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合作學習對於國中生聽力理解及焦慮感之效益

The Effects of Cooperative Learning on Junior High School  
Students' English Listening Comprehension and Anxiety

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Students' English Listening Comprehension and Anxiety

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國立政治大學英國語文學系英語教學碩士在職專班

碩士論文提要

論文名稱：合作學習對於國中生聽力理解及焦慮感之效益

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研究生：徐曉潔

論文提要內容：

本研究旨在探究分組合作學習應用於增進台灣國中生聽力理解之成效和降低學生對於英語聽力之焦慮感之成效，以及學生對分組合作學習的看法。研究參與對象來自北台灣某公立國中七年級兩個常態編班之班級，並分別設定為控制組及實驗組，控制組有 29 人，而實驗組有 22 人，進行為期 10 週的聽力課程，控制組採用傳統式聽力教學，而實驗組接受分組合作學習練習聽力，實驗中比較課程前後學生之英語聽力理解及英語聽力焦慮感之差異。研究工具有自編英語聽力理解測驗、中文版外語聽力焦慮量表、分組合作學習問卷、結構性訪談稿，資料處理方式包含量化和質性分析。研究結果發現實驗組及控制組之聽力理解皆有顯著性進步，而實驗組的後測分數又高於控制組，且有顯著性差異；聽力焦慮感方面，焦慮量表後測顯示實驗組學生的聽力焦慮感並未減低，但於訪談及問卷中，許多學生有表示分組合作學習對於降低聽力焦慮感有幫助。此外，綜觀訪談及分組合作學習問卷之回應，發現學生對於此教學法有高度正向的回應。最後，根據研究結果，本研究提出對於分組合作學習教學及研究相關建議，希望作為英語教師對於分組合作學習及研究之參考。

關鍵字：分組合作學習、英文聽力、聽力焦慮感

## Abstract

This study explored the effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students' English listening comprehension and anxiety. Students' perceptions towards cooperative learning were also investigated. 61 participants consisted of two classes of seventh graders from a public school in Northern Taiwan, with 22 in the experimental group and 29 in the control group. The experimental group received cooperative instruction in listening class, while the control group was instructed through traditional teaching method. The experiment was conducted for 10 weeks in 10 class periods. The students' listening comprehension and anxiety before and after the instruction of the two groups were examined. Data were collected from a self-designed listening comprehension test, Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), a questionnaire about cooperative learning and a group interview. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were used. The results presented that students in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group in terms of listening comprehension test scores. Then, the quantitative data collected from the FLLAS showed no significant difference for two groups before and after the instruction, though the students in experimental group expressed they felt less anxious during cooperative instruction in the group interview and the questionnaire. Furthermore, the findings from the interview and the questionnaire indicated the experimental group had highly positive perceptions towards cooperative learning. Last, based on the findings, some suggestions of applying cooperative instruction in teaching listening and research are provided.

Key words: cooperative learning, English listening comprehension, listening anxiety

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background and Motivation of the Study

Listening plays an essential role in language learning, and more and more teachers and parents are concerned about students' listening ability (Devine, 1982). English listening comprehension ability is also increasingly important in Taiwan. For example, an English listening comprehension test has been included in the monthly exam in most junior high schools. Besides, listening comprehension skills started to be tested in Comprehensive Assessment Program for junior high school students in 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2012). However, the development of English listening ability is still challenging for both teachers and students, since the process of listening comprehension is invisible and is hard to be observed (Rost, 2013). For many teachers, when teaching listening, they tend to play the recording and ask students to choose the correct answers to check their comprehension (Goh, 2014). In this passive way, students are often bombarded with the spoken texts due to the lack of vocabulary, grammatical and background knowledge, or the fast speaking rate (Devine, 1982), and the experiences of failure may lead to students' frustration and anxiety about English listening (Çifçi, 2001). Anxiety is one of the factors that affects learning, so in order to reduce students' listening anxiety as well as improve their listening skills, the traditional way of teaching listening needs to be modified. In the field of language teaching, cooperative learning has been utilized by some teachers and researchers as a possible method to lower students' anxiety

(Chen, 2014; Lin, 2017). Therefore, it might be a feasible way to improve listening ability as well as decrease listening anxiety.

Different from the traditional teaching method, cooperative learning provides students with a more active learning process (Bolukbas, Keskin, & Polat, 2011; Chenga & Linb, 2010; Dang, 2007; Fen, 2011). Cooperative learning can be defined as a learning process that students work in heterogeneous groups to achieve the same goal (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013). During this learning process, both high-achievers and low-achievers benefit from each other and obtain a better learning performance (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). In addition, cooperative atmosphere increases students' motivation and their interests in learning (Chen & Wang, 2013). Besides, when working together to achieve their mutual goal, students have more opportunities to discuss, negotiate and communicate in English instead of passively listening to what teachers say (Slavin and Cooper, 1999).

Many studies have been done to investigate the effects of using cooperative learning in English teaching. Some studies focus on enhancing students' motivation. Ning and Hornby (2014) claimed that cooperative learning is better to enhance students' intrinsic motivation than traditional teaching methods. Zhou (2012) investigated the effects of cooperative learning on improving college students' motivation of learning English, and she indicated that this instruction not only improves the overall climate of the classroom but also motivates learners to use the target language bravely. In addition, several studies found out that cooperative learning could improve students' reading, writing, and speaking skills (Talebi & Sobhani, 2012; Marzban & Alinejad, 2014; Munawar & Chaudhary, 2019). As for listening comprehension, Han (2015) used cooperative learning to improve college students' listening ability and found out it is effective. In terms of learning anxiety in an EFL class, some studies have provided positive evidence of using cooperative

learning to reduce learning anxiety (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2010; Talebi & Sobhani, 2012). However, research into Taiwanese junior high school students' listening comprehension and anxiety was relatively scant. To fill this gap, the present study aimed at exploring the effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students' English listening comprehension and listening anxiety in Taiwan.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

In Taiwan, English listening is often a challenging task for many junior high school students. In order to help them improve listening comprehension ability and relieve their listening anxiety, this present study focused on the application of cooperative learning instruction in teaching English listening and looked into its effects on listening comprehension and listening anxiety. Also, students' attitude toward the use of cooperative learning in the English classroom was also investigated. Three research questions were used to guide the study:

1. To what extent does cooperative learning enhance junior high school students' English listening comprehension?
2. To what extent does cooperative learning lower junior high school students' English listening anxiety?
3. What are junior high school students' perceptions toward the impact of cooperative learning on their English listening?





## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews previous studies of listening comprehension, learning anxiety and cooperative learning. The first section includes listening comprehension and the factors affecting listening comprehension. The second section introduces the theoretical concepts of learning anxiety and listening anxiety. The third section provides the definition of cooperative learning including its basic elements, techniques, and learning outcomes. The last section discusses the studies of the application of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom.

#### **Listening Comprehension**

Listening has often been viewed as a passive skill in language learning, but in the past few years, more and more research suggests good listeners need to play an active role to construct comprehension and see it as a dynamic process (Morley, 1999). Listening comprehension is the process of receiving sound wave through our ears to brain. According to Brown (2001), there are some processes involved in listening comprehension. First, the listener receives “raw speech” and gets an image consisting phrases, clauses, cohesive markers, intonation and stress pattern in short-term memory. The second one is the determination of the type of speech. Third, the inference of the speaker’s objectives based on the speech type that is processed. Fourth, the background knowledge or schemata are recalled to bring a plausible interpretation. The fifth one is the process of making correct interpretations

in certain cases. Sixth, the hearer determines whether to retain the information in long-term memory. Last, the hearer deletes the original form of the message and retains the important information conceptually.

### ***The Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension***

Yagang (1993) explained that there are four resources that make listening difficult, which are the message to be listened, the speaker, the listener, and the physical setting. Besides, Underwood (1989) suggested seven factors that affect listening comprehension. First, the speed of the speaking text cannot be controlled by the listener. Second, the listener cannot always replay the listening passage when he or she doesn't understand. Third, the listener might have limited vocabulary. Fourth, the listener might not recognize the signal words, such as "for example," or "then." Fifth, the listener may not have enough contextual knowledge. Sixth, the listener's degree of concentration may affect the comprehension. Last, the learning habits of the listener may also be a factor, for example, some students may feel anxious if they do not understand a word or a phrase. In sum, an effective listener needs to understand not only what is being said but also non-verbal information; there are many factors that affect one's listening comprehension (Tayşi, 2019). Due to these factors, some students may often experience failure, which causes anxiety (Çifçi, 2001).

### **Learning Anxiety**

Anxiety can be defined as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1983, p. 15)." The harmful effects of anxiety on learning performance have been concerned for many years (Elkhafaifi, 2005). In language learning,

Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) categorized foreign language learning anxiety into three types: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication avoidance and communication withdraw are the two typical patterns of communication apprehension. People who are communicatively apprehensive are more reluctant to interact in the target language (McCroskey, 1984). As for test anxiety, Sarason (1997) defined it as “the tendency to view with alarm the consequences of inadequate performance in an evaluation situation.” (p.214) This kind of stress and anxiety may impede one’s performance and improvement. Last, fear of negative evaluation occurs when individuals expect others would evaluate them negatively. In the classroom, students with fear of negative evaluation tend to sit passively and even avoid learning activities (Watson & Friend, 1969). Horwitz et al. (1986) suggest teachers must acknowledge the existence of learning anxiety. In order to deal with it, what teachers could do are: (a) helping students learn to cope with the anxious situation (b) making the learning environment less stressful. Therefore, the researcher will employ cooperative learning to provide students with a less stressful environment.

