

國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士在職專班碩士論文

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全民英檢聽力測驗題型對國中生聽立策略選擇影響之研究

A Study of Effects of Question Types on Junior High Students' Listening  
Strategy Choice While Taking GEPT Listening Test

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士在職專班

碩士論文提要

論文名稱：全民英檢聽力測驗題型對國中生聽力策略選擇影響之研究

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論文提要內容：

本研究旨在比較國中學生在全民英檢聽力測驗中不同聽力題型之測驗結果，並探究聽力題型是否造成學生聽力策略選擇之差異。

本研究對象為宜蘭一所公立國中八年級六個班級共 177 位學生。研究工具為全民英檢初級聽力測驗以及聽力策略問卷。問卷內容以 Vandergrift(1997)的聽力策略分類為架構，改編自蘇曉雯(2007)自編問卷。問卷回收後資料以統計軟體 SPSS 17.0 進行敘述性統計、單因子變異數分析及雙因子變異數分析，獲得結果簡述如下：

1. 國中學生在全民英檢聽力測驗四種題型中的聽力表現有所差異。四種題型的不同因素包括了聽力內容中參與談話者的人數、聽力內容所包含的難字以及測驗題型是否提供圖片輔助。
2. 整體來說，在聽力測驗作答時，國中學生較常使用後設認知策略。例如：理解監測(*monitoring*)，選擇性專注(*selective attention*)和前導組織(*advance organizers*)。然而，若細究不同的聽力題型，學生則較常使用不同認知策略。例如：當遇到較長的聽力內容，學生較常使用摘要(*summarization*)策略。而遇到較難的聽力內容，學生則慣用由下自上(*bottom-up*)策略。
3. 綜觀不同語言能力之學生在不同題型中使用聽力策略的差異，本研究發現學生之語言能力與題型對聽力策略使用上並無交互作用。整體而言，高低成就學生



在四種不同題型中使用相似的聽力策略。然而，若細究各項不同聽力策略的使用頻率，則高低成就者中所慣用的聽力策略有所不同。

根據統計及問卷調查結果，本研究最後提供教學上相關建議以供參考。第一，教師可協助學生分析試題題型，以幫助作答。第二，教師應提供學生不同類型之聽力練習，讓學生嘗試使用不同聽力策略。第三，教師可請高成就學生分享聽力理解過程，以幫助低成就學生能有更好的聽力表現。



## Abstract

The major purpose of the study is to examine whether question types influence junior high students' listening performance and their listening strategy choice. The study is mainly concerned with three aspects: (1) whether students performed differently among the four different question types of GEPT listening section; (2) what kind of strategies did junior high students tend to use in the four types of questions; (3) whether proficiency level played a significant role in listening strategy choice among four question types.

GEPT elementary level of listening comprehension test and a questionnaire were used to collect quantitative data from 177 students in one public junior high school in Yilan Area. The items in the questionnaire were mainly adapted from Su (2007), which followed Vandergrift's (1997) classification of strategy use. In this study, statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA with Scheffe post-hoc test and two-way ANOVA were used to analyze the collected data.

The major findings are summarized as follows:

1. Junior high students performed differently in the four different types of listening questions. Factors that differentiate the four question types include the number of speaker, the content itself and the presence of pictures.
2. Generally speaking, junior high students tended to use metacognitive strategies, such as monitoring, selective attention and advance organizers more often in different question types. However, in specific question types, students appeared to have preference in using certain cognitive strategies. For example, students were

inclined to use summarization when encountering question type with longer listening text. They also tended to use bottom-up strategies to tackle with more difficulty text.

3. There was no significant interaction effect between question types and proficiency level. Overall on the four question types, students with high and low levels used same strategies. However, when examining strategy items specifically, high and low achievers had different preference for using strategy in different question types.

Finally, based on the findings in this study, several suggestions and implications were presented in the conclusion of the paper. First, teachers could help students analyze question types before listening test. Second, teachers could give students more kinds of listening activities to make students experience the effectiveness of using different kinds of listening strategies. Third, teachers could invite high level listeners to share their listening process so that low level listeners might learn from them.



## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background and Motivation**

Listening, a commonly used language skill, plays an important role in daily life. According to Rankin(1928), when people are awake, they spend 80% of their time communicating, and listening composes 45% of which. Also, Feyten (1991) found that listening ability is an indicator of foreign language proficiency. Vandergrift (1997) also asserted that listening is probably the most crucial language skills among the four at the beginning stage. It facilitates the emergence of other language skills such as speaking, reading and writing. Since listening is so critical in language learning, language teachers should put more emphasis on it.

However, listening is often neglected in language teaching because it is a receptive skill. Detecting the improvement and achievement of listening ability is difficult. Language teachers usually follow the patterns of reading instruction to teach listening (Rost, 1994). Another reason of underestimating listening skill might be due to its fleeting characteristic. Lund (1991) once pointed out that listening process exists in time instead of in space. Because listening is ephemeral in nature, it becomes a problem for second language learners. Listeners could only retrieve what they have heard from their memory. And memory might not be reliable because it intertwines listening input and listeners' interpretation together. Hasan (2000) made a comparison between listening and listening comprehension. He addressed that listening is a process of just listening to the input without interpreting but listening

comprehension is a process which contains the meaningful interaction between the text and listeners' background knowledge. It is suggested that listening is an active, rather than passive process because listeners need to build up meanings by connecting what they hear and what they know (Berne, 2004; Mendelsohn, 1994; Rost, 2002).

Knowing the features of listening does not guarantee successful listening comprehension. In fact, EFL listeners encounter great difficulty in listening (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). They receive insufficient input, noise and unclear sounds that hamper their comprehension. And they rely on controlled processing, which cause them longer time to comprehend listening input than L1 listeners. There were several studies contributing to factors that influence listening comprehension. Boyle (1984) categorized them as listener factors, speaker factors, and factors in material and medium. According to Anderson and Lynch (1988), three major factors influencing listening performance were the types of language, the task of listening, and the contextual situation of listening. In Rubin's review (1994), there were five major factors, which were text characteristics, interlocutor characteristics, task characteristics, listener characteristics, and process characteristic. These elements might interfere in listening process and thus might cause failure in listening comprehension. To deal with listening difficulties, listeners need to use some tactics to compensate for insufficient listening skills. Hence, several studies were contributed to the benefit of using listening strategies. The concept of listening strategies originates from studies in learning strategies. Some researchers compared the use of successful and unsuccessful learners and found that some strategies help learners to boost their learning outcome (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Purpura, 1997).

The arising attention on learning strategy inspires more research on specific

language skills, such as listening. Generally speaking, listening strategies may be divided into three main types: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies (Rost, 2002 ; Vandergrift, 1997). Listeners do not use all the strategies at one time. Instead, they choose what strategies they need according to different situations. Furthermore, studies were conducted to explore factors influencing strategy use. Some of them focused on the factors relating to task requirement. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggested that text factors were related to strategy choice. Bacon (1992) addressed that listening strategy was influenced by passage difficulty. It is proved that text factor plays an important role in listening comprehension. However, the classification of task and text is inconclusive and thus more research is needed.

According to Lewis (1999), the listening process is not visible; only the result of the listening is visible. Therefore, using listening comprehension test to explore strategy use is necessary for it shows the outcome of listening process. And researchers could further speculate on how listeners process aural input by questionnaires of listening strategy use. Most of the studies conducted to date were mainly about the relationship between strategy use and text type. Usually text type is defined by the number of speakers involved in the listening text. However, there are still other elements to be considered in the listening text. Under the circumstances of listening comprehension test, there might be factors such as visual support, text length, familiarity of words and so on. Therefore, the present study aims to explore a broader aspect of listening text and listening strategy use. The listening text would be chosen from listening comprehension test. Since the listening text presented in listening test is in the form of questions, and the questions presented vary in type, listening text in the present study would be called as question types.

The reason to call for a study in the relationship between question types and

strategy use is because of the great difficulty encountered by EFL learners in Taiwan. Chuang (2009) conducted a research to explore listening problems from students' and teachers' perspectives and found that students and teachers perceive different listening problems while listening. In Chuang's (2009) study, students reported that the text factor was the hugest barrier to their listening, whereas teachers indicated that their students encountered listening difficulties in the listener factor most often. The results showed that teachers seemed not to understand why students failed in listening comprehension. But helping students respond correctly in listening exercise or listening test is important because listening exercise and test might be the major sources of listening input in students' learning experience. If students successfully answer listening comprehension questions, they might feel more confident in their English ability and be more motivated in learning English. To answer listening comprehension questions correctly, teachers could help students use the clues in the questions and instruct them to apply useful tactics. The present study probes into the relationship between the question types and listening strategy use. It is hoped that teachers could select appropriate listening exercise and instruct students to use facilitative listening strategy when encountering different question types in listening comprehension test.

#### The Purpose of the Study

Studies related to relationship between question type and strategy use were mostly concerned with senior or college students (Luo, 2004; Su 2007). Little study is conducted to examine the effect of listening text on junior high school students' listening strategy use. The purpose of the study was first to examine whether question types have effect on junior high school students' listening comprehension performance. And, second, to investigate what listening strategy junior high school students use between different question types. Finally, the relationship between



question types, language level and strategy choice was discussed.

### The Research Questions

1. Do junior high students perform differently for different question types in GEPT listening comprehension test?
2. Are there differences between the strategies students use for different question types?
3. Do students with high/low proficiency levels demonstrate different patterns of strategy?





## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter comprised four parts: first the process of listening comprehension were introduced. The second part portrayed the variables influencing listening comprehension. The issues in listening strategies were reviewed thirdly. Finally, related studies on the relationship between listening comprehension tests and listening strategy choice would be discussed.

#### **The Process of Listening Comprehension**

Listening used to be considered as a receptive skill. In traditional view, listeners passively accept information like a tape-recorder. However, Anderson and Lynch (1988) deemed listening an interactive process. It requires listeners to apply background knowledge to oral input. Listeners might hear the same information but generate different interpretations. According to Anderson (1995), the first step of listening is called perception. In this phase, listeners pay attention to input and a large number of information keep coming to be stored in the short-term memory, where specific details can only be retained for a short time. Because of limited capacity in the short-term memory, the information undergoes the process of being decoded. In the decoding process, listeners select important cues, such as pauses and hesitation, to help them comprehend meanings. Listeners also concentrate on task and are influenced by text types in this phase. The second stage of listening comprehension process is called parsing. Listeners apply existing knowledge in the long-term memory to represent the words just received in the short-term memory.

Therefore, what have already been saved in the long-term memory would affect listening comprehension. The last phase of listening comprehension is utilization. Listeners associate the meaning of listening text with declarative knowledge, which is stored in the long-term memory. Declarative knowledge could be divided into real world knowledge and linguistic knowledge. Using real world knowledge, which is related to the content itself, is a top-down process while using linguistic knowledge is a bottom-up process. The three phases of listening process mentioned above can be recursive and overlapping. Therefore, listening comprehension requires intricate process in each step. Listeners passively receive input but actively produce personal interpretations by different strategies.

One study about listening processes was conducted by O'Malley, Chamot, and Küpper (1989). They investigated 11 high-school ESL native speakers of Spanish. Eight of them were grouped as effective listeners and three were ineffective ones. All subjects listened to academic lectures in a tape, and the lectures were imposed with pauses. During each pause, the researchers then interviewed the subjects and asked them what came to their mind while listening. Unfortunately, ineffective listeners quitted because the task was too difficult for them. Data collected from the effective listeners showed that listeners used different strategies in each phase of listening process. Effective listeners were conscious of attention problems and intended to deal with them during the perceptual stage. In the second stage, parsing, effective listeners used more top-down strategies than bottom-up strategies. During the phase of utilization, effective listeners related listening input to both personal experience and knowledge of the world. Main differences between effective and ineffective listeners were self-monitoring, elaboration and inferencing.

