

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This chapter comprises three parts. Section 5.1 is a summary of the major findings of the present study. Section 5.2 presents the pedagogical implications based on the results. Section 5.3 provides the limitations of the present study and potential topics for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Major Findings

The major findings of the present study are as follows:

First, it was found that general listening anxiety correlated negatively with EFL listening performance significantly. To be more specific, anxiety level was more closely related to the subjects' listening performance on global questions than on local questions. That is, the HI-ANX group performed worse on global questions than the LOW-ANX group.

Second, general listening anxiety correlated negatively with the subjects' performance on short talks and statements significantly, but not on conversations. The LOW-ANX group outperformed the HI-ANX group on all three text types. Yet, the participants' performance on statements and conversations significantly correlated with their anxiety recall, whereas short talks did not significantly correlate with their anxiety recall. A closer examination showed the subjects showed the most consistency in their difficulty perception, performance, and anxiety recall of conversations.

Third, the LOW-ANX group was found to employ all of the listening strategy types more frequently than the HI-ANX group, except for cognitive and affective strategies. The HI-ANX group used metacognitive strategies the most, followed by cognitive and memory strategies. Those LOW-ANX subjects tended to choose compensation strategies most frequently, followed by metacognitive and memory

strategies. However, no significant difference was found between the strategy use of the HI-ANX and LOW-ANX groups except for CG1 (“I’m used to translating words, phrases, or sentences into Chinese when listening”) and CP4 (“I try to keep up with the speed when listening”).

Finally, the participants of high proficiency were found to adopt all the listening strategy types more often than the low-proficiency group except cognitive and affective strategies and within each proficiency group, the highly anxious students tended to utilize strategies more frequently, with compensation strategies being exception. With regard to memory, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies, the successful listeners of the HI-ANX group were the more frequent users, followed by the successful listeners of the LOW-ANX group, the unsuccessful listeners of the HI-ANX group, and then the unsuccessful listeners of the LOW-ANX group.

## **5.2 Pedagogical Implications**

What follows are the pedagogical implications derived from the present study:

First, to truly evaluate students’ listening ability, teachers are suggested to lower students’ anxiety prior to a test so that their anxiety status will not influence their listening performance. Arnold (2000) has proven that students can perform better through anxiety-reducing techniques. In writing a listening test, test writers are to start with local questions first so that examinees’ nerves can be eased. Both teachers and textbook writers can also provide students with more practice on global questions under testing circumstances or during in-class activities.

In addition, to reduce those highly anxious students’ anxiety, teachers are advised to put conversations in the beginning of a listening test because these students need such a sedative or boost to calm them down. For less anxious students, statements probably can be placed anywhere in a test. Short talks are found to be the

most anxiety-provoking text type, and thus they are to be placed at the end of a test. Apparently, students need lots of help in dealing with short talks. In designing class activities, teachers may arrange more exercises or practice for students to get accustomed to listening to short talks.

As for strategy use, teachers are advised to teach the highly anxious students some of the strategies they are not familiar with, like compensation strategies. Besides, students are to be taught that one single strategy, like translation from English to Chinese, can rarely be applied to all situations. As Rost and Ross (1991) proposed, practitioners should teach learners of all proficiency levels specific strategies for particular tasks. Though acquiring new effective strategies is important, HI-ANX students should be taught to effectively make use of the strategies than randomly use a lot of strategies.

Lastly, it is suggested that teachers introduce to those highly anxious students of low proficiency compensation strategies, which they are less likely to use. These students adopted lots of cognitive strategies, especially translation, which did not seem to work well for them. Thus, they should be educated to employ various strategies in different contexts rather than stick to a single strategy.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Present Study and Suggestions for Future Research**

Owing to the limited resources available to the researcher, the present study has several limitations.

To begin with, our subjects came from the same grade at the same school and thereby could not represent all the senior high school students in Taiwan. It is suggested that correlational research can be replicated to include more samples and a larger subject pool of both genders, different ages, and varied English proficiency.

In addition, in order not to interrupt the class schedule, the listening

comprehension test used in the present study was not a standardized one. To ensure the reliability and validity of a listening test, future studies may adopt a standardized test. Moreover, the numbers of global and local questions in the test were uneven. Further research may adopt equal numbers of both the two question types for a fairer comparison.

On top of the abovementioned, the present study was a one-shot test. Future researchers can conduct longitudinal research to examine over time the effect of anxiety on listening performance. To further corroborate anxiety effect, each student's listening performance can be observed when he is (or is not) anxious.

Lastly, the present research concluded that the students with low anxiety and those of high proficiency manipulated listening strategies better than their counterparts. However, it did not explore if strategy training could contribute to the reduction of anxiety. Future research can be done to delve into the relationship between strategy training and reduction of anxiety.