A study on the influence of anxiety and metacognitive strategies on listening proficiency

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author tries to identify the relationship between listening anxiety and listening proficiency from the perspective of listening metacognitive strategy use. Three instruments are adopted including the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scales (FLLAS), a listening metacognitive strategy-use questionnaire and a CET-4 listening test. The results indicate that a large proportion of students report experiencing listening anxiety. There is significantly negative correlation between listening anxiety and listening proficiency and there is significant difference in the use of metacognitive strategies across three listening anxiety levels. Gender difference is also an important variable taken into consideration in exploring listening anxiety and listening strategy use in listening proficiency. Interview is used to elicit the reasons that cause listening anxiety. Accordingly, suggested solutions are proposed to reduce listening anxiety.

Key words: Listening anxiety, listening proficiency, correlation, gender difference

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INTRODUCTION

With the world's globalization and worldwide use of English as an international language, it becomes more essential for foreign language teaching and learning to be communication-oriented. However in China for many years, reading and writing are given the priority over listening and speaking in English classes. Most non-English majors can not open their mouths to communicate with others although most of them have been learning English for six or seven years. What they have learned is nicknamed "mute English"[1-5].

Not until 1980s, listening has been paid much attention to and viewed as an important way for language learning. In some important foreign language tests such as CET4, CET6, TEM4 and TEM8, the percentage of listening comprehension material is scoring higher [6-9]. This is because listening is a basic way of getting foreign language input. Rost (1990) points out, listening is vital in language learning because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, learning can not begin. Input gained from listening can play a key role in language acquisition. Therefore, a high level of proficiency in listening is badly needed. Yet comprehending the spoken form of the target language is one of the most difficult tasks for most foreign language or second language learners. Many students may have experienced some degree of helplessness and anxiety when doing the listening comprehension.

In traditional listening classes, students are given listening materials but not taught "how" to listen. Most of them do not have appropriate listening strategies. Ever since language teaching and learning have shifted from the teacher-centered model to the learner-centered model. A number of studies have been undertaken from the students' perspective. How learners go about learning something, that is, what skills and strategies they use in order to make sense of their learning has been the concern of many researchers. Some researchers have found that those successful language learners had, more or less, some common sets of learning strategies. They also believe that language

learning strategies contribute a lot to the success of language learning (O'Malley et al., 1985). Waters (1999) and Wen (1995) have revealed that what unsuccessful foreign language learners need most is not the language learning skills, namely, the cognitive ability in foreign language learning, such as guessing the meanings, association of ideas and inferring the reasons, but the inner language learning ability such as ego awareness and macro - control ability, which are requisite qualities to successful foreign language learners. Chen (2005) claims that the inner language learning ability which Wen has referred to is the metacognitive ability. Thus, it is of great value to do some research to reduce listening anxiety from the perspectives of the use of metacognitive strategy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Process of listening comprehension
Traditionally, listening has been regarded as a passive, receptive skill. There are four processing levels in listening comprehension, namely, perceptual, lexical, sentential and discoursal. That is to say, when the listener receives the signals of sound flow, he or she has to identify the speech sounds and then conveys them into the listener's brain, which divides the sound stream into fragmental units. Then, with the help of linguistic knowledge and other knowledge sources, the listener integrates the small language units into big ones, thus, the meaning of the message can be worked out and the listening comprehension process is finished [10]. However, this traditional opinion about listening process has received challenge from other researchers, who believe that listening comprehension process is not a process of receiving passively sound materials. Rather, they take it a more interactive process, in which the listeners' linguistic knowledge such as phoneme, word, and grammar and so on interacts with their non-linguistic knowledge, such as contextual knowledge, schema about the topic. This point of view could be confirmed by some researchers' definition about listening comprehension. Larry Vandergrift (1997, p.387) defines it as "listening is anything but a passive activity. It is a complex, active process in which listeners must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreter stress and intonation, retain what is gathered in all of the above, and explain it within the immediate as well as the larger social- culture context of the utterance". The definition could be interpreted like this: with the passage entering the listener's auditory system, he or she verifies his or her prediction by analyzing and combining his or her prior knowledge with the newly heard information to take in the message and stored it in the long term memory. It is a process of integration of decoding process and meaning reconstruction. A successful listener is always able to integrate the process of using linguistic knowledge system with the process of using non-linguistic knowledge system in order to acquire message most efficiently. (Nunan, 1991).

Krashen's affective filter hypothesis
Affective filter hypothesis, together with other four hypotheses constitute Krashen's Monitor Model which were proposed by American psychologist S. D. Krashen in 1980s and has gained considerable prominence in second language acquisition field. Affective filter hypothesis claims that not all the input could reach the part of brain responsible for language acquisition because of the filter. Understanding a message is not enough to assure language acquisition: one must be open to the message so that it can reach the LAD (Language Acquisition Device). Affective variables act to debilitate or facilitate the delivery of input to the language acquisition device. The factors that are debilitative are called emotional barriers, which are called "internal hurdles" by Dulay in his book Language Two. Dulay et al point out that "when a student is exposed to a new language, the first internal hurdles are posed by the individual's emotional state and motivation" (Dulay, 1982, p.4). According to Krashen, the learner's motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety state are the three main affective factors that cause the inefficient study. That is, learners with higher motivation, high self –confidence and lower anxiety can obtain more input because of the low filter. Whereas those with lower motivation, little self-confidence, and higher anxiety have high filters which receive little input. Krashen (1985b) points out that anxiety is surly an important variable which relate to success in SLA. Whatever the source of the anxiety, it hinders learners' study. The influence of affective filter on learning process is great and is vividly depicted by Krashen as in the following figure: From the above depiction it can be seen that the affective filter is just like a wall. Once the input enters the learners' brain, some of them will be rebounded when the learners are in the negative mood and can not enter into the learner's LAD, resulting in the low effect in listening comprehension learning and insufficient learning competence. In accordance with this hypothesis, the quality of acquisition varies with the strength of their affective filters.

