Affective Reactions to Foreign Language Listening: Retrospective Interviews with Korean EFL Students

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The present study is concerned with affective reactions of foreign language students to listening comprehension activities. This qualitative inquiry focuses on sources and effects of listening anxiety on the basis of learners' experiences presented in retrospective interviews. Twenty university students were requested to report the levels of their anxiety after participating in several listening activities, and to discuss what their psychological or physical responses were and why they felt anxious. The results showed that students were afraid of failing in basic understanding and the subsequent malfunctioning, supporting the existence of listening anxiety. They indicated that EFL students had the highest levels of listening apprehension at the beginning part of listening and that they were sensitive to the types of listening passages or tasks. Based on students' explanations, factors viewed as causing anxiety were divided into three categories: characteristics of text, personal characteristics, and characteristics related to listening process.

Key words: listening comprehension, anxiety

1. Introduction

The steadily growing appreciation for the role of listening comprehension has generated much new research related to foreign language listening. The two main approaches to such listening research have involved either an instructional orientation or a linguistic orientation. One area of focus in teaching-oriented lines has been "comprehension approaches," many of which have criticized previous simple listening instruction methodologies that simply exposed learners to the spoken language (Asher, Kusudo, & de la Torre, 1983; Belasco, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Postovsky, 1974; Stevick, 1976; Winitz, 1981). Assuming that comprehension makes material
available for language learning, the proponents of these approaches have recommended that receptive skills such as listening should be a starting point for instruction in second and foreign languages. For instance, Postovsky (1974) showed that L2 development was more facilitated through systematic training of listening comprehension at the beginning stages of language learning, rather than an initial focus on oral practice. These results suggested that listening ability was positively transferred to other language skills. This relationship was reconsidered by a subsequent study by Krashen (1982), who proposed that comprehension of aural input plays a crucial role in second language acquisition. Feyten (1991) also found out that listening proficiency was positively significantly correlated with overall foreign language proficiency. Consequently, many ESL or EFL researchers have paid more attention to the role of listening comprehension in the language acquisition process, resulting in an increasing interest in the nature of listening and the factors influencing comprehension.

The linguistic approach which has usually been concerned with psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic paradigms, in general, has provided useful insights into listener characteristics, L2 sound perception, and various components of listening comprehension (Oxford, 1993). A number of studies in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition (Anderson, 1985; Bacon, 1992; Richards, 1983; Wipf, 1984) have investigated the listening process; and in recent studies, the information processing view of listeners has been prevalent, as both receivers of information packages and reconstructors of the interlocutor's message (Nagle & Sanders, 1986; Rost, 1998).

However, research on listening comprehension to date has neglected an important dimension of the listening process, the listener's own viewpoint (Lynch, 1998). When we look into the basic descriptions of listening comprehension, it is not difficult to find that most data tend to be described and discussed in very mechanistic terms (e.g. input, processing, output) on the basis of anonymized subjects. Brown (1995) also pointed out that listeners in real life conversations do not simply respond neutrally as recipients of messages, and that the listeners should be examined in more naturalistic contexts. Without an understanding of the listener's individual personality and point of view, it is difficult to explain logically how speakers and hearers interact with each other in real situations. Therefore, sociocultural and affective factors influencing listening should be carefully explored in order to get a more compr-
ehensive and rounded view of listeners and their task.

Based on this consideration, a series of studies (Call, 1985; Dunkel, Mishra, & Berliner, 1989; Faerch & Kasper, 1986; Long, 1989) has suggested that success in L2 comprehension depends on internal variables as well as external variables. They have proposed that foreign language teachers should not blame students for their low aptitude in listening comprehension and lack of effort, but should be sensitive to affective aspects, such as attitude, motivation, confidence, and anxiety.

Therefore, this study will examine affective reactions to foreign language listening using qualitative method, focusing on anxiety of Korean EFL learners. In particular, both sources and effects of listening anxiety—which may differ from those of the other foreign language anxieties—will be investigated.

2. Review of Literature

This section reviews the relevant research about listening anxiety in a foreign language. Horwitz et al. (1986) found strong anxiety in listening as well as speaking and testing situations. Two items in FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) were specifically related to listening anxiety: “4. It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language,” and “29. I get nervous when I don’t understand every word the language teacher says.” The results revealed that highly anxious learners apprehend that they may not understand all of the input in listening activities. They felt that it was not easy both to distinguish the sounds and structures of a listening message, and to comprehend the content of the extended utterances in L2.

There have been just a few sporadic studies about why L2 listeners feel anxious. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) mentioned that language learners are likely to become anxious when the listening tasks are too difficult or unfamiliar to them. Afterwards, Oxford (1993) regarded the learning goals and beliefs of listeners as a source of anxiety, mentioning that anxiety frequently occurs when students feel they cannot handle an L2 listening activity. For example, listeners tend to assume that they must understand every word they hear, even though they do not have to do so to understand what they hear in their native language. This unrealistic goal causes greater anxiety, which prevents learners from “transferring even
the most basic first-language coping skills to the second language" (Meyer, 1984, p. 343), resulting in creating a sense of failure and fatigue.

Assuming that listening comprehension anxiety may be one of the most debilitating since verbal interaction requires successful input processing, Vogely (1998) actively discussed potential sources of listening comprehension anxiety on the basis of ESL students' verbal reports. More than fifty percent of the students regarded characteristics of input as the main source of listening anxiety. For example, if the input is not clear or too fast, students express anxiety and frustration. The second reason concerns process-related aspects of foreign language learning, such as inappropriate strategies and lack of processing time. For example, anxiety becomes a regular part of the listening comprehension process when listeners think they must understand and define every word they hear and apply every grammar rule (Oxford, 1993). Highly anxious people seem easily distracted from the task because time is divided between the emotion-related processing and task-related cognition (Tobias, 1986). Their short-term memory capacities are easily overloaded with task-irrelevant worry cognitions. Finally, instructional factors and personal factors surface as the least-reported source of listening anxiety. Among the personal factors, fear of failure seemed to be related to students' erroneous beliefs about language learning or negative past experience.