### ***Listening Anxiety***

Foreign language learning anxiety may relate to some certain kinds of language skill (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994b). Listening anxiety is one of them, which can be defined as the feeling of being worried, panicked, afraid and frustrated during the listening process. Vogely (1998) claimed that listening anxiety may be caused by the types of listening materials, listening process, and instructional factors. Melanlıoğlu (2013) stated that there are three stages of listening anxiety, which are before listening, while listening and after listening. In the before-listening stage, distraction and lack of contextual knowledge will affect the listening process. In the after-

listening stage, if the new information cannot be linked to the prior knowledge, the listening anxiety will increase. In addition, the traditional listening class, which the instructor usually asks students to pay attention to the recording quietly, may increase students' anxiety and develop a negative attitude toward listening (Umagan, 2007). As a result, for the purpose of reducing students' anxiety as well as improving English comprehension, the researcher utilized cooperative learning instruction in the present study.

## **Cooperative Learning**

### ***Definition of Cooperative Learning***

Cooperative learning is a term that refers to learners work in small groups to achieve a mutual goal and get rewards based on their group performance (Slavin, 1980). Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1998) also defined cooperation as “What benefits self benefits others” (p.6). Through cooperative learning, group members share or exchange resources and information with each other (Brown, 2016).

### ***Basic Elements of Cooperative Learning***

In order not to miss the essence of cooperative learning, Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1998) brought up five elements of cooperative learning, which are positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, social skills and group processing. They are depicted as follows.

#### ***Positive Interdependence***

According to Johnson and Johnson (2017), group members must discern they are linked with each other, that is, they sink or swim together. The instructor sets up a mutual goal for them to accomplish and assign each member a role. Then, if they succeed together, they will get joint rewards. Through the process, there are shared

resources; group members have to share the information they know with each other.

### ***Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction***

“Team members promote each other’s productivity by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to produce” (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998, p.7). In the small group, students teach others, discuss and exchange the ideas, and share their strategies with each other.

### ***Individual Accountability***

Every individual needs to take the responsibility for the group performance. Slavin (1980) indicated that every team member must encourage others to do their best in order to get the best outcome. The instructor could apply individual assessment including tests or presentations to make sure everyone make their most efforts.

### ***Social Skills***

Students should develop different social skills to make the group function the most effectively. There are some social skills that need to be taught such as the needed leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management.

### ***Group Processing***

Group members discuss how successfully they accomplished their task. They give feedback to each other and find out the way to make improvement.

## ***Techniques of Cooperative Learning***

There are four common models of practical classroom cooperative learning instruction. The first one is Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT) (DeVries & Mescon, 1975). The instructor assigns students into heterogeneous group. After learning the

academic materials the instructor presented, teammates quiz each other to make sure everyone is prepared. Then, students are assigned again according to their ability. In other words, students compete with those with the similar ability of themselves in a tournament. The second one is Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) (Slavin, 1980). The grouping method of STAD is as same as TGT, but the assessment is changed into using a simple quiz, which students take after learning in the group. The group scores are accumulated based on each member's degree of improvement. The third one is Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978), which students are also grouped heterogeneously. The learning materials were divided into different parts for each member. Students need to discuss or learn with the members that have the same part from other teams and form expert group. After that, they return to their home group to report the part. Finally, they take a quiz and get an individual grade. Fourthly, Kagan (1989) developed Numbered Heads Together. Each member is given a number: 1, 2, 3, or 4. After the instructor gives them a question, they put their heads together to discuss and find the answer. The instructor then chooses a number to present the answer.

### ***Positive Outcomes of Cooperative Learning***

As stated by Johnson and Johnson (1999), learning cooperatively results in numerous instructional outcomes, which can be categorized into three, effort to achievement, positive relationships, and psychological health and social competence. All of them are depicted as follows. First of all, working together to achieve a mutual goal makes higher productivity and achievement than working individually. Cooperative learning provokes more higher-level reasoning and critical thinking and more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions. Students also have more

chances to transfer what is learned to the real world. In addition, cooperative learning enables students to achieve their maximum potential and experience psychological success, so they are more willing to engage in learning task and invest their efforts. Regarding to positive relationships, cooperative experiences promote better interpersonal attraction (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). It establishes the friendships between peers, which leads to improvements in productivity, personal commitment and responsibility. Lastly, through interaction with others, students improve social competence and promote each other's success. The process tends to enhance one's self-confidence, self-worth, and autonomy.

### **Cooperative Learning in the EFL Classroom**

Cooperative learning has been found effective in classroom for the past few years. The advantages of using cooperative learning in English classroom are also shown in many studies. Some of them indicated the enhancement of motivation. As Dornyei (1997) stated, a cooperative classroom provides a motivational basis for L2 learning. In the process, students engage in interaction and constructing knowledge. Zhou (2012) also mentioned that the peer support in cooperative classroom can be a motivator for those insecure or uninterested learners. The findings showed that cooperative learning provides students with a more enjoyable atmosphere to motivate students brave enough to use the target language. As for cooperative learning in four skills, Liao, Li, and Wang (2019) applied cooperative learning instruction to facilitate medical university students' English, and the results showed that the listening, speaking, reading, and writing ability were all significantly improved. They were also more motivated because they could interact and participate in the learning group. Pan and Wu (2013) indicated college students received cooperative instruction performed significantly better on reading

comprehension. Moreover, the medium- and low-proficiency level students improved more. Talebi & Sobhani (2012) examined the impacts of cooperative learning on speaking ability in a university and found out a positive outcome. In terms of the effects on listening comprehension, Han (2015) investigated the feasibility of using cooperative learning in college English listening classes. The results showed this teaching method created a more interesting environment, enhanced students-students and teacher-students relationships, and improved listening comprehension effectively. Kırbaş (2017) used the learning together technique to investigate the effects on listening comprehension of the secondary school eighth grade students in Turkey. Compared to the control group, which used traditional teaching method, the academic achievements of experimental group were significantly better. Kırbaş mentioned that the process of discussing, sharing, and expressing ideas with classmates may be the key point of the improvement. In addition, some studies showed that cooperative learning reduced students' learning anxiety. For example, Wichadee (2010) employed cooperative learning to reduce students' learning anxiety in Thailand and indicated that this method creates a relaxing classroom while a traditional classroom usually makes students feel threatened. According to Wichadee, students tend to perform better when their anxiety decreases.

Regarding to the effects of cooperative learning on listening and listening anxiety, Lin (2017) used STAD and Jigsaw in English classroom in elementary school and found out students' listening comprehension was improved and their listening anxiety was reduced. Furthermore, students' attitude toward cooperative was mostly positive. In Taiwanese junior high school context, there are few studies focus on the areas of listening comprehension and listening anxiety. Although Chen (2014) applied the technique, Numbered Heads Together, of cooperative learning in



junior high school to see if there was any effect on listening comprehension and listening anxiety, the results showed that the listening anxiety was effectively reduced while the listening comprehension did not have a significant improvement. As Chen stated, he argued that one of the possible reasons was that an important element, individual accountability (Slavin, 1980), did not function well in his teaching procedure. Therefore, the effectiveness of cooperative learning on junior high school students' listening comprehension remains unclear. To further investigate the issue, in addition to applying Numbered Heads Together technique, the researcher also used STAD to increase the individual accountability to see the effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students' listening comprehension and listening anxiety. Furthermore, Chen only used a questionnaire, which contained three open questions to understand students' attitude toward cooperative learning. Unlike Chen's study, the present study conducted group interviews to gain more insights about students' views towards the use of cooperative learning.

In short, despite the potential benefits of utilizing cooperative learning in the EFL classroom, research into its effects on younger learners' listening ability remained relatively scant. To fill this gap, the present study aimed at exploring the effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students' English listening comprehension and listening anxiety in Taiwan. Furthermore, the students' attitude towards such teaching approach was also examined.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study utilized a quasi-experimental research design to investigate the effects of cooperative learning on students' English listening ability and anxiety. Multiple sources of data were collected to answer the three research questions proposed. The detailed description of the research design including participants, instruments, procedure for data collection and analysis are presented in the sections below.

#### **Participants**

The participants consisted of two classes of seventh graders from a junior high school in northern Taiwan, of which the school officials had promoted the use of cooperative learning for many years. Sixty students were recruited to participate in the study. They were randomly assigned to one of two instructional groups, thirty in the experimental group and thirty students in the control group. The experiment lasted for ten weeks during which the students in the control group received regular English instruction (i.e. a typical teacher-centered teaching approach) and those in the experimental group received cooperative learning instruction. In addition, the two classes were instructed by the same teacher/researcher.

## **Instruments**

To investigate the effects of cooperative learning instruction on junior high school students' English listening comprehension and anxiety, several instruments were employed in this study; they included: (a) the instructional materials, (b) a listening test, (c) the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), (c) a questionnaire about cooperative learning (d) interview guidelines. They are described respectively in the following section.

### ***The Instructional Materials***

In the present study, the researcher used two kinds of teaching materials in both control and experimental group. First, the textbook (iEnglish Book 1 by Hanlin Publisher) was used to instruct participants. Second, to provide students with more learning materials, the researcher also utilized three listening worksheets published by Hanlin Publisher. The details of the two materials are depicted as follows. Three units were selected from iEnglish book; the researcher applied cooperative learning instruction in teaching the vocabulary, the dialogues and the listening exercise section in each chapter. This textbook was chosen according to the following reasons: (a) the contents and the difficulty are appropriate for junior high school, and (b) the structure of the text is explicit, which is suitable for teaching listening skills. With respect to the three worksheets, there were listening tasks that were in accordance with the contents of the three selected units from iEnglish book. The listening tasks contained choosing a picture according to the situation they heard, choosing the best response, and choosing the best answer after listening a dialogue or a short talk. Additionally, for experimental group, they still had a simple assessment in each period due to the Teaching Technique, Student Teams-Achievements Divisions

(STAD). Every assessment was a filling in the blank quiz adapted from one listening text they learned during that period to practice dictation. How the assessment used is depicted in next section.

