and 3) to propose specific solutions for implementing listening in third language Mandarin education.

We structure the paper so readers are gradually introduced to more complex ideas, starting with a comprehensive overview of theoretical underpinnings of listening in addition to language acquisition before expanding the work. The following section examines the unique difficulties of tonal scripts like Mandarin, highlighting tonal and phonological hurdles. The conceptual framework intended to unite cognitive, linguistic, and pedagogical dimensions illuminating listening's role in third language Mandarin learning is then laid out. The discussion turns to application, providing recommendations for educators and policymakers stemming from framework insights. In closing, the paper discusses broader implications of the findings and suggests several paths for future research. The analysis is based on data through October 2023.

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Literature Review

Defining and Explaining Listening Skills in Third Language Acquisition

One of the corner stones of the very first stage in the language learning process is listening skills which is a means of getting in touch with the linguistic input, thus, another way of developing communicative competence. With particular reference to the phenomenon of third language (L3) acquisition, the cognitive dimension of listening is assumed to have raised the language learning awareness in terms of the interaction of several linguistic systems and the cognitive load of processing new languages within an established multilingual biography. Listening is an active, interactive, and multidimensional process of decoding phonological input, interpreting contextual clues, and storing sound in working memory, as Vandergrift and Goh (2021) pointed out. Such processes are particularly challenging in tonal languages like Mandarin, where the precise typological realization of lexical tones conveys meaning. In this example, a biased interpretation of a tone is a semantic mistake, that is, the four tones in Mandarin (mā [mother], má [hemp], mǎ [horse], and mà [scold]) have different semantic meanings, although their phonological structures are identical (Zhang & Li, 2022).

L3 contexts of listening proficiency are derived from linguistic knowledge from L2 and L1 in previous languages of the learner. In this sense, listening is an active process of cross-language transfer in which multilingual learners engage as they draw on their existing linguistic repertoire to make sense of new sounds and structures (De Angelis, 2021). Transference is not always facilitative, though: it can mislead learners if they have to combat interference from L1 or L2 phonological systems and therefore cannot accurately perceive sounds in L3 (Hardison, 2003b), especially in languages with unique phonological quirks like mandarins. Thus, listening in L3 learning needs to be complexly considered in fine-grained terms between cognition and language.

Relevant Theories and Models

L3 acquisition requires some exposition to the role of listening in L3 pave ways for the emergence of a few theoretical frameworks. One well-known example of how the first language influences language acquisition (but also language production) is the Linguistic Proximity Model (Falk & Bardel, 2022) wherein it is argued that L3 learners tend to rely on a language that is close to the target language. This model emphasizes on the role of the auditory domain in the recognition of phonological similarities and differences across languages. For example, learners of Mandarin who have a tonal L1 (such as Vietnamese or Thai) (Hansknecht, 2016) are said to have positive transfer, while learners with a non-tonal L1/L2 are said to experience negative transfer that may cause acquisition difficulty of Mandarin's tonal system.

The second nondidactic framework is derived from the Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller et al., 2020), which clarifies the effects of the auditory input complexity on listening comprehension. For processing Mandarin, processing tonal, syllabic, and contextual information at the same time is a high cognitive load on the learners. This implies you need to have listening instruction, to purposefully reduce extraneous cognitive load, to decompose complex tasks into smaller bricks of parts of listening, to build skills of listening to single tones before stacking those on top of other tones to make syllables to then listen to.

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Another important thing is the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 2021) because listening is a very big provider of comprehensible input. This theory posits that learners learn best when provided input at the next higher level than their current level (i + 1). For example, Mandarin learners require very carefully scaffolded listening activities, starting with very simple input and slowly becoming more complex as time goes on to help them feel they can learn and to assist in accuracy for the next instance they hear this tone and/or vocabulary.

While these theories are well supported, they lose some sight of the challenges that are unique to L3 acquisition, and to tonal languages in particular. This also further necessitates the exploration of this intersection in the form of an appropriate conceptual framework specifically for L3 Mandarin learners.