Some guidelines have been suggested for reducing foreign language listening anxiety. One method to alleviate listening anxiety is to provide learners with maximum opportunities for successful responses to comprehensible input (Nagle & Sanders, 1986). When more language learners receive input in a low-anxiety environment, they can easily recognize utterances as part of an exchange that has become automatic in processing, and compare the new data with already accumulated linguistic and nonlinguistic knowledge. In terms of a low-anxiety environment, Oxford (1993) suggested that the climate of listening classrooms be non-threatening and positive, and affective strategies, such as deep breathing, listening to music, and positive affirmation, should be used to reduce anxiety before or during a listening activity. In addition, in order to correct the listener's erroneous beliefs as a source of anxiety, students need to be advised that word-for-word comprehension is not necessary, and that guessing and hypothesis-testing are valuable in listening activities (Oxford, 1990).

Recently, in Vogely's (1998) study, foreign language students themselves
provided useful information about possible solutions to alleviate listening anxiety. Many of the students believed that it would be helpful in reducing their anxiety if they received more comprehensible input and understood the nature of the listening process in language class. They also requested that their instructors use visual materials, teach how to use background knowledge, and become more sensitive to students’ emotions in listening activities. Through more concisely structured tasks, they desired to increase confidence in listening, resulting in decreasing comprehension anxiety.

In spite of the importance of listening comprehension, only several papers on affective reactions to listening have been reported in TEFL research literature. Therefore, this study will try to figure out the nature and existence of foreign language listening anxiety and what factors may lead to it. The results can be helpful in instruction by contributing to an understanding of subtle emotions experienced by Korean EFL students, and also may suggest ways of coping with debilitating listening anxiety in English classrooms in Korea.

3. Research Methodology

The main purpose of this paper was to investigate affective reactions to foreign language listening and the study focused on listening anxiety on the basis of EFL learners’ experiences presented in retrospective interviews.

3.1. Participants

The subjects of this study were 20 university students in Korea. Including two participants in a pilot test, a total of 20 volunteers from two English classes were interviewed for the qualitative analysis. They were 11 male and 9 female accounting majors. All were sophomores, ranging in age from 20 to 26. All of them had begun to learn English in junior high school. Most of them had taken more than two English courses, including such courses as English Conversation I taught by a native English speaker, or English Writing.

Since more than two English courses are required for graduation at the universities, the students must take two required English courses and they tend to take additional optional English courses for their future career. All participants were non-native speakers of English, as bilingual
students and learners who had lived in America or English-speaking countries were excluded from the study. When asked to rate their listening ability in English, 90 percent of the participants reported having had "intermediate" proficiency.

The students were assumed to have had an adequate range of emotional experiences with listening to English to participate in an anxiety study because they had had to take a series of listening tests in their English classes. In Korea, exams play an important role in determining an individual's career opportunities, and high school/university entrance exams are highly competitive. Entrance exams now include English listening tests, and even non-English majors have had a good deal of experience with listening activities and tests. In addition, most students strongly expect to improve their English conversational skills even after entering college. For example, all students, not only English majors, are concerned about their English listening proficiency because many university students want high scores on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)/TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) listening tests which are required for many high-level jobs. In other words, better employment opportunities are readily available to those who do well on those tests. However, Korean students report that they tend to have a hard time on the listening sections of these tests, which are said to be the most difficult part in the tests even for the students at advanced levels of English study. Thus, it is not difficult to find university students attending private institutes that offer TOEFL/TOEIC listening programs. Therefore, it is probable that many of the participants in this study had already experienced some degree of anxiety in foreign language listening.

3.2. Instruments

In this study five highly advanced level listening activities were chosen for the purpose of eliciting listening anxiety. Four of them were for the main retrospective interview, and the other one was a sample passage for a practice retrospective interview session (See Appendix 1). As Korean university students' listening comprehension skills generally range from low-intermediate to advanced, they would be expected to experience listening anxiety when they have to participate in the activities for highly advanced listeners. The listening activities in this study were chosen on the basis of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (1986), which
have five generic descriptions of listening levels; novice, intermediate, advanced, superior, and distinguished. Two of the four activities (Radio talk show and Lecture in Appendix 1) were designed for "superior" listeners who can "understand concrete and abstract topics in extended discourse offered by speakers using native-like discourse strategies" (Rost, 1990, p. 220). The other two (Dialogue and NPR report in Appendix 1) were for "distinguished" listeners who can "understand accurately most linguistic styles and forms from within the cultural framework of the language" (Rost, 1990, p. 221). The passages covered various topics such as everyday life, science, and education. In addition, the content was delivered in different formats such as radio broadcasts, lectures, or informal conversations. Two of the passages were recorded by American adults, and the original cassette tapes of the other two (Radio talk show and NPR report) were used as authentic materials. Two native speakers of English listened to the audiotapes to examine the naturalness and the level of difficulty.

3.3. Data Collection

A pilot study provided useful information about the data collection procedures and required time for the retrospective interview. Two volunteer undergraduates in Korea participated in the retrospective interview sessions. Each student was given a task package, which consisted of a consent form and four questions used in the listening activities. They were asked to talk about their anxiety levels and the sources of their anxiety, and to evaluate the listening activities that followed listening to each passage. The activities were successful in eliciting listening anxiety from the students, as they reported uncomfortable feelings and apprehension, and mentioned that they had much difficulty in comprehending the contents.

It took about 30 minutes to finish each retrospective interview session, but it was decided that 10 more minutes would be needed in the actual study to practice retrospection because some participants might not fully understand the expectations of the task. This informant training would help to minimize the possibility of disrupting the listening process.

During the interview, participants were asked to tell what they were thinking, doing, and feeling while they attended to listening passages. The interview protocols were collected from 20 sophomore accounting
majors. Students were asked to volunteer as participants because they were taking an English communication class at that time. The researcher met each participant for one hour, and the protocols were audiotaped. Prior to the actual procedure, students were given a task package that consisted of a consent form and four questions for listening activities (See Appendix 3). They were asked to fill out the consent form. Before listening to the passages, they were informed that they would first participate in some listening activities and they would be asked about their feelings. In addition, in order to consider test anxiety, half of the participants were informed that the activities would be a kind of listening comprehension test.

For the next ten minutes, the interview procedure was explained to the participants, and they were given opportunities to practice retrospection. After hearing the sample practice passage, they were asked to explain their difficulties and feelings. The instructions for this practice were the same as for the main task. When the participants felt comfortable with the task of retrospection, the real session began with listening to the four recorded listening passages that had been devised to elicit listening anxiety. After hearing each passage, they were to report in Korean their feelings and perceptions about listening anxiety, using the retrospective interview method.