Learners' affective variables are obviously important to SLA, though there are some controversial problems on how they affect learners' process of learning. Krashen's affective filter hypothesis is often challenged by others on some specific point, like the problem of under-definition and over-generalization. In addition, there is one arguing problem with this hypothesis: are language learners unsuccessful because they are bored, angry, and stressed? Or are language learners bored, angry and stressed because they are unsuccessful (Higashi, 1988, p.41)? Though affective filter hypothesis is raised on basis of second language acquisition, nobody could deny that affective filter does have an effect on foreign language learning and the affective filter hypothesis provides some insight into the way teachers may present input. According to this hypothesis, teachers should provide comprehensible input in a medial anxiety

situation in order to make foreign language learning more effective. In a word, there is sufficient evidence to show that anxiety is an important factor in foreign language learning, so it should not be neglected by teachers.

Foreign language anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, 1986, p.125). It belongs to the category of situation- specific anxiety, which requires the respondents to ascribe their anxiety to particular sources. Gardner and Maclntyre (1995, p.98) describe anxiety as: "apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of foreign language with which the individuals is not fully proficient". Anxiety is a common phenomenon in the study of a foreign language and has been found to have detrimental effects on learners' learning ability. According to Howritz et al (1986), foreign language anxiety manifests by three main categories, namely, communication apprehension, text anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension arises from learners' inability to express adequately mature thoughts and ideas. Not being able to express their feelings or understand other persons can cause the learners to experience frustration and apprehension. Test anxiety is the apprehension over academic evaluation. Fear of negative evaluation comes from the learners' need to make a positive impression on others.

Foreign language listening anxiety

Foreign language listening anxiety can be defined as "the fear of misinterpreting, inadequately processing or not being able to adjust psychologically to message sent by others" (Wheel, 1975, p.263, cited in Cheng 2003). Listening comprehension is generally regarded as the most difficult language skill by language learners for its transient nature and the limited degree of control by the listener on the stream of speech. When listeners do not have the appropriate listening competence or in other words, the listening strategies, they may fail to decode the discrete information, losing the first significant items of information (Kim, 2000). So the researchers and teachers should help students analyze the cause and the form of expression of listening anxiety, try to act to allay it to the minimum.

  Preiss and Wheeless (1990 cited in Cheng 2003) postulate that listening anxiety consists of three interrelated antecedents: primary anxiety, secondary anxiety and information processing. The primary anxiety refers to the situational fear of encountering new information. Secondary anxiety means that listeners get stressed when they encounter complex information. The anxiety of information processing means the listeners' intension state in the process of decoding the unfamiliar listening scheme or the listeners' unskillful listening strategic use. The above explanation derives from the study in first language learning context. However, students are assumed to be more anxious when they face the incoming message in another language.

Metacognitive strategies and performance

Theoretically，there is a close correlation between metacognitive strategy use and performance. That is，the higher metacognitive ability one has, the higher probability that he performs better. This has been proved by many researches. Many empirical studies show that successful learners differ from less successful ones in both the quantity and quality of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use (e.g., Oxford, 1989;). High-achieving students are more metacognitive than low-achieving students. Students with effective metacognitive skills can "accurately estimate their knowledge in a variety of domains, monitor their on-going learning, update their knowledge, and develop effective plans foe new learning" (Everson et al, 1998, p12). "Through metacognition, one can define the nature of a task or problem; select a useful mental and physical representation; select the most useful strategy for executing the task; activate relevant prior knowledge; pay attention to feedback on how the task is proceeding; and translate feedback into improved performance, rather during execution or in a plan for the future" (Gourgey, 1998, p81). Purpura (1997) conducts studies to investigate the relationship between test-takers' cognitive and metacognitive strategy use and performance on L2 tests, using structural equation modeling and exploratory factor analyses. The 1382 subjects answer an 80-item cognitive and metacognitive strategy questionnaires before taking a 70-item standardized language test. The result shows that cognitive strategies are directly and positively related to the test performance. Metacognitive strategies have a significant, direct, positive relationship to cognitive strategies and are indirectly related to the learners' performance.

Anxiety and gender difference

Gender, in most studies concerning anxiety has been regarded as an inescapable factor. Generally, women are said to be more anxious than men in foreign language studies, especially in test or test-like situations. Men and women are hypothesized to have different manners dealing with test situation (Lewis & College, 1987). Male and female students react differently to the same or similar situations. What is often thought as a source of pressure and discomfort for female students may not be as nerve-wracking for male students. Men are said to take test situation more like a challenge rather than a threat, consequently, they adopt a more positive manner facing the arousing anxious feelings during a test. While other studies show different opinions. Aida's (1994) investigation on some Japanese sophomores at Texas University demonstrates no obvious gender difference in foreign language anxiety.

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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY
Some related literatures have been reviewed from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Research hypotheses and questions are put forward, research methodology are presented, including selection of participants and instruments. The data collection and analysis procedure are also illustrated.