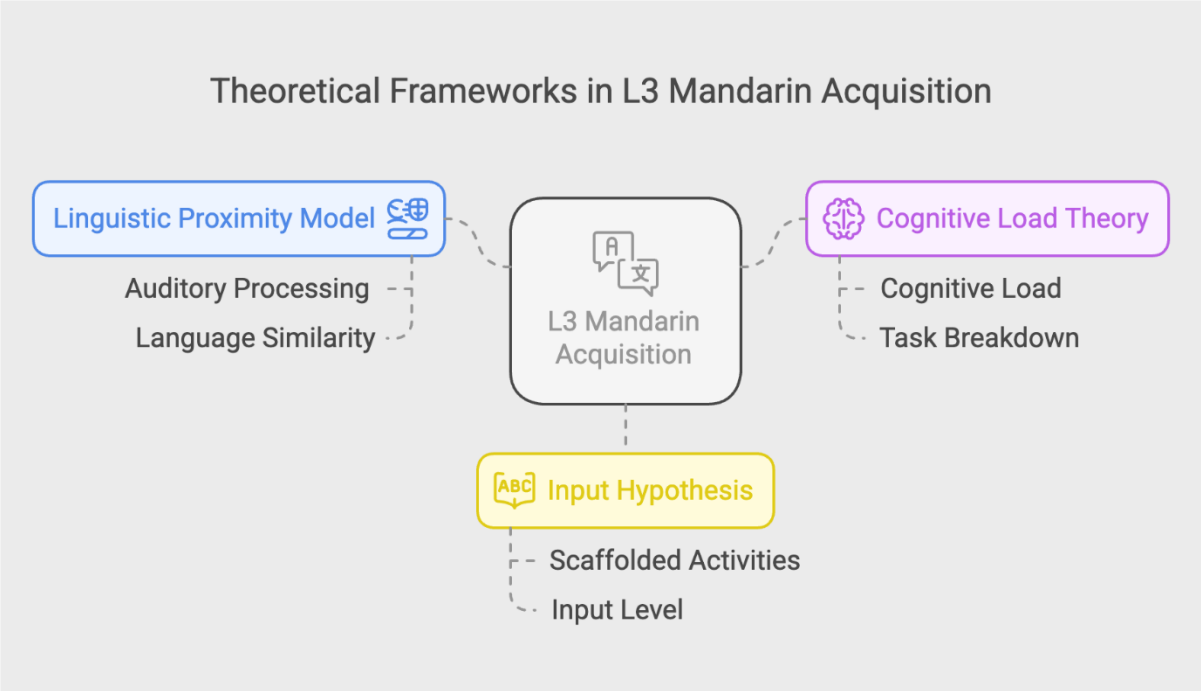

Figure 1 : Theoretical Framework in L3 Mandarin Acquisition

Listening proficiency is fundamental in language processing, and recent studies on Listening skills in L3 acquisition collectively highlight how listening is a multidimensional faculty with critical implications on third language (L3) learning, especially when related to tonal languages like Mandarin. Appropriately, De Angelis (2021) offers a basis for understanding cross-linguistic influence, showing how existing linguistic knowledge accrued in L1 and L2 affects learners in decoding auditory input for L3 acquisition. Even more so, a meta-analysis conducted by Falk and Bardel (2022) shows positive transfer for tonal L1 or L2 speakers acquiring Mandarin tones, while non-tonal L1 or L2 speakers face considerable negative transfer consequences. Field (2020) notes the cognitive load of processing complex tonal systems, calling for scaffolded listening tasks to relieve extraneous load on learners. Similarly, Sweller et al. (2020), utilize cognitive load theory in developing their hypothesis on oral language acquisition, whereby chunking of auditory information allows for improved processing of the tonal distinctions in Mandarin. Grounding these findings, Vandergrift and Goh (2021) highlight how metacognitive strategies, like planning, monitoring, and evaluation, can enhance comprehension, especially in demanding L3 environments, such as Mandarin.

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While there have been these theoretical advancements, Zhang and Li (2022) argue of a significant gap in current pedagogical practices, whereby Mandarin L3 curricula tend to neglect the teaching of listening skills in favour of speaking and writing. Wang et al. further corroborate this oversight (2023), who highlights the expanding global significance of Mandarin language as a system of symbolic communication and emphasizes the need for instructional approaches that incorporate listening as a fundamental basis of communicative competence. These studies together highlight the theoretical questions as well as the practical gaps related to listening skills in the context of L3 Mandarin acquisition, calling for a coherent conceptual framework to help future research as well as pedagogy.

Research Gaps and Conclusion

As much as the competences we groom, listening is still not well-established in the L3, not even to mention Mandarin novices. By this we mean that the majority of previous research has focused solely on L2 acquisition and that the results have then been transferred to L3 contexts without taking into account the added complications we find in the domain of multilingualism (Field and Révész et al., 2020) Although the importance of auditory processing is highlighted for L2 learning (e.g., Vasiljevic & Zhu, 2021), few have explored the extent to which previous linguistic knowledge transfers to listening skills in L3 acquisition. Furthermore, the unique phonological and tonal characteristics of Mandarin demand targeted listening teaching, but the current practices focus on speaking and writing (Zhang & Li, 2022).