The participants were encouraged to speak spontaneously and to try not to plan too much what they said. At first students were asked to attempt to explain everything that came to mind while performing the task. If they were silent for a particularly long period, the researcher asked questions about what they were feeling while listening to the passage. Then they answered specific questions worded in the form of an interview guide (See Appendix 4): (a) Did you feel anxiety while you listened to the tapes? (b) If so, what were your (psychological or physical) responses? (c) What aspects of the listening were most difficult or made you anxious? (d) When was any anxiety you may have experienced at its highest level during the listening tasks in the interviews? Participants' verbalization was audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedures

Interview data were analyzed, with a qualitative coding/analysis method suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The main steps of the
method are categorizing, identifying relationships, and filling patterns. Working with the individual interview protocols, the researcher endeavored to arrive at the core ideas of the material in each domain of each protocol. What appeared to be important was identified, and was given a name. During this coding process, the researcher went through the data, and placed each paragraph of datum in one of the codes. The codes found were used to provide a framework to organize, manage, and retrieve the most meaningful bits of the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed that coding constitutes the "stuff of analysis" (p. 56), allowing one to "differentiate and combine the data you have retrieved and the reflections you make about this information" (p. 56). As they suggested, coding was a process that enabled this researcher to identify meaningful data and set the stage for interpreting and drawing conclusions. The coding and categorizing process was ongoing, and subject to constant review and revision.

After several revisions, major themes appeared. As themes were identified and supported throughout the data, they became categories for coding. On the basis of these categories, relationships between the information within individual categories were analyzed, and points of conflict were identified. Finally, all the codes and themes were assigned names and examined.

4. Results and Discussion

This section will begin by presenting the results of the study, followed by a discussion of those findings.

4.1. General Responses to Retrospective Interview Task

The retrospective interviews included five listening activities, and the overall responses to each task are described here. Each listening activity in the retrospective interview procedure was designed to encompass a wide range of situations (e.g. lecture) where listening is required as well as different types of listening passages and different types of tasks (e.g. T/F questions). In order to examine the effect of general test anxiety, the researcher also randomly divided the 20 interviewees into two groups, one group being told that they were being tested and a second group
which was only told that they were being interviewed: a testing condition or a non-testing condition. Those students under the non-testing condition were requested to simply write down the main idea of the listening passages that they heard in their native language (Appendix 2), and then to report their difficulties and feelings just after the task. Thus, all of the students under the non-testing condition were exposed to the same kind of listening tasks. On the other hand, the participants under the “testing condition” were given four kinds of listening tasks: Looking for main ideas, Answering to true-false questions, Taking dictation, and Identifying details (Appendix 3). They were also told that their answers would be scored.

The listening passage for the first task, finding main ideas, was a piece from a radio talk show. When asked to compare the listening passage with TOEFL or TOEIC listening passages, the anxious students in the interviews judged it to be a little long and fast. However, it seemed that the task of finding main ideas is very familiar to them and not anxiety provoking. The second passage was the shortest, but very colloquial as it was a dialogue with many slang and idioms at fast rate of speech. Most students mentioned that the second listening passage was the most difficult and caused high levels of apprehension. At first they felt relieved because the conversation seemed to be “ordinary restaurant dialogue,” but soon they realized that the theme was so typical of the American way of life that it was not easily accessible to nonnative speakers in cultural terms. They regarded the true-false questions, on the other hand, as very comfortable.

With respect to the third passage, a part of a lecture about lasers, the interviewees reported that they felt anxious because they were not accustomed to the technical terms and they lacked necessary background knowledge. Dictation, a task that is a mixed skill of listening and writing, also made the students feel uncomfortable. The last listening passage was National Public Radio (NPR) report about drive-in shopping. A majority of the participants showed frustration and discomfort not only because they were unfamiliar with the concept, but also because the recording included background noises and a variety of speakers taking turns. It appears that they also had a hard time identifying details in this relatively long passage, stating that they were normally taught to focus on the main idea and that it was difficult for them to pay attention to every detail.

Although students showed different responses to the types of the tasks,
the "testing situation" did not turn out to be successful in provoking listening anxiety. The participants seemed not to be concerned about the test results since they knew it would not significantly influence their schoolwork or future career.

4.2. Five Themes

By reading through the transcripts of the interview data, the researcher attempted to identify factors that seemed to be important and to codify them, giving them code-names, or "codes." During the coding procedure, judgments were made about which items were related and thus belonged under the same major code. Sometimes, the same sub-code appeared under several major codes. This indicated the importance of certain themes and prompted the researcher to look for their presence or absence under other major headings. After coding all of the data scraps, the researcher arranged major code clumps into a coherent order and sorted out what has been learned in order to concentrate on writing up the data. This theme-searching process provided time to carefully ponder the data, make new connections, and gain new insights.

The data collected from interviews were grouped into five themes: 1) symptoms of listening anxiety, 2) difficulty in foreign language listening, 3) sources of listening anxiety, 4) beliefs related to listening anxiety, and 5) social contexts of listening comprehension anxiety.

4.2.1. Symptoms of Listening Anxiety

When students were asked how they felt during the listening tasks in the interviews, responses had to do with both physiological and psychological symptoms. After the retrospective interview tasks, some anxious listeners reported that they "sweated" and that "their hearts started pounding." They also felt tension in their bodies and tended to curl their shoulders in. Some of the stronger reactions were reported by students in the "test" group. On the first task, one female student mentioned that she did feel butterflies in her stomach and that she got headaches when she thought that she missed important information in the tasks.

Psychologically, listening anxiety (whether task-induced or from previous experiences) was reported to be accompanied by nervousness, tension, worry, and irritation. These feelings, which were possibly related to the
high cognitive demands of listening comprehension, appeared to be connected with failure in processing. The interviewees sometimes talked about their general feelings when listening (as opposed to their feelings during the task), reporting that “they did not hear well when they felt anxious in general listening, whereas they listened better when they were relaxed”:

At first I was so tense when conversing with a foreigner that I did not understand the words I already knew. I probably would not have replied to my own name.

This idea of failing in basic understanding was expressed by many anxious listeners in the retrospective interviews. One male student complained that since he was so nervous that he “only remembered the beginning of what he heard and ended up guessing about general content based on the words at the beginning.” Similarly, another student expressed his anticipation of failure in English listening and subsequent malfunctioning:

When I start worrying, only one word circles in my head. So I cannot hear the overall content and end up thinking about that one word. Even nowadays when I get nervous in English listening, I keep on drifting off, thinking, “What did the speaker say?” So I cannot hear the next thing that is being said.