Goh (2000) also investigated listeners' comprehension problems, and analyzed listening problems according to the three comprehension phases developed by

Anderson (1995). The purpose of this study was mainly to probe into real-time problems that listeners faced during the process. Goh collected data from a group of EFL college students by having them keep diaries. Participants wrote down how they tried to understand the listening text and the problems they encountered. In addition to diaries, 17 students from the same group took semi-structured interviews to explain how much they knew about the listening task. Twenty-three students also took part in immediate retrospective verbalization to show their use of processing strategies. The study showed that among the ten real-time listening problems, half of them were perceptual processing problems relating to unsuccessful word recognition and ineffective attention. Three were problems with parsing and two were with utilization. The study helped us to recognize the detailed situation when ESL learners listened. Language teachers can thus help listeners develop strategies that might be needed to overcome listening difficulties.

Both of the studies above seemed to agree with Thompson's (1995) opinion that aural medium has special effect on listening comprehension. Listeners must understand the text while listening, retain message in memory, coordinate listening text with the prior knowledge and continually check comprehension by sifting incoming information. Listeners shoulder a heavy cognitive load in order to successfully obtain the whole meaning of information. To further explore the factors that influence listening process, we need to examine the source of aural input, the spoken text.

### *Features of Spoken Language*

Reading and listening both receive input; however, the features of their information carrier, the written text and the spoken text, are totally different. Buck (2001) indicated three main features of speech that are specifically crucial in building up listening comprehension. First is that the medium of sound might generate ambiguity

because of the indistinct acoustic input. During fast speech, speakers often unconsciously use phonological modifications such as assimilation, elision and intrusion. Listening to every word clearly might be difficult for listeners. Second, spoken language is real-time. Listeners need to grasp as much information as they could because the spoken text won't be accessible in the next moment unless the speakers are required to repeat the text again. This feature might add difficulty to listening process because listeners can't control the speech rate. The speed of talking is determined by speakers, and listeners can only use their limited short-term memory to store listening input. Therefore, what is remained in the memory couldn't be on all fours with what is heard. Third, speakers seldom use sentences to convey their thoughts, they use idea units instead. Idea units are short phrases or clauses which strung loosely together. Other than that, the vocabulary and the grammar used in spoken text seem to be more colloquial and less formal. There are many expressions that are only presented in spoken text, not the written text. According to the above three characteristics of spoken text, we might infer that listeners might hear acoustic input but don't really understand what was said. However, listening input is not always presented as oral text; some might be script as well. Oral text and script are at two ends of a continuum. We need to be very careful not to attribute listening difficulty solely to the features of spoken text. Other features, such as the speakers and the listeners, both determine whether the listening process is successful or not.

Since the research aims to investigate listeners' performance on different question types, and the classification of question types is related to the text variables, the present study would focus on the variables of listening text in the following literature review.

For many years, studies on listening were influenced by research of reading. Factors influencing listening comprehension were based on parallels in reading research. Hence, Rubin (1994) devoted much effort to sort out five major categories of variables which affect listening. In his review, these five factors include text characteristics, interlocutor characteristics, task characteristics, listener characteristics and process characteristics. Text characteristics depict variation in a listening text or associated visual support. Interlocutor characteristics focus on variation in speakers' personal features. Task characteristics are related to the purpose for listening and types of responses. Listener characteristics portray listeners' personal attributes. Process characteristics are mainly about listeners' cognitive activities and the interaction between speakers and listeners. The purpose of the present study is to explore the relationship between question types and strategy use in a listening comprehension test. Therefore, the following passages would focus on the factors of text in the listening comprehension process.

#### *Text Factors in Listening Comprehension*

Language teachers need to choose appropriate listening text for listeners. According to Brown and Yule (1983), listening comprehension process is influenced by the speaker, the listener, the content and the support. Thompson (1995) also made similar conclusion, i.e., to select a proper listening text, we need to consider the feature of oral extent, visual support, length, content familiarity, speech rate and pauses. Shang (2008) made some suggestions on how to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning of listening comprehension by analyzing in detail the nature of listening, listening process and listening skills. One of the methods to improve listening comprehension is by carefully selecting listening materials. Listening materials could be surveyed in different ways. First, there are different types of input,

such as English songs, everyday conversations, and announcement. Second, they could be presented with visual aids such as pictures and diagrams. Third, listening material should be chosen in accordance with listeners' proficiency level. Fourth, other than vocabulary, if listeners acquire the knowledge of structure before listening, it is possible that they could use this knowledge to comprehend the target language more efficiently. In the present study, students with different ability need to receive the same test. Also, to make the study impartial, listening instruction is not allowed. Therefore, the following passage would focus on the elements of oral extent and visual aids.

#### *Oral Extent in Listening Text*

Oral extent, according to Thompson (1995), is a continuum which includes conversation at one end and lectures at the other. It is believed to influence listening comprehension. She also suggested that when the listening text is closer to the oral end of continuum, the higher the listening comprehension test scores would be. The idea of oral extent could be enlarged to include text types by adding elements such as the interaction between listeners and speakers. Berne (1992) gave text type a general definition, which is the format and genre to which they belong. She concluded that in Shohamy and Inbar's study (1991), the degree of interaction between speaker and listener differentiated text types. News broadcast is at one end of the continuum and dialogue at the other. The more interaction between speaker and listener, the easier the text is. Overall, the most commonly seen classification in text type is by the number of speakers involved (Luo, 2004). Texts with only one speaker contain more explicit language and complicated sentence structure. They are presented in the forms of statements, narration, speech, lectures, news broadcast, instruction, and announcement, which are often termed as monologue. As for texts involving more than one speaker,



they contain more implicit information and oral features. Conversations, interviews, movies, dramas, debates and discussions all involve many speakers, and they are termed as dialogues. The influence of text type differed in several studies. In the study of Shohamy and Inbar (1991), text type was determined by its location along the oral and literate continuum. These researchers used three main text types. One is a pre-written, edited news broadcast. Another is a lecturette in which a speaker interacted with an addressee. The other is a consultative dialogue. The study found that subjects performed better in dialogue because it contained more pauses, false starts and other oral features. It confirmed that whether the text contained the oral or written feature had effects on listening comprehension.

However, the results of Read (2002) were contrary to Shohamy and Inbar's study. He investigated the influence of applying different text types in EAP (English for academic purpose) condition. First, he chose an appropriate topic and wrote a script. The monologue was spoken by one speaker with the written script, and the researcher developed the test item by the written text. Then, three speakers read the written text and planned what to say in a discussion. The discussion was spontaneous without script. The result showed that discussion was more difficult than monologue. The researcher concluded that the result may have something to do with the fast speech rate in discussion. Though the experiment had some flaws in test item, the results still indicated that the oral extent of listening text should be examined along with its speech rate and vocabulary in a listening comprehension test situation.

### *Visual aids in Listening Text*

Listening in daily life usually occurs along with non-verbal information, such as gesture and facial expression of the speaker. Non-verbal information provides listeners with clues to comprehend the meaning. In the context of a listening test, one

of the possible ways to aid non-verbal information is by using visual supplements such as videos, pictures, graphs and tables. Many researchers have suggested that visual aids play a significant role in listening comprehension. As Early (1989) claimed, graphics help listeners to lower the language barrier and decrease short-term memory load by activating both content and rhetorical schemata simultaneously. When listening text can not be completely understood, listeners use visual aids to anticipate, predict, infer and confirm meaning. Some theorists believed that a well-organized picture can be representative in expressing speakers' meaning, and it might be more effective than a thousand words. Paivio (1971) protested that an image help listeners deal with information in comprehension, storage and recall. Mayer (1997) addressed similar viewpoint. He contended that listeners are active constructors who select crucial words and images from the listening text at the beginning of the listening process. They then systematize these words and images and make them coherent mental representation. The last step is to coordinate the verbal and visual input and to build up the meaning. It is noteworthy that the degree of using visual aids depends on the listeners' cognitive ability and cognitive styles. Despite the positive effects demonstrated, there were some research showing adverse effect of visual aids on listening comprehension. Gildea *et al.* (1988) conducted an experiment to find the effects of various amounts of contextual enrichment for native language learning retention. Materials for the experiment were the movie 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' and 36 passages adapted from a text of the story, which were similar in length and complexity. They grouped sixty grade-school students into five conditions: the group who read the text only, the group receiving word definition on request, the group receiving definition and sentence using of words on request, the group receiving illustrative pictures from a movie and sentences on request and the last group receiving definition, illustrative pictures and sentences on request. The result showed

that more information did not proportionally guarantee increase in learning. Surprisingly, using pictures decreased vocabulary learning outcome. Thus, Gildea et al. contended that visual information may divert learners' attention when the pictures presented were "novel" and "salient." Though the study aims at discovering learning effectiveness on vocabulary, it provides some important viewpoints on using visual aids while learning. First, the amount of visual aids is not proportional to learning performance. It is worth discussing whether the presence of pictures plays an important role on learning. Second, while using visual aids, there are some factors to be considered. The feature of pictures may influence the effectiveness in comprehension.

Arbib et al. (1987) insisted that some elements in a picture decide how helpful it would be for learning. These elements include: the size of an image, its centrality in the frame, variance from learners' expectation, and how it portrays movement. What listeners hear need to correspond with what they see; otherwise, the beneficial effect would be diminished. That is to say, whether a picture assists or distracts listeners rely on the presentation of a picture and how listeners use it.

One of the factors noticed by the researchers is the timing of presenting a picture. Brandsford and Johnson (1972) once conducted four experiments to examine the effect of thematic organizers. Thematic Organizer is like a bridge, which connects the background knowledge of learners and the knowledge that needs to be learned. One of the thematic organizers in Brandsford and Johnson's study was a picture relating to the context. The researchers put 50 high school students into five groups. Group one heard a passage once with no context. Group two heard a passage twice with no context. Group three read a contextual picture for 30 seconds before hearing the content. Group four looked at a contextual picture for 30 seconds after hearing the content. The last group viewed a picture of the objects mentioned in the content

before hearing the passage. The only difference between group three and group five is that for group five, the picture of objects had no meaningful relationship to one another, though the objects in the picture were relative to the content. The result showed that group three had the best performance among the five. The researcher found that contextual visuals help the most when they are presented at the beginning of a story. Therefore, when providing listeners pictures, it is better to consider the sequence of the listening activity.

Omaggio's (1979) study also agreed with the conclusion above. Another interesting finding from the research is that the higher language learners tended to use less contextual visuals than lower language learners did. The same viewpoint can be sustained by a review of Berne (1998). The researcher examined through the literature related to L2 listening. One of the viewpoints is that the effectiveness of different types of visual aids differs according to the ability of L2 listeners. From the schematic perspective, low-achievers might need more visual aids because of their insufficient linguistic knowledge. Therefore, they rely more on the cues from the pictures, which help them to predict, perceive and integrate listening input. As for high-achievers, visual aids might be redundant, but they are never hindrance. They can use linguistic cues to comprehend listening text and check whether their responses are correct. In addition to the level of listeners, difficulty of listening text might also be a factor influencing the use of visual aids. When listeners hear easy or simple input, they can use the cues from the language itself. On the contrary, when listeners need to pay attention to more difficult listening text, it is possible that they could not cope with the linguistic cues and need the help of visual images. This surmise is supported by Wolff (1987). Wolff carried out a study on the effects of visual images with German secondary ESL students. He suggested that an easier text allowed students to overlook the visual images because bottom-up process was not impeded. On the contrary, when

encountering more difficult text, they relied on visual support to build up the meaning.

When seeing a picture, learners act differently in different levels of text difficulty. When they hear the text with and without visual aids, they use different cognitive process. Duquette and Pinchaud (1996) found that when listeners could see a picture and hear a passage simultaneously, they seemed to pay less attention to linguist cues. While hearing a passage without seeing a picture, they tended to pay more attention to linguist cues. Therefore, to facilitate comprehension, learners adjust their strategies when facing different kinds of task. The following passages would present the research, study and theories and studies of strategy use in listening comprehension.