A critical shortcoming is the lack of an integrated framework that simultaneously accounts for cognitive, linguistic, and pedagogical aspects in facilitating such an account of the listening aspect of L3 Mandarin acquisition. This paper aims to address this gap by proposing a new framework that foregrounds listening in L3 learning. The framework presented seeks to combine particular insights from three distinct aspects — the Linguistic Proximity Model; Cognitive Load Theory; and, Input Hypothesis — thereby providing a holistic perspective on how to best leverage all manner of listening-based pedagogical approaches for the Mandarin learner.

Indeed, listening skills are complex and play a predominant role in L3 acquisition, especially when it comes to Mandarin. Completion of the identified research gaps has both theoretical implications as well as practical implications for educators and the developers of curricula. This paper adds to the scientific conversation about multilingualism by arguing the case for consideration of the above. This study provides recommendations and outlines tangible measures for improving L3 Mandarin outcomes when learning with this condition in mind. Based on the ground that listening has inherent overlap with this situation, the paper serves to build a case for the skill's specificity in multilingualism outcomes. Longitudinal studies could further validate this framework and could explore any long-term effects of listening-focused instruction on L3 proficiency in future studies.

Table 1: Relevent Previous Studies

De Angelis, G.	2021	*Third language acquisition: Insights from multilingualism research*	Theoretical review and synthesis of empirical studies	Highlighted the role of cross-linguistic influence in L3 acquisition, emphasizing how prior linguistic

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				knowledge impacts listening comprehension. Suggested tonal languages like Mandarin require unique auditory processing strategies.
Falk, Y., & Bardel, C.	2022	Cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition: A comprehensive review	Meta-analysis of 50+ studies on L3 acquisition	Found that learners rely on the language most similar to the target language for phonological decoding. Positive transfer was observed in tonal L1/L2 speakers learning Mandarin, while non-tonal speakers faced challenges.
Field, J.	2020	*Listening in the language classroom: Challenges and solutions*	Classroom-based case study with L2 and L3 learners	Identified cognitive overload as a barrier to listening proficiency in tonal languages. Emphasized the need for scaffolded listening tasks to reduce complexity for learners acquiring Mandarin as an L3.
Révész, A., et al.	2021	Listening comprehension in second language learning: Theoretical perspectives and empirical insights	Mixed-methods study involving 200 participants across L2 and L3 contexts	Found that listening proficiency significantly predicts overall language competence but noted a lack of focus on L3-specific challenges. Advocated for tailored instructional approaches for tonal

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				languages like Mandarin.
Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. M.	2021	*Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action*(2nd ed.)	Longitudinal study with L3 Mandarin learners	Demonstrated that metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning, monitoring, evaluating) enhance listening comprehension in L3 contexts. Suggested these strategies are particularly effective for mastering Mandarin tones.
Zhang, L., & Li, W.	2022	Challenges and strategies in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language	Qualitative interviews with Mandarin educators and L3 learners	Identified a gap in pedagogical emphasis on listening skills. Found that current curricula prioritize speaking and writing over listening, hindering learners' ability to perceive Mandarin tones accurately.
Wang, X., et al.	2023	The growing influence of Mandarin in global communication: Trends and implications	Survey and content analysis of Mandarin learning programs	Highlighted the increasing importance of Mandarin proficiency in global markets. Noted that listening skills are underemphasized in L3 Mandarin instruction despite their critical role in communicative competence.
Sweller, J., et al.	2020	Cognitive architecture and instructional design: 20 years later	Experimental study testing cognitive load theory in	Applied cognitive load theory to listening instruction in tonal languages. Found that breaking

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			language learning	down complex auditory input into smaller, manageable components improved learners' ability to process Mandarin tones effectively.