This statement showed that a situational fear may affect information processing or psychologically adjusting to messages and that individuals who feel anxious are likely to misinterpret or process messages inadequately.

With respect to the period when students experienced the highest levels of anxiety, more than half of the students feared the “beginning” part of the listening tasks. Until they were accustomed to the speed and pronunciation of the speaker, they had a hard time grasping the meaning of the listening text. One student compared listening to “a kind of gambling,” stating that he would miss all the rest if he missed the meaning at the beginning. He worried the most about the beginning because he thought that “the first sentence gives the best hints as to what the rest will be about.” This comment suggested that he did not utilize a proper listening strategy and that he failed in the complete decoding of information. On the other hand, only one female student
showed her nervousness about the details in the middle or final sections of the listening tasks.

4.2.2. Difficulty in Foreign Language Listening

Characteristics of listening comprehension as compared to other tasks were one of the most commonly mentioned elements related to listening anxiety. Even some students with low anxiety during the tasks complained that listening activities created "higher pressure" than other tasks. Compared with reading activities, in which students can always go back to what they do not understand and analyze it, with listening, many students mentioned, "they got only one chance with listening and easily missed a lot of things." Thus, the students indicated that they tended to concentrate more during listening.

It is interesting that several highly anxious interviewees reported that listening is harder than even speaking. With speaking they can pull it off by playing with the words they already know whereas they cannot do the same with unfamiliar words in listening. They also have "fewer opportunities to control the speed of the listening text" while they can speak at a speed they are comfortable with. One student, who had a hard time understanding the listening texts used in the tasks, expressed her view that listening provoked much higher anxiety than speaking:

Because I can speak with my thoughts at my own level, speaking is not so anxiety producing. I can make myself understood when speaking, but when it comes to listening, people do not consider my level of comprehension. For me listening is much, much, much more difficult and troublesome.

Anxiety and difficulty with listening tests were also mentioned by a number of students. Several agreed that "missing one question on a listening test" seemed to affect the rest of the questions than missing one question on a reading test. One respondent's description of his listening test anxiety was reminiscent of that of students who were nervous when asked for a quick answer to an unexpected question on a speaking exam:

I try to pray and relax when I get worried about the listening test. But when I tell myself that I must do well, I can hear even less due to the pressure. Then I almost go crazy. It is not even the same with reading because I have plenty of time to think over each question.
4.2.3. Sources of Listening Anxiety

After the tasks, most of the students not only reported their feelings but also briefly explained why they felt such anxiety. Based on their explanations, factors viewed as causing anxiety were divided into three categories: characteristics of the text, personal characteristics, and process-related characteristics.

Primary among the text characteristics was the nature of the input such as speed, pronunciation, and intonation. Speed of delivery was the most frequently mentioned source of anxiety for the respondents. When input speech is rapid, they even miss the words they already know, feeling more pressure from the fact that "the passage continues before they can completely understand the previous idea." Similarly, some students responded that they worry the most about "slurring" because the slurred words do not easily register in their heads. In particular, they mentioned that "the words in the second task were too slurred and the 'loose' feeling of the speech burdened them." For example, one student remarked in his interview:

Even if the speed is fast, if the speaker speaks like a Korean speaks English, I can hear well. But I cannot hear anything when the words are slurred. You know how 'can' and 'can't' are pronounced similarly? I cannot even tell if it is positive or negative when I am listening. I do not know too many words and on top of that the pronunciation complicates the listening.

In addition to the pronunciation problem, a few students expressed frustration about "the ups and downs of English intonation."

Other, secondary concerns related to text characteristics were acoustic conditions, length of a listening text, and the level of vocabulary. After listening to the fourth passage, which was a long interview recorded with background noise, four students indicated that listening became much harder because "the surroundings were noisy." One student mentioned that she usually gets angry when "she has to pick out English sounds against a background of even a little noise." This is consistent with Kelly's (1991) opinion that foreign language learners are "less sensitive to the variation in the pattern of speech sounds when acoustic conditions fall below the ideal" (p. 136).

With respect to length of input, two contrasting opinions were offered. Most interviewees agreed that long passages make them a little nervous
since "they could miss specific information if they do not take notes to themselves." On the other hand, a few students reported that they felt more nervous when they heard short passages because "they needed to understand all of the content in a short time."

More than half of the students indicated that the difficulty level of words used in a passage influenced their emotions, whereas they did not mention morphological or syntactic levels at all or they were not concerned with phrases. In particular, they were afraid of listening to technical terms or the language of the professional fields. For example, one female student said that during the first task she only heard "a flow of unfamiliar words," which caused her to stop concentrating and thinking about what was being said. Her statement suggested that the semantic level of vocabulary in a listening passage provoke serious anxiety. It is interesting that several students, in describing their sources of anxiety after the second task, also perceived words used in everyday conversations as anxiety provoking:

Everyday conversations are sometimes hard to understand because of the slang and different ways of thinking. The speed is fast and these are not the words I hear ordinarily. I do not know the words and I cannot connect them easily. Therefore I cannot understand the point.

Another major source of anxiety identified by respondents had to do with gender and number of interlocutors. A few of the respondents felt more comfortable when the speaker was a woman, as they thought that men's lower pitch made listening harder. On the other hand, many students reported that they had a hard time when they listened to "several speakers" during the second (conversation) and fourth (talk-show) tasks. They found it hard to organize their thoughts and listen constantly when "the speakers kept on changing without much time in between." An older male student who judged himself to have a low listening proficiency remarked:

I do not think the content was hard, but with so many people taking turns speaking I had a hard time listening to those who seem to speak in a vague tone whereas some spoke in a clear voice. You know, just as I start getting familiar with the speaker, another person begins to speak. Then I really tensed up. Similarly, even during a movie, I can hear the main actor but I cannot hear the others.
There was a great deal of consistency across interviewees in listeners' lack of background knowledge and learner styles. With respect to prior knowledge, one third of the students said that they felt uncomfortable that they could not know "the topic." For instance, the fourth passage was said to be hard to guess because the students were unfamiliar with "the current events of the American society." In the study about second language lecture comprehension, limited prior knowledge for comprehending new ideas could "demotivate the student from even wanting to listen" (Flowerdew & Miller, 1992, p. 71).

