

Identification of Relationship between Meta Cognition and Misconceptions

Urvashi Sharma¹
Sharda University

Abstract:- This study investigates the complex interplay between meta cognition and misconceptions within the educational context, focusing on implications for effective teaching and learning strategies. Aligning with India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates for a transition from rote memorization to in-depth understanding, this research explores the concurrent presence of misconceptions and meta cognition in elementary science education.

Meta cognition, the process of reflecting on one's cognitive processes, and misconceptions, or predefined notions that impede authentic learning, are analyzed through influential frameworks, including those developed by Flavell and Nelson and Narens. The MASRL model by Efklides is also incorporated to understand the interplay of meta cognitive knowledge, control strategies, experiences, task characteristics, and learning outcomes. The study highlights the impact of misconceptions as cognitive barriers and their influence on meta cognition, emphasizing the need for effective educational strategies. The literature review explores existing research on meta cognition and misconceptions, showcasing how meta cognition acts as a cognitive mirror, enabling learners to navigate and rectify misconceptions. This research has significant educational implications, highlighting the importance of cultivating self-directed learning, critical thinking, and evidence-based study strategies to enhance academic outcomes. The study concludes by emphasizing the dynamic interplay between meta cognition and misconceptions, offering insights for educators and researchers to design interventions fostering accurate conceptual understanding in learners.

Keywords:- Meta Cognition, Misconceptions, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Cognitive Barriers.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2020, India unveiled its National Education Policy (NEP), a visionary road map that aimed to transform the nation's education landscape. Rooted in the principles of holistic development, flexibility, and relevance to the 21st century, the NEP 2020 ushered in a new era of education in India. Within this ambitious policy framework, two critical elements stand out as integral to its vision: misconceptions and meta cognition. The NEP 2020 advocates for a transformative approach to education, moving beyond mere

memorization to cultivate in-depth understanding and critical thinking skills, particularly in the sciences

We have seen that teaching and learning is flawed in our country and one of the reasons is the persistent presence of misconceptions—preconceived notions and flawed understandings that hinder genuine learning. (Makonye, 2012)

The policy also acknowledges the vital role of meta cognition - the capacity to introspect and manage one's cognitive processes - as fundamental to successful learning, seamlessly integrating with the goal of cultivating autonomous and self-motivated individuals. Science education at the elementary level is a fertile ground for the exploration of these intertwined concepts. (NEP2020)

As young minds embark on their scientific journey, they grapple with both misconceptions and the opportunity to develop meta cognitive skills. Understanding the complex relationship between misconceptions and metacognition in elementary science holds important lessons for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to improve learning outcomes.

This exploration delves into the confluence of misconceptions and meta cognition, with a keen eye on the NEP 2020's guiding principles. By understanding how these cognitive elements intersect and influence the learning process, we can harness the trans-formative potential of the policy to shape a generation of scientifically literate and critically thinking individuals. In shaping elementary science education, we align with NEP 2020's overarching goal: to foster a dynamic educational framework that prepares learners to navigate the challenges of an increasingly interconnected and evolving global landscape.

➤ Meta Cognition

The prefix "meta" signifies self-referential analysis. Consequently, metacognition involves reflective thinking about one's cognitive processes (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2019).

John Flavell (1979) is prominently associated with this concept. According to Flavell (1979, 1987), metacognition encompasses two key components: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation.

Metacognitive knowledge comprises acquired understanding of cognitive mechanisms, enabling intentional control over these processes. Flavell categorizes metacognitive knowledge into three subsets:

- Person variables: recognizing individual differences in cognitive abilities.
- Task variables: understanding task-specific requirements.
- Strategy variables: selecting appropriate cognitive strategies.

➤ *Misconceptions*

Adey and Shayer describe misconceptions as "preconceptions," which are existing beliefs that individuals bring to a learning situation. These preconceptions can be inaccurate or incomplete, and they often conflict with scientific or correct understandings of a subject. Misconceptions, in this context, are obstacles to learning because they can hinder a person's ability to grasp new, more accurate concepts. The significance lies in recognizing that these pre-existing beliefs need to be addressed and modified to facilitate meaningful learning and conceptual change.