Collectively, the studies find evidence in support of The Role of Listening Skills in Third Language Acquisition: A Conceptual Framework for Mandarin Learners revealed the multifaceted nature of listening proficiency and its significant importance in L3 contexts, like that of obtaining tonal language like Mandarin. De Angelis (2021) gives some overall knowledge of cross-linguistic influence, explaining how past knowledge between L1 and L2 affects how learners process auditory input, even during L3 acquisition. Falk and Bardel (2022) also provide more support on this point. Their meta-analysis demonstrates that learners from either tonal L1 or tonal L2 background experienced facilitative transfer effects in the acquisition of Mandarin tones, while non-tonal language speakers were observed to struggle considerably with interference. Field (2020) explains the excessive load placed on listeners attempting to process complex tonal systems, recommending scaffolded listening tasks to relieve the burden of extraneous load to learners. Similarly, Sweller et al. at the same time, Wu & et. al (2020) applied cognitive load theory in the context of second or foreign language development and this perspective indicates that dividing auditory input into parsable units could also help learners to process Mandarin's embedded tonal distinctions effectively. Among attributes from my reading that coalesce with these insights, Vandergrift and Goh (2021) highlight the metacognitive strategies (i.e., planning, monitoring, and evaluating), which enhance listening comprehension, particularly in difficult L3 contexts like Mandarin. Although these theoretical positions have been addressed thus far, there is a gap in how effective this is in current practices, with Zhang and Li (2022) explaining that of the romanization learning theory based on modern phonetics, many R3 Mandarin curricula deemphasize listening and comprehension, yet hold extensively to training in speaking and writing. Wang et al. Further confirm this oversight (2023), who underscore the increasing global value of Mandarin fluency and emphasize the importance of instructional frameworks that integrate listening as an essential aspect of communicative competence. When considered together, these studies illustrate the theoretical challenges and practical limitations associated with the treatment of listening skills in the study of L3 Mandarin, highlighting the need for a coherent conceptual framework to inform future research and pedagogical practices.

Conceptual Framework: Influence of Listening Abilities on Mandarin Learners' Acquisition of a Third Language

Below is a conceptual framework that outlines how the combined influences of cognitive processes, linguistic factors, and pedagogical strategies can be formulated to explain the role of listening skills in third language (L3) Mandarin acquisition. It stresses the interaction of these dimensions and their influence on learners' communicative competence.

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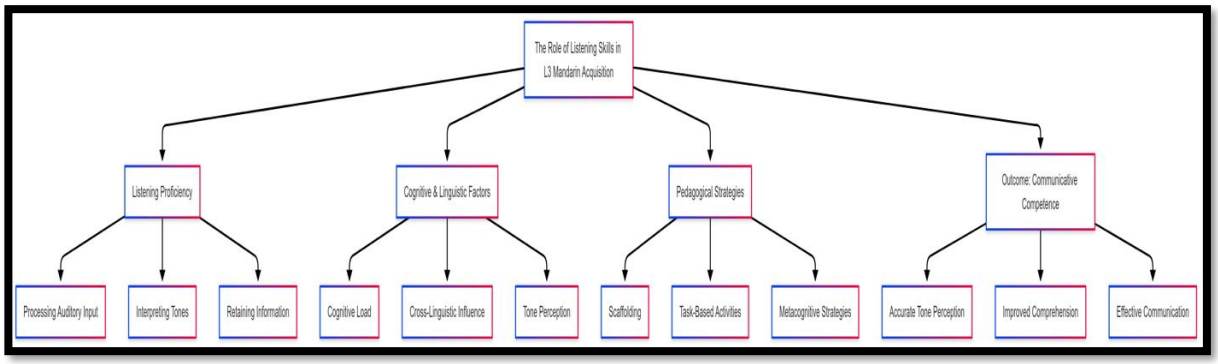

Figure 2: Listening Skills in Learners of Third Language: A Conceptual Framework for Mandarin

The conceptual framework illustrates how the core elements of listening proficiency, cognitive and linguistic factors, and pedagogical strategies work together to help and close the link between each other to aid in building communicative competence in L3 Mandarin. It is the foundation of listening capability, which is knowledge, including auditory input processing (e.g., tone hear and interpretation, someone is memorable), and it is fundamental to lead to the fluency of the Mandarin tonal system (Zhang & Li, 2022). Particularly, cognitive and linguistic factors contribute as mediators of this process: cognitive load, cross-linguistic influence or tone perception. Language is processed in a mental "workspace" that can become overburdened when attempting to decode increasingly elaborate auditory input, notably the tonal languages such as Mandarin (Sweller et al., 2020). Another important factor here is whether there is negative or positive transfer, that is, the extent to which the scholars' L1 (most commonly an intonation language) and L2 influence each other (Falk & Bardel, 2022). However, pedagogical approaches, such as scaffolding, task-based activities and metacognitive strategies, further enhance listening skills as they help to reduce complexity and therefore promote optimal processing of tones by learners (Vandergrift & Goh, 2021). All of these factors converge to give us the effect we want: improved perception of tone, improved comprehension of tones, and improved expression of tones in Mandarin. The paper draws from previous research on L2 and L3 acquisition, as well as cognitive linguistics, and brings these diverse strands of research and insights together in a principled and coherent framework that enhances our understanding of the cognitive and affective aspects of L3 Mandarin acquisition and outlines the unique challenges that language learners encounter in this context.