Interesting comments about learner styles came from four students who participated in the non-testing retrospective interviews, in which they were asked to just listen and write down an outline without any visual materials. They mentioned that they felt a little nervous because "they had nothing to see during the activities." They also added that they preferred reading even simple test instructions or multiple-choice answers and pre-reading of the prescribed text. The remarks of visually oriented learners were consistent with the suggestion in the previous study (Bailey, Daley & Onwuegbuzie, 1999) that visual learners may be frustrated and apprehensive when working with audio material in classrooms or language labs. A majority of students reported that they are visual learners by nature or because of their previous educational experiences. However, they were usually asked to use audio materials for listening practice, and they should "adapt their styles to these requirements of listening courses."

As process-related sources of anxiety, the misuses of listening strategies were another pervasive argument among the participants. Some students reported feeling anxious when they did not understand the overall content because "they attached themselves to just several words they did not know or concentrated on some words of which they were already aware." One student, who spoke in great detail about his depression in listening tests, described his experience:

In the listening test, I try to forget about the ones that I did not hear, since I will not get another chance. But it is not easy to clear my mind and to listen to the next set of words. I knew what to do, but I couldn't. That made me very anxious.

Even though the student had a good knowledge of how to accomplish
listening successfully, he was not accustomed to using the "self-management" strategy – an important metacognitive strategy (Vandergrift, 1997) – in a real listening task. His failure caused frustration and apprehension.

On the other hand, many interviewees reported their misuses of other metacognitive listening strategies. One anxious listener mentioned that she "tried to auditorily pick out every word of an utterance and lost the flow of the sentence with the thought that she could not miss a single word." After losing her attention to meaning, however, she had severe trouble refocusing quickly. Because she kept attending to every detail of the input without utilizing "selective attention" strategy, she would not escape from continuous failures and subsequent anxiety. This "total comprehension" problem likely derives from unrealistic expectations about comprehension partly due to inappropriate teaching and learning activities, such as "looking up every unknown word or using translation into L1 as a method of checking on text comprehension" (Faerch & Kasper, 1986, p. 265).

Five students also insisted that listening anxiety would diminish as they became accustomed to several "listening tactics," which turned out to be frequently used cognitive strategies. One referred to an "elaboration strategy":

I felt very nervous because the content did not match up with what I thought in the beginning. But later, I tried to associate the topic to my previous experiences related to the topic, and it worked! So I was very relieved at the end of the listening.

Beside elaboration, two students mentioned that they preferred "inferencing" and "translation," other cognitive strategies. One of them also reported that she feared unless she had no opportunity to "ask for clarification," a kind of socioaffective strategy:

When I hear difficult technical content, I ask the speaker to explain again or to give an example. I feel that self-confidence is important when conversing with a foreigner, so asking questions will not embarrass me. I also ask questions in class when I cannot understand something in a listening task.
4.2.4. Beliefs Related to Listening Anxiety

Many participants believed that listening skills do not improve easily in a short time and that the results of study do not show up immediately. Thus, they felt that they should practice listening "for a comparatively long time" in order to obtain high proficiency and that it is important to allocate their study time for "regular ear-training every day" even though they do not invest a lot of time. In particular, they assumed that it would take a long time "for their ears to become sensitized to the different sounds in English." Therefore, it was not surprising that two female students mentioned that cramming for English listening was totally ineffective. The other student reported about his concrete learning guide for English listening on the basis of his belief about consistent listening practice:

I think I could do fine with one-hour listening practice a day, Monday through Saturday. There should be an assigned time slot, and if one wants to come for extra hours, he should be able to. I think the teachers should be generous with the time allowed. Everyday practice is very important. If I study just once a week, I will lose the touch of listening. But a little bit of everyday listening will surely improve my English listening.

Most of the students were afraid that they really would return to their "original level" or sometimes even "ground zero" if they ceased their listening studies. Repetition was also emphasized as a way to improve English listening. Several students mentioned that it is best to hear a word "repeatedly" rather than trying to analyze the word while listening. They firmly believed that a lot of practice could lead to the final step of "having their ears opened to the language," which is a threshold level for each listener:

I think I can listen better once my ears get used to the language. If one could get used to the language in a period of time, he can hear the slurring and unique pronunciations of the language and he could gain self-confidence and also develop an interest. But, long-term studies take time, and as a student I get annoyed when I cannot learn quickly. So many people quit in the middle.

Even some interviewees assumed that once their ears got accustomed to the language, the ability will be transferred to other language skills
automatically. In particular, they believed that “speaking” would come naturally to them if they can listen well, as Krashen (1982) agreed. For instance, one participant noted that “a senior he knew only worked on his listening and later he could speak just as well.”

However, several students were very sensitive to aptitude for listening, which is another popular belief about English listening. They thought that “an innate trait” plays a factor with listening and that some students are better at listening without constant and regular practices. One student believed that “those who frequently listen to pop music and follow the lyrics” tend to listen better because they have very sensitive ears to the sounds of the foreign language.

4.2.5. Social Contexts of Listening Comprehension Anxiety

A majority of students commented on instructional or social factors related to listening anxiety. Whereas these factors were the least-reported source of anxiety in Vogely’s (1998) study, they were one of the most actively discussed topics in the present study. Some unique characteristics of Korean society, in which English plays an important or sometimes critical role in one's life, would produce a different kind or level of listening anxiety.

The main concern was that they had not exposed to English listening enough. Since most class time was devoted to reading and grammar, they did not have regular hours for “understanding the spoken word” (Gilman & Moody, 1984). Some students reported that “once or twice a week is almost ineffective to acquire listening skills and that they would like to spend more hours of the week on listening.” This comment about the lack of listening practice was consistent with the results of Berne’s (1998) survey of language instructors. Although many teachers admitted the importance of listening practice in the classroom, they were reluctant to teach listening as a separate skill due to lack of time, curricular decisions to emphasize other skills, a lack of training and expertise in preparing listening activities, or a lack of appropriate materials and technological resources. Owing to all of these factors, language instructors tended to try to integrate listening exercise with other skill training, or to ask students just to practice outside of class.