### Issues on Listening Strategies

The main role of English teaching has been shifted from teachers to students recently. Boyle (1984) once examined factors that influenced listening performance from the perspective of both students and teachers in secondary and tertiary levels. Surprisingly, there were several factors that students and teachers perceived differently. For students, they conceived vocabulary an important elements in listening process more than teachers did. They thought that the more words one knows, the more possible one might understand listening texts. Three other factors mentioned by students but barely mentioned by teachers were memory, attention and the influence of reading habit. The teachers, on the other hand, focused much more on linguistic elements, such as the ability to cope with stressed syllables, intonation and complex syntactic structures. The study suggested that teachers and students had different concepts in listening strategy use. Therefore, teachers need to examine students' listening process by constantly checking their strategy use. Only by doing so

can teachers know what strategies students need and how to help them.

### *Strategy Use under Listening Test-taking Condition*

Learning strategies might help learners acquire language knowledge in language learning situations. However, in language test situations, strategy use is related to the ongoing working memory to solve task problems (Gagne et al., 1993). When inspecting variation in language test performance, the strategies used during tests could not be neglected. The concept of test-taking strategies was first started with the word “test-wiseness.” It depicts “one’s capacity for using test characteristics and formats and/or test-taking situations to raise test scores (Ritter & Idol-Maestas, 1986, p.350). What test takers do to solve test problems is worth discussing. Phakiti (2003) examined test-taking strategies on multiple-choice reading comprehension tests. Subjects of the research are 384 Thai university students enrolled in an English course. They took an 85-item achievement test and finished a cognitive-metacognitive strategies questionnaire. Eight of the subjects were further interviewed to describe their thinking process. The result showed that the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies had a positive influence on the test performance. Also, high achievers tended to use more metacognitive strategy than low achievers. Oxford et al. (2004) used tests to examine test-takers’ reading strategy use. In the study, it was found that reading strategies were not affected by task difficulty or proficiency alone. However, when examining specific items, high achievers used more top-down strategies while low achievers tended to use more bottom-up strategies.

Most of the research before mainly focused on the reading task-based situation; studies on listening task-based situation are comparatively rare. Vogely (1995) investigated how English learners of Spanish used and perceived listening comprehension strategies on an authentic task. In this study, subjects tended to use the

following strategies. By the order of importance, they were getting the overall meaning of the text, relating the background knowledge with the information in the text, understanding the meaning of each word, focusing details, and mentally sounding out the words and phrases. Interestingly, the strategies often used above don't correspond with strategies subjects perceived. For example, in the questionnaire, subjects thought that understanding the gist of the text is important, but they didn't report using it often in their strategy use questionnaire. That is to say, listeners might know what strategies could be helpful for comprehension, but in the listening task, they do not know how and when to use these strategies successfully. Therefore, to help listeners compensate for the gap between "knowing what" and "knowing how", is important for facilitating listening comprehension.

#### *Taxonomy of Listening Comprehension Strategies*

Studies related to strategy use were first focused on those for language learning purposes. According to Oxford (1992), learning strategies are consciously activated by FL/L2 learners to improve their language skills. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) categorized language learning strategies into three types: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies. Language learners use cognitive strategies to cope with the incoming information. Listening strategies under the scope of cognitive strategies are rehearsal, organization, inferencing, summarizing, deduction, imagery, transfer, and elaboration. As for metacognitive strategies, they help language learners to monitor, plan and evaluate the outcome of activities, and they need higher mental process. Metacognitive strategies in listening process include selective attention, planning, monitoring, reviewing, and checking comprehension. Social/affective strategies are interaction among people and the affective control, which facilitate learning outcome. In the listening process, social/affective strategies include

cooperation, questioning for clarification, and self-talk.

In O'Malley and Chomat's (1990) viewpoint, there are three main benefits of applying language learning strategies. First, learners don't have to rely on others; they can be responsible for their own learning. Second, learners can build up schemata, which also help other kinds of learning. Third, strategies are easy to change or teach compared with other personal characteristics. It is important to instruct strategy in language classroom because it is teachable and flexible compared to other elements that influence performance (Rost, 2002). Generally speaking, listening strategies are like learning strategies. Vandergrift (1997) specifically focused on the types of listening strategies. He modified some of O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) categorization of learning strategies and elaborated detailed subcategories under three categories, which are also metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies. The detailed classification of listening strategies by Vandergrift (1997) are presented below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

*Vandergrift's (1997) Classification of Listening Comprehension Strategies*

- 
- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Metacognitive Strategies | (1) Planning                |
|                             | a. Advance organization     |
|                             | b. Directed attention       |
|                             | c. Selective attention      |
|                             | d. Self-management          |
|                             | <hr/>                       |
|                             | (2) Monitoring              |
|                             | a. Comprehension monitoring |
|                             | b. Auditory monitoring      |
|                             | c. Double-check monitoring  |
|                             | <hr/>                       |
|                             | (3) Evaluation              |
|                             | a. Performance evaluation   |
|                             | b. Strategy evaluation      |
|                             | <hr/>                       |
|                             | (4) Problem identification  |
-



2. Cognitive Strategies	(1) Inferencing a. Linguistic inferencing b. Voice and paralinguistic inferencing c. Kinesic inferencing d. Extralinguistic inferencing e. Between parts inferencing
	(2) Elaboration a. Personal elaboration b. World elaboration c. Academic elaboration d. Questioning elaboration e. Creative elaboration f. Imagery
	(3) Summarization (4) Translation (5) Transfer (6) Repetition (7) Resourcing (8) Grouping (9) Note-taking (10) Deduction/induction (11) Substitution
3. Socio/affective Strategies	(1) Questioning for clarification (2) Cooperation (3) Lowering anxiety (4) Self-encouragement (5) Taking emotional temperature

Related Studies of Listening Comprehension Test and Listening Strategies

The following research also aimed to explore the relationship between GEPT test performance and strategy use. All of them chose subjects in Taiwan, and the subjects might share similar background knowledge and learning experience with the subjects in the present study. Therefore, the research is further discussed in the following passages.

### *The Relationship Between Strategy Use and GEPT Test Performance*

Wu's (2008) study investigated the relationships between strategy use and GEPT test performance. Subjects are 567 test takers of Taiwanese EFL learners. The age of the test takers ranged from 14 to 19, and the average age was 17.09. These test takers took a GEPT-Intermediate practice test two weeks before they participated in a formal GEPT-Intermediate test. The study only examined the part of reading and listening and excluded the part of speaking and writing. Before the subjects took the practice test, they were asked to fill out the strategy use questionnaire which was developed based on Purpura's (1997) work. It contained 34 items of cognitive strategy use and 30 items of metacognitive strategy use. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale and was translated into Chinese. A pilot study was executed among a small sample before the practice test to check whether test takers could understand the statements clearly.

The researcher concluded two main points based on the result of the study. First, learners used more metacognitive strategies than cognitive strategies. It is believed that the phenomenon might be deduced from the second language testing situation. While taking language tests, learners are usually inclined to language performance rather than on language learning. Since performance is product-oriented and learning is process-oriented, it seems logical that learners employ more metacognitive strategies because they are relative to post-assessment process such as *self-evaluation* and *self-testing*. Second, when considering strategy use as predictors for GEPT performance, *assessing the situation* and *monitoring* were two strategies which were identified repeatedly in three different test results: sum score, reading score, and listening score. Monitoring had a positive effect while assessing the situation had negative consequence on test performance. It is noteworthy that the findings are

consistent with Paris's (2002) assertion that strategies can have positive, negative, and neutral consequences. One of the possible explanations of negative influence on the study might be the statements under *assessing the situation* in the questionnaire were often used by low achievers. The statements often describe thinking process before or during a language performance. For example, Item 36 says "*Before I begin an English test, I try to see which parts will be easy and which parts will be difficult*". Item 45 tells that "*Before I begin an English test, I think about how the test will be scored*". For low achievers, they may have little confidence in their language competence. Therefore, they need to estimate the test situation and try to optimize their performance. For better learners, on the other hand, they might feel confident for the test and thus could focus on the test items single-mindedly.

#### Effects of Test Format and Text Type on Listening Comprehension and Strategy Use

The study of Luo (2004) aimed at discovering the effects of test format (whether questions are presented with pictures) and text type (the oral extent of the listening passage) on listening comprehension and strategy use. There were 106 third-year senior high school students who were divided into high, medium, and low proficiency groups by their performance on a listening comprehension test. Then, 32 students from high proficiency group and 33 from low proficiency group participated in the study. After taking a listening test from GEPT, students were asked to fill in the questionnaire of strategy use in their real-time situation. The questionnaire contained 25 items and was based on Oxford's (1990) classification of strategy.

The findings of the study are presented as below. First, all subjects performed better on test item with pictures than without pictures. The researchers concluded two possible reasons of the phenomena. One is that test with pictures avoid testing other language skills, such as reading. In test items without pictures, test-takers need to read

questions and rely on cues from the passage and thus might underestimate test-takers' listening ability. Another reason is that pictures provide contextual cues, which can make up for incomplete understanding of the input. Second, the study found that students have preference in using strategies. For high proficiency learners, they used compensation, metacognitive, and social strategies more often than low proficiency learners. The researcher suggested that compensation and metacognitive strategies require higher level of mental processing, and thus can be served to distinguish high and low proficiency learners. Third, subject tended to use metacognitive and affective strategies in the test item with pictures. Metacognitive strategies were also related to subjects' test performance in the test item without pictures. In conclusion, test format and text type had significant effect on listening performance and strategy use. And metacognitive strategies were found to enhance subjects' overall performance. The researcher suggested language teachers to be aware of these elements when instructing listening comprehension in teaching.

#### *Effect of Text Types on College Students' Listening Strategy Choice*

Su's (2007) study intended to examine the effect of text type on listening strategy choice while taking listening comprehension test. The subjects were 360 college students from the universities in central Taiwan. They took a listening comprehension test of GEPT intermediate level. There are three types of text in the test: picture, dialogue and conversation. After taking each part of question, they were asked to fill in a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to understand strategy use in different kind of text types. In other words, they needed to fill the same questionnaire three times. The questionnaire was based on Vandergrift's (1997) classification of listening strategy and contained 34 items. 33 were 5-point Likert scale and one was an open question. After finishing the test and questionnaire, 30 subjects from each high,

intermediate and low proficiency level received an interview for exploring their in-depth use of strategy during the test.

The research concluded three points by the study. First, the result showed that EFL learners in Taiwan were accustomed to use certain strategies in different kind of text types though these strategies might not be facilitative or appropriate. Second, the EFL listeners tended to use certain listening strategies with different frequency in different text types. One possible explanation is that listeners perceived that they need to adjust their strategy use according to text types, so they changed their frequency of using strategy. Third, both proficiency level and text type had significant influence on the strategy use. However, there was no interaction effect between proficiency level and text type.

The limitation of the study is that it didn't take subjects' major into consideration. Whether subjects were from English department or not might change the result of the study to some extent. The background of subjects could be more similar to one another. The other part that needed to be improved is the way of applying interview. It was carried out after the listening test. Therefore, some thinking process of the listeners could not be reflected right away. To have more holistic picture of how listeners use strategies, think-aloud method might be helpful.

#### Concluding Remarks of Chapter Two

The researcher has reviewed the issue on listening text, listening strategies and relative studies. It was found that several factors and some strategies were contributed to listening performance. However, most of the studies focused on listeners of higher level who are from senior high school or college. Few or even no studies have been conducted to examine listening strategy use of junior high school students. Secondly, the instrument of listening comprehension text varied, some were from authentic

audio tape, and some were from standardized test. Even studies which used GEPT listening test often analyzed listening text in dichotomy, either text with picture and non-picture or text of monologue and dialogue. However, the GEPT listening test has been modified from three question types to four since 2010. Therefore, more work on the issue is needed.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

The primary aim of the present study is to explore listening performance and strategy use in different question types. The study used GEPT elementary level listening comprehension test. After taking test on each question type, test-takers took strategy use questionnaire. The questionnaires for test-takers were designed to collect necessary data for further analysis. This chapter comprises four sections. The first section describes the background information of the participants. The second section discusses the instruments used in the study. Procedure of the study is briefly introduced in the third section. Techniques used for analyzing data are presented in the last section.