Hypotheses of the study
Most non-English major students are suffering listening anxiety.
There is significant difference in listening anxiety and listening metacognitive strategy use between male and female students.

There is some correlation between listening metacognitive strategy use and listening anxiety in non-English major students. The higher the listening metacognitive ability, the lower the listening anxiety.

There is some correlation among listening anxiety, listening metacognitive strategy use and listening proficiency: the higher the listening metacognitive ability, the lower the listening anxiety and the better the listening proficiency.

It is hypothesized that listening anxiety will be caused by some factors related to the characteristics of listening comprehension and some other factors such as social factors, learners' learning style and so on.

Research questions:
Do Chinese non-English major students report experiencing foreign language listening anxiety?
Does listening anxiety have any influence on listening proficiency?
Do metacognitive strategies have any influence on listening proficiency?
What's the relationship between listening anxiety and listening metacognitive strategy use? That is, does listening anxiety interplay with metacognitive strategies in the listening test situation? How?
Is there any gender difference in listening anxiety and listening metacognitive strategy use?
What are the effects and sources of foreign language listening anxiety as well as suggested ways to reduce listening anxiety?

Participants:
The participants in this study are 95 sophomores of non-English majors from two classes taught by the same English teacher in Henan Normal University, who range from 18 to 21 in age with the average age 19.5. Of the total 95 students, 47 are male -students and 48 are female. They take up 49.4 and 50.5% separately. The reason why I choose non-English majors as the subjects is that of all the college and university students, the larger majority is non-English majors, who are required to learn English as a compulsory subject since they were in senior high school. After entering university or college, they find that English becomes even more important. Every week, they have four English classes. They have two listening classes every another week. They have to put more time and energy in English since they are required to pass the CET-4 in the last term of the second year. Though in the latest few years, some scholars criticize the action of linking CET-4 certificate with the bachelor's degree, a certificate of CET-4 plays a vital role in determining an individual's career opportunities. However, the difficulty of passing CET-4 seems to lie in the listening section. Many non-English major college students report that they have a hard time on the listening part, which is believed to be the main hard nut for them.

Instruments
The instrument involved in the present study consists of a listening proficiency test (CET-4), the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), a listening metacognitive strategy questionnaire and an interview.

Listening section of CET-4，2005, is adopted in the present study in order to investigate students' English listening proficiency. CET-4 has been acknowledged to have the high validity and reliability national wide in measuring the non-English major students' English proficiency. Listening section consists of two parts and students are asked to finish these two parts within 25minutes. Section A includes ten short conversations. Students are asked to answer a question about the dialogue and choose one correct answer out of the four answers marked A, B, C and D. In section B, three passages, each of which about 150 words, are delivered to students. After listening to each passage, they are asked to answer three to five questions according to the passage, and then blacken the number they chose. In this test, each question holds one score and the total score is 20 for all the 20 questions. In order to have a direct view of the scores, the author assigns each question 5 scores, thus, the total scores of the test is100.

In the present study, the author adopts Cheng's (2003) revised Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale. Compared with other anxiety measure methods, self-report measurement, which is in form of scale in the present study, is considered a better option available for the evaluation of anxiety. Cheng adapts Kim's listening anxiety

scale, whose reliability reported to be 0.93 based on Cronbach's alpha, to investigate students' listening anxiety. The scale consists of 34 self reported items measuring students' feelings of anxiety in foreign language listening process. For the purpose of the present study, the original statement "foreign language" in the scale is revised to "English". It is a 5-point Likert type scale. The students are required to give responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strong agree". Each student's listening anxiety score is derived by calculating the responses to each item. The five levels of responses "strongly disagree", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree" and "strongly agree" are assigned a value of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 respectively. The statements of the FLLAS are negatively worded and the responses are reversed, so that a high score in the FLLAS indicates a high level of English listening anxiety and a low score a low listening anxiety. In Cheng's study, reliability and validity analysis are carried out to ensure the quality of the scale. The internal consistency coefficient is.915 on the basis of Crobach's alpha. Furthermore, the construct validity is also tested with the other Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales (FLCAS) and the correlation coefficient between the two scales is reported to be r=.666 (p<o.1, n=87), which supports the construct validity of FLLAS. Therefore, Cheng's version of FLLAS is regarded a reliable instrument for students' listening anxiety measurement. A questionnaire consists of 31 items concerning the students' metacognitive strategy use in listening comprehension process is adopted in the present study. The questionnaire is designed by Huang Ling on the basis of O'Malley and Chamot's learning strategy classification scheme, which is composed of metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. For the research purpose, only metacognitive strategies which have planning, monitoring and evaluating as its subcategories are dealt with in the present paper. In the questionnaire, the first 9 items are planning strategies, items from 10 to 24 are monitoring strategies and items from 25 to 31 are evaluating strategies. The questionnaire is designed on a 5-point Likert scale and written in Chinese for the purpose of a better understanding and a more accurate result. The students are asked to give their responses which range from "never", "sometimes", "half of the time", "most of the time" to "always" on each item. Like the FLLAS, the scores of students' metacognitive listening strategies are obtained by summing up each item score. Unlike FLLAS, the statements in the listening metacognitive strategy questionnaire are positively worded; therefore a high score of the questionnaire indicates a high level of English listening metacognitive strategy competence and a low score a low listening metacognitive competence.