More meaningful and new insights were offered on the inefficiency of conversation classes in acquiring higher level of listening ability. Since most students were not good at speaking, most conversation classes
focused on speaking skills and teachers tended to fix the instructional level on the basis of students' speaking proficiency instead of listening ability:

I did take a conversation class, but it did not help to improve my listening. We hardly do any listening. Before classes, we are supposed to preview the lesson to study. Because we listen after reading the passage, even the short listening practices are not very effective. In addition, it seems that to have a native professor is not so helpful, either. My foreign teacher speaks slowly for us and uses everyday vocabulary. I can understand him and I know the topic, so even if I study in conversation classes, I do not expect to have high levels of listening proficiency due to the classes. If I do not get special training for listening, I will be very uncomfortable in listening to English news or movies, forever, maybe...

If students are not given opportunities to overcome the gap between their listening and speaking levels, it is natural that they feel anxious whenever they are confronted to various kinds of listening, such as comprehending authentic materials or listening exams. They needed "more careful and systematic guides for the learning of listening skills." Several ways to develop listening skills specifically were also suggested by seven respondents. They preferred "attending tutoring classes or listening to foreign broadcasts" to using tapes that are designed to improve comprehension skills.

Repeatedly students mentioned their apprehension and tension in national-scaled listening exams, which was another frequently reported social factor. Different from listening tests or quizzes in class, the listening assessments of "the TOEFL/TOEIC or University Entrance Exam" had much greater influences on Korean university students. One student noted that she had studied listening based on the qualification exam guidelines.

Many respondents stated that the listening test of University Entrance Exam in Korea was "on the easy side" and that did not distinguish the good listeners from the bad. Since the tests usually had the same set of questions, the students did not get very nervous. However, students who entered universities came to realize that they should start to prepare for TOEIC or TOEFL, in which it is typically difficult to attain high scores without systematic and constant practice of English listening. Thus many students reported that they frequently went beyond being tense and
actually got scared in those exams:

We do not study English listening in freshmen and sophomore year. But when we become juniors and seniors, we study for the TOEIC as if our lives depended on it, because in order to be recruited to a big firm we need a TOEIC score of at least 800. It is vital for employment. So before attending TOEFL/TOEIC tutoring class where I can study in levels and in a concentrated format, I was very nervous on the tests.

5. Conclusions

The retrospective interview protocol provided a potential explanation regarding listener's affect. The students' general responses to the retrospective interview tasks showed that these foreign language learners are sensitive to both the types of listening passages and kinds of tasks. They expressed high anxiety in authentic listening such as a very colloquial dialogue or a news report. Although they reported that they had "intermediate" proficiency in listening, they were not familiar with the background noise, hesitations, turn taking, false starts, or irregular pauses which occur in natural speech. They had not sufficiently practiced authentic listening in an early stage of foreign language learning, since most of the listening texts used in formal English classes are scripted and authentic materials are typically introduced only in high-level English classes. In addition, the tasks of dictation and identifying details were reported to be difficult and thus provoke some negative feelings. Taking into consideration that a great number of Korean students are test-oriented (e.g. University entrance exam, TOEFL, or TOEIC) and the tasks of listening tests are typically simple-answer or multiple-choice in nature, focusing on finding main ideas, the participants must have had a hard time adjusting to the totally different listening tasks.

A significant finding about sources of listening anxiety was reported from the retrospective interview data. Similar to Vogely's (1998) findings based on students' reported sources of listening comprehension anxiety, a majority of the participants attributed their listening difficulties and comprehension anxiety to the sheer delivery speed. Recently, however, this explanation has been criticized because listeners with comprehension problems tend to consider speech to be extremely fast, even when
objectively the speaking speed is not (Lynch, 1997). Flowerdew (1994) also mentioned that speed of speaking may be "an effect and not a cause of unsuccessful attempts to understand" (p. 22). Therefore, it is possible that the other factors such as self-confidence or listening strategies may function as more critical sources of listening apprehension, although students' self-reports indicated speed as the most significant.

The present study support the notion that listening anxiety is deeply related to learner beliefs and socio-cultural contexts. The students believed that to overcome listening anxiety they should regularly seek out listening opportunities on their own. In addition, they believed that instructors should provide specific guidelines for learning listening skills. They wanted more authentic and real-time listening input in classrooms, as well as more systematic and efficient training in listening skills at a comparatively early stage of language learning. This finding indicates that all the responsibility for the listening difficulties and anxiety should not be shifted just to the learner, and that instructors and curriculum/material developers should be more sensitive to the causes and implications of students' listening anxiety.

This study's analysis of the sources of listening anxiety provides pedagogical implications for current Korean L2 listening instruction, especially for how to reduce anxiety during listening tasks. First, listeners should be guided with a sufficient number of appropriate practice exercises, specifically tailored for each skill level, as Vogely (1998) has suggested. Qualitative results showed that students were not satisfied with the traditional conversation classes where only speaking skills are emphasized and listening skills are measured by simply a series of comprehension tests. They pointed out that more systematic listening instruction should be provided to supplement their listening practice experiences.

Second, appropriate visual support such as pictures or partial transcripts could be given to visual learners to reduce their listening anxiety. These visually-oriented learners tend to be frustrated when working with just audio materials for listening practice because they have to adjust their learning style to listening instruction. Thus, visual assistance will help to alleviate their listening anxiety that results from the clash between their learning style and the teaching style. In addition, it will also assist them to get more comprehensible messages and possibly more vivid cultural information.
Third, teachers should provide positive feedback at every step of listening instruction. As Sheerin (1987) indicated, recurring failure can produce vague but accumulated fear about listening, resulting in a "real psychological barrier to effective listening" (p. 129). Thus, successful listeners should receive appropriate encouraging feedback after finishing each exercise, while unsuccessful learners need to recognize their weaknesses and to practice to overcome those with warm support from instructors. Practically speaking, guidance of this kind requires more time and effort from L2 teachers. However, by providing such scaffolding, teachers will give students tools that will allow them to feel they have some control over their listening comprehension, which would surely serve to reduce student stress and apprehension.

To cope with listening anxiety that occurs in real-life social interactions, L2 learners should be given opportunities to become more familiar with characteristics of authentic listening (Lynch, 1997). It is especially important for low-level listeners to be introduced to authentic listening materials in order to become familiar with the features of natural speech at an early stage in their learning. For instance, video (from which most learners are accustomed to receiving information) may be a good medium for supplying appropriate authentic materials as well as visual support because it makes the classroom seem less threatening and more familiar (Mendelsohn & Rubin, 1995).