II. CONCEPTS OF META COGNITION

A. *Nelson and Narens' (1990) Model: Understanding Self-Regulatory Processes*

Nelson and Narens' (1990) work on meta-cognitive processes introduces a regulatory hypothesis that has garnered significant attention in research circles.

There are two stages to this: the object level as well as the meta level • Cognitive functions or 'One's thought' takes place. Text decoding is one such. whilst perusing a text. Cognitive techniques operate at the object level. (such as decoding) are employed to assist the student in achieving a specific objective (comprehending the text's meaning). This is understanding.

Meta-level thinking involves reflective analysis of one's cognitive processes. At this advanced stage, learners utilize metacognitive strategies to ensure achievement of their objectives.

Consider the reading example. This reflective process begins with self-assessment, where learners evaluate their comprehension of the text. This evaluation is termed observation.

If satisfied, learners proceed with reading at their current level. Otherwise, they may revisit the passage or employ additional resources, such as dictionaries, to enhance understanding. These adaptive behaviors are known as control processes, as they adjust cognitive actions based on self-monitoring feedback.

In essence, metacognition encompasses this cyclical process of reflection, evaluation, and adjustment.

➤ *According to Perkins (1992), Meta-Cognitive Learners can be Categorized into Four Distinct Levels:*

- Implicit learners (Tacit): Unaware of their existing meta-cognitive knowledge.
- Aware learners: Recognize their meta-cognitive abilities.
- Strategic learners: Intentionally apply meta-cognitive strategies.
- Reflective learners: Critically evaluate and refine their meta-cognitive processes.

"Tacit" learners do not recognise the meta cognitive knowledge they possess. They never do consider any specific learning techniques and just accept their ignorance if it exists. "Aware students possess a basic understanding of their thought processes, recognizing activities like:

- Concept formation
- Data collection

However, their thinking lacks intentionality and deliberate planning. Strategic students, on the other hand, deliberately structure their thinking through:

- Categorization
- Organization
- Problem-solving
- Information gathering
- Decision-making

Reflective learners possess a comprehensive understanding of effective learning strategies, which they deliberately apply to enhance their academic outcomes. Moreover, these learners exhibit a meta cognitive awareness, concurrently reflecting on their learning processes and assessing the efficacy of their strategies in real-time.

By engaging in this reflective practice, learners continually evaluate the success of their approaches and adapt them as necessary, fostering a dynamic and responsive learning environment.

B. *Flavell's Meta-Cognition Model*

Flavell's framework posits that meta-cognitive activities comprise four essential components: meta-cognitive knowledge, meta-cognitive experiences, goals/tasks, and actions/strategies. These elements interact to facilitate intellectual processes. Meta-cognitive knowledge encompasses an individual's understanding and beliefs about personal, task, and strategic variables. This knowledge is stored in long-term memory, indistinguishable from other types of knowledge. Meta-cognitive experiences refer to the conscious cognitive and affective states accompanying intellectual endeavors. These experiences arise when meta-cognitive knowledge enters consciousness, typically in situations requiring deliberate, effortful thinking. Meta cognitive experiences allow for the addition, deletion, or revision of meta cognitive knowledge. The tasks or goals are related to the real purposes of a cognitive endeavour.

subsequently, as the name suggests, actions or strategies are some methods and approaches that could help achieve those objectives.

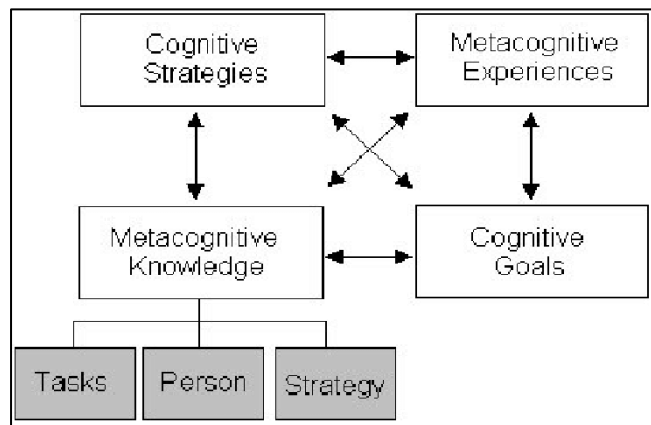


Fig 1 Flavell's Meta-Cognition Model

C. MASRL: A Metacognitive-Affective Approach to Self-Regulated Learning

Meta cognitive Knowledge: This forms the basis of the model and comprises the knowledge that learners possess about their own cognitive processes and learning capacities. It includes being conscious of one's own learning preferences, past knowledge, and learning strengths and shortcomings.