Data collection procedures

The present study was conducted on December10th, 2005. Before the listening test and the filling of the questionnaire, the subjects are told by their English teacher that the test and the questionnaires are only used for the purpose of academic research and would not have any negative influence on their English study. To protect their personal privacy as well as for the study need, the subjects are asked to fill in their genders instead of their real names. Then, the listening test is administered to 95 non- English majors from two classes taught by the same English teacher. After the listening test, the subjects are required to fill in the FLLAS and the questionnaire according to their own responses with their first inclination and without too long deep thinking. The reason why the author of the present study requires the subjects to response immediately is that if the subjects answer quickly, their answers may come from a true feeling. The listening test takes about 25 minutes and the completion of the FLLAS and the questionnaire about 15minutes. The conduction of the test and the distribution of the questionnaire are all done by the English teacher. Due to both the teacher's cooperation and the students' earnest treatment, all the questionnaires and the listening tests are well done, that is, all the samples of the study are valid.

In order to make the present study more reliable, an interview is designed with the purpose of finding out the reasons that make students feel anxious during listening as well as the situation of students' listening metacognitive strategy use. After the students' listening test and the questionnaires, the author conducts an interview with 9 students of each listening proficiency level. The students are chosen from the volunteers. 5 females and 4 males are chosen randomly to analyze the gender difference. The questionnaires consists the following questions:

● What are your feelings in each stage of this English listening test? Do you feel the same anxious before and during the test?
● What are the reasons that make you feel anxious?
● How do you try to manage your listening successfully?
● Do you have the awareness of metacognitive strategy use in listening? Do you actively take some planning, monitoring and evaluating strategies?
● What can you suggest to reduce listening anxiety and improve listening proficiency effectively?

Data analysis procedure

After all the scores of listening proficiency, listening anxiety and listening metacognitive strategy competence are obtained, they are put into computer together with other data collected from the questionnaire and the FLLAS. SPSS 18.5 is used to process and analyze the data. According to the scores, descriptive statistical analysis is used to determine three groups under each variable, namely the high, the medium and the low listening proficiency, listening

anxiety and listening metacognitive strategy use, followed by a one-way ANOVA to see if there is a significant difference among the three levels of listening anxiety scores. ANOVA is also employed to measure gender difference in listening anxiety and listening metacognitive strategies respectively. That is, to see if there is a significant difference between male and female concerning their listening anxiety and their use of listening metacognitive strategies respectively. Then correlation analysis is used to examine the relationship among listening anxiety, listening metacognitive strategy use and listening proficiency.

After the statistical analysis, the material got from the interview are also transcribed and analysized by the author. The students' answers and suggestions are sorted according to the categories of the questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objects' listening anxiety states

Table 4-1: Statistical Description of Students' Listening Anxiety Scores

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	60-85	16	16.8	16.8	16.8
	86-110	41	43.2	43.2	60.0
	111-145	38	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-2 :One-way ANOVA of Three Anxiety Levels

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24727.056	2	12363.528	271.416	.000
Within Groups	4190.776	92	45.552		
Total	28917.832	94			

Table 4-1 gives a clear description of the students' listening anxiety scores. Based on the scores, students are grouped into the high, intermediate and the low listening anxiety levels with each group has 38, 41 and 16 students respectively. Those who score below 85 are considered as low-anxious students, students whose scores are higher than 110 are classified into the high-anxious group. The rest who score between 85 and 110 fall into the intermediate anxious group. From the table, we can see that the number of low anxiety students is small, taking up 16.8% while the intermediate and the high anxiety level students take up 83.2% of the total. A definite answer could be given to the hypothesized question "do college students report experiencing listening anxiety?" a large majority of students is suffering listening anxiety.

Table 4-2 has shown that the students are actually belong to three different anxiety levels of groups as the scores of each group show statistically significant difference (F=271.416, p<.05).

The figures and numbers in Table 4-1 and 4-2 imply that Chinese college students are experiencing a certain amount of anxiety in listening comprehension process.

Table 4-3: Correlations between LA, LMS Use and LP

		LP	LMS	LA
LP	Pearson Correlation	1	.681(**)	-.649(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
	N	95	95	95
L LMS	Pearson Correlation	.681(**)	1	-.613(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	95	95	95
LA,	Pearson Correlation	-.649(**)	-.613(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	95	95	95

Correlations between listening anxiety and listening proficiency
Correlation analysis is used to determine the relationship between listening anxiety and listening proficiency. The result shows that the correlation coefficient is -.649, (p=.000<.05) which indicates that there is a strong relationship between listening anxiety and listening proficiency. The lower the listening anxiety, the higher the listening proficiency is, which shows the same as we have expected.

To further identify the effects of different anxiety levels on listening proficiency, person correlation analysis is

adopted to determine their relationships. The correlation results in table Table 1 - 1-4shows that low level anxiety has a strong, positive and significant correlation with their corresponding scores. (Pearson Correlation=.802, p=.000<.05). The intermediate and high anxiety is negatively related to listening proficiency. This indicates that low anxiety plays a great facilitative role in listening, which is consists with what has been stated in the literature review. The reason may be that anxious students are easily distracted from listening. They tend to think more about the potential failure and the negative evaluation from others. While low anxious students put more energy in the task itself and their concentration is not divided. The relationship is not so strong and obvious (Pearson Correlation=-.299, p=.068 >.05) in the high anxious students. This may indicates that anxiety is not the only factor that affects listening proficiency. There may be some other more powerful factors like language proficiency that influence listening proficiency.