#### **Participants**

In order to investigate the effects of question types on listening strategy in junior high school, participants were selected from one junior high school in Yilan. The school consists of eighteen classes in total; each class includes approximately 30 students. 177 students from six classes of eighth grade were invited to participate in the study. The participants have received formal English class for at least five years. When entering junior high school, they took entrance examination implemented by Yilan County Government Education Department. The entrance examination aimed to allocate students equally to each class by their achievement. Therefore, students in each class were equally distributed in terms of their academic ability.

## Instruments

There were two instruments used in the study, a listening comprehension test from GEPT elementary level and an adapted questionnaire based on Vandergrift's (1997) classification of listening strategy.

### *GEPT*

The listening comprehension test was chosen from GEPT (General English Proficiency Test) elementary level. The test was published in 2010 by the Language Training & Testing Center. GEPT is a standardized test and the elementary level aims to test the language proficiency level of junior high school students. It is recorded by native speakers of America and the speed of talking is slower than normal speech for the purpose of testing. There is not any distinctive accent or fast speech rate. The GEPT elementary level consists four parts, picture description, answering questions, conversations and short talks. Table 3.1 shows the structure of the listening comprehension test.

Table 3.1

*The Structure of the GEPT Listening Comprehension Test*

Section	Presentation of questions	Number of speakers	Number of questions
1. Picture Description	pictorial	one	5
2. Answering Questions	Non-picture	one	10
3. Conversations	Non-picture	two	10
4. Short Talks	pictorial	one	5

Taking the test of section one (picture description) needs about three minutes for all five questions, each question takes about 30 seconds. There is a five-second pause between questions in picture description. In section two (answering questions), every question lasts about 20 seconds, and is followed by a 15-second pause for test-takers



to respond. As for section three (conversations), time for each question is around 40 seconds, the waiting time for answering question is 15 seconds. The question in section four (short talks) needs about 40 seconds, and before the statement, questions that needed to be answer is spoken by a narrator. The pause for test-takers to answer question takes 5 seconds. The subjects took all of the four sections and the test took about twenty minutes to answer all the listening questions.

Rubin (1994) reviewed Weinstein-shir and Griffiths' (1992) study about the effect of speech rate in listening comprehension. According to the results from the study, low-intermediate level listeners performed the best when the listening text is presented at the speed of 127 w.p.m (word per minute). Table 3.2 shows the duration and speed of four sections in GEPT listening test. The text is example questions from a GEPT elementary listening test. The result shows that the speech rate of GEPT listening test isn't too difficult for junior high school students. Though the speed in the section of answering questions seems faster than others, it did not trouble students while taking test. The reason is due to its simple question stem. There is only one speaker asking one question at one time. And the pause between questions is long enough for students to respond.

Table 3-2

*Speech Rate of Four Sections in GEPT Elementary Level Listening Test*

<b>Section</b>	<b>Number of words in each question</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Speed (w.p.m)</b>
<b>One</b>	16	0'33	123.75
<b>Two</b>	12	0'27	135
<b>Three</b>	39	0'19	123.15
<b>Four</b>	42	0'20	126

### *Questionnaire*

Researches on listening strategy choice used various methods. Some use think-aloud procedure (Bacon, 1992), others use listening journals (Katchen, 1996) and still others use interview (Bacon 1992 ; Su, 2007). Considering the level of junior high school, it might be difficult for them to articulate strategy use precisely. Therefore, the study explored junior high school students' listening strategy use by questionnaire. The questionnaire is adapted from Su's (2007) study, which was based on the classification of Vandergrift's (1997) classification of listening strategy. One subcategory of cognitive strategies, association, was not included in the questionnaire. The original description of association in Su's (2007) study was "*I associate the word I hear with the word I have learned.*" Because students who joined the pilot study found the description confusing, they did not know what kind of association might occur in the listening process. Students could only judge whether the word is familiar for them in limited time for response, they were unable to associate words that they have learned before. Therefore, the subcategory of association in cognitive strategies was deleted in the present study. There were two parts in the questionnaire; one is about the subjects' background, such as their gender, years of learning English. The other part is regarding the listening strategy they use. There were 24 items in the five-point Likert scale, ranging from "always" to "never". One open-ended question will be used to examine the subjects' other strategies (See Appendix A). The subjects filled the questionnaire after they listened to each question type. Table 3.3 shows the categories of listening strategy covered in the questionnaire and their correspondent items. The description for each item is presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.3

*The Classification of the Strategy Items in the Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire*

Strategy	Item
1. Metacognitive strategies	
a. Planning	
Advance organizers	14. 18.
Directed attention	6.
Selective attention	10.
Self-management	4. 21.
b. Monitoring	
	5. 7.
c. Self-evaluation	
	17. 24.
2. Cognitive strategies	
a. Repetition	9.
b. Grouping	8.
c. Imagery	19.
d. Auditory Representation	12. 22.
e. Elaboration	13.
f. Inferencing	15.
g. Note-taking	2.
h. Summarizing	1.
i. Translation	3.
j. Association	
k. Bottom-up	16. 20.
l. Top-down	23.
m. Listening-specific	11.

Table 3.4

*Description of Items*

Item	Descriptions
1	I make a mental or written summary when I listen to the text.
2	I take notes when I listen. (Ex. Jotting down key words).
3	I translate key words or sentences into Chinese.
4	I adjust myself to catch up the speed.
5	I check if I really understand the meaning and never complete the test by guessing.

- 6 I won't give up even if I don't understand thoroughly. Instead, I focus on the following text.
  - 7 I try to concentrate when I find myself being distracted.
  - 8 I group words I heard according to their features.
  - 9 I repeat key words in my mind once or twice.
  - 10 I read possible distracters before listening.
  - 11 I listen to chunks of words once.
  - 12 I used pause and tone to speculate words that I don't know.
  - 13 I relate what I heard with my experience and background knowledge.
  - 14 I decide what to focus on before listening.
  - 15 I predict the following text and outcome when seeing questions.
  - 16 I focus on the details of the content.
  - 17 I evaluate how much I have known about the topic.
  - 18 I utilize the description of questions to help comprehension.
  - 19 I have mental pictures when listening to the texts.
  - 20 I piece up the gist with detailed information.
  - 21 I ask myself to think in English when listening.
  - 22 I use intonation to segment words and phrases.
  - 23 I focus on the gist of the contents.
  - 24 I evaluate how much I have understood the contents.
- 

Almost each item corresponds with one subcategory of listening strategy. The classification of Vandergrift's (1997) listening strategies included three parts: metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies, social/affective strategies were crossed out in the questionnaire. Since the present study aims to investigate the strategy use under the listening comprehension test, it is not possible for students to ask help from the peer while testing. Therefore, the listening strategies under social/affective category were not used in the questionnaire.

### Procedure

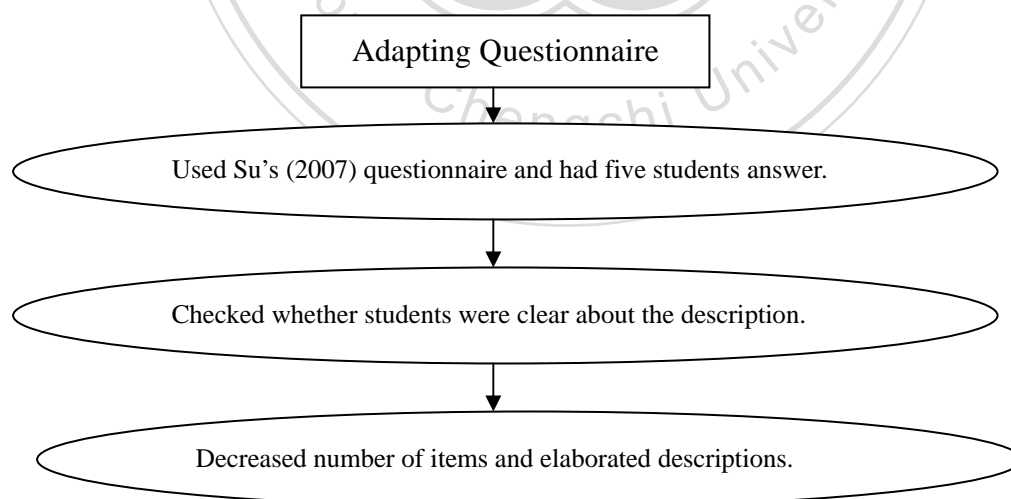
The research procedure includes three parts: modifying questionnaire, implementing formal test, and grouping students.

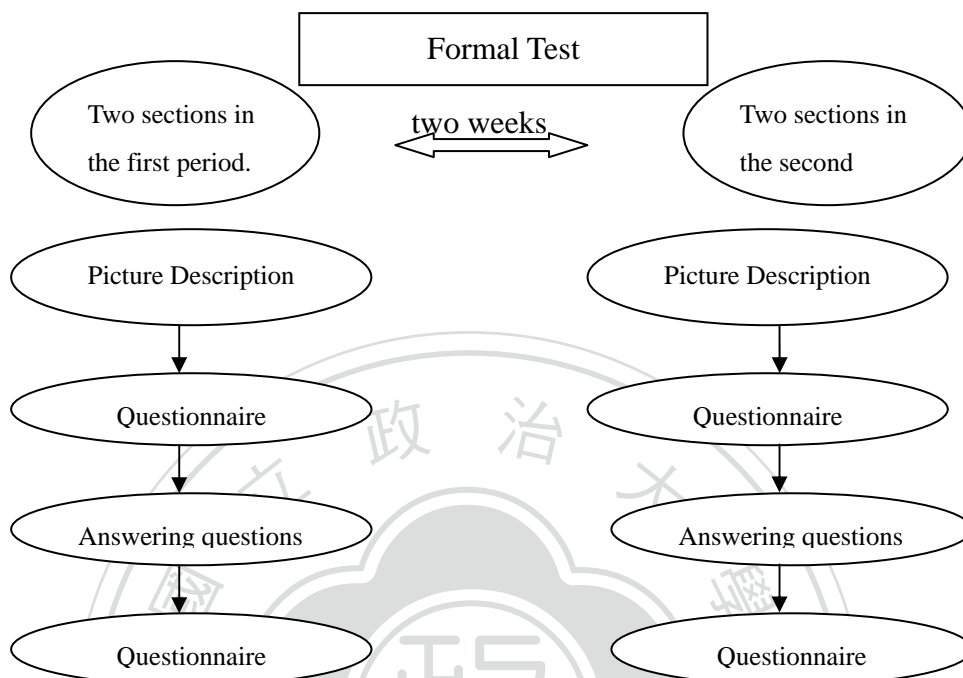
The questionnaire is first adapted from Su's (2007) study. She investigated the relationship between listening strategy choice and text type. Participants of the study were college students from central Taiwan; therefore the wording of the questionnaire might be too difficult for junior high school students. The researcher had five students answer the questionnaire to check whether it is clear and friendly for junior high school students. And the questionnaire was modified by students' responses. For example, in the description of note-taking, Su (2007) wrote that "*I take notes while listening.*" But students who joined the pilot study reflected that it is not possible for them to take notes in such a short time because taking notes means writing down a whole sentence for them. Therefore, the researcher gave an example of taking notes in the end of the description, i.e., jotting down key words.