- **Meta Cognitive Control Strategies:**

Learners use a variety of meta cognitive control strategies to manage their learning process. These tactics consist of goal setting, organising, keeping an eye on, and assessing their progress. These regulatory mechanisms allow learners to tailor their approach to suit the unique demands of each task.

- **Meta Cognitive Experiences:**

This component of the learning process deals with motivational and affective aspects. Emotional reactions in learners, such as curiosity, confidence, or frustration, can

influence their learning outcomes. Setting and completing learning objectives is greatly aided by motivation.

- **Task Characteristics:**

The model recognises that a key component is the context or type of learning task. Various learning tasks might call for various adjustments and meta cognitive techniques. Task features include objectives, familiarity, and complexity.

- **Learning Outcomes:**

These are what the meta cognitive procedures have produced. The development of meta cognitive skills, problem-solving techniques, and knowledge acquisition are examples of learning outcomes.

➤ The Person Level

When presented with a learning scenario, the student's attributes are represented at the Person level. In addition to personality qualities, it includes meta cognitive knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and other cognitive resources and abilities, as well as knowledge about motivation and meta motivational techniques, and affect as well as meta emotional knowledge and strategies.

➤ The Task-Person Interface

At this level, tasks are tailored to individual capabilities through the dynamic interplay between person-level guidance and task-specific processing. Although guided decisions typically dictate task processing, individuals retain the flexibility to override these policies based on real-time cognitive processing and its outcomes, thereby creating adaptive strategies aligned with the task's unique demands (Efklides, 2011). Depending on their meta cognitive, the student may alter their priorities, affective subjective and meta motivational experiences. According to the MASRL model, learners' cycle through these elements continuously, adjusting and regulating their learning processes in response to meta cognitive information, learning strategies, experiences, and the particulars of the learning task.