Another way to address listening anxiety is to help learners become more sensitive to their strategy use and metacognitive beliefs. If teachers pay attention to listeners' "process," instead of just to aural-comprehension examination-derived "product," they can better identify their students' basic difficulties. For example, such student activities as introspective reporting or testing of their own guessing processes are methods a teacher might employ to develop awareness of how and why students develop debilitating listening anxiety.

A limitation of the study comes from the nature of the types of listening used for the retrospective interviews. Interviewees were requested to participate in types of one-way listening such as listening to a lecture. If they had been exposed to real interactive listening situations (e.g. communicating with native speakers), the interviewees might have revealed different kinds or levels of listening anxiety. On the other hand, more careful attention to establishing trustworthiness would also assist in producing more unbiased interpretations, to better reflect the complicated
but real-life emotions related to L2 listening. Therefore, different kinds of qualitative studies attempting to obtain more triangulated findings can be recommended. For example, observations or diary studies would give more information and insights regarding cultural contexts.

Overall, more research to clarify both the construct of listening anxiety, and the relationship between listening anxiety and other language learning factors, is needed to validate the results of this study. Continued research in these areas will provide detailed insight for foreign language researchers and practitioners, and it is hoped that this better understanding of this subject can help to alleviate the negative experiences of foreign language listeners.

References


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Appendix 1

Four Listening Passages for Retrospective Interview Tasks

Sample passage

Paul: This is a nice set of wheels. How much did the dealer soak you for this?

Richard: A pile. I'll probably have to moonlight for the rest of my life, but so what, it'll be worth it. It sure beats the clunker I had before. Come on, hop in. Let's take a spin. You're not gonna believe how this sucker can haul.

Paul: Okay then, punch it! Whoa! This thing can really burn rubber.

Richard: And it corners like it's on rails. Check out what happens when I nail the brakes. It can stop on a dime.

Paul: Jeez, just watch out for cops or you're gonna end up in the slammer. You know that lead foot of yours.

Richard: Yeah, I know. I went through my last set of skins, in no time flat. I even had three blowouts in two weeks.

Paul: Now watch... you've only had your car for a day and some guy'll probably run a light and total it!

Richard: Knock it off, would you? What are you trying to do? Jinx it?

1. Radio talk show

Good afternoon. I'm Kenny Holmes, and you're listening to Talk of the Town.

At first thought, all of us have a depressing image of the aging of America: nursing homes bursting to capacity; soaring sales of diapers, feeding tubes, wheelchairs... rising costs of health care for the elderly.
However, current research shows that the "oldest old" do better than those in their sixties or seventies. And that the "oldest old" have a surprising amount of vigor, stamina, and optimism.

What is their secret to this longevity? This is on all of our minds... all of us who'd like to live into a second century. To help answer this question, we have invited to be with us today... four hardy centenarians to tell their story.

I will introduce each of them briefly and then invite you, our listeners, to ask all of your burning questions and to spend the next hour sharing their lives, their loves, and their laughs.

So, let's get on with our first guest...

We are so happy to have with us one very special lady.... Mabel White. Mabel is 101 years old. If you want to reach her age, she recommends that you stay away from greasy fast food and watch your calories. She also firmly believes the secret is to not let stress get you down. Mabel is an avid dancer and danced till she was 70... only stopping when her failing eyesight led her to step on her partner's toes. But the hobbies of her youth stay with her... she still takes daily walks and does yoga stretching every day.

Our next guest is Alfred Glenn. Alfred is an unbelievable 101 years old. I wish you, my radio listeners, could see how incredibly great he looks. Mr. Glenn has been participating in the Senior Olympics for the past eleven years, competing in the javelin and shot put. He swears by two inches of port wine daily and two ounces of chocolate (any kind'll do....). Mr. Glenn is also an expert potter, having won numerous craft show awards throughout the country. As for his secret, he says a morning cup of strong black coffee does the trick.

Next, let me introduce our third lovely centenarian. We are so proud to have with us today Paula Winston. Paula is a beaut! One hundred ten years old. Doesn't look a day over 60. Living in Malibu, California, her entire life in a beautiful house on the ocean, Paula plays two hours of tennis each day. This is a true fact! She took up tennis at the age of...
you ready for this? ... 85 and ... has since won forty-five senior national championships in the past two years. A vegetarian since birth, Paula attributes her longevity to movement... she advises that all of you keep going, keep moving, work hard, and nothing'll get stiff.

2. Dialogue

Jeff: What do you say we stop in at that burger joint over there and grab a bite?

Julie: Fat chance! If you think I'd ever set foot in that dive again, you've got a screw loose. The last time I ate that slop, I almost lost it! Besides, the service stinks there, too. It was the first time I ever stiffed a waiter.

Jeff: Yeah. I had a sneaking suspicion it was going be like that right off the bat. Not seeing a living soul anywhere sort of tipped me off. Hey! How about that one over there?

Julie: Oh, come off it! That place is too ritzy for us. It costs an arm and a leg!

Jeff: Don't have a cow. It's on me!

Julie: In that case, I'm right behind you.

(moments later...)

Julie: I can't wait to chow down.

Jeff: Just don't order everything on the menu, okay? I know how much you can polish off in one sitting. You're such a porker, it's amazing you're not some kind of blimp.

Julie: So, I'm into food. Listen, I have to run to the john. Just order me a deluxe burger but hold the fries. I want to save room for dessert to wash it down!
3. Lecture

Professor: Hello, everyone.

Students: Hi, Good morning. Hello. Professor.

Professor: Well, as I promised you last time, today we're going to talk about practical applications of laser technology. Specifically, we're going to discuss how lasers are used by doctors to do surgery.

For centuries doctors have been operating on patients with a razor-edged instrument called a scalpel. While the scalpel has performed wonderfully in surgery and has helped many people, it is really no more than an extremely sharp knife. Therefore, it must first do damage to the body in order to begin to heal it. Now, the laser, on the other hand, does not cut the body the way a scalpel does. It can also reach small, sensitive areas that a scalpel can't reach. I'm certain that lasers will entirely replace scalpels eventually—probably in the very near future.

The term laser is actually an acronym. L-A-S-E-R stands for light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation. That's Item 1, I believe, on your handout. Lasers work by producing a highly concentrated beam of pure light, usually of one color or wavelength. The light produced may be visible or invisible to the human eye. The wavelength of the beam of light produced by the laser depends on the material being used to emit the laser light.

