

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the present study seeks to contribute to EFL teachers' understanding of the English listening needs by junior high school students in Taipei. This final chapter first provides several pedagogical implications; then, a couple of limitations of this research will be addressed. Later on, for those who are interested in further research, possible solutions to the limitations of the present study, or suggestions for future research will be offered. Hopefully, the EFL instructors or further researchers can really help satisfy junior high school students' English listening needs and boost their EFL learning.

Pedagogical Implications

To recapitulate, the conclusions yielded several teaching implications:

1. Junior high school students have strong needs to obtain English listening abilities. Therefore, it is suggested that EFL teachers stress more on the instruction of listening comprehension and provide adequate training in improving students' listening comprehension abilities, which, in order to meet students' needs, must at least include the Top 10 necessary abilities chosen by the majority of the participants. Listening instruction reinforced, other three skills will benefit from it and so does EFL learning.
2. EFL instructors should satisfy students' academic listening needs and

meanwhile encourage their equal learning of conversational listening abilities. Although it seems that most students hold congruent views toward English listening, different proficiency groups of students have distinct ideas about their learning and thus yearn for different training content. EFL teachers should realize such differences between effective learners and ineffective learners and try to work on the planning of instructional activities so as to take care of students with different levels of English proficiency. To be more specific, the planning stage should take into consideration personal characteristics of the students, operating on the principle of moving from the known to the unknown. For example, the teaching of listening skills should start with a concept not entirely new to the students, such as discriminating among the distinctive sounds of the target language, and gradually move to the more complex skill, such as being able to identify and reconstruct topics and coherent structure from ongoing discourse involving two or more speakers. Additionally, it would be better if academic listening abilities are taught before conversational ones. In brief, teachers should determine the teachability and learnability of listening skills and settle the planning of instructional activities with flexibility.

3. Educators should be aware of the reasons for the gender differences and explore ways for both genders to access equal opportunity in learning. Girl students are more engaged in school learning and the acquiring of listening abilities. As a result, EFL teachers should consider innovative listening instruction that customizes teaching and learning to meet the unique needs of boys and girls. Besides, teachers should also explore their classroom practices more while opening their mind to document evidence of gender

differences that influence their students' learning of English listening.

Teachers may then find it worthwhile to know more about gender and different learning styles.

4. The following of those suggestions on the instruction of English listening comprehension by the instructors is definitely not enough. Regarding the suggestions in this study as the prerequisite consideration of the designing of EFL curriculum or syllabus is even more urgent. If textbook publishers can take the results into careful consideration, students' English listening needs can be best satisfied.

Limitations of the Study

This research study has limitations as follows:

1. The scope of the study was limited by the insufficient number of participants—only 208 students in HPSH were involved. Owing to the small sample size, the statistic accountability becomes limited to students of the same characteristics as the selected samples. In other words, the results may not be sufficient enough for generalization over all the junior high school students in Taipei.
2. The questionnaire used in this study is based on the taxonomy of listening comprehension skills proposed by Richards (1983) only. Although Richards' taxonomy was well-acknowledged or trusted, the sheer utilization of it as the questionnaire content may result in two possible problems. One of them would be the insufficient coverage of English listening comprehension abilities, since there may be different opinions toward the definition of English listening comprehension ability. The other problem may be the 'inappropriateness' for this research. The word 'inappropriateness' refers to

the fact that the junior-high-school participants may have problem understanding the meaning of each listening comprehension ability in Richards' taxonomy, or they may not even have the chance to access certain abilities in their English learning process. Although the present writer tried to offer explanations when the participants bumped into difficulties, the adoption without any modification or localization may in turn influence the results of students' real listening needs.

3. The reliability or validity of the students' school listening proficiency test employed in the placement of the students' listening proficiency may be questionable. Such test was not well-organized enough to tell students' real ability, which may cast some doubts about the validity and reliability of the test outcomes.

Suggestions for Future Study

Based on the limitations of the present study, several suggestions for future study are proposed:

1. Since the sample size was not large enough to be convincing, it is suggested that further related research expand the range of the participants, such as from one single school in Taipei to schools from different locations in Taiwan, or from one single grade of students to different grades of students. This way, the results will be more generalizable to all.
2. Since the instrument adopted in the present study included only Richard's taxonomy of listening skills, on the one hand, other qualitative instruments can be utilized so as to strengthen the credibility of the results. For example, further researchers can conduct personal interview to have a more complete understanding of students' choices of listening abilities needed. On the other

hand, the future researchers may need to take the participants' English proficiency levels into careful consideration, localizing or modifying the questionnaire so as to ensure the participants' perfect comprehension of each questionnaire item and therefore obtain trustworthy results.

3. Since the categorization of students' English listening proficiency relied simply on the small-scale, loosely-organized monthly listening proficiency test, a more prudently-designed yearly listening comprehension exam can be a much better and more reliable decisive instrument in the future assessment and classification of students' English listening comprehension ability. Moreover, the correlation between English listening proficiency and English listening needs will in turn become more trustworthy.
4. Since, aside from English listening proficiency and gender, there may be many other factors resulting in different results of students' English listening needs, it is recommended that future researcher take into account more variables for further study, such as motivation, interests, personality, aptitude, learning style, school performance, life experience, language learning experiences, and so on.