Table 2-4: Correlations between Three LA Levels and the Corresponding Listening Scores

Anxiety level	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Low anxiety	16	.802(**)	.000
Intermediate anxiety	41	.433(**)	.005
High anxiety	38	-.299	.068

Pearson correlation in Table Table 3-4shows that metacognitive strategy use and listening proficiency are positively and significantly related (Correlation coefficient =.681, p=.000<.05). The result is consistent with what has been hypothesized.

. Metacognitive strategy use is proved to be the best predictor of success for foreign language learners', which means the higher metacognitive strategy use, the higher the listening proficiency is. Metacognitive strategy use and listening anxiety are two independent but related variables in listening process. Listening anxiety shows itself in the unpredictability and uncontrollability of reason, process and results while metacognitive strategies in listening are composed by planning, monitoring and evaluation   strategies. They are independent and related because they act to listening process during which they interplay with each other. As in table 4-3, metacognitive strategy use and listening anxiety are negatively and significantly related. (Correlation coefficient =-.613, p=.000 <.05) that is, the more anxious students feel in listening process, the less effective listening metacognitive strategies they use or vice versa. The negative relationship between listening anxiety and metacognitive strategy use may give us some hint that listening anxiety could be reduced from the point of view of metacognitive strategy use.

Use of three LMS by students with different LA levels
In order to see the use of three metacognitive listening strategies by students with different listening anxiety levels, the author presents a detailed list of strategy uses as in the following:

Table 4 - 4: Strategies Used by Different Anxiety Level Students

Listening Metacognitive strategies	Planning strategies	Monitoring strategies	Evaluation strategies
Low anxiety mean(n=16)	28.3125	57.0000	28.3750
SD	4.02854	7.26636	3.84491
Intermediate anxiety mean(n=41)	21.5854	42.0732	22.0244
SD	6.74898	11.09367	5.78138
High anxiety mean(n=38)	20.1053	38.8158	21.0263
SD	4.96904	7.01680	4.63528
Total(n=95)	22.1263	43.2842	22.6947
SD	6.32328	10.99580	5.64381

Table 4 - 5: Results of ANOVA for LMS by Different Listening Anxiety Level Students

(I) anxiety levels	(J)anxiety levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper Bound
60 -85	86-110	6.1894(*)	1.78480	.002	1.9376	10.4412
	111-145	8.0376(*)	1.81341	.000	3.7176	12.3576
86-110	60-85	-6.1894(*)	1.78480	.002	-10.4412	-1.9376
	111-145	1.8482	1.29142	.329	-1.2282	4.9247
111-145	60-85	-8.0376(*)	1.81341	.000	-12.3576	-3.7176
	86-110	-1.8482	1.29142	.329	-4.9247	1.2282

From the table, we could see that in each category of metacognitive strategies, the lower anxiety level students tend to use more metacognitive strategies. To further identify the relationship between metacognitive strategy use and listening anxiety in listening proficiency, one-way ANVOA is adopted to determine the differences. The results are presented in table   4-6 and they indicate that there are significant differences among three anxiety level students concerning using planning,(F [2,91]=8.263, p<.05) monitoring(F [2,91]=16.429, p<.05) and evaluation strategies(F

[2,91]=11.781, p<.05) in listening.

Table 4 - 7: Dependent Variable: Planning Strategies

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Planning strategies	Between Groups	577.117	2	288.559	8.263	.001
	Within Groups	3177.819	91	34.921		
	Total	3754.936	93			
Monitoring strategies	Between groups	3012.225	2	1506.113	16.429	.000
	Within groups	8342.200	91	91.673		
	Total	11354.426	93			
Evaluation strategies	Between groups	615.778	2	307.889	11.781	.000
	Within groups	2378.275	91	26.135		
	Total	2994.053	93			

In terms of Planning strategy use, (see table 4-7.) low anxiety students show significant differences with both the intermediate and the high anxiety students, with mean difference=-13.9485 p=.002<.05 and mean difference=-8.0376, p=.000<.05 respectively. Non-significant difference is found between the intermediate and the high anxiety students (Mean differences=1.8482 p=.329>.05). As for the monitoring and evaluation strategies, the results show the same trend (See table 4-.8. The results suggest that low anxiety students use more planning, monitoring and evaluation strategies, which contribute to high listening proficiency.

Table 1- 4 - 8: Dependent Variable: Monitoring Strategies

(I) anxiety levels	(J) anxiety levels	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
60-85	86-110	13.9485(*)	2.87762	.000	7.0933	20.8037
	111-145	17.9699(*)	2.92375	.000	11.0049	24.9350
86-110	60-85	-13.9485(*)	2.87762	.000	-20.8037	-7.0933
	111-145	4.0214	2.08214	.136	-.9387	8.9816
111-145	60-85	-17.9699(*)	2.92375	.000	-24.9350	-11.0049
	86-110	-4.0214	2.08214	.136	-8.9816	.9387

Gender difference analysis
Gender difference in metacognitive strategy use
Chavez (2001) points out that the ultimate goals of understanding gender differences in strategy use in foreign language listening are as following: (a) to make us aware of how gender can affect development and achievement in L2 listening; (b) to enable L2 teachers to use this awareness to help their students of either gender to achieve gains in L2 listening comprehension; (c) to encourage further research into the role of gender in L2 listening ; and (d) to accommodate individual students' needs, given that males and females deserve an equal chance of learning success.