The researcher had students fulfill the task in two different periods. In the first period, students listened to the explanation of the listening test and listening strategy questionnaire. The researcher read through items on the questionnaire and checked whether students understood the words. Then, students answered questions in the section of picture description and answering questions. At the end of each section, the researcher stopped the CD player and had students fill in the questionnaire. Another two sections, conversations and short talks were given to students two weeks away from the first class. The reason to split the procedure into two periods is because that the subjects needed to answer the same questionnaire four times after taking GEPT listening test. The GEPT listening test took about twenty minutes, and answering 24 items on the questionnaire carefully for four times took about forty minutes. For fear that subjects might not have abundant time to fulfill listening test and questionnaire in one period, and having students fill in the same questionnaire for four times in two consecutive periods might cause fatigue or practice effect, the researcher decided to have an interval of two weeks to reduce possible influence of practice effect.

In the formal test, the researcher introduced the procedure and purpose of the study, and students were told that the result wouldn't influence their academic scores. Students were asked to spend three to five minutes filling personal information in the first part of questionnaire. Then they started the listening test. The content of listening text was played only once. After answering questions about the listening text, the researcher stopped the CD for a moment. The 24 items on the questionnaire were read through by the researcher for making sure that every student understood the meaning of the items. During the time of filling questionnaire, students were allowed to ask any questions about the questionnaire. Then, the researcher made sure whether every subject had finished every question of the first part, and started playing the second part of listing test. In the second part, the subjects also answered the listening comprehension question first and fill the questionnaire later. It took about forty-five minutes for the whole procedure. The whole procedure was presented in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 A Flowchart of the Research Procedures





After finishing four sections of listening test, the researcher asked whether there were students who had already taken the test. Data from those who had taken the test were excluded. Scores of the GEPT listening test was used to group subjects into high and low proficiency level. The correct answer was given two points for each question; total points for four sections were 60. Subjects whose scores are at top 30 % were classified as high level students; their scores were beyond 36 points. Subjects whose scores are at bottom 30 % were low level students; their scores were below 24 points.

### Data analysis

After gathering data of listening scores and the questionnaire, all the data was calculated by SPSS 17.0 computer software. To answer the first research question, the descriptive statistics was used to figure out the mean and standard deviation of the listening performance on each question type. To address research question two, the

one way ANOVA was used to show the different usage of strategies in the four question types. To answer the third research question, MANOVA was applied to examine the strategies used in four different sections, and the two-way ANOVA was computed to see if there was a significant difference in the usage of listening strategies between the high and low achievers.





## Chapter Four

### Results

In this chapter, the results are presented by analyzing data from both questionnaires and the listening comprehension test. To address three research questions, three statistical analyses were used. First, descriptive statistics were used to find out the means and standard deviations of the results on the listening part of GEPT test, and ANOVA was used to see whether there existed difference in four question types. Then, MANOVA was applied to examine the strategies used in four different sections. Finally, the two-way ANOVA was computed to see if there was a significant difference in the usage of listening strategies between the high and low achievers. Total number of participants was 177, but 9 sets of response were invalid because of their incomplete answer. Therefore, 168 data sets were adopted for data analysis.

Research Question 1. Do junior high students perform differently for different question types in GEPT listening comprehension test?

To answer this research question, the descriptive statistics of four sections were presented respectively. To make comparing results convenient, two points were given to each question in the listening comprehension test. For section one and four, the total scores is 10; 20 for section two and three. Due to different numbers of questions in each section, the mean would be divided by numbers of questions.

Therefore, weighted means of each question for each section are shown in the rightmost column. Table 4.1.1 presents the results of students' performance on the listening comprehension test.

Table 4.1.1

*Students Scores on Listening Comprehension Test*

Section	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Weighted Mean
1	0	10	5.18	2.728	1.036
2	0	20	10.52	5.007	1.052
3	0	20	9.51	4.308	0.951
4	0	10	6.39	1.942	1.278
Total	10	58	31.61	10.687	4.317

It was found that student scored higher in section four (Short Talks), followed by section two (Answering Questions), section one (Picture Description) and section three (Conversations). And based on the data, students' performance spread out over a large range of values in section two (Answering Questions) while their performance tended to be more uniform in section four (Short Talks).

To understand whether student performance differed significantly among question types, ANOVA was further used to compare results of listening comprehension test. Table 4.1.2 shows that there is significant difference of student scores among the four question types. Therefore, the *post hoc* tests were then utilized to examine the difference of four text types. The result is shown in Table 4.1.3.

Table 4.1.2

*Student Scores among the Four Question Types*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3218.923	3	1072.974	78.362	.000
Within Groups	9146.595	668	13.693		
Total	12365.518	671			

Table 4.1.3

*Scheffe Post hoc Comparison of Listening Performance among question types*

Question types	Question Type	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	Notes
1	2	-5.345*	.404	.000	*Test scores was the least influenced in Question type 1 comparing with other three question types.
	3	-4.333*	.404	.000	
	4	-1.214*	.404	.029	
2	1	5.345*	.404	.000	*Degree of influence of test scores: 2>1; 2>4
	3	1.012	.404	.100	
	4	4.131*	.404	.000	
3	1	4.333*	.404	.000	*Degree of influence of test scores: 3>1; 3>4
	2	-1.012	.404	.100	
	4	3.119*	.404	.000	
4	1	1.214*	.404	.029	*Degree of influence of test scores:4>1
	2	-4.131*	.404	.000	
	3	-3.119*	.404	.000	

As shown in Table 4.1.3, question type one (picture description) was the least related to students' listening performance. In other words, little difference of listening scores appeared in the section of picture description. Listening scores was less influenced by question type four (short talks) and mostly affected by question type two (answering questions) and three (conversations). In this case, it is hard to

tell whether answering questions or conversations played a more important role on difference of students' listening performance. However, we can infer that high and low achievers had similar performance in the section of picture description. Also, conversation is the question type which distinguished high and low achievers.

Research Question 2. Are there differences between the strategies students use for different question types?

Before comparing differences in the strategy choice among four different sections, strategies used frequently in these four sections were presented respectively.

Table 4.2.1 shows the most frequently used strategies in the section of Picture description. The top ten items were Item 7, 8, 4, 10, 6, 24, 14, 20, 23, and 5. It shows that students tried to concentrate while distracted, utilized the description of questions, adjusted themselves to catch up speed, read all distracters before listening, didn't give up even if they didn't understand the text, evaluated their understanding about the contents, decided what to focus before listening, listened to detailed information, focused on the gist and didn't complete the test by guessing. The list above contains specific behaviors that belonged to different classification of listening strategies. According to Vandergrift's classification of listening strategy, in the section of picture description, students tended to use monitoring, advanced organizer, self-management, selective attention, directed attention, self-evaluation, bottom-up and top-down strategies frequently.

Table 4.2.1

*Most Frequently Used Strategies in the Section of Picture Description*

Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Strategy
7	4	1.17	1	Monitoring
18	3.89	1.13	2	Advance Organizer
4	3.82	1.11	3	Self-management
10	3.78	1.22	4	Selective Attention
6	3.75	1.28	5	Directed Attention
24	3.73	1.16	6	Self-evaluation
14	3.67	1.24	7	Advanced Organizer
20	3.59	1.18	8	Bottom-up
23	3.56	1.15	9	Top-down
5	3.43	1.15	10	Monitoring

As for the section of answering question, the most frequently used strategies are shown in Table 4.2.2, which are utilizing the description of questions, reading all distracters before listening, concentrating while distracted, adjusting oneself to speed, not giving up easily, evaluating understanding about the contents, focusing on the gist of the contents, deciding what to focus on before listening, gathering gist with detailed information and not completing the test by guessing. In other words, students used strategies of advance organizer, selective attention, monitoring, self-management, directed attention, self-evaluation, top-down and bottom-up more often.

Table 4.2.2

*Most Frequently Used Strategies in the Section of Answering Questions*

Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Strategy
18	3.71	1.20	1	Advance Organizer
10	3.71	1.23	1	Selective Attention
7	3.70	1.26	3	Monitoring
4	3.68	1.22	4	Self-management
6	3.66	1.27	5	Directed Attention
24	3.54	1.25	6	Self-evaluation
23	3.50	1.25	7	Top-down
14	3.41	1.29	8	Advanced Organizer
20	3.41	1.24	9	Bottom-up
5	3.36	1.23	10	Monitoring

The most frequently used strategies in the section of conversations are provided in Table 4.2.3. It indicates that students tried to concentrate when being distracted, read all distracters before listening, didn't give up when they didn't understand, evaluated how much they had understood the contents, adjusted themselves to speed, utilized the description of questions, decided what to focus on before listening, made mental or written summary, focused on the gist of the contents and pieced up the gist with detailed information. These listening behaviors were included in the strategy category of monitoring, selective attention, directed attention, self-management and self-evaluation.

Table 4.2.3

*Most Frequently Used Strategies in the Section of Conversations*

Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Strategy
7	3.68	1.20	1	Monitoring
10	3.61	1.25	2	Selective Attention
6	3.59	1.26	3	Directed Attention
24	3.57	1.13	4	Self-evaluation
4	3.57	1.17	5	Self-management
18	3.55	1.17	6	Advanced Organizer
14	3.43	1.25	7	Advanced Organizer
1	3.41	1.18	8	Summarizing
23	3.39	1.12	9	Top-down
20	3.39	1.16	10	Bottom-up

As can be seen in Table 4.2.4, in the section of short talks, students were inclined to concentrate when distracted, didn't give up when they didn't understand, read all distracters before listening, adjusted themselves to speed, evaluated how much they had understood the contents, utilized the description of questions, made mental or written summary, focused on the gist of the contents, didn't complete the tests by guessing and decided what to focus on before listening. That is to say, students tended to use the strategy of monitoring, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-evaluation, advanced organizer, summarizing and top-down in the section.

Table 4.2.4

*Most Frequently Used Strategies in the Section of Short Talks*

Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Strategy
7	3.79	1.16	1	Monitoring
6	3.73	1.21	2	Directed Attention
10	3.68	1.21	3	Selective Attention
4	3.65	1.22	4	Self-management
24	3.63	1.17	5	Self-evaluation
18	3.59	1.25	6	Advanced Organizer
1	3.55	1.26	7	Summarizing
23	3.48	1.8	8	Top-down
5	3.47	1.23	9	Monitoring
14	3.44	1.26	10	Advanced Organizer

As shown in Table 4.2.5, the similarity and difference of the frequently used items in four sections are presented. The most frequently used items are 4, 6, 7, 10, 14, 18, 23 and 24, all of which appeared in the top 10 lists of strategies used in all four sections. This displays subjects' tendency of using strategies. Generally speaking, these junior high school students adjusted themselves to speed, didn't give up easily, tried to re-direct concentration, read all distracters while listening, decided what to focus on before listening, utilized the description of questions, focused on the gist of the contents and evaluated understanding about the contents. However, use of item 1, 5 and 20 was slightly different. The subjects often made mental or written summary only in the section of conversations and short talks, not in the section of picture description and answering questions. In the section of picture description, answering questions and short talks, subjects frequently checked if they really understood the



meaning and never completed questions by guessing. This strategy was not used often in the section of conversations. Subjects also pieced up the gist with detailed information in the section of picture description, answering question and conversations. But in the section of short talks, this strategy was not used very often.

Table 4.2.5  
*Frequently Used Strategies in the Four Sections*

Section	Picture	Answering	Conversations	Short
	Description	Questions		Talks
Frequently	7	10	7	7
Used	18	18	10	6
Strategies	4	7	6	10
	10	4	4	4
	6	6	24	24
	24	24	18	18
	14	23	14	<u>1</u>
	<u>20</u>	14	<u>1</u>	23
	23	<u>20</u>	23	<u>5</u>
	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>20</u>	14

*Note.* Numbers with special marks are aimed to present different use of strategy in four sections.

To further verify whether there is any significant difference in the strategy choice among four sections, MANOVA was used to analyze the data. The fixed factor was different question types, and the dependent variables were 24 items on the questionnaire. Also, the *post hoc* tests were used to compare the frequency of

strategy use among four different sections.