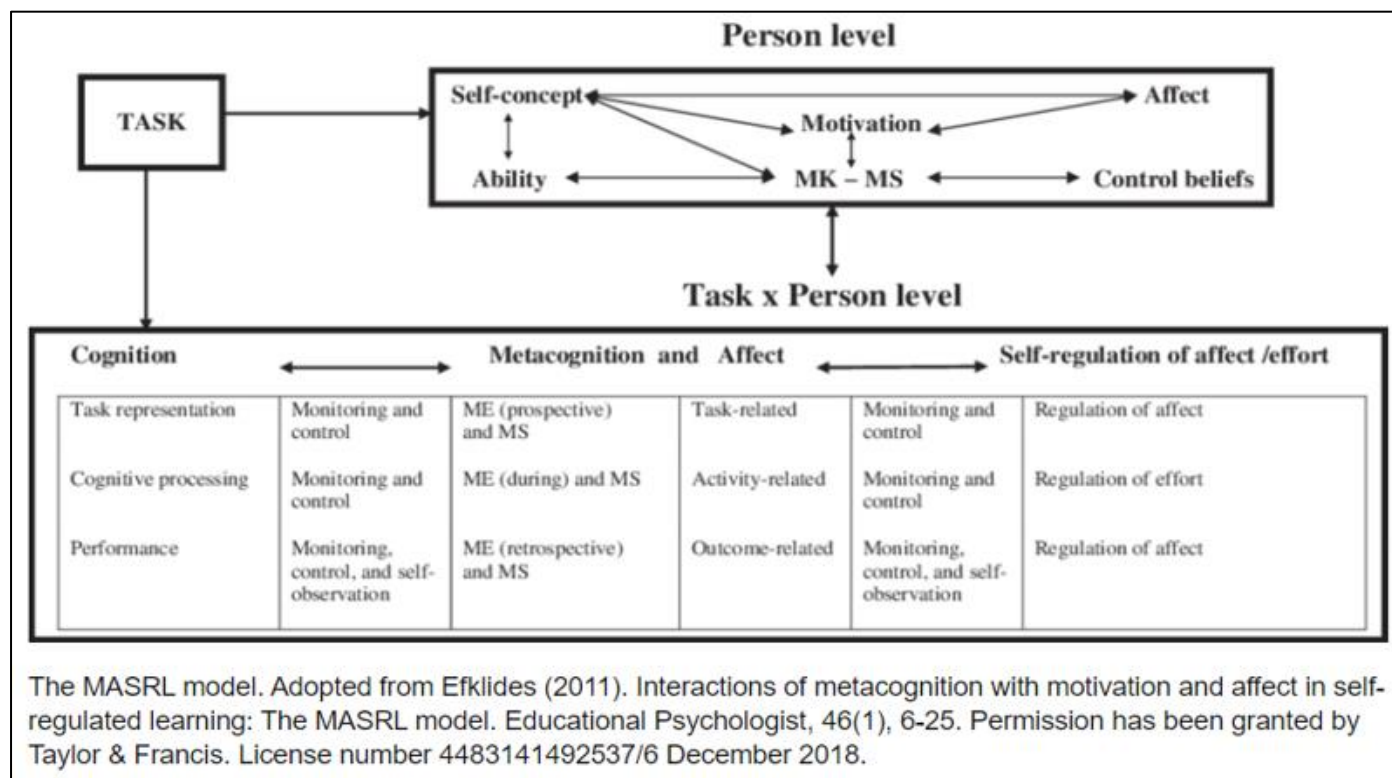


Fig 2 The Task-Person Interface

III. CONCEPTS

➤ Meta Cognitive Processes

- **Monitoring:**

Meta cognitive monitoring involves individuals' ongoing assessment of their own understanding and the recognition of discrepancies between their current knowledge and accurate information (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). Meta-cognition allows for introspective evaluation of cognitive processes, fostering recognition of errors and facilitating corrective action.(Schraw & Dennison, 1994).

- **Control Strategies:**

Meta cognitive control strategies refer to the action's individuals take to regulate their own cognitive processes. These include selecting appropriate learning strategies, setting goals, and allocating resources effectively. "Meta cognitive control strategies are essential for learners to correct and restructure their misconceptions" (Mason & Boscolo, 2004).

- **Reflection:**

Meta cognitive reflection involves deep self-analysis of one's thought processes, beliefs, and misconceptions. It is a critical step in recognizing and addressing misconceptions (Gupta et al., 2021). "Meta cognitive reflection promotes awareness of misconceptions and facilitates self-correction" (Gupta et al., 2021).

➤ Misconception Processes (Naushad,2008)

Assimilation and Anchoring: Individuals initially encounter new information or concepts. They attempt to fit this information into their existing mental frameworks, which may contain misconceptions or oversimplified beliefs. The mind "anchors" on these initial beliefs and adjusts from that point, which can perpetuate the misconception.

- **Confirmation and Filtering:**

People naturally seek out information that confirms their existing beliefs, while tending to ignore or downplay information that contradicts these beliefs (confirmation bias). This selective attention reinforces the misconception, as individuals only focus on information that supports their preconceived notions.

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- **Peer and Cultural Influence:**

Societal interactions and cultural expectations significantly impact the formation and evolution of personal beliefs. Misconceptions can be spread or reinforced through discussions with peers or exposure to societal beliefs. Cultural and societal factors can deeply influence how individuals understand and accept concepts, even if those understandings are not scientifically accurate.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Meta cognition and Misconceptions in Education
Introduction The fields of education and cognitive psychology have long been fascinated by the intricate interplay between meta cognition and misconceptions in the learning process. Meta-cognition, involving self-awareness of cognitive processes (Flavell, 1976), significantly impacts how individuals identify, challenge, and overcome misconceptions - flawed beliefs contradicting established knowledge (Posner et al., 1982). This complex interplay is vital in educational settings. Meta-cognition functions as an introspective tool (Schraw & Dennison, 1994), enabling individuals to supervise and adjust their thinking. Through meta-cognitive strategies like planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning approaches, learners can refine their cognitive processes.