### ***Teaching Techniques of Cooperative Learning***

There are several kinds of teaching techniques of cooperative learning. In the present study, the researcher chose STAD and Number Heads Together. Referring to STAD, an easy assessment is given for students after each learning, and the group scores are accumulated based on every member's degrees of improvement compared to the last time. In this way, students of different levels even the low-achievers could have a contribution to their groups. The reason why the researcher chose this technique in this present study was that STAD could help raise individual accountability for every member (Slavin, 1980). Without individual accountability, it is possible for members to let others do most of the work, which is also highly possible to happen in junior high school. Students might see cooperative learning as having fun rather than learning. According to Slavin, the assessment can be a very simple 15-minute quiz, testing what students learn in that period. In this study, the researcher made a simple filling-in-the-blank dictation quiz for each period. The dictation text was selected from the listening transcriptions students learned in that period.

Regarding to Number Heads Together, each member has a number appointed by the instructor. For each discussion, members put their heads together to discuss. After discussion, the instructor chose one number, and the assigned number of each group should present their opinions or answers in front of the whole class. In this study, the researcher chose this technique to ensure every member paid attention and shared the information in each discussion. Moreover, in this way, all of the students

could have the opportunities to speak English in front of others. With discussion, they could have the ability to speak out with more support and less fear.

### ***The Teaching Procedures for Experimental Group and Control Group***

This section describes how the teaching procedures for experimental group and control group. First, the students of experimental group were grouped based on their scores on the listening comprehension test. In order to group them heterogeneously, the researcher grouped them in an S shape. There were four or five students in a group. They sat in groups with high-achievers sitting next to low-achievers to help each other. The instructor assigned a high-achiever to be the leader in a group, and the principle to choose the leader was that he/she needs to be not only self-discipline but also good at communicating with others. The main duty for the leader is to keep an eye on everyone's learning situation, lead the discussion or distribute the tasks for members. The role of the instructor was a monitor or a facilitator. Before the experiment, the instructor told them the role and duty for each member in groups. As for the teaching procedure, the researcher mainly adopted Numbered Heads Together and STAD technique. The procedure of each listening task is shown as follows.

1. The instructor told the students the topic or showed a picture for them to predict the topic.
2. Students discussed the words or phrase they heard according to the topic with group members. The researcher called a number according to the Numbered Head Together technique to present their answers to the whole class.
3. Students listened to the recording for the first time, took notes and discussed the content for one minute after listening.

4. The instructor gave them 3 questions about the listening material and played it again.
5. Students shared and discussed the answers with each other.
6. The instructor gave students the transcription and then gave them some time. During this period, high achievers read the text out to low achievers and made sure they understood it. Then, the low-achievers read again.
7. The instructor used STAD to assess their learning. The listening text was adapted into a filling in the blank quiz, and students did the dictation. Based on STAD, each student got an improvement scored each time, and it was accumulated into group scores.
8. The group with the highest scores got a little prize as a reward at the end of the experiment.

Regarding the control group which received traditional teaching method. The students sat in rows and listened to the instructor. Normally, the activities during the procedure were teacher centered. The teacher asked a volunteer or assigned a student to answer each question without group discussion. When they had any problems, they could raise the hand to ask the instructor.

1. The instructor told students the topic or showed a picture for them to predict the topic.
2. The instructor asked students to write down any words or phrases they knew about the topic, chose a few students to share the ideas, and then wrote them down on the black board.
3. Students listened to the recording for the first time and took notes.
4. The instructor gave them 3 questions about the listening material and played it again.

5. The instructor asked volunteers or assigned a few students to answer the questions.
6. The instructor gave students the transcription and explained the content to them. They were given a few minutes to read and understand the text.
7. The listening text was adapted into a filling in the blank quiz, and students did the dictation. The scores were accumulated individually.
8. Five students got a prize based on their own scores at the end of the experiment.

Basically, there were pre-listening, while-listening and after-listening stages for two groups. The teaching materials, the listening text, the pre-listening prediction and questions, and the assessment were the same. The biggest differences were the pre-listening, after-listening activities, and the way of presenting the opinions or answers. During these phases, students in the experimental group could discuss, share the information and check each other's understanding, whereas those in control group had to think by themselves or raised hands to ask the instructor. Besides, the ways to present the answers were different. The answers of a presenter in experimental group represented the whole group, but a volunteer or an assigned student in the control group answered the questions individually.

### ***The Listening Test***

To evaluate the effects of cooperative learning instruction on listening comprehension, students' listening comprehension was examined through a listening test. The test items were selected from the workbook published by Hanlin Publisher, which were in accordance with the teaching materials. The test items included filling in the blanks, choosing the right picture based on the recording, choosing the best response, and choosing the best answer according to the talk. To



improve validity of the tests, three English teachers were invited to examine these test items. At the beginning of the study, this test was administered to all of the participants as a pre-test, and after the 10-week instruction, they had the test again as a post-test. The listening test can be found in Appendix A.

### ***The Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS)***

In order to probe into the change of students' listening anxiety after the instruction of cooperative learning, a questionnaire, the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), developed by Kim (2000) in Korea was used. Kim (2000) claims that the internal consistency is .91 based on the value of Cronbach's alpha, and the test-retest reliability is .84 in FLLAS. FLLAS has been employed in some Asian countries, such as Korea, Japan, Turkey, Iran, China, and Taiwan to examine learners' listening anxiety (Kim, 2000; Kimura, 2008; Cheng, 2009; Golchi, 2012; Kilic & Uckun 2013; Capan & Karaca, 2013; Chen, 2014; Movahed, 2014). Therefore, the items in FLLAS were considered suitable for investigating Asian EFL learners' language learning anxiety. Kim's (2000) version of FLLAS contained 33 items with a five-point Likert scale. Chen (2014) translated FLLAS into Chinese, and then Lin (2017) adapted from it. Lin (2017) removed the neutral standpoint and revised FLLAS into 25 items in the questionnaire, with a coefficient alpha of .90 (N=50), indicating its satisfactory level of reliability. The researcher used this modified version to investigate students' English learning anxiety before and after the instruction. The Chinese version was presented in Appendix B.

### ***Questionnaire about Cooperative Learning***

In order to understand the participants' attitude toward cooperative learning, the researcher adopted a questionnaire developed by Lin (2017) to collect the data. The

questionnaire contained fifteen items with a four-point Likert scale. The contents of this questionnaire were mainly about students' feeling during the process of cooperative learning as well as their changes in learning through this teaching mode. The participants in experimental group were asked to fill out the questionnaire after the instruction. The Chinese version of the cooperative learning questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

### *The Interview Guidelines*

The researcher adopted a group interview to understand the participants' attitude toward cooperative learning in experimental group after the instruction. The researcher divided all of the participants in the experimental group into five groups, and the group arrangement was different from the one during the instruction. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher. The interview guidelines with a set of questions were adapted from Lin (2017)'s study. Lin designed them for elementary school students, while this present study focused on junior high school students. Therefore, the wordings in the guidelines were modified in order to be suitable for junior high school students. Besides, the researcher deleted two items from the original version, adding two questions to understand students' changes of confidence and motivation in learning. The English version of interview guidelines was presented as follows.

- (1) Do you prefer cooperative learning or traditional teacher-centered instruction?  
Why?
- (2) Does cooperative learning instruction help you reduce the anxiety when listening to English? Why?
- (3) What do you learn by teaching others or learning from others?
- (4) Does cooperative learning enhance your interests in learning English?

- (5) Does cooperative learning enhance your confidence in English?
- (6) Do you engage in English class more due to cooperative learning?
- (7) Does your English ability improve after the instruction?
- (8) Do you have any other idea or suggestions about this cooperative learning

### Procedure

This study was conducted for 10 weeks in 10 class periods, which lasted for 45 minutes each. In the beginning of the study, all of the participants finished the FLLAS questionnaire and the listening comprehension pre-test. Next, the researcher conducted cooperative learning instruction and traditional translation instruction in the experimental group and the control group respectively to teach listening. After the 10 week instruction, both groups completed FLLAS and the listening comprehension test as posttest. In addition, participants from the experimental group filled out a questionnaire about cooperative learning and completed group interviews. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese and audio-recorded for data analysis. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. The research design and the overall procedure of this study are presented as Table 3.1. Besides, Table 3.2 shows the timetable of this experiment.