Scouting for Gaps in the Existing Literature

While significant progress has been made towards understanding the nuances of listening skills, there is still much that remains unknown in the context of L3 Mandarin acquisition. One major gap is the insufficient investigation into the effects of cross-linguistic influence, from learners' first (L1) and second language (L2), on their processing of Mandarin tones, especially speakers who are from tonal versus non-tonal language backgrounds. While some studies (e.g., Falk and Bardel 2022) have started to consider transfer effects, empirical findings on the development of auditory processing skills are still sparse and lack findings on diverse learner populations. Likewise, the implementation of Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller et al. (2020) on the teaching of L3 listening skills in tonal languages such as Mandarin is lacking in research, indicating a requirement for experimental studies that would test strategies with the goal of mitigating cognitive overload while also improving learners' perception of tone. This gap is also reinforced by pedagogical practices, which often prioritize speaking and writing over listening,

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even though listening is foundational to communicative competence (Zhang & Li, 2022). However, further research is needed to assess fresh instructional approaches, including scaffolding, metacognitive exercises, and technology-embedded devices, to maximize listening fluctuations found when learning L3 Mandarin speakers. On the policy front, there are no standardized guidelines for enriching existing L3 Mandarin programs with listening skills, which underscores the need for partnership between researchers, educators, and policy makers towards a cohesive and comprehensive approach to language education that is inclusive, attainable, and tailored to the current socio-cultural climate. Moreover, rapidly emerging digital technologies, such as virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), and mobile applications enable new, integrated methods that create beneficial opportunities to harness immersive and personalized environments to facilitate listening acquisition. More longitudinal studies are needed to follow the progress of learners over time and more attention should be paid to some underrepresented groups, such as adult learners, heritage language speakers, and learners from low-resource educational settings. By conducting subsequent research and filling these gaps through an interdisciplinary lens—including linguistics, cognitive science, neuroscience, and educational technology—future efforts can illuminate the mechanisms involved in L3 Mandarin listening acquisition. These efforts will contribute to theoretical advancements as well as practical strategies for enhancing listening comprehension, helping learners learn to navigate and master Mandarin as a global language.

Conclusion

This article has explored the multifaceted role of auditory processing abilities in the complex undertaking of acquiring Mandarin as a third language, illuminating both the intricate obstacles and promising pathways that learners may encounter. Through an exhaustive survey of the pertinent body of scholarship, we pinpointed significant gaps in comprehending how listening competency interacts with cognitive mechanisms, linguistic elements, and instructional tactics in third language environments. Central insights gleaned from each segment underscore the sophistication of processing tonal languages like Mandarin orally, where accurately perceiving tones is fundamentally important for effective interaction. The proposed conceptual framework brought together these dimensions, providing a structured approach to grasping and addressing the intricately intertwined nature of third language listening acquisition. By emphasizing the interplay between cross-linguistic influence, cognitive load management, and groundbreaking educational methods, this framework not only advances theoretical knowledge but also supplies practical guidance for educators and curriculum designers.

The potential of this research area is vast, particularly given Mandarin's growing global significance as a language of economics, culture, and diplomacy. Proficiency in Mandarin grants learners access to one of the world's most substantial economies and nurtures cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly interconnected world. However, achieving communicative competence in Mandarin demands a robust foundation in listening abilities, which remain underemphasized in current pedagogical practices. This underscores the urgent need for additional research to cultivate evidence-based strategies that optimize listening proficiency in third language learners. Moreover, the integration of technologies, such as AI-driven tools and immersive learning platforms, presents exciting possibilities for enhancing auditory processing capabilities and rendering Mandarin education more accessible to diverse learner populations.

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To fully realize this potential, collaboration between academicians, policymakers, and students is essential. Scholars can lead empirical studies to address identified gaps, like the long-term effects of cross-linguistic transfer on tone perception and the efficacy of technology-enhanced listening instruction. Policymakers, on the other hand, play a crucial role in shaping inclusive language education policies that prioritize listening skills in third language Mandarin curricula. Students, particularly those at institutions like UiTM, are uniquely positioned to contribute to this endeavor by participating in research initiatives, pilot programs, and cross-disciplinary undertakings. Their firsthand experiences as language learners provide valuable insights into the practical challenges of third language Mandarin acquisition, enriching both academic discourse and pedagogical innovation.

In conclusion, the study of listening abilities in third language Mandarin acquisition represents a dynamic and impactful area of research with far-reaching implications for multilingual education and global interaction. By fostering collaboration between researchers, educators, and students, we can bridge existing divides, refine instructional practices, and empower learners to achieve communicative competence in Mandarin. We encourage academicians and UiTM students to actively engage in this critical field, driving forward innovations that will shape the future of language learning and contribute to a more interconnected and linguistically diverse world.

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