Table 4.2.6

*The Effect of Question Types on Strategy Choice*

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.940	422.739(a)	24.000	645.000	.000	.940
	Wilk's Lambda	.060	422.739(a)	24.000	645.000	.000	.940
	Hotelling's Trace	15.730	422.739(a)	24.000	645.000	.000	.940
	Roy's Largest Root	15.730	422.739(a)	24.000	645.000	.000	.940
Question Type	Pillai's Trace	.135	1.270	72.000	1941.000	.065	.045
	Wilks' Lambda	.870	1.279	72.000	1928.434	.060	.045
	Hotelling's Trace	.144	1.237	72.000	1931.000	.055	.046
	Roy's Largest Root	.091	2.462(b)	24.000	647.000	.000	.084

Based on Table 4.2.6, only one kind of multivariate tests, Roy's largest root, showed significant difference. Generally speaking, question types did not have great impact on listening strategy choice.

Research Question 3. Is there any significant difference in the strategy use among different question types across different listening proficiency levels?

Two-way ANOVA was utilized to scrutinize whether the interaction effect exists between different question types and proficiency levels on strategy use. Two

fixed factors were four question types and proficiency levels while total points of 24 items from each subject were set as variables. Proficiency levels were decided by subjects' listening performance. Subjects whose scores ranked at the top 30% of all were classified as high level listeners, those whose scores were in the bottom 30% were grouped as low level listeners.

Table 4.3.1

*The Interaction Effect of Sections and Proficiency Level*

	SS	df	F	Significance
Intercept	4252739.288	1	425739.288	.000
LCT	21129.095	2	10564.547	.000
Sections	969.948	3	323.316	.520
LCT*Section	502.931	6	83.822	.978

Note: LCT means different proficiency level in listening comprehension test.

According to data from Table 4.3.1, there was no interaction effect between different question types and proficiency levels, but the proficiency levels might account for different strategy choice in the listening comprehension test. Therefore, 24 items were analyzed again by one-way ANOVA. Table 4.3.2 to Table 4-3-5 displayed strategies with significant difference for students with different levels from section one to section four, which are picture description, answering questions, conversation and short talks.

Table 4.3.2

*Strategies with Significant Difference for Students with High/Low Levels in Section One.*

Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
5 Between Groups	22.335	2	11.167	9.176	.000
Within Groups	200.808	165	1.217		
Total	223.143	167			
6 Between Groups	20.706	2	10.353	6.704	.002
Within Groups	254.794	165	1.544		
Total	275.500	167			
7 Between Groups	9.992	2	4.996	3.713	.026
Within Groups	222.008	165	1.346		
Total	232.000	167			
11 Between Groups	34.909	2	17.454	12.803	.000
Within Groups	224.942	165	1.363		
Total	259.851	167			
14 Between Groups	11.262	2	5.361	3.745	.026
Within Groups	248.071	165	1.503		
Total	259.333	167			
15 Between Groups	30.638	2	15.319	9.636	.000
Within Groups	262.309	165	1.590		
Total	292.946	167			
16 Between Groups	21.070	2	10.535	6.835	.001
Within Groups	254.305	165	1.541		
Total	275.375	167			
20 Between Groups	8.546	2	4.273	3.118	.043
Within Groups	226.114	165	1.370		
Total	234.661	167			
21 Between Groups	22.483	2	11.241	6.774	.001
Within Groups	273.803	165	1.659		
Total	296.286	167			
24 Between Groups	15.760	2	7.880	6.157	.003
Within Groups	211.187	165	1.280		
Total	226.946	167			

Table 4.3.3

*Strategies with Significant Difference for Students with High/Low Levels in Section Two.*

Item		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Between Groups	19.418	2	9.709	5.571	.005
	Within Groups	287.576	165	1.743		
	Total	306.994	167			
4	Between Groups	10.964	2	5.482	3.774	.025
	Within Groups	239.679	165	1.453		
	Total	250.643	167			
5	Between Groups	26.415	2	13.207	9.636	.000
	Within Groups	226.157	165	1.371		
	Total	252.571	167			
6	Between Groups	19.467	2	9.734	6.419	.002
	Within Groups	250.193	165	1.516		
	Total	269.661	167			
7	Between Groups	18.429	2	9.214	6.153	.003
	Within Groups	247.089	165	1.498		
	Total	265.518	167			
10	Between Groups	15.467	2	7.734	5.343	.006
	Within Groups	238.819	165	1.447		
	Total	254.286	167			
11	Between Groups	30.541	2	15.271	10.893	.000
	Within Groups	231.310	165	1.402		
	Total	261.851	167			
15	Between Groups	13.865	2	6.933	4.290	.015
	Within Groups	266.611	165	1.616		
	Total	280.476	167			
16	Between Groups	9.416	2	4.708	3.248	.041
	Within Groups	239.156	165	1.449		
	Total	248.571	167			
20	Between Groups	23.018	2	11.509	8.059	.000
	Within Groups	235.642	165	1.428		
	Total	258.661	167			

To be continued

Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
21 Between Groups	13.852	2	6.926	4.051	.019
Within Groups	282.124	165	1.710		
Total	295.976	167			
23 Between Groups	14.706	2	7.353	4.867	.009
Within Groups	249.294	165	1.511		
Total	264.000	167			
24 Between Groups	26.958	2	13.479	9.474	.000
Within Groups	234.750	165	1.423		
Total	261.708	167			

Table 4.3.4

*Strategies with Significant Difference for Students with High/Low Levels in Section Three.*

Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2 Between Groups	7.612	2	3.806	4.152	.017
Within Groups	151.239	165	.917		
Total	158.851	167			
4 Between Groups	15.104	2	7.552	5.822	.004
Within Groups	214.039	165	1.297		
Total	229.143	167			
5 Between Groups	19.871	2	9.936	8.131	.000
Within Groups	201.629	165	1.222		
Total	221.500	167			
6 Between Groups	17.002	2	8.501	5.574	.005
Within Groups	251.658	165	1.525		
Total	268.661	167			
7 Between Groups	14.214	2	7.107	5.142	.007
Within Groups	228.066	165	1.382		
Total	242.280	167			
10 Between Groups	10.374	2	5.187	3.374	.037
Within Groups	253.697	165	1.538		
Total	264.071	167			

To be continued

Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
11 Between Groups	35.223	2	17.612	13.787	.000
Within Groups	210.771	165	1.277		
Total	245.994	167			
12 Between Groups	9.932	2	4.966	3.251	.041
Within Groups	252.062	165	1.528		
Total	261.994	167			
15 Between Groups	10.576	2	5.288	3.217	.043
Within Groups	271.275	165	1.644		
Total	281.851	167			
16 Between Groups	14.089	2	7.045	5.198	.006
Within Groups	223.619	165	1.644		
Total	237.708	167			
18 Between Groups	11.426	2	5.713	4.283	.015
Within Groups	220.091	165	1.334		
Total	231.518	167			
20 Between Groups	16.234	2	8.117	6.329	.002
Within Groups	211.617	165	1.283		
Total	227.851	167			
21 Between Groups	18.376	2	9.188	5.978	.003
Within Groups	253.618	165	1.537		
Total	271.994	167			
23 Between Groups	11.766	2	5.883	4.895	.009
Within Groups	198.305	165	1.202		
Total	210.071	167			
24 Between Groups	15.143	2	7.571	6.246	.002
Within Groups	200.000	165	1.212		
Total	215.143	167			

Table 4.3.5

*Strategies with Significant Difference for Students with High/Low Levels in Section Four.*

Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3 Between Groups	12.536	2	6.268	3.754	.025
Within Groups	275.535	165	1.670		
Total	288.071	167			
4 Between Groups	14.529	2	7.265	5.048	.007
Within Groups	237.447	165	1.439		
Total	251.976	167			
5 Between Groups	17.553	2	8.776	6.128	.003
Within Groups	236.298	165	1.432		
Total	253.851	167			
6 Between Groups	12.533	2	6.267	4.449	.013
Within Groups	244.946	165	1.409		
Total	244.946	167			
7 Between Groups	10.155	2	5.078	3.841	.023
Within Groups	218.131	165	1.322		
Total	228.286	167			
11 Between Groups	32.451	2	16.226	12.168	.000
Within Groups	220.025	165	1.333		
Total	252.476	167			
14 Between Groups	9.889	2	4.944	3.193	.044
Within Groups	255.516	165	1.549		
Total	265.405	167			
15 Between Groups	12.460	2	6.230	3.826	.024
Within Groups	268.659	165	1.628		
Total	281.119	167			
16 Between Groups	12.779	2	6.390	4.976	.008
Within Groups	211.864	165	1.284		
Total	224.643	167			
17 Between Groups	16.557	2	8.278	6.067	.003
Within Groups	225.152	165	1.365		
Total	241.708	167			
20 Between Groups	14.363	2	7.182	5.672	.004
Within Groups	208.917	165	1.266		
Total	223.280	167			

to be continued



Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
21 Between Groups	21.721	2	10.860	7.505	.001
Within Groups	238.756	165	1.447		
Total	260.476	167			
22 Between Groups	18.743	2	4.372	3.364	.037
Within Groups	214.399	165	1.299		
Total	223.143	167			
23 Between Groups	15.204	2	7.602	5.735	.004
Within Groups	218.701	165	1.325		
Total	233.905	167			
24 Between Groups	14.363	2	7.181	5.460	.005
Within Groups	217.012	165	1.315		
Total	231.375	167			

Table 4.3.6  
*Strategies with Significant Difference for Students with High /Low Levels in Four Sections.*

Section Talks	Picture Description	Answering Questions	Conversations	Short
	5	1	2	3
	6	4	4	4
	7	5	5	5
	11	6	6	6
	14	7	7	7
	15	10	10	11
	16	11	11	14
	20	15	12	15
	21	16	15	16
	24	20	16	17
		21	18	20
		23	20	21
		24	21	22
			23	23
			24	24

To compare different usage of strategies in each four section by different levels, Table 4.3.6 displayed the strategies with significant difference for students with different levels in four question types.

As revealed by Table 4.3.6, students from different levels used different kind of strategies in four sections. The situation mentioned above was the most obvious in the last two sections, conversations and short talks. In the contrast, it was the least obvious in the first section, picture description. The strategies which all reached significant difference in four different sections were items 5, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21 and 24. Item 1 appeared exclusively in the section of answering questions, item 2 can be seen only in the section of conversations and items 3 and 22 were only presented in the section of short talks. Other strategies that high and low achievers used differently in each section were collated in Table 4.3.7. As we can see, item 4 and 23 showed difference in the section of answering questions, conversations and short talks. It means in these three sections, high achievers tended to adjust their speed more often than low achievers, and they often focused on the gist of the content. In the section of answering questions and conversations, the appearance of item 10 probably means that high achievers were inclined to read possible distracters before listening. As for item 14, high and low achievers used it differently in the section of picture description and short talks, which questions are presented in pictures. It might indicate that high achievers decided what to focus on before listening more often than low achievers.

Table 4.3.7

*Strategies that High and Low Achievers Used Differently in Some of the Four Sections.*

Item	Sections
1	Answering questions
2	Conversations
3	Short talks
4	Answering questions, Conversations, Short talks
10	Answering questions, Conversations
14	Picture description, Short talks
22	Short talks
23	Answering questions, Conversations, Short talks

In this chapter, I have presented the findings of the present study. It was found that the subjects' scores in the listening comprehension test differed from one question type to another. However, the use of listening strategy seemed to have no obvious relation to question types. Moreover, listening proficiency level and question type had no interactive impact on listening strategy choice. But it is worth noticing that there were some listening strategies that high achievers used more frequently in particular question types. More in-depth analyses and discussion will further be made in the next chapter



## Chapter Five

### Discussion and Conclusion

The previous chapter addresses the answers to the three research questions of the present study; this chapter provides further discussion on these results. The discussion derived from analysis mainly contains three parts: students' performance on different question types, strategy choice among four question types and the interactive effect of proficiency level and question types on listening strategy choice.