Table 3.1 Design and Overall Procedure of the study

	pretest	10-week listening instruction	posttest	
Experimental group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ FLLAS</li> <li>◆ Listening comprehension test</li> </ul>	Cooperative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ FLLAS</li> <li>◆ Listening comprehension test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Questionnaire about cooperative learning</li> <li>◆ Group interviews</li> </ul>
Control group		Traditional teaching method		

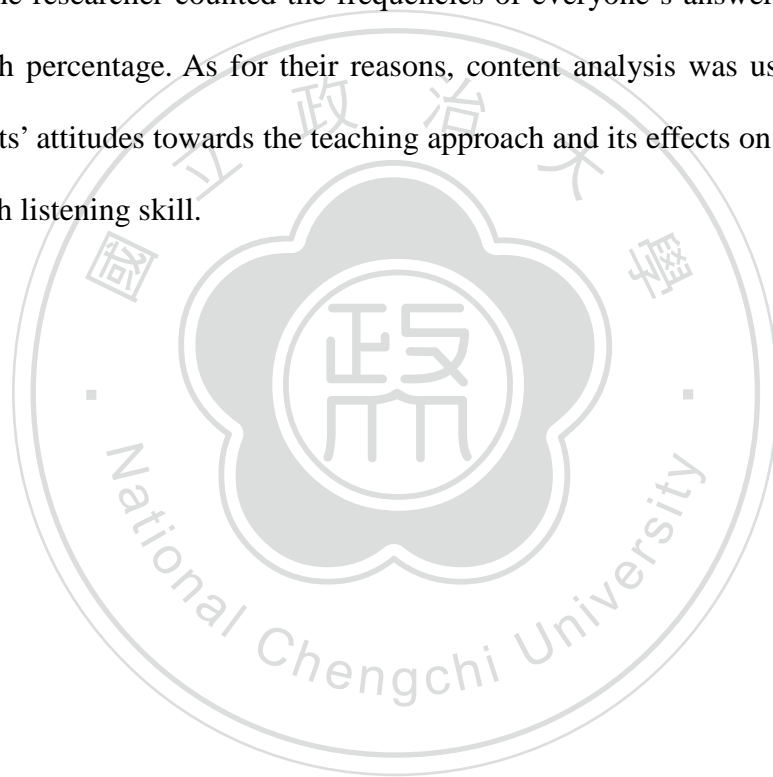
Table 3.2 The Timetable of the Experiment

Time	Content
2020.10.16	The experimental group and the control group completed listening comprehension pretest and FLLAS pretest.
10.19	The instructor explained the grouping and the roles of each member to the experimental group.
10.20~12.22	The experimental group: receiving cooperative learning to learn listening  The control group: receiving traditional teaching method to learn listening
12.23	The experimental group and the control group finished listening comprehension posttest and FLLAS posttest.
12.24	The experimental group filled out a questionnaire about cooperative learning.
12.28-31	The experimental group had group interviews

### Data Analysis

In order to investigate the effects of cooperative learning on listening comprehension and listening anxiety, data collected from students' scores of the pretest and posttest of the listening comprehension tests and their responses to the FLLAS survey were analyzed. To compare students' listening progress and their anxiety level before and after the instruction, and also between the experimental and control group, various statistical procedures were performed on the data including both paired-sample and independent sample t tests.

To obtain students' perceptions towards cooperative learning, their responses to the questionnaire were collected. Descriptive statistics including the mean scores and standard deviation were calculated. As for the group interviews, audio data was first transcribed verbatim and then analyzed qualitatively. Most of the questions were Yes/No questions or alternative questions, but every student was asked to express the reasons. If there were no reasons, everyone should at least answer the agreement part or make a choice for each question. Therefore, for the agreement and the choice part, the researcher counted the frequencies of everyone's answers, and presented through percentage. As for their reasons, content analysis was used to document students' attitudes towards the teaching approach and its effects on their learning in English listening skill.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of this study. To answer three research questions, the results are outlined as follows: students' listening comprehension, the differences in students' foreign language listening anxiety, and their perceptions toward the cooperative learning.

#### **Students' Listening Comprehension**

The first research question aimed to find out to what extent cooperative learning enhances junior high school students' English listening comprehension. To answer it, a listening comprehension pre-test and post-test were administered to both the experimental group and the control group. The test scores between the two groups and between the pre- and post-tests were compared and analyzed through the independent sample t-test and paired sample t-test.

#### ***The Pretest of Control Group and Experimental Group***

The statistical results of the pretest of control group and experimental group were displayed in Table 4.1. The mean score of control group was 59.32 while that of the experimental group was 62.54 ( $t = -.56, p > .05$ ), which indicated the two groups were not significantly different in terms of the listening test scores before the experiment.

Table 4.1 Listening Comprehension Pretest of Two Groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Control group	29	59.32	19.83	-.56	.57
Experimental group	22	62.54	20.81		

Note.  $P > .05$

### *The Posttest of Control Group and Experimental Group*

Table 4.2 showed the results of listening comprehension of posttest of control group and experimental group. The mean score of control group was 72.98, and that of experimental group was 84.81 ( $t = -2.24, p < .03$ ). The values indicated the experimental group involving in cooperative learning significantly outperformed the control group.

Table 4.2 Listening Comprehension Posttest of Two Groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Control group	29	72.98	20.44	-2.24	.03
Experimental group	22	84.81	16.01		

Note.  $P < .05$

### *The Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group*

Paired sample t-test was used to compare the pretest and posttest of experimental group. The statistical results were displayed as Table 4.3. The mean of pretest was 62.59, and that of posttest was 84.79 ( $t = -7.44, p < .05$ ), which represented there was a significant difference before and after the cooperative instruction. In other words, the listening test scores of the students in experimental



group had progressed through cooperative learning.

Table 4.3 Listening Comprehension Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Pretest	22	62.59	20.81	-7.44	.00
Posttest	22	84.79	16.00		

Note.  $P < .05$

### *The Pretest and Posttest of Control Group*

As for the pretest and posttest of control group, Table 4.4 presented the means of pretest and posttest were 59.32 and 72.94 respectively ( $t = -4.77$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The control group receiving traditional teaching method also made a significant progress after the instruction.

Table 4.4 Listening Comprehension Pretest and Posttest of Control Group

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Pretest	29	59.32	19.83	-4.77	.00
Posttest	29	72.94	20.46		

Note.  $P < .05$

Based on the above statistical results of the listening comprehension test, for the comparison between the control group and experimental group, there were no significant differences between the two groups at first. However, after the intervention of cooperative teaching, the mean score of post-test from the experimental group was significantly higher than that of control group. Although the

results also showed that all of the participants' listening test scores significantly improved after the instruction regardless of groups, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test to a statistically significant level. Therefore, we could assume that cooperative learning seemed more effective than the traditional teaching method on junior high school students' English listening comprehension.

### **Students' Foreign Language Listening Anxiety**

The second research question focused on whether cooperative learning could lower students' language listening anxiety. To answer this question, the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), a questionnaire about anxiety, was adopted to examine the difference. Both control group and experimental group had to fill out the questionnaire before and after the instruction. Independent and paired sample t-test were also used to compare the response scores between groups and before and after the instruction.

The scale included 25 items, each with a four-point Likert Scale, and the score of each was from 1 to 4. Since the options are strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree, and all of the questions were mainly to understand whether a student feel anxious and nervous under some certain circumstances, the higher score a student gets, the more anxious about listening comprehension he/she is (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, and strongly agree = 4). In this section, the pretest and posttest of control group and experimental group were compared to investigate the effect of cooperative learning instruction on students' levels of anxiety. The results are presented as follows.

### *The Pretest of Control Group and Experimental Group*

As Table 4.5 presented, the mean of the 25 items of control group was higher than that of experimental group, but p-value was higher than .05, which indicated there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of their language learning anxiety level before the instruction. Despite the non-statistical difference, it was worth noticing that the mean of the control group was higher than 2.5. Since 2.54 means to agree with the statement, the students in control group possibly tended to be a little more anxious when it came to English listening than those in the experimental group.

Table 4.5 FLLAS Pretest of Two Groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Control group	29	2.54	.43	-1.91	.06
Experimental group	22	2.19	.76		

Note.  $P > .05$

### *The Posttest of Control Group and Experimental Group*

After the ten-week instruction, the two groups filled out the questionnaire again, and the statistical results derived from independent sampled t-test displays as Table 4.6. For the control group, the mean was still higher than 2.5, which showed that they were still anxious while listening to English. Even though the mean of experimental group did not change a lot, their mean score still leant to disagree. Overall, the mean of the control group was significantly higher than that of experimental group in the post-treatment survey ( $t = -2.09, p < .05$ ). That is, after the

different instructions, the students in control group felt more anxious than experimental group.

Table 4.6 FLLAS Posttest of Two Groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Control group	29	2.59	.54	-2.09	.04
Experimental group	22	2.20	.75		

Note.  $P < .05$

### *The Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group*

As Table 4.7 presents, the mean score of FLLAS posttest of experimental group did not decrease, and p-value was higher than .05. That means students' listening anxiety did not change after receiving the cooperative learning instruction.

Table 4.7 FLLAS Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Pretest	22	2.19	.76	-.06	.95
Posttest	22	2.20	.72		

Note.  $P > .05$

### *The Pretest and Posttest of Control Group*

As for the pretest and posttest of control group, Table 4.8 shows that the mean of pretest was 2.54, and that of posttest was 2.59 ( $t = -.34, p=.73$ ). There was no significant difference in the anxiety scores after the 10-week instruction.

Table 4.8 FLLAS Pretest and Posttest of Control Group

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Pretest	29	2.54	.44	-.34	.73
Posttest	29	2.59	.55		

Note.  $P>.05$

In sum, after the ten-week instruction, students' level of anxiety in the control group was significantly higher than that of the experimental group. As for the comparison between the pretest and posttest of within the two groups, there were not significant differences before and after the 10-week instruction.

### **Students' Perception toward Cooperative learning**

The third research question aimed to collect students' feelings and feedback about cooperative learning instruction, so a questionnaire and a group interview were applied to look into students' perceptions towards the teaching method. After the 10-week instruction, students in the experimental group filled out a questionnaire about cooperative learning, and they were divided into four groups to have a thirty-minute interview. The results collected from the questionnaire and the group interview are presented in the following two sections.