In the context of misconceptions, meta cognition becomes a powerful tool for learners. When students possess strong meta cognitive skills, they are more adept at recognizing discrepancies between their current understanding and accurate knowledge (Veenman et al., 2006). For instance, a student studying astronomy might initially hold the misconception that the Sun revolves around the Earth. Meta cognitive awareness prompts them to question their understanding when presented with evidence supporting the heliocentric model. This heightened awareness facilitates the deployment of meta-cognitive tactics, including self-reflection and elaborative reasoning, which are vital for rectifying misconceptions (Vosniadou, 2008). Misconceptions: Cognitive Barriers to Learning Misconceptions, often deeply ingrained, can persist despite formal instruction and educational interventions (Driver et al., 1985). They pose cognitive barriers to learning, impeding the acquisition of accurate knowledge and understanding (Mayer, 2004). The presence of misconceptions in educational contexts necessitates targeted strategies for their identification and correction (Posner et al., 1982). The Interplay Between Meta cognition and Misconceptions The relationship between meta cognition and misconceptions is dynamic and reciprocal. Meta cognitive awareness enables learners to recognize the existence of misconceptions, prompting them to seek clarification and engage in more effective learning strategies. Conversely, misconceptions can challenge meta cognitive processes by biasing students' self-assessment and self-regulation (Mason & Boscolo, 2004). Recent research has highlighted the effectiveness of meta cognitive interventions in addressing misconceptions. For example, meta cognitive reflection, where students actively analyze their own thought processes and identify misconceptions, has shown promise in fostering conceptual change (Gupta et al., 2021). Additionally, Self-directed learning techniques, such as inquiry-based thinking and explanatory self-dialogue have been found to enhance the identification and correction of misconceptions (Wang & Bodner, 2007). **Conclusion** The relationship between meta cognition and misconceptions in education is a complex and vital area of study. Meta cognition serves as a cognitive bridge, enabling learners to navigate and rectify misconceptions, while

misconceptions challenge meta cognitive processes by influencing self-assessment and self-regulation. Understanding this dynamic interplay is essential for educators and researchers seeking to design effective interventions and pedagogical strategies that promote accurate conceptual understanding in learners.

➤ *The Impact of Misconceptions*

- *Cognitive Barriers:*

Misconceptions can serve as cognitive barriers that hinder the acquisition of accurate knowledge and understanding (Mayer, 2004). "Misconceptions create cognitive barriers, impeding the acquisition of accurate knowledge" (Mayer, 2004).

- *Influence on Meta Cognition:*

Misconceptions can influence meta cognitive processes by biasing self-assessment and self-regulation. Students may be less likely to recognize their own misconceptions, hindering the meta cognitive cycle (Mason & Boscolo, 2004). "Misconceptions influence meta cognitive processes by biasing self-assessment and self-regulation" (Mason & Boscolo, 2004).

➤ *Implications for Education*

- *Self-Regulation of Learning:*

"Research conducted by Brown (1987) suggests that by fostering meta-cognition, students develop the capacity for self-directed learning, monitoring their progress, and addressing misconceptions promptly.

- *Promoting Critical Thinking:*

"In a study by Johnson, meta cognition was found to enhance students' critical thinking skills, reducing the likelihood of accepting misconceptions.

- *Enhancing Study Skills:*

"According to Martinez (2006), The integration of meta-cognitive strategies enhances the efficacy of study methods , which students can use to identify and rectify misconceptions during self-guided study sessions."

➤ *Outcomes*

- *Conceptual Change:*

Conceptual change is a fundamental goal in education (Duit & Treagust, 2003). It aims to help learners transition from their existing, often flawed or incomplete, conceptions to more accurate and profound understandings of a topic. This process is particularly challenging when learners hold misconceptions – preconceived notions that deviate from accepted scientific or academic knowledge (Posner et al., 1982).