Table 4-9: Gender Difference in Metacognitive Strategy Use

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	F	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Planning strategies	M	48	21.4167	4.93288	.71200	.774	-3.012	.003
	F	47	24.0000	6.06487	.88465 .88465			
Monitoring strategies	M	48	38.7292	7.74525	1.11793	7.710	-4.474	.000
	F	47	47.9362	11.91711	1.73829			
Evaluation strategies	M	48	20.2708	5.93131	.85611	3.132	-2.280	.025
	F	47	24.0213	6.20480	.90506			

T-test is uses to make clear whether the three metacognitive strategies will play the same role in gender difference in listening test. The means of planning strategy use of males and females are 21.4167 and 24.0000 respectively. Standard deviations are 4.93288and 6.06487 respectively (p=.003<.05). The means of monitoring strategy use of males and females are 38.7292 and 47.9362respectively. Standard deviations are 7.74525 and 11.91711 respectively (p =.000<.05). The means of monitoring strategy use of males and females are 20.2708 and 24.0213 respectively. Standard deviations are 5.93131and 6.20480 respectively (p=.025<.05). T-test shows that there is significant difference between males and females on listening metacognitive strategy use, in terms of planning, monitoring and evaluation categories, which is consistent with the author's hypothesis. Female students are assumed higher metacognitive strategy use than male ones. In the present study, the most significant difference is shown in monitoring category, followed by the category of planning and evaluation. Why male and female students show differences in planning and monitoring strategies instead of evaluation strategies? There are possible interpretations for the findings: Although females are not as good as males in abstract and logical thought, they are better in self-introspection, insight and thought-control, which are aspects of metacognitive abilities. Take the learning native language as an example of which metacognitive strategies are important component, girls show significant

difference with boys before and after ten years old. Females are believed as better language learners than males in foreign language learning. The higher use of metacognitive strategies by female students than their male counterparts may explain the reason why females outperform males in listening proficiency.

Gender difference in listening anxiety

Table 4-10: Group Statistics of Gender Difference in Listening Anxiety

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
listening anxiety	M	48	111.0417	9.95513	1.43690
	F	47	96.0851	20.29546	2.96040

Table 4-11: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
listening anxiety	Equal variances assumed	20.085	.000	4.575	93	.000	14.9566	3.26932	8.46433	21.44879
	Equal variances not assumed			4.545	66.609	.000	14.9566	3.29069	8.38761	21.52551

T-test is conducted on the scores of listening anxiety of male and female students. The means of male and female students' listening anxiety are 111.0417 and 96.0851 respectively and Standard deviations are 9.95513 and 20.29546 respectively, with p (2-tailed) being .000<.05.The result shows that there is significant difference between male and female students in listening anxiety. Male students have a higher anxiety measure than female students. This is consistent with Cheng's study, which also believes that males tend to be more anxious than females in listening test. The reason why male students show more anxious feeling than female ones may be that female students are more circumspective than males. They will do more preparations for the coming exams from both psychological and practical perspectives. They become more confident about themselves and feel less anxious. Another reason may be that female students have higher language proficiency. Poor language proficiency will arouse apprehension in listening.

Gender difference in listening proficiency

Table 4-12: Group Statistics of Gender Difference in Listening Proficiency

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
listening proficiency	M	48	42.5000	12.92367	1.86537
	F	47	64.0426	14.69392	2.14333

Table 4-13 : Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
LPPPPPPPPPPPP	Equal variances assumed	.960	.330	-7.592	93	.000	-21.5426	2.83753	-27.17732	-15.90779
PPPPPPP	Equal variances not assumed			-7.582	90.986	.000	-21.5426	2.84138	-27.18663	-15.89848

Since gender difference is obvious in both listening anxiety and listening metacognitive strategy use. There must be some difference between male and female student in their listening proficiency. To validate the hypothesis, t - test is adopted to determine the difference. The means of male and female students' listening proficiency are 42.5000 and 64.0426.respectively and Standard deviations are 12.92367 and 14.69392 respectively, with p (2-tailed) being .000<.05. The result shows that there is significant difference between male and female students in listening proficiency. Female students, at the same time the more successful listeners, show higher scores of listening proficiency. The hypothesis is further proved: the higher the listening metacognitive ability, the lower the listening anxiety and the better listening proficiency is.

Results of the interview

In the previous parts, quantitative method is used to testify the author's hypotheses. In this part, the author transcribes and analysizes the data collected by the interview. The transcriptions of the interview are listed according to the categories of the questions: students' awareness of listening anxiety, factors that cause anxiety and suggested

ways to reduce listening anxiety. Students' awareness of listening anxiety. Of the nine interviewees, seven students report feeling anxious and apprehension before and during listening test. The rest two students though do not show much anxious feeling, still report having a small amount of uneasiness. From their attitudes and responses towards the test, differences could be seen between low and high anxious students. High-anxious students tend to get tense and they feel under an atmosphere of nervousness. Such a feeling will increase their anxiety. For example, one high-anxious student says: "I feel anxious and nervous whenever I listen to English, I doubt about my listening ability though sometimes the listening material is quite easy. When the listening texts become difficult with more new words, my mind gets blank".