***The Results of Questionnaire about Cooperative Learning***

First, the means and the standard deviations of each item in the questionnaire are presented in Table 4.9. This questionnaire contained fifteen items, each with a four-point Likert scale. The higher the score was, the more the student liked this instruction. The means of each item were all over 2.5, which reveals that students had a positive perception toward cooperative instruction.

Table 4.9 the Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank of Each Item

Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Item	Mean	SD	Rank
14	3.25	0.68	1	9	3.08	0.47	9
1	3.21	0.66	2	4	3.00	0.64	10
10	3.21	0.54	2	2	2.96	0.54	11
11	3.21	0.61	2	3	2.96	0.54	11
15	3.21	0.61	2	12	2.96	0.61	11
5	3.17	0.66	6	7	2.92	0.58	14
6	3.13	0.58	7	8	2.71	0.76	15
13	3.13	0.69	7				

Second, in order to look into students' responses about their feeling, the percentages of every option and the rank of each item are displayed in 4.10. The rank of each item is based on the sum of the percentages of A (Agree) and SA (Strongly Agree) to clearly show what made them enjoy cooperative learning.

Table 4.10 Students' Responses towards Cooperative Learning (1)

Item	Responses				Rank
	SD	D	A	SA	
After the cooperative instruction					
14. I like cooperative learning.	4.2%	0%	58.3%	37.5%	1
11. The interaction among classmates increase.	0%	8.3%	54.2%	37.5%	2
15. I learn more in cooperative learning than in traditional teaching.	0%	8.3%	54.2%	37.5%	3
5. There is less pressure when cooperative with classmates.	0%	12.5%	50%	37.5%	4
4. I am more pleased to cooperate with classmates than before.	0%	12.5%	50%	37.5%	5
1. I participate more actively in the classroom activities.	4.2%	0%	62.5%	33.3%	6
10. Classmates can learn from each other and then help each other.	0%	4.2%	62.5%	33.3%	7
6. I can learn the materials taught in the class better than before.	0%	8.3%	62.5%	29.2%	8

13.	I have courage to ask for my classmates' help when having difficulties.	4.2%	4.2%	62.5%	29.2%	9
3.	I am more confident to complete the quiz in class.	0%	16.7%	58.3%	25.0%	10
9.	Through peer teaching and learning, I learned more.	0%	4.2%	75%	20.8%	11
12.	I can work harder for the whole group.	0%	16.7%	62.5%	20.8%	12
8.	I am more concerned with my classmates' learning.	0%	41.7%	37.5%	20.8%	13
2.	My learning anxiety has decreased.	0%	12.5%	70.8%	16.7%	14
7.	I learn English more actively than before.	0%	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	15

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*Note.* SA = strongly agree; A = agree; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree.



Third, to clearly show the difference, Table 4.11 displays the percentage of agreement and disagreement of every item, which were derived from Table 4.10.

Table 4.11 Students' Responses towards Cooperative Learning (2)

Item	Responses		
	Agree	Disagree	Rank
After the cooperative instruction			
1. I participate more actively in the classroom activities.	95.8%	4.2%	1
9. Through peer teaching and learning, I learned more.	95.8%	4.2%	2
10. Classmates can learn from each other and then help each other.	95.8%	4.2%	3
14. I like cooperative learning.	95.8%	4.2%	4
6. I can learn the materials taught in the class better than before.	91.7%	8.3%	5
11. The interaction among classmates increase.	91.7%	8.3%	6
13. I have courage to ask for my classmates' help when having difficulties.	91.7%	8.3%	7
15. I learn more in cooperative learning than in traditional teaching.	91.7%	8.3%	8
2. My learning anxiety has decreased.	87.5%	12.5%	9

4.	I am more pleased to cooperate with classmates than before.	87.5%	12.5%	10
5.	There is less pressure when cooperative with classmates.	87.5%	12.5%	11
3.	I am more confident to complete the quiz in class.	83.3%	16.7%	12
7.	I learn English more actively than before.	83.3%	16.7%	13
12.	I can work harder for the whole group.	83.3%	16.7%	14
8.	I am more concerned with my classmates' learning.	58.3%	41.7%	15

---

From these data collected from the questionnaire about cooperative learning, it can clearly be seen that the students receiving cooperative instruction had a highly positive attitude toward cooperative learning.

### ***The results of group interviews***

After the instruction, the students in the experimental group had group interviews, and this section presents the results. The students were grouped randomly into four groups with 5-6 students in each. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes, and there were eight questions. Students were encouraged to say whatever they thought about the question. Among the twenty-two students, ten were at a higher proficiency level, and they were numbered as H1, H2, H3...; eight were at the medium level (M1, M2, M3...) and four were at the low level of English

proficiency (L1, L2, L3 and L4). The results are presented by questions as follows.

(1) Do you prefer cooperative learning or traditional teacher-centered instruction?

Why?

As stated in the interview, most students preferred to learn through cooperative learning (92%). There were some reasons why they liked cooperative learning more. First, it was more interesting. Second, they felt free to ask classmates who sat next to them. Third, students enjoyed discussion and the interaction with classmates during class. For example,

“I like cooperative learning since it is more interesting. I will not feel sleepy. Besides, the more competent ones are able to teach those who do not understand.” (H4)

“I like cooperative learning because it is less stressful. Moreover, I can be more relaxed due to the discussion.” (H2)

“I like cooperative learning because it is more interactive. The atmosphere is less indifferent.” (H8)

“I like cooperative learning. We can have opinions from other classmates. If anyone who does not understand, others can teach him/her.” (H5)

“I like cooperative learning because everyone can sit together and discuss. I sometimes feel confused when answering the questions alone, but if there are others' opinions, it is more effective.” (H7)

“I prefer cooperative learning. If I have any questions, I can ask the one next to me. I will feel afraid to ask the teacher when sitting in rows.” (M5)

“Cooperative learning. Because when I don't understand something, I can ask

my team members at once.” (L5)

Only two of the students preferred traditional teaching. Their reasons are displayed as follows.

“I prefer traditional teaching method, as our leader were not good at leading us to have a discussion. Sometimes he just gave us answers to copy.” (M7)

“I like traditional teaching method. Because I am an introvert person, I do not know how to discuss with classmates.” (L3)

(2) Does cooperative learning instruction help you reduce the anxiety when listening to English? Why?

66 percent of the interviewees agreed that cooperative learning reduced their English listening anxiety. The others felt their degrees of listening anxiety were the same, but the reason was that all of them mentioned they were not so anxious about English listening originally.

“It released my anxiety. After listening to a listening text, I would tell what I heard to the classmate next to me, and she could check if my understanding was right, which gave me a sense of security.” (M5)

“It released my anxiety. Before listening, we could discuss what keywords we would hear later, which made me feel more relaxed.” (H1)

“Cooperative learning released more stress than listening the text alone, because after learning, I could discuss with my group members and share ideas with each other.” (H9)

“Cooperative learning reduced my listening anxiety. When listening alone, I always felt that I had a wrong answer, but with others’ opinion, I could understand the ideas more.” (L6)

(3) What do you learn by teaching others or learning from others?

In this question, most students mentioned the benefits they got through teaching others or learning from others, and they were excerpted as follows.

“During the process of teaching others, I was also reviewing the content, which improved my learning.” (H1)

“I was the one that needed others’ help, but when I understood something, I was able to teach those in need.” (M6)

“I learned something from teaching others. When my team members and I did not understand something, I would make more efforts to find the answers and understand the content because I had the responsibility to explain to others. I would be more conscientious.” (H5)

“Because I had to read the context to others, I would try to fully understand the content when we did not know something.” (H10)

“When there were some words I did not know how to pronounce, my classmates would teach me, and I felt it was more effective. Besides, the reason why I think cooperative learning is better is that everyone would discuss together to find out the best way to teach others something they do not know.” (L4)

“I had to teach Amy, and I taught her sentence by sentence. When she got a better grade, I felt a sense of achievement.” (H9)

(4) Does cooperative learning enhance your interests in learning English?

About half of the students indicated that cooperative learning could increase their interests in learning English, especially for those medium and low proficiency students, for example,

“I had more interests in English due to cooperative learning. Being taught by others, I understood the content more, which made me more interested. Otherwise, I used to feel frustrated when I could not understand something.”

(M5)

“My team members taught me to read vocabulary. Therefore, when I heard those key words, I would feel a sense of achievement. I felt that I understood more than before.” (L5)

“I was interested in English originally, so after cooperative learning, it improved my learning and helped those who did not understand to learn more.” (H7)

“Yes, when I found everyone in my team could understand the content, and I was the only one that did not understand, I would want to learn right away.”

(L4)

(5) Does cooperative learning enhance your confidence in English?

68 percent of the students mentioned that cooperative learning gave them more confidence in English.

“It increased my confidence to find that I had the ability to teach others.” (H8)

“There were someone who were better than me, and we would encourage each other.” (H5)

“When there were something I was good at, I felt good about myself.” (H10)

“Yes, after listening, I could tell it to my classmate right away. If she said that I was right, it would increase my confidence.” (M5)

“When answering a listening question, I would discuss with Becky. Because sometimes we had a different answer, we would discuss the reason. After discussion, I would feel more confident in my understanding, or I would be afraid that I was wrong.” (L6)

(6) Do you engage in English class more due to cooperative learning?

91 percent of the students agreed that they engaged in English class more due to cooperative learning.