#### Students' Performance on Different Question Types

Based on the scores of listening comprehension test, Table 4-1-1 showed that among the four question types, students got higher scores in the section of short talks, followed by answering question, picture description and conversations. There are several possible explanations for the phenomena. Brown and Yule (1983) once showed four groups of factors which might influence the difficulty of spoken language: the speaker (the number of the speakers, speech rate, the types of accent), the listener (the role of listener, the level of response, the interest in the subject), the content (vocabulary, grammar, information structure, background knowledge), and support (visual aids to support the text-pictures, diagrams, etc.) In the following passages, the research would discuss factors of the speaker, the content and support. The factor of the listener would be addressed in later section because it is relevant to a listener's strategy use.

First, factors of speakers include the number of speakers, speech rate and the types of accent. Listeners in the present study actually listened to a tape instead of people. Throughout the four question types, the accent of speakers has no much difference because it is controlled in the listening test. Therefore, the researcher would focus on the number of speakers and the speech rate. In the aspect of the number of speakers, short talks and conversation are at two ends of a continuum. In the section of short talks, the questions are spoken by only one speaker. In the section of conversation, two speakers take turns to complete a short dialogue. Students get higher scores in the section of short talks and the scores were lower in the section of conversation.

The findings of the study are consistent with those of Read (2002) and Lou (2004). Though Read's (2002) study was based on academic contexts, his explanation of listening performance may give us some suggestions. According to Read (2004), dialogues include a series of turn takings. Listeners who are not involved in the dialogue might find it difficult to understand interactive texts because of insufficient contextual information. Another reason might be that the structures of dialogues are different from what they've learned in the textbook. For example, in question 17, a man says to a woman "What are you doing, Jean? Getting ready to fight someone?" The woman answers "Ha-ha! No, this is kickboxing." Then the man double checks the answer by saying "kickboxing" with a raising tone. Listeners might grasp the key word "fight" in the first sentence, but get lost when they heard the word "kickboxing" twice. They might have difficulties in decoding meaning and making sentences connected (Luo, 2004). Third, monologues are more condensed in carrying information, which might force listener to be more attentive to the texts (Lin, 2009). And it takes more words to express the speakers' intention in dialogues, with longer text, listeners might get distracted easily because of their lack of confidence or short

of attention span in a second language.

Speech rate as a factor of speaker also influences listening comprehension. The speech rate of listening material in the present study is controlled quite close to each other. Each of them is between the ranges from 123 w.p.m. (word per minute) to 126 w.p.m. However, these four question types have different amount of interval between each question. That is to say, when listeners listen to a passage and answer the question with the limited time of five seconds, they may perceive the speed of the speaker to be rather fast. If listeners can answer a question with a fifteen-second interval, they might feel the speed comparatively slow. As we can see in Table 5.1.1, answering questions and conversations contained the most abundant time while picture description and short talks provided the least amount of time for test-takers to react. However, students had the lowest scores in conversation and the highest scores in short talks. It probably suggests that when pondering factors influencing listening comprehension, the interval between questions can not be overemphasized, it should be taken into consideration together with other factors.

Table 5.1 *Features of Each Question Type*

	Picture description	Answering questions	Conversation	Short talks
Interval between questions	5 seconds	15 seconds	15 seconds	5 seconds
Unfamiliar words	2	3	8	7
Visual support	A menu, a calendar and a picture for five questions.	No	No	Three pictures for each question. 15 pictures in total.

Second, the factor of content contains vocabulary, grammar, information structure and background knowledge. It is hard to know the overall background knowledge toward the listening text from all the test-takers. Therefore, the following

discussion would focus on the former three elements. The most commonly seen listening difficulty for language learners is the encountering of unknown words. They may cause listener to stop and think about meaning of the words. While listeners speculating unfamiliar words, it is very likely that they may miss the next part of the speaking (Osada, 2004). Test-takers in the present study are junior high students. Therefore, the researcher read through the listening text and picks words that are out of 1,000 basic vocabularies for junior high students edited by MOE. It is found that students got the lowest grades in conversation, which contains the most unfamiliar words. However, it is worth noticing that students got the highest scores in short talks, which also include 7 unfamiliar words. One of the reasons might be that questions in short talks are picture-assisted. Picture might provide contextual knowledge and make up insufficient understanding for listeners (Paivio, 1971).

The structure and order of information also influence listeners' listening performance. How fast listener process listening text depends on how the listening text or questions were presented. In the section of short talks, time for reacting to questions was longer than of picture description. In short talks, students listened to the questions first and then followed by a chunk of information, which was presented as statements. While listening to the statement, students had sufficient time to choose from one of the three pictures related to the statements. However, in the section of picture description, students saw the picture first and then followed by a short question. They needed to react right after the question was asked. Though students could see pictures before listening in the section of picture description, their mental processing probably went with audio input simultaneously. The timing of attention to pictures differed in these two question types, thus influenced recall of information. This result is similar with Kashani, Sajjadi, Sohrabi, & Younespour's (2011) study. In their study, picture-before condition got the best scores; picture-during got the second



best and picture-free got the lowest scores in the listening comprehension test.

Incorporating pictures into listening material is useful, and it is better to consider timing of picture presentation. The section of short talks in the study could be deemed as picture-before condition since test-takers saw pictures before they listened to questions and the texts.

Third, in the case of whether pictures facilitated listening comprehension, several studies maintained that pictures have positive influence on listening performance. In Paivio's (1969) dual coding theory, information can be carried visually and aurally. The information is stocked in two different but interconnected modes, which enhance the chance of inducing correct response. Some researchers suggested that pictures assist learners in eliciting background knowledge ((Bransford & Johnson, 1972; Omaggio, 1979). Learners utilize pictures to understand the information that is not clear, which might be caused by ambiguity of the information or insufficiency of language proficiency.

However, question with pictures in this study facilitate listening comprehension to certain degree. Among four question types, picture description and short talks are shown with pictures. Students got the highest scores in the section of short talks, but the scores of answering questions exceeded in picture description. Pictorial questions helped students answer questions, but different kind of pictorial questions influenced students to different degree. The different performance of these two pictorial questions may due to different types of pictures in these two sections. In picture description, pictures mostly contain more than one piece of information, they are more like diagrams. For example, picture for question one is a menu of a restaurant, which includes different kinds of food and food prices. The second picture is more like a calendar, with smaller pictures representing different kinds of activities. In picture three, a man named Jerry is running after a bus while a man Steve is waiting

by the bus stop. All the pictures above cover much information, and people can make a lot of interpretation from them. Students need to listen to the question and find out the relative clues in the pictures. Pictures of short talks are simpler comparatively. In the section of short talks, there are three pictures for each question. These three pictures are distinguishing and they all have something in common. For question 26, three pictures all represent places. A is a train station, B is a classroom and C is a restaurant. For question 27, a man is calling on the beach in picture A, calling on a boat in picture B and calling by a river in picture C. The results showed that the degree of picture facilitation might depend on how the pictures are presented. Sometimes the presentation of pictures might distract listeners' attention. The similar findings were proposed by Gildea *et al* (1988), which showed that more information did not enhance learning proportionally. In their study, learning performance was hindered by novel and salient pictures. As a matter of fact, some researchers argued that some elements of picture influence the correspondence between what listener hear and see. According to Arbib (1987), these elements are the size of a picture, its centrality in the frame, difference of listeners' expectation and prediction. Therefore, whether a picture support or disturb listeners may rest on visual salience (Chung, 1994). What listener hear need to correspond with what they see, otherwise, the beneficial effect would diminish. That is to say, whether a picture assists or distracts listeners rely on the presentation of a picture and how listeners use it.

The present study showed difference in listening performance among four question types. In this section, the researcher has discussed the factors of speaker, content and visual support in the present study. It is found that there are several factors combined together which make students perform the best in short talks and the worse in conversation. In question type of short talks, it contains about 52 words on average, which is the second longest text among the four question types (See Table

5.1.1). Also, in short talks, the interval between questions is five seconds, which is relatively short compared with answering questions and conversation. However, students had the highest performance in the question types. It might be due to small number of speaker (only one), the company of facilitative pictures and longer time for listener to react. On the contrary, conversation is the most difficult question type for students. It might be caused from the turn taking between speakers, longer text length, and more unfamiliar words.

### Strategy Choice among Four Question Types

In these four question types, students tended to use strategy of monitoring, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-evaluation and advanced organizer most often. According to Vandergrift's listening strategy classification, all of the strategies listed above are under the category of metacognitive strategy. The results agree with the findings of Luo (2004), Teng (1996), Vandergrift (1996, 1997), and Wang (2004). All these studies suggested the importance of metacognitive strategy in listening comprehension. Listening is a complicated, active process. It requires great mental activity to interpret input (Vandergrift, 1999). Therefore, listeners need to stay focused or they might get distracted easily. Metacognitive strategies help listeners do self-reflection and self-direction. And overall speaking, in the present study, it played an important role while students answering questions.

It is noteworthy that specific strategies were used in particular question types. The most distinguishing strategy use was item 1 (*I make mental or written summary when I listen to the text.*) This strategy, summarizing, is one subcategory of cognitive strategies. In the present study, it was only used frequently in the section of conversation and short talks. The possible explanation of this finding might be the

influence of text length. Among these four question types, the stem of conversation and short talks contain about forty to fifty words while picture description and answering question only have ten to twenty words. Because the load of input is larger in the former two question types, listeners need to summarize the text as much as possible. Another possible explanation might be accounted to the characteristics of listening. Listening is fleeting and ephemeral. Language learners usually have limited capacity in remembering listening input of target language. Moreover, trace decay and interference from new input can hinder listeners from retrieving information that is already stored in the short-term memory (Nagle and Sanders, 1986). Therefore, students needed to rearrange and simplify long listening input to make it more understandable.

Another interesting finding is that in the section of short talks, listeners tended not to use the strategy of bottom-up strategy as much as they did in other three question types. The finding is reasonable if we take the feature of short talks into consideration. In this section, three pictures were provided before students listened to the text. Listeners didn't have to cross out other distracters by fully relying on acoustic input. They listened to the questions first, scrutinized three pictures and then decided what they needed to focus on while listening. In other words, pictures helped listeners eliminate the least possible answer. According to Rahimi (2012), listeners examine from first syllables, then words, phrases, and finally sentences in parallel when they use bottom-up strategy. During this cognitive process, listeners eliminate more possibilities while more sounds occur until they reach the most accurate match to the sounds. By the contrast, listeners tended to use top-down process more often in short talks. In top-down processing, listeners infer meaning by applying background knowledge. "Through top-down processing, readers and listeners utilize real-world knowledge and refer to various types of schemata that help them predict what will

follow in the discourse” (Jung, 2003, p. 563). Pictures provided listeners clues and expectation toward the upcoming listening text. Thus they might decrease the frequency of using the strategy of bottom-up. Another factor might be the task difficulty. According to Bacon (1992), when listeners encountered more difficult texts, they tended to use more bottom-up strategies. Students had higher scores in the short talks, which indicated they found that other three question types were more difficult.

It is also surprising to find that in the section of conversation, the frequency of using monitoring strategy is not as much as other three question types. Actually, monitoring was at the ninth and tenth most used strategy in the section of short talks, picture description and answering question. In the rank of ten most used strategies, monitoring didn't appear in the section of conversation. The situation doesn't mean that listeners don't need monitoring in the question type. Rather, it means that listeners might not be adjusted to using monitoring while taking the test of conversation. According to Vandergrift (1997, 2003), monitoring means “checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in a course of a listening task”. Since students' listening performance in the section of conversation was the lowest among the four question types, it is possible that students might not know how to check because of less understanding about the text. Vandergrift (2003) testified that the more skilled listeners use more comprehension monitoring than less skilled listeners. Therefore, students' poorer listening performance in conversation might be the factor of using monitoring strategy less frequently.