Being different from the high-anxious students, low anxiety level students take a more positive attitude and make more efforts. They regard the test as a challenge and express more confidence to conquer the difficulty:

● "I feel a little nervous before the test, but when it really comes, I find I am not so uneasy. I am sure I can understand most of the listening material since its difficulty degree is equal to what I have practiced everyday"
● "I feel nervous at the beginning of the test. But when the listening continues, I calm down and concentrate on listening, because I am familiar with most of the listening topics though there are several new words."
● "I believe that practice makes perfect, I practiced a lot and I think my listening ability will improve."

Factors that cause anxiety: When asked what causes them to feel anxious in listening test, the interviewees show great interest and list the following factors: language proficiency and listening level, characteristics of the listening material, pressure from parents and themselves.

1). Language Proficiency and Listening Level: Language proficiency and listening level ranks high among the factors that contribute to listening anxiety. All the interviewees agree that a high language proficiency and listening level will ensure a success of listening test. Interesting enough that none of them think they have a high English proficiency, even the students with relatively high scores. They think "if I have a high English proficiency, I will not feel nervous or frustrated at all" "my anxious feeling due to my low language ability" "I have a small amount of vocabulary, this is the main problem that hinder me from getting a high listening score."

2). Characteristics of the Listening Comprehension and listening Material: Not being able to control the input is the most anxiety-provoking reason that students report. Unlike reading and writing, during which students can refer back to identify what they do not understand, in listening comprehension, especially in listening test, students have only one chance to perceive the input. Therefore, just as one interviewee complains "I get nervous because in CET-4 I have only one chance with listening section. I am so worry about missing even one word. Consequently, I get more anxious and can not concentrate on listening material". The listening material in the test also has its own characteristics, which may include the word length, the pronunciations, vocabulary difficulty, sound speed, and so on. Of the characteristics, sound speed is considered anxious-provoking. One interviewee says: "I get easily anxious when the sound is delivered quickly, at that time, the most familiar words seem strange to me."

3). Pressure from Parents and Themselves: Students may feel pressure from both themselves and the outside world. Anxiety is aroused when language learners compare themselves to others, which can rarely attain. (Bailey 1983). Several interviewees report that their anxious feeling derives from the demands they put on themselves. "I feel guilty if I get a low score in the exam." "I always tell myself that I can not fall behind others, if my classmates can pass the exam while I can not, I will feel anxious." Some students say that their parents' high expectation make them feel anxious.

Suggested solutions to listening anxiety: According to the above –mentioned causes of listening anxiety, possible solutions offered by students are listed in the following:Poor command of the target language lead to high listening anxiety and low listening proficiency. Therefore, to overcome anxiety and improve listening competence, foreign language learners' must take effective measures to practice listening. One student says "I felt nervous because my poor language proficiency in the pasty, but I know practice makes perfect. The more I practice, the more confident I become. Now I become more confident than before." The reason why some students think the sound delivery speed is too high and they can not catch every word clearly is that they lack of tolerance of ambiguity. They hold the belief that they should catch every word clearly and correctly. Otherwise, they think their listening is imperfect and thus anxious feelings arouse. Lack of effective listening strategies is one of the main sources of listening anxiety. Teachers are advised to offer some effective strategies to reduce the students' listening anxiety and improve their listening competence. One interviewee suggests "our teacher should teach us some useful strategies to cope with listening anxiety; otherwise, we are easy to get loss in listening tests." "I have no idea of what to do before listening test. If my teacher can suggest how to prepare and monitor our listening, I am sure my confidence will increase." In addition, learners' past experience plays an important role in the formation of listening anxiety. Listening anxiety

stems from habitual, irrelevant, negative thoughts that some students have during a testing situation. These negative thoughts distract students from listening and cause them to focus on their fears, inadequacies, and past failures. Listening anxiety occurs when students who have failed or done poorly in the past develop negative self-images, causing irrelevant thought patterns during the listening. Several students report "I'm not smart enough," "The teacher is watching me," and "Everyone is finishing before me". Although these students may have adequate study skills, they become distracted and anxious during the test, causing poor listening effects.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, the author uses the FLLAS and listening metacognitive strategy questionnaire to examine the subjects' listening anxiety states and metacognitive strategies used in listening process. Correlation analyses are conducted among listening anxiety, listening metacognitive strategy use and listening proficiency. T- Test is used to determine the differences between male and female subjects in terms of listening anxiety and the use of three metacognitive strategies. A series of results of statistical analyses are displayed. discussions of the results in which major contribution and conclusions, limitation of the study as well as recommendation for future research are probed into. From the results of the empirical research in the previous chapter, we have the following findings:

1). According to the description of listening anxiety analysis, the hypothesis that most non- English major students are suffering listening anxiety has been testified. A large proportion of 82% students have reported experiencing listening anxiety. The number is alarming and once again it proves the pervasive existence of listening anxiety among non – English major students.

2). There is a positive co-efficiency between metacognitive strategy use and listening proficiency, especially in terms of planning and monitoring strategies. Metacognitive strategies, a kind of executive strategies, are essential for successful listening, since listeners often deal with too much "newness" in listening process, in which case conscious use of metacognitive strategies is conducive to listening proficiency. Low anxiety students actively use metacognitive strategies because they are able to deal with "newness" for lack of anxiety while high anxious students avoid the choice of metacognitive strategies.