“I had to concentrate on the listening texts in order to tell what I heard to my team members.” (M5)

“When there was something I did not know, I could ask others. Otherwise I would quit easily.” (L5)

“When sitting alone to listen, I just wrote down the answer and did not think too much. However, due to cooperative learning, I had to check my team members’ understanding, so I needed to think about the content in mind in order to tell my team members which part they were right or misunderstood.” (H8)

“Yes, because we had more questions that we had to discuss. Also, when the one next to me did not understand, I had to make more efforts to teach them.” (H9)

“In the normal situation, I just took responsibility for myself, but when I was the leader in a group, I had to check everyone’s learning.” (H5)

(7) Does your English ability improve after the instruction?

77 percent of the students found their English had improved. In addition to listening comprehension, most less proficient students showed they memorized more vocabulary, and several more proficient students' reading or speaking ability also improved.

“I can memorize vocabulary better than before.” (L5)

“I could understand the content better and better, or others would taught me, which enhanced my retention. When listening alone, even I did not fully understand, but I could only guess the answer. Besides, my reading ability also improved.” (M5)

“Yes, I have progressed. What my team member taught me was helpful when I was doing my homework and even the sentence pattern exercises in textbook.”

(M6)

“The speed of reading and listening improved.” (H5)

“My oral as well as listening ability have improved.” (H2)

(8) Do you have any other idea or suggestions about this cooperative learning instruction?

Not many students gave their suggestions about cooperative learning; all of the answers are presented as follows.

“Sometimes we finished the discussion, but there was still some time, and we did not know what to do. Maybe the questions for discussion could be more.”

(H8)



“Our leader was not so good. I hope Teacher could choose the leader and group more carefully.” (M7)

“Can we have cooperative instruction in every English class?” (L1)

To understand students' perceptions toward learning English listening through cooperative learning, the researcher applied two instruments to collect the data, the questionnaire about cooperative learning and the group interviews. Based on the responses in questionnaire about cooperative learning, students had highly positive attitude toward cooperative learning. Besides, the responses in the questionnaire were also in line with the responses in the group interview. For instance, according to the Item 1 in the questionnaire, 95.8% of the students agreed that they participated more actively in the classroom activities, and from the interview question (6), many students indicated that they were more engaged in the cooperative learning. Moreover, 95% of the students agreed that they could learn more through cooperative learning from Item 9, which also echoes the responses in the interview that many students mentioned they benefitted from the learning and teaching process. Despite the overall positive attitudes toward cooperative learning, a few students still brought up some problems and suggestions. For example, one of the leaders did not do the leading job well, and the time controlling needs to be improved. Additionally, one of the students mentioned that he was introvert, so the group arrangement should be concerned.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students' English listening comprehension and anxiety as well as their perceptions toward cooperative learning. This chapter consists of three sections. First, the major findings of the study are summarized and discussed. Second, the pedagogical implications derived from the findings are depicted. Last, limitations and suggestions are proposed.

#### Major Findings and Discussion

This study attempted to investigate whether cooperative learning can improve junior high school students' English listening comprehension and reduce their listening anxiety. Besides, students' perceptions toward cooperative learning were explored. The data was collected from the English listening comprehension test, Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale, the questionnaire about cooperative learning, and group interviews. The major findings and discussion in terms of the three research questions are presented in three sections, (a) the effects on Junior high school students' listening comprehension, (b) the effects on junior high school students' listening anxiety, (c) junior high school students' perceptions toward cooperative learning.

### ***The Effects on Junior High School Students' Listening Comprehension***

According to the results collected from the listening comprehension test, for the experimental group, the students got significantly better scores on the posttest after the cooperative learning instruction. Compared with the control group, the experimental group also had a significantly higher mean score in the listening posttest. Although all participants improved their listening test scores after the instruction regardless of groups, students in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group after the cooperative learning instruction. In other words, the cooperative learning approach was more effective on improving junior high school students' listening ability than the traditional teacher-centered approach.

One of the possible reasons why cooperative learning was more helpful was that students played an active role in this learning process (Dang, 2007; Chenga & Linb, 2010; Bolukbas, Keskin, & Polat, 2011; Fen, 2011). As Morley (1999) stated, listening comprehension is dynamic, so a good listener should be active in this process. In this study, by way of cooperative learning, students engaged in constructing the knowledge, which was different from their old experiences of sitting and receiving knowledge passively. Before the listening, they needed to predict and discuss what vocabulary, sentence patterns or the content they might hear in the listening material. Since the leader of each group was endowed with the responsibility for checking every member's understanding, none of the members could just sit there and wait for the teacher's translation or the transcript. After the listening, because they had to share what they heard to each other, they were more focused and engaged in listening rather than sitting quietly and waiting for the answers. In addition, because they had to tell the main idea or the details after

listening, students also practiced how to organize what they heard through the experiment.

Another possible reason was that the atmosphere motivated students' learning (Dornyei, 1997) and gave them a sense of achievement. Many study have proved that cooperative learning is effective in improving students' motivation in learning English (Zhou, 2012; Pan and Wu; 2013; Ning and Hornby, 2014; Tsai, 2019). For listening, many low proficiency students in junior high school are lacking basic lexical knowledge; many of them even do not know the meaning and pronunciation of several words, let alone the listening contents, and they gradually lose the motivation in listening English. In the study, based on the responses of the questionnaire and interview, most medium and low proficiency students mentioned that they were more interested in learning English and more willing to listen to the materials through cooperative learning. Due to the teaching from the classmates, they learned more words and the pronunciation. Hearing the words they knew, they felt an immediate sense of achievement and became more interested than before. Besides, this cooperative atmosphere gave those insecure students more courage to ask questions of their classmates proactively. This was consistent with the study by Zhou (2012) who indicated cooperative learning enhances motivation, raise achievement and produce social outcomes; students might feel supportive in using the target language, and this showed in the study. As some students stated, telling what they heard to their partners made them feel supportive and they would try hard to do their best.

Furthermore, either high-achievers or low-achievers improved because they had a mutual goal and they could benefit from teaching and learning from each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). According to the data from questionnaire, 95% of the students agreed that they learned more through cooperative learning and classmates

could learn from each other and then help each other. This is in line with the study by Liao, Li, and Wang (2019), which found both stronger and weaker peers made improvement due to this learning-and-teaching process. In a traditional English classroom, a teacher needs to teach 25-30 students who are heterogeneous in the same time. According to the interview data, some competent students expressed that they felt needed and not bored with listening to the teacher teaching what they had learned, and teaching others left them a deeper impression. Regarding the low and medium achievers, most of them felt learned more due to the peer teaching. However, this result is different from Chen's (2014) study, who also conducted cooperative learning on English listening in Taiwanese junior high school and found it was not effective on listening comprehension. He indicated that according to Slavin (1980), in order to reinforce students' learning achievement, the elements, individual accountability and group goals, need to be incorporated into the application of cooperative learning, but either element did not function well in his teaching procedure. Chen only adopted one of the techniques of cooperative learning, Number Heads Together, which was a way for a teacher to choose students in each group to present after discussion. Chen indicated that students saw cooperative learning as playing house, and some high-achievers thought it was time-consuming in his study, so they distrusted this teaching method and were not engaged in group learning. Even he used Number Heads Together technique to motivate students, but it still did not help. Besides, in his study, there were also pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages, but students only had group discussion in post-listening stage. This is different from the present study that students were provided discussion time for three listening stages. It was also helpful for them to recognize they should learn together rather than relying on the teacher. In terms of Lin's (2017) study, she used STAD and Jigsaw II to enhance elementary school students' listening

comprehension effectively. In her study, the elements, group goal and individual accountability, worked well. As a reference, in addition to Number Heads Together the present study applied STAD for junior high school students in the listening instruction, and the instructor told the students and emphasized that everyone regardless of the roles in groups should aware that they were on a same boat. Everyone's contribution was important for group's score. With STAD, in the present study, every member in the group took the responsibility and tried their best to make a progress to achieve the mutual goal, and their listening ability finally got significantly improved.

### *The Effects on Junior High School Students' Listening Anxiety*

Concerning the listening anxiety of experimental group, the quantitative data collected from the FLLAS showed no significant difference before and after the instruction, though the students expressed that they felt less anxious during cooperative instruction in the group interview. The results were different from Chen's (2014) and Lin's (2017) study, indicating cooperative learning was not effective enough to reduce these students' listening anxiety. Chen's participants were junior high school students; Lin's were elementary school. The explanation might be the length of the experiment was not long enough to change their anxiety level. This study was conducted in 10 weeks with 10 class periods, and each lasted for 45 minutes. Unlike this study, Chen (2014) conducted the experiment for fifteen minutes four times a week, lasting for 12 weeks, and Lin's (2017) experimental duration was 14 weeks with 2 class periods. Therefore, it was possible that although cooperative learning can be effective, it may take longer time for students to significantly reduce their anxiety level.

Besides, according to the questionnaire about cooperative learning, 87.5% of

the students agreed their listening anxiety had decreased, and for the interview, about 66% of the students agreed, and the others felt their degrees of listening anxiety were the same, but they mentioned they did not feel anxious at first. This was consistent with their FLLAS pretest mean score, 2.54, which also indicated their degree of listening anxiety was not so high before the instruction, so the change was not obvious, and this could be another reason why these participants did not show a significant change. As for those who agreed, the discussion helped a lot. Before listening, they could discuss the key words, and after listening, they could argue or exchange their opinions. For the medium and low achievers, they tended to feel uncertain about the content, but through the group discussion, they could check their understanding, which gave them a sense of security. This was in line with Melanlıoğlu's (2013) study, which stated there are three stages of listening anxiety, before, while, and after listening. In before listening stage, distraction and lack of contextual knowledge will affect the listening process. In the after listening stage, if the new information cannot be linked to the prior knowledge, the listening anxiety will increase. Through cooperative learning, students in this study referred this instruction helped them lower the listening anxiety in the above ways. In sum, although the quantitative data did not show a significant change, based on the qualitative data, students expressed their anxiety had decreased. The reasons might be the length of the experiment was not long enough and the degrees of their listening anxiety were not very high at first.