Misconceptions can act as significant barriers to learning because they shape how learners interpret and respond to new information. The effective integration of meta-cognitive skills, including self-awareness and

cognitive regulation, drives conceptual change (Veenman, 2005), allowing learners to oversee and adjust their thinking processes. By honing these meta cognitive skills, individuals become better equipped to assess and reflect upon their own thinking. When they encounter new information that contradicts their existing misconceptions, meta cognition enables them to recognize the discrepancy and take steps to address it. Through meta cognitive practices, learners can engage in a more reflective and self-regulated approach to their studies. When they identify discrepancies between their misconceptions and new information, they can employ meta cognitive awareness to acknowledge these inconsistencies. This often necessitates critical thinking, problem-solving, and further exploration of the topic. Over time, with consistent meta cognitive development, individuals can gradually transition to more accurate and profound conceptual understandings (Veenman, 2011).

- *Critical Thinking:*

Critical thinking is a vital skill for individuals in both educational and real-life contexts. It involves the capacity to think logically, evaluate information, and draw well-founded conclusions. The development of critical thinking, crucial for lifelong learning (Paul & Elder, 2006), relies heavily on meta-cognitive strategies and the ability to recognize and address misconceptions.

Meta cognition is central to recognizing and addressing misconceptions, as it allows individuals to assess their cognitive processes. Critical thinking requires the capacity to identify biases, inaccuracies, and contradictions in one's own thinking – an area where meta cognitive skills come into play. As students encounter disparities between their existing beliefs, often influenced by misconceptions, and new information, their meta cognitive abilities guide them to question and critically evaluate both sets of beliefs. They can scrutinize the credibility and reliability of information sources, scrutinize the evidence supporting different viewpoints, and make informed judgments about which ideas or concepts to accept.

V. CONCLUSION

This study illustrates the dynamic relationship between meta cognition and misconceptions in education. Meta-cognition functions as an internal regulatory mechanism, facilitating the identification, examination, and correction of misconceptions, ultimately leading to more accurate and profound conceptual understanding. Understanding this interplay is essential for educators and researchers aiming to design effective interventions and pedagogical strategies that promote optimal learning outcomes.

The relationship between misconceptions and meta cognition is a critical aspect of cognitive development and learning processes in education. Meta-cognition pertains to an individual's ability to reflect upon and comprehend their cognitive operations, including mental processes, memory, problem-solving, and learning tactics.

On the other hand, misconceptions are erroneous beliefs or ideas that individuals hold, often in contradiction to well-established and scientifically accepted knowledge. Misconceptions can significantly impact learning by creating cognitive barriers that hinder the acquisition of accurate knowledge (Mayer, 2004). When students hold misconceptions, they may not recognize the need to seek correct information, as they are unaware of their own knowledge gaps or errors (Vosniadou, 2008). This is where meta cognition plays a crucial role. Meta cognitive awareness allows individuals to monitor their own understanding and recognize when their existing knowledge conflicts with new information or concepts. When students possess strong meta cognitive skills, they are more likely to identify and address their misconceptions actively. They can engage in processes such as self-assessment, self-correction, and self-explanation (Veenman et al., 2006), all of which are essential for overcoming misconceptions and fostering accurate conceptual understanding. For instance, a learner exploring the heliocentric model may initially cling to the incorrect assumption that our solar system is geocentric, with the Sun revolving around the Earth.

Through meta cognitive awareness, they might recognize their misconception when presented with evidence supporting the heliocentric model. This awareness could prompt them to seek further information, correct their misconception, and develop a more accurate understanding of the topic. In summary, meta cognition and misconceptions are interconnected in the learning process. Meta cognitive skills enable individuals to monitor and regulate their own thinking, which, in turn, helps them identify and correct misconceptions, leading to more accurate and deeper conceptual understanding.

➤ *The Interaction between Meta cognition and Misconceptions*

- *Meta Cognition as a Bridge:*

Meta cognition serves as a bridge between recognizing misconceptions and addressing them. When individuals possess strong meta cognitive skills, they are more adept at identifying and challenging their misconceptions (Vosniadou, 2008). "Meta cognition serves as a bridge between recognizing and addressing misconceptions" (Vosniadou, 2008).

- *Meta Cognitive Interventions:*

Interventions targeting meta-cognition, including reflective self-assessment and explanatory reasoning, have proven effective in combating misconceptions by fostering cognitive awareness and enabling self-directed correction. (Wang & Bodner, 2007). "Meta cognitive interventions, including self-explanation, facilitate the identification and correction of misconceptions" (Wang & Bodner, 2007).

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