3). There is significantly negative correlation between listening anxiety and metacognitive strategy use, which is consistent with what we have hypothesized in the initial of the research. According to the model of foreign language learning, individual learner differences (beliefs, affective states, and previous learner experiences) together with various situational factors (the target language being studied, whether the setting is formal or informal, the nature of the instruction, and the specific tasks learners are asked to perform) determine the learners' choice of learning strategies. The learning strategies then influence the rate of acquisition and the ultimate level of foreign language achievement. The learners' success and their level of foreign language proficiency can in turn affect their choice of strategies. Therefore the degree of anxiety affects the choice of strategies. Students with different anxiety levels have different metacognitive strategy use. Specifically, the lower anxiety students use significantly more planning, monitoring and evaluation strategies than the intermediate and the high anxiety level students, while there are no statistical differences between intermediate and high anxiety students in their metacognitive strategy use in each metacognitive category. Thus, it is clear that the role of anxiety can't be ignored in considering the use of metacognitive strategy.

4). In listening comprehension test, metacognitive strategy use acts as a facilitative factor while listening anxiety a debilitative one. That means during listening process, students with high listening anxiety will easily be distracted from concentration. At the input stage, their anxious mood causes attention deficits as well as the poor initial information processing, resulting in the disability of comprehending the coming information. At the information-processing stage, anxiety disrupts from searching the appropriate items in memory and slows down the speed of recall during the time –limited task (Maclntyre & Gardner, 1994).

5). The empirical study provides the conclusion that male students, on average, have higher listening anxiety and at the same time, lower listening metacognitive strategy use than their female counterparts. As a result, they have the significantly lower listening proficiency than female students.

Implications for EFL teaching and learning: The results of the present study indicate that there is significant correlation between learners' listening anxiety, listening metacognitive strategy use and their listening proficiency. A large majority of non-English major students suffer listening anxiety, which, seen from the present study, has greatly jeopardized their learning. Listening anxiety is partly rooted in teaching. So teachers should realize the situation and take measures to reduce the level of anxiety so that more strategies are used as a whole. The quantities and types of the strategies tend to be balanced for those originally high anxiety learners.

Firstly, teachers should help their students to acknowledge their listening anxiety and then discuss ways of reducing it, because "sharing of common feelings of nervousness or frustration with the group may elicit creative ways to solve the problem for the whole class". (Hussein 2005). Students should be made to believe that time, experience and hard work will surely to help reduce listening anxiety.

Secondly, application of proper teaching techniques will help reduce listening anxiety. For example, according to the input hypothesis, more comprehensible input should be provided to students with carefully designed schedules. Teachers should give students permission to respond with less perfect response and boost self–confidence by providing more opportunities for even small successful listening.

In addition, Oxford listed a number of suggestions for teachers to diminish language anxiety: help students understand that language anxiety episodes can be transient and do not inevitably develop into a lasting problem; encourage moderate risk-taking and tolerance of ambiguity in a comfortable and non-threatening environment; reduce the competition present in the classroom; help students realistically assess their performance (Oxford, 1999, cited in Arnold 2000).

As for listening metacognitive strategies, which, in the present study, have been proved to have strong, significant correlation with listening proficiency, should be attached more importance by both teachers and students. Some teachers take it for granted that all students are aware of metacognitive strategies. In fact, many students do not have a deep understanding of metacognitive strategies and have no idea of how to develop their metacognitive ability. Given that listening metacognitive strategy use can not only reduce listening anxiety but also improve listening competence, the acquisition of them should have far reaching listening teaching implications. Improve the students' metacognitive strategy awareness is the premise of developing their strategy competence. Teachers should help students to realize that good learners are not born with the capability of using metacognitive strategies; rather, they acquire these strategies in the language learning process. So, it is feasible for teachers to develop strategy- based teaching method in listening classroom. In order to enhance language learning to the fullest, learners' should be aware of themselves as self-regulatory organism as well as the agents of their own thinking. Thus, they can consciously and effectively achieve their learning goals. The result of gender difference in metacognitive strategy use may suggest that male students need more help in developing their strategies since females are more skilled in using metacognitive strategies. The complexity of listening comprehension process and the interaction between listeners and strategy use make it a great challenge for teachers and language researchers to train students to master some useful and effective metacognitive strategies in listening.

Recommendation for further research
Despite the above limitations, this thesis is successful in providing some preliminary evidence for the role of anxiety and metacognitive strategy use in listening comprehension. Several directions for further research evolve from this study. Firstly, to verifies or refute the findings of this study, the present study should be repeated, using other data gathering methods or different sample groups. Although the present study shed some light on how anxiety and metacognitive strategies affect listening comprehension process, more confirmatory researches and investigations are recommended for further research. At the same time, learner background factors such as learning style, learning motivation, age are some of other factors should be considered in future studies of the relationship between anxiety, metacognitive strategies and listening. It would be of great interest to replicate the research with a more reliable and valid research method in which quantitative method and qualitative study method both employed in the hope of providing different intuitions. Because in the inquiry into the affective factors, especially anxiety, observation and interview can provide more unquantifiable information that sometimes the quantitative data can not supply. Thirdly, distinctions and similarities between non-English majors and English majors concerning the relationship between these two variables are to be probed into to form a relatively more complete picture of this area. Distinctions and similarities between non-English majors and English majors concerning the listening proficiency in which listening anxiety and listening metacognitive strategy use are taken as variables are to be probed into to form a relatively more complete picture of this area. In the present study, functions of anxiety and metacognitive strategies are studied only in listening scope. Future research should be carried out to study other types of language–skill -specific anxiety in the hope of gaining a better understanding of language learning process.

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