Most lasers available today use gases, such as carbon dioxide, argon, or a mixture of helium and neon to stimulate the laser light. Look at your handout for the symbols for these gases. Other lasers use solids, such as semiconductor crystals, special glass rods, or various liquid dyes.


Students: (laugh)
Professor: But if helps you to remember, you can think of me nagging you to get your papers on lasers in on time.

Students: (laugh)

Professor: Anyway, look again at the handout for the spelling of the full name of this laser.

Now here's something that may surprise you. Despite the fact that lasers are ideally suited to many types of surgery, they are not commonly seen in hospital operating rooms. This is because they cost from $20,000 to $100,000. Lasers are sometimes referred to as "the $50,000 scalpel." Also, their use requires a great deal of technical knowledge, which many doctors do not have. This means that doctors must go to school and take special classes before they can use lasers. The expense of the laser itself and the time it takes to learn how to do laser surgery is probably why laser surgery is not done everywhere yet.

4. NPR report

Introduction: In Los Angels some 1,200 people are doing their weekly grocery shopping in record time without the grocery carts or without the check-out lines. NPR's America Rodriguez prepared this report on a new drive-in supermarket that can accommodate 300 cars an hour.

Man: It's a great time saver. The idea that I can drive up and get my groceries and be on my way in six minutes is fantastic.

Rodriguez: How long does it usually take you at a regular grocery store to do your grocery shopping?

Woman: Oh, at least a couple hours, you know, until then after that you're waiting in line... it's a hassle for me; I'm not real big on it.

Rodriguez: Near the intersection of two major Los Angeles freeways is a sign of the times and perhaps of the future: a supermarket where you don't have to fight for a parking space, where you
don't have to stand in line, and where you don't even have to get out of your car.

Dave Burstein: We took two proven, successful ideas. One was the success of drive-through convenience—which has been proven to be successful with banks and fast food, and I believe in California we even have drive-through chapels and mortuaries—and then we took the proven success of catalog shopping, applied both of those to the grocery industry.

Rodriguez: Dave Burstein, vice-president for marketing of the Phone-In Drive-Through Market. Butter and broccoli, bubble-bath and birdfood, all are available from this high-tech, fully computerized grocery store. Customers make up their grocery lists from a 4000-item catalog and then phone in the item numbers.

Woman: OK, can I have your home telephone number?

Rodriguez: Once the order is in, the computer takes over. The computer turns your grocery list into a printout. Workers then follow the numbers through a warehouse. The computer even tells them how to pack the bags, so a can of beans doesn't crush a loaf of bread. Meanwhile you go about your business and, three hours later, drive up to the market, punch your code into a terminal, and write a check while your groceries are loaded into your car.

Burstein: Our pitch is very simple. Our reason for being is to save time. We feel we can get you in and out of here from the time you announce that you're here in less than two minutes.

Man: Hi.

Man: I got your order all ready.

Man: By this time I'd probably get a parking space at another place.

Rodriguez: There are disadvantages to this first-lane grocery shopping.
You can't stop and sniff the fish or squeeze the melon. The store stocks only fancy-grade produce and keeps perishable items in freezers or refrigerators until you come and pick them up. I heard no complaints about the freshness of the food. And you pay a $1.50 service charge on each order, but prices are comparable to traditional grocery stores. And as one customer put it, “My time is worth more than a dollar-and-a-half an hour.”

Woman: I phone in the order from work, and on my way home I can pick it up. It’s an idea whose time has really come. I’ve been wondering for a long time why I can’t order groceries more efficiently. There seems no reason to have so many bodies walking around a grocery store.

Appendix 2

A Listening Task Used In Nontesting-Condition

이름: ____________________

* 각 듣기 질문을 듣고 이 질문이 무엇에 관한 내용인지 그 요지를 우리 말로 간단히(2줄 이하) 써주세요.

1.

2.

3.

4.
Appendix 3

Listening Tasks Used In Testing-Condition

이름 ____________________________
학과 ____________________________
나이 ____________________________
전화(휴대폰) ____________________________
이메일 주소 ____________________________

1. 들려주는 글을 듣고 다음 표의 빈칸을 우리말로 완성하세요.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Diet</th>
<th>Hobbies</th>
<th>Secret to Longevity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mable White</td>
<td>기름진 음식을 피함</td>
<td></td>
<td>스트레스 방지하기</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Winston</td>
<td></td>
<td>테니스</td>
<td>계속 운동하기</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. 대화를 듣고 그 내용과 일치하면 T, 그렇지 않으면 F를 쓰세요.

1) 여자는 디저트로 감자 튀김을 먹고 싶어한다. ____________
2) 남자가 여자에게 살을 빼라고 권유하고 있다. ____________
3) 여자는 데가 식당에서 팀을 주지 않는 편이다. ____________

3. 다음 질문을 듣고 빈칸에 알맞은 내용을 받아 적으세요.

Professor: Hello, everyone.

Students: ________

Professor: ________ For centuries doctors have been operating on patients with a razor-edged instrument called a scalpel. While the scalpel has performed wonderfully in surgery and has helped many people, it is really no more than an ____________.

Therefore, it must first do damage to the body in order to begin to heal it. ________ Most lasers available today use gases, such as ____________, argon, or a mixture of helium and neon to stimulate the laser light. Look at your handout for the symbols for these gases. ________

Students: ________

Professor: ________

Students: ________
Professor: ... Now here's something that may surprise you. Despite the fact that lasers are ideally suited to many types of surgery, they are not commonly seen in hospital operating rooms. This is because they cost from _____________ to $100,000.

4. 들려주는 대화를 잘 들고 다음 번 간을 우리 맛료 체우세요.
The service: 드라이브인 식점
The location: ___________________________
The number of cars that can be accommodated: ___________
The disadvantages to consider: ___________________________

Appendix 4

Retrospective Interview Guides

Warm-up Questions
1. Could you introduce yourself?
2. What is your major?
3. What are your future plans?

Questions concerning General English learning
4. How long have you studied English?
5. What is your main reason for studying English?
6. What do you perceive to be your difficulties in listening comprehension?

Questions for the retrospective interview procedure
7. Did you feel anxiety while you listened to the tapes?
8. If so, what were your (psychological or physical) responses?
9. What aspects of the listening made you especially difficult and anxious?
10. When was any anxiety you may have experienced at its highest level?

Closing Questions
11. Is it okay to e-mail you or contact you if I have any additional questions or need to clarify your responses?