### ***Junior High School Students' Perceptions toward Cooperative Learning***

In order to know more about junior high school students' perceptions toward cooperative learning, two instruments, a questionnaire about cooperative learning and group interviews, were applied in this study. The results are depicted as follows.



First, most of the responses in the questionnaire were positive. For example, 95.8% of the students agreed they participated more actively in the classroom activities. They learned more through peer teaching and learning, and classmates could learn from each other and then helped each other. Overall, students' responses toward cooperative learning in the questionnaire were highly positive. Second, based on the group interview data, most of the students' feedback was also positive. With the use of interview, students' thought and feeling could be investigated more, and their answers could echo the elements of cooperative learning, positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, social skills and group processing, brought up by Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1998), and these were helpful in their cooperative learning. In this study, most students worked hard for the mutual goal and took their own responsibility in the group. They indicated they enjoyed the process of discussion and were benefitted from others' opinions or teaching. For those who taught others indicated they had to organize the information in mind before teaching, so they had to be more concentrated and more engaged than before. In addition, in line with Zhou (2012)' study, students expressed the reason why they preferred cooperative learning was the relaxing and interesting atmosphere. Furthermore, either the high achievers or the low achievers expressed they were more confident and had a sense of achievement with this instruction. Last, as Johnson and Johnson (1999) stated, cooperative learning enhances students' self-confidence and self-worth. Many of the students interviewed showed they were more confident no matter what their level were. For instance, a low achiever mentioned that they learned more pronunciation of words, so when they could catch the key words in the listening materials they felt a sense of achievement. Some medium-level students stated that when listening alone, they felt uncertain about their understanding, but when learning together, others could help check the

understanding. This gave them more confidence in listening. Additionally, some high-achievers revealed that when those taught by them made a progress, they felt a sense of achievement, and their confidence was built when finding they had the ability to teach others.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The aim of this study was to explore the effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students' English listening comprehension and listening anxiety as well as students' perceptions toward this instruction. Based on the findings, cooperative learning benefited students' English listening comprehension, while students' listening anxiety did not significantly decrease after the experiment. In addition, students' perceptions toward cooperative learning were highly positive. As a result, several pedagogical implications can be made concerning the application of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom.

First, it may be feasible and effective to teach listening through cooperative learning. As the previous statements, cooperative learning allows students to take the active role in listening and learning. Students engaged in discussion, sharing resources and helping each other. As Morley (1999) indicated, a good listener needs to be active. As a result, it is suggested that English teachers could use this teaching method to make students more active in listening class rather than sitting passively and waiting for the answers. This also motivated students to improve their listening comprehension and gave them a sense of achievement during the learning process. In Taiwanese context, an English teacher usually needs to teach about 30 students in a class, which is hard to take care of every student with different levels, and many low-achievers give up easily and lose their motivation to learn since they feel they are far behind others. Many of them even have difficulty to recognize the vocabulary,

let alone listening comprehension, so they tend to be absent-minded when the listening materials play. With cooperative learning, the high-achievers and low-achievers have a mutual goal and feel they are in the same boat. Consequently, they try hard to teach and learn from each other. High achievers would feel needed and more engaged in learning activities in order to teach others, and meanwhile medium or low ones could learn from them. For example, during the discussion and teaching and learning period, the high-achievers could teach low-achievers how to pronounce the words, and even help them to read the whole text aloud. Moreover, low-achievers tend to feel uncertain about their understanding; with the support from team members, they could get feedback right away. Therefore, cooperative atmosphere may increase students' motivation to improve their listening comprehension. When they are more willing to learn, their listening comprehension could improve more.

Second, regarding the effects of cooperative learning on listening anxiety, based on the qualitative data, many students indicated that this instruction could lower their anxiety, but the quantitative data did not show a significant difference. This might be the case that the length of the experiment was not long enough. According to the students' subjective feelings, an English teacher could adopt cooperative learning to lower the students listening anxiety, but the effects might need longer time for students to change it. In the process, students may find the discussion helpful in reducing their anxiety, and the supportive atmosphere gave them a sense of security.

Last, cooperative learning encourages a student-centered classroom. Thus, as an instructor, good class management is essential. Before the instruction, it is important to make sure every student understands his or her role in the group, especially the leader's role, or some students may slack off during the discussion.

Assigning a competent leader for each group is essential, he/she should not only be responsible and good at communicative with each other but also care about others' learning situation. Furthermore, the order for each group is necessary, so a leader should be able to maintain the group discipline. Even though the instructor tried hard to choose the leaders, one of the leaders still got complaints from his team members. Perhaps a teacher's point of view is different from students'. It would be better if the teacher could consult some students or their homeroom teacher before assigning the leaders to prevent the bias. Besides, a few students suggested that sometimes they did not know what to do when finishing the discussion while other groups were still working on it. Therefore, to enhance the learning outcome of cooperative learning, instructors might need to monitor and manage the time of every group discussion.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

This present study attempted to investigate the effectiveness of cooperative learning on junior high school students' listening comprehension, listening anxiety, and their perceptions toward this instruction. It is hoped that these findings could offer some useful insights into this instruction. Thus, some limitations and suggestions in this study are discussed. First, the sample size of this study was not large enough for the results to be generalized to other teaching context. Because of the low birth rate, there are usually less than 30 students in a class. As a result, the sizes of the two groups were small. It is suggested that future research should expand the sample size to enhance the generalizability of the finding. Second, the length of the whole experiment only lasted for ten weeks, and it might need longer time span to reduce students' listening anxiety through cooperative learning, so the quantitative

data did not show a significant difference. Therefore, it is suggested that the time span could extend longer to make a difference on students' listening anxiety. The third limitation was that the listening materials were only from the textbook in school because the instructor was a teacher in a public school, and there was not enough time to apply various listening resources which were not accordance with the textbook. With more diverse teaching material, the effect of cooperative learning on students' listening ability and anxiety might be more evident. The fourth limitation is that the interview data was transcribed and analyzed qualitatively by the researcher alone. To enhance the reliability of the data, future studies should employ various steps during the qualitative analysis including member checking and peer debriefing. Furthermore, the researcher presented the interview data based on participants' proficiency levels, but the groups for interview were heterogeneous. It might be more proper to make the interview group members homogeneous.

In conclusion, there are some findings in this study. First of all, cooperative learning was effective on junior high school students' listening comprehension since it could help students play an active role in English listening. This cooperative atmosphere motivated many students and gave them a sense of achievements. With a mutual goal, both high-achievers and low-achievers took their own responsibility to help each other. Thus, through cooperative learning, the students' English listening comprehension got significantly improved in this study. In addition, quantitative data and qualitative data were collected to understand students' listening anxiety. From the quantitative data from FLLAS, students' anxiety did not decrease. It might be the length of the experiment was not long enough, and students' degrees of listening anxiety were not very high in the beginning, so the change was not obvious. In terms of the qualitative data, many students expressed they actually felt

less anxious about listening through cooperative learning, and the reason was they felt supportive in cooperative learning, which made them obtain a sense of security. Last, most students had positive perceptions toward cooperative learning because they enjoyed the interesting atmosphere and felt the benefits from teaching and learning from each other. Though there were some limitations in this study, these results could still offer some useful insights for both teachers and researchers who are interested in the application of cooperative learning in an EFL context.



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## APPENDIX A

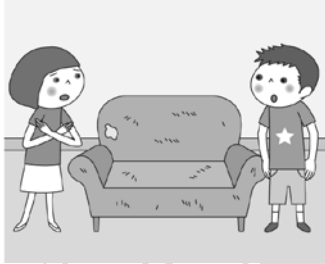
### Listening Comprehension Test

#### 一、 填空。

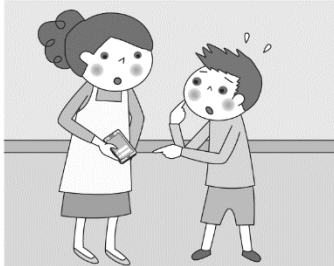
1. A: \_\_\_\_\_ the rules and be quiet. B: Oh, OK.
2. Adele's new song is \_\_\_\_\_ with many young people.
3. The students are \_\_\_\_\_ in the classroom.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_ month of the year.
5. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ for my junior high school teacher.
6. Christmas is an \_\_\_\_\_ in the USA.