As for the strategy choice among four different question types, there was no significant difference. It means that the strategies students used in these four question types were mostly alike. Though the presentation of questions differed, students seemed to use specific strategies to tackle all the questions. The results were consistent with Chang's (2009) study. The researcher examined usage of listening

strategies in four different task types. It was found that students with different ability employed similar strategies, and the difference lied in preferential order and frequency of use. One possible explanation of this situation might be the age and proficiency level of the students. Graham (2003) indicated that compared to effective learners, less effective learners usually use the same strategies with whatever questions they encounter. Since the students in this study are eighth graders from junior high, the listening test might be too difficult to most of them. The Elementary Level of GEPT test aims to test language learners with ability similar with graduated junior high school students. Generally speaking, most of the students in this study are not equipped with enough linguistic knowledge to cope with these listening questions. There are some words and sentence structures that they have not learned before. And their limited linguistic and background knowledge might impede use of various strategies. Though there was no significant difference appeared in the present study, it didn't mean that it is better to utilize similar strategies in different question types.

In the discussion above, there are three conclusions deduced from the results. First, junior high school students tended to use metacognitive strategies while taking listening comprehension test. The possible reason might be that listeners found that certain metacognitive strategies partially reinforce their comprehension (Teng & Chan, 2008) Second, when encountering specific listening task, listeners tended to use certain kind of strategies more or less. When listening to longer text, listeners used strategy of summarization more often. When encountering more difficult task, listeners tended to use bottom-up strategies more often. In the question type of conversation, students used the strategy of monitoring less frequently. Third, among the four question types, there was no significant difference in strategy use. Students were inclined to use same strategies for all kinds of question types. It is possible that they were unable to distinguish different elements of different question types, and

they didn't know what kinds of strategies are appropriate for certain question types. Therefore, they use similar strategies despite different question types.

### Language Proficiency, Question Types and Strategy Use

There was no significant interaction effect between question types and proficiency level. The results indicated that all students, including high and low achievers, used similar strategies in four question types. The findings were similar to Su's (2007) study in which different level of college students chose similar strategies among three question types. However, if we examined strategy items specifically, high and low achievers had different preference for using strategy in different question types. That is to say, the proficiency levels had impact on listening strategy choice in the listening test. The findings showed that high and low students had different preference for strategy choice. For example, number of different strategy choice in picture description was ten, thirteen in answering question, and fifteen in both conversation and short talks. The situation was significant in the section of conversation and short talks. In these two sections, number of strategies that different levels chose differently were more than half of total strategies in the questionnaire. The findings were similar to studies of Goh's (2002). Goh (2002) surveyed the listening tactics used by different listening ability groups and found that listeners with high ability used more and varying strategies than listeners with low ability did. Also, according to Chang (2009), students with high proficiency adapted their strategy use to different task conditions, whereas low proficiency students seemed to use their usual strategies and their strategy choice wasn't influenced by the change of test task.

Students with different ability used nine strategies differently in four question types. These strategies include monitoring, directed attention, self-management,

self-evaluation, listening specific, inferencing, and bottom-up. They are under the subcategories of four metacognitive strategies and three cognitive strategies. Due to lack of introspective report from listeners, it is not possible to tell how different ability listeners apply these strategies. However, we can probably refer the use of strategy from the feature of question types. For example, different use of note-taking strategy from different level listeners was particularly seen in the section of conversation. Questions in the conversation were lengthy and they mostly contained various information and shifts between speakers. For high proficiency listeners, they could write down key words that were helpful for answering questions. But for low proficiency listeners, they might have difficulty distinguishing sounds, not to mention writing down words. Another example is that in the section of picture description and short talks, different ability listeners showed different usage of advanced organizer (*I decided what to focus on before listening.*). These two question types were presented with pictures, which might enable listeners predict what they would hear in the following listening passage. However, it seemed not helpful for low proficiency listeners. One possible reason might be that even they saw the pictures before listening; they didn't know the counterpart of English. Therefore, they couldn't decide what would be worth attention in the listening text. These situations indicated that even if low proficiency learners might know what strategies they should use, they couldn't execute them because of their incompetence of linguistic knowledge. Similar findings appeared in Lee & Schallert's (1997) study. They pointed out that in the reading process; the deployment of some strategies is not possible below a certain level of linguistic knowledge. In the listening process, insufficient linguistic knowledge also "short-circuits" the utilization of strategies.



## Pedagogical Implications

The teaching implications observed from the present study are presented as follows:

First of all, the findings about listeners' performance among four text types suggest that teachers should help students analyze question types before answering questions. The cues of answering questions are hidden in different places. For example, in picture description, listeners need to scan the picture and listen to the key words of the question so that they can decide which part of the picture would be helpful. In another question type with picture, short talks, listener could listen to questions before they hear the main passage. Another merit of the question type is that there are three correlative pictures for each question. Listeners can omit distracters when listening to the description. As for conversation, it is lengthy and it involves turn taking between speakers. Teachers could tell students to choose key words by focusing on words with raising tone or words in repetition. If students know what they could pay attention before taking listening test, they would probably be more confident.

The findings about strategy choice among questions type suggest that teachers should give students more kinds of listening activity so that students can experience the effectiveness of using different kinds of listening strategy in different situations. Listeners of junior high students in the present study tended not to adjust their listening strategy when encountering different task. Therefore, it is the teachers' responsibility to provide different kinds of listening situation. When giving students listening text with pictures, teachers should give instruction beforehand. They should lead students to use cues from pictures. When having students listen to longer conversation, teachers should cut it into smaller unit and lead students to comprehend

step by step. If students have more chances to do different listening exercises, they might be more flexible in listening strategy use.

Last but not least, the present study shows that the proficiency level of students influences strategy use. It is commonly seen that there are usually 30% of both high and low level learners in a class. Since selecting different listening materials for the same class seems difficult, teachers could probably invite high level listeners to share their listening process. There are two advantages of doing so. For one thing, when high level listeners describe listening difficulties, teachers could grab the chance and help students solve the problem. For another, low level listeners can listen to some good advice from the peer. Sometimes teachers could not perceive listening difficulty in students' perspective. High level listeners could be good teaching assistant.

#### Limitation of the Present Study and Suggestions for Future Research

There are some limitations in the study. First, the listening comprehension test seems too challenging for the subjects. The total points of the listening comprehension test were 60, and the average points of the all the subjects were 31. Subjects in this study are eighth graders from the same school. However, the purpose of GEPT elementary level is to examine whether test-takers are equipped with ability in parallel with junior high graduates. There are some language skills that the subjects have not learned before. Their limited language proficiency might influence the results to some extent. Therefore, it is suggested that in future study, ninth graders could be recruited as a more confident group taking the same test. Second, there were only two instruments in the study, GEPT listening comprehension test and a questionnaire. Though there might be difficulty in applying think-aloud method to junior high students, it is still possible to elicit listeners' in-depth thinking process by

interview, recall protocol or listening log in future studies. Third, the question types were restricted to GEPT listening test. Though it is a standardized test, it might neglect some common question types. Also the categorization of question types in the present study is just an attempt by the researcher. These four question types are not at two ends of a continuum in text type or picture-assisted in pairs. GEPT question types share similar characteristics, and it should be avoided in future research.





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## Appendix

### Appendix A--英語聽力策略問卷

各位同學你好:

這份問卷目的是要了解你使用聽力理解策略的情形。你在問卷裡所答的每個項目只供研究用，你的資料不會外洩，也不會影響學校成績，請安心作答。

此問卷總共有兩個部份，第一部分是關於個人背景，第二部分則是英語聽力理解策略的相關問題，共有兩張，每張有 25 題。請你於做完第一部分題型時，回答第一份的問卷;做完第二部份題型時，回答第二份的問卷。請仔細閱讀每一項，並按照實際狀況於方格中打勾:

總是---我一樣或幾乎總是這麼做。

通常--- 我通常會這麼做。

有時---我有時候會這麼做。

不常---我不常這麼做。

從不---我從未或幾乎沒有這麼做過。

以下這些問題並沒有對或錯的答案，請依照自己的實際情況作答，謝謝你的合作與協助!

政治大學英語教學碩士在職專班 研究生何佩融

#### 第一部分:個人背景資料

1. 年齡: \_\_\_\_\_ 歲
2. 性別: 男 女
3. 你幾歲開始學英文? \_\_\_\_\_ 歲
4. 你是否住過以英語為母語的國家?  
是，我從 \_\_\_\_\_ 歲到 \_\_\_\_\_ 歲，曾住過 \_\_\_\_\_。  
否。
5. 你認為你的英語聽力能力如何?  
非常好 好 還好 差 非常差
6. 你認為國中升學管道(會考)是否應採計英語聽力成績?為什麼?  
是，因為 \_\_\_\_\_  
否，因為 \_\_\_\_\_
7. 你覺得聽力在英語學習上有多重要?  
非常重要 重要 還好 不重要 非常不重要
8. 除了課堂練習之外，你每週花在英語聽力學習的時間約多久?  
0 小時 0.5 小時 1 小時 1.5 小時 2 小時 大約 \_\_\_\_\_ 小時

第二部份:聽力理解策略問卷

第一頁

填答說明：

請在閱讀下列敘述句後，依照您所了解的實際的情形來填寫，每一題有五個選項，在「非常同意」與「非常不同意」的區間選項中擇一項□內打√。

總 通 有 不 從

是 常 時 常 不

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 01. 在聽的時候，我會在紙上或腦海裡用自己的話把剛剛聽到的內容重新敘述一次或作簡短的摘要。  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 02. 我會一邊聽一邊做筆記(例如:快速記下最重要的單字)。  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 03. 我會把聽到的單字或句子翻譯成中文。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 04. 在聽的時候，我會調整自己習慣的速度，努力跟上聽力內容的速度。  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 05. 聽每一題時，我會注意我是不是真正了解聽力內容的意思，而不是靠猜測來完成題目。  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 06. 當我不了解聽力內容時，我不會放棄，而會繼續聽接下來的內容。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 07. 當我發現自己不專心時，我會再集中注意力來聽。  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 08. 聽的時候，我將聽到的字依照屬性來分類。(例如聽到許多食物的名稱，就將這些字歸為食物類，並因此推測這是與食物有關的內容)。                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 09. 當我聽到一個重要的字，我會在心裡默念一、二次。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. 當我在聽題目之前，我會先看其他選項，來幫助我作答。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. 當我在聽的時候，一次可以聽一連串的字，而不是只聽一個字。  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. 我會用停頓或語氣來猜測不認識字的意思。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. 將所聽到的內容與我自己的經驗和常識相連，以便了解全文。(例如，在聽到有關發燒的內容，就會想起醫院、醫生、吃藥等事項。)                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. 每聽一個題目之前，我會先決定要聽的內容。(例如:如果圖片或題目是關於食物，我會特別注意聽食物的名字。)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. 當我看到題目時，我會預測或假設接下來將會聽到什麼。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. 聽的時候我比較專注於內容的細節(例如:確切的時間、地點或價錢。)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. 當我聽的時候，我會評估我對主題原有的了解有多少。(例如，在聽到有關網路的內容，我覺得我比較了解，聽的時候會比較有把握。在聽到有關自然科學的內容，我覺得我比較不了解，就會比較認真聽。) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. 我在聽的時候，會仔細聽答題說明，來幫助我推測答案。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

第二部份:聽力理解策略問卷

第二頁

- |   | 總                        | 通                        | 有                        | 不                        | 從                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | 是                        | 常                        | 時                        | 常                        | 不                        |
| 19. 在聽的時候，我腦海裡會形成一幅畫面，是關於所聽到的內容。                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. 我會將聽力內容的細節湊在一起，以了解大意。   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. 當我準備要聽時，我會要求把腦袋切換成英語來思考及聽。                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. 我會利用音調的高低起伏或抑揚頓挫把字或片語分段。                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. 聽的時候我比較專注在內容的大意(例如:事件的原因和結果。)                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. 聽完每一題時，我大概能知道自己對每一題了解程度有多少。(例如:這一題雖然有一些字不懂，但靠著其他線索能幫助我自信地作答。) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. 除了以上的敘述之外，你還有沒有其他的聽力策略或方法?                                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
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