#### 二、 辨識句意：根據聽到的內容，選出符合描述的圖片或符合圖片的描述。

1. ( )



2. ( )

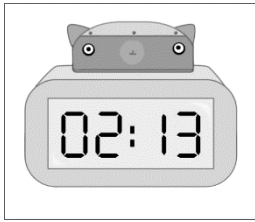


3. ( )

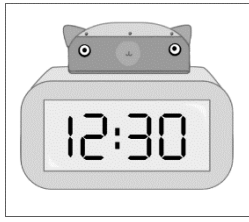


4. ( )

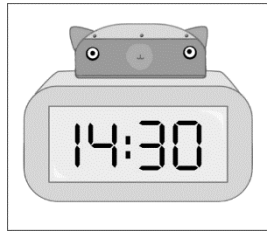
(A)



(B)



(C)

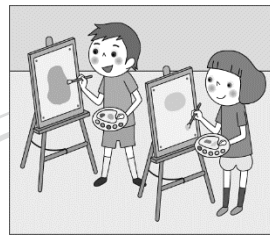


5. ( )

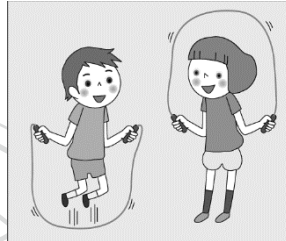
(A)



(B)

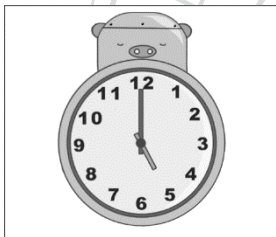


(C)

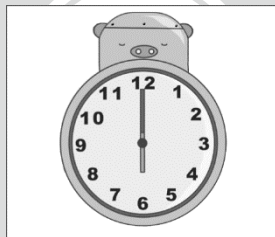


6. ( )

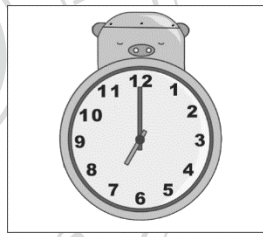
(A)



(B)

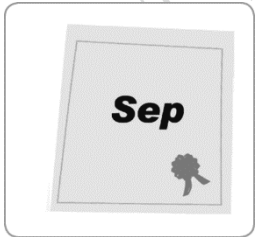


(C)

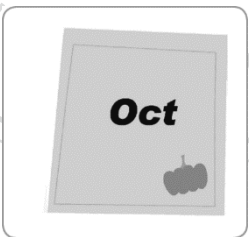


7. ( )

(A)



(B)



(C)

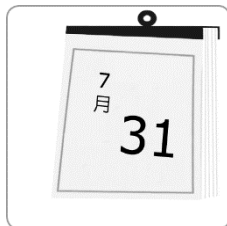


8. ( )

(A)



(B)



(C)



9. ( )

(A)



(B)



(C)



三、基本問答：根據聽到的內容，選出一個最適合的回應或最適合的問句。

1. ( )

- (A) No. They are in the box.
- (B) Sure. You can have them.
- (C) Yes, but don't look inside the box.

2. ( )

- (A) Yes. Let's go talk to him.
- (B) No, he's not our classmate.
- (C) No, he's not in the classroom.

3. ( )

- (A) It's 10:15 a.m. now.
- (B) It's on Monday afternoon.
- (C) It's at 9:45 in the morning.

4. ( )

- (A) Who is the card for?
- (B) Where is your room?
- (C) What can I do for your brother?

5. ( )

- (A) They're signing pictures.
- (B) They're not having a good time.
- (C) You can shake hands with them.

6. ( )

- (A) Isn't it Friday?
- (B) It's January 27.
- (C) The English class is on Monday.

7. ( )

- (A) It's on May 12.
- (B) It's a nice holiday.
- (C) She is a good nurse.

8. ( )  
(A) It's a cow.  
(B) It's in the mud.  
(C) It's running around.

四、言談理解：根據聽到的內容，選出一個最適合的答案。

1. ( )  
(A) Don't eat in the lab.  
(B) Welcome to Joy Lab.  
(C) Please check your number.

2. ( )  
(A) She's at home.  
(B) She's with Mike.  
(C) She's at Jerry's house.

3. ( )  
(A) Yes, he can.  
(B) No, he can't.  
(C) Yes, he can wash the tubes.

4. ( )  
(A) Do not talk or sleep.  
(B) Do not use your phone.  
(C) Do not run, eat, or drink.

5. ( )  
(A) A singer.  
(B) A teacher.  
(C) A police officer.

6. ( )  
(A) Taking a walk.  
(B) Taking a picture.  
(C) Running with her father.

7. ( )  
(A) It's at six.  
(B) It's at six thirty.  
(C) It's at seven thirty.

8. ( )  
(A) It's on Sunday.  
(B) It's on Tuesday.  
(C) It's on Saturday.

9. ( )  
(A) Singing a song.  
(B) Dancing to the music.  
(C) Studying in the classroom.
10. ( )  
(A) Tuesday.  
(B) Saturday.  
(C) Wednesday.
11. ( )  
(A) Turkey legs are special.  
(B) The date of Father's Day.  
(C) A special dinner for Father's Day.
12. ( )  
(A) It's June 14.  
(B) It's June 15.  
(C) It's June 16.
13. ( )  
(A) Eating fish.  
(B) Jumping up and down.  
(C) Hiding behind the sofa.
14. ( )  
(A) Christmas.  
(B) Thanksgiving.  
(C) Teacher's Day.
15. ( )  
(A) It's on December 21.  
(B) It's on December 22.  
(C) It's on December 23.

## APPENDIX B

### Chinese Version of Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS)

#### 外語聽力焦慮量表中文版問卷

親愛的同學：

本問卷是想了解你對英語聽力的感受，讓老師更了解你的狀況。問卷結果對你的成績毫無影響，請安心作答。請根據自己的經驗或看法回答每一個問題，請誠實作答，謝謝合作。

#### 第一部分：基本資料

1. 性別：男 女
2. 你從何時開始學習英語？幼稚園小班 幼稚園中班 幼稚園大班 小一 小二 小三
3. 你每星期聽英語多久(包含上英語課時間)： 2 小時  3 小時  4 小時  5 小時以上
4. 你是否在英語為母語的國家居住過(例如美國，英國，澳洲等)?  
否 是：1~3 個月 4~6 個月 7~12 個月 一年以上

#### 第二部分：聽力焦慮問卷調查

請仔細閱讀各項敘述，依照你平時聽英語的情況勾選。

題號	題目內容	非常不同意	不同意	同意	非常同意
1	聽英語時，我只要一兩個字沒聽懂，聽力就會受阻礙。				
2	如果聽力測驗只播放一次，我會緊張。				
3	當人們說英文說得太快，我會擔心我沒辦法聽懂。				
4	我對英語聽力的主題不熟時，我會緊張。				
5	聽英文時只要有一點不專心，我就會擔心漏聽重點。				
6	做聽力測驗時，如果聽不懂每個字，我會覺得緊張和困惑。				
7	聽英語時很難把每個聽到的單字分得很清楚。				
8	在班上聽英語時，如果沒有聽力內容的文字稿，我會覺得不安。				



9	聽英語時，我對於無法記住聽過的內容感到十分困擾。				
10	我在聽英語時，感覺充滿自信。				
11	我會擔心如果只有一點點時間能思考我所聽到的內容。				
12	聽英語時，我通常只能逐字翻譯，無法聽懂內容。				
13	我擔心大家都聽得懂英語，只有我聽不懂。				
14	無法聽到適合我速度的英語，我會感到擔心。				
15	我不確定是否了解所聽到的內容時，感到心煩。				
16	假如人們很小聲說英語，我擔心會聽不懂。				
17	我聽到打電話給我的人說英語，或想像有人打電話給我時說英語，我就會緊張。				
18	當周圍環境吵鬧時，聽英語就變得困難了。				
19	我在社交場合中聽他人說英語，或想像在社交場合聽別人說英語，我覺得精神緊繃。				
20	聽英語時，聽到不懂的單字，我會緊張。				
21	聽英文時，我常常可以聽懂單字，但聽不懂說話者說什麼。				
22	聽英文文章時，我抓不到重點字，我會覺得害怕。				
23	當別人的英語發音和我發音的方式不同時，我很難聽懂他說的內容。				
24	聽英語時，我無法看到說話者的嘴型或表情時，我會覺得擔心。				
25	聽英語時，要猜出漏聽的部分有困難。				

## APPENDIX C

### Chinese Version of Questionnaire about Cooperative Learning

親愛的同學：

為了瞭解大家對於小組合作學習的意見及感受，請據實回答下面的問題。這不是考試，問卷結果對你的成績毫無影響，請安心作答。作答時請和過去不同的學習經驗或感受做比較，謝謝你的合作。透過小組合作學習，我覺得…

		非常不同意	不同意	同意	非常同意
1	我更主動參與課堂活動。				
2	我的學習焦慮降低了。				
3	我更有信心完成課堂上的小考。				
4	我更樂於跟同學合作。				
5	和同學合作學習比較沒壓力。				
6	我更能吸收上課所教的內容。				
7	我比較主動學習。				
8	我會更關心同學的英語學習狀況。				
9	經由同學的教導，我學會更多。				
10	同學之間互相學習，更能幫助彼此。				
11	同學間的互動變多了。				
12	我更能為了全組同學的表現而努力。				
13	遇到不會的地方時，我更能尋求同學的協助。				
14	我比較喜歡這種學習方式。				
15	合作學習比傳統教學方式讓我學會更多。				

謝謝您的填寫！

## APPENDIX D

### Group Interview Guide

(1) Do you prefer cooperative learning or traditional teacher-centered instruction?

Why?

你比較喜歡合作學習還是傳統老師講述式上課方式? 為什麼?

(2) Does cooperative learning instruction help you reduce the anxiety when listening to English? Why?

分組學習會讓你比較減輕聽力時的焦慮感嗎?為什麼?

(3) What do you learn by teaching others or learning from others?

你有從教別人身上學到什麼嗎? 或者別人教會了你什麼?

(4) Does cooperative learning enhance your interests in learning English?

分組合作學習有讓你提升學習英文的興趣嗎?

(5) Does cooperative learning enhance your confidence in English?

分組合作學習有增強你在英文的自信嗎?

(6) Do you engage in English class more due to cooperative learning?

你會因為分組學習比平常更投入在英文課嗎?

(7) Does your English ability improve after the instruction?

你的英文能力有因此而進步嗎?

(8) Do you have any other idea or suggestions about this cooperative learning instruction?

對於分組合作學習的課程有什麼建議?