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# **Improving English Listening Self-efficacy Of Chinese University**

**Students ----- Influences of Learning Strategy Training with**

**Feedback on Strategy Use and Performance**

**Renzhi Yan**

## **Abstract**

Self-efficacy which is people's evaluation of their capabilities of performing certain tasks affects students' persistence, effort, and academic performance in academic settings. This present study aimed at exploring how to improve English listening self-efficacy and performance of Chinese university students as English listening comprehension is the most difficult part of English acquisition perceived by Chinese university students.

Based on Graham's work in 2007, the study examined the impacts of strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance on English listening self-efficacy, English listening performance and attributions of Chinese university students. 96 first year non-English majored Chinese university students were invited to participate in the study and they were divided into three groups with 32 in each group. One group of students received both strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance. They were also asked to keep a strategy use diary, for which feedback was also given. At the end of study, they were required to comment on feedback they received. The other group received only strategy training. A control group was involved receiving no intervention at all.

The findings of the study suggested that strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance improved self-efficacy in English listening and English listening performance of the participants significantly. Their attributions however, were not changed significantly after the training. The reasons for the findings were discussed. Pedagogical implications were recommended to help improve self-efficacy and performance in English listening of Chinese university

students.

**IMPROVING ENGLISH LISTENING SELF-EFFICACY  
OF CHINESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

----- INFLUENCES OF LEARNING STRATEGY TRAINING WITH  
FEEDBACK ON STRATEGY USE AND PERFORMANCE

**RENZHI YAN**

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

**2011**

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## **DECLARATION**

*I declare that this thesis represents my own work and it has not been submitted to this or any other universities in application for admission to a degree or diploma.*

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***Renzhi Yan***

***Durham, United Kingdom***

*To my family*

# Chapter One --- Introduction

## 1.1 Background

With its increasing significance as a foreign language, English has become a crucial part of higher education in China and greater emphasis is placed on enhancing the English level of Chinese university students. With the purpose of increasing students' English achievement, a growing number of foreign teachers who are English native speakers are invited by many Chinese universities to deliver EFL classes and specialized courses, providing students with more opportunities to listen to authentic accents and communicate with native speakers. As a teaching assistant with one year teaching experience in a Chinese university, I was responsible for translating the specialized courses given by native English speaking teachers into Chinese when students were unable to understand. Over time however, students increasingly depended on translation rather than trying to listen and understand by themselves due to poor confidence in English listening skills. It was also found that because of the poor confidence, many students tended to give up as long as they were unable to understand the teachers. The worse is some of them refused to or were afraid of speaking with native English speaking teachers with a great worry of unable to understand what they said. How to enhance estimates or beliefs of English listening capabilities of university students in China therefore, has become a question I'd like to explore.

According to researchers, such belief in one's capabilities of performing a certain task is of great importance. Based on social cognitive theory which was introduced in detail in Chapter two, this belief serving as an important element of self-evaluations is self-efficacy, which is defined as "*beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments*" (Bandura, 1997, P21). Self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to influence task choices and goals setting, effort in pursuit of goals, persistence, resilience in the face of difficulties and the final outcome (Schunk & Meece, 2006). According to Pajares and Schunk (2001), self-efficacy provides the foundation for human motivation, well-being and achievement. Individuals tend to select tasks for which they feel competent and confident, and high efficacious individuals tend to contribute more effort, persist longer and rebound faster when they encounter problems or setbacks (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). It was found that students with high self-efficacy tend to perform better than those low scoring self-efficacious students do (Pajares, 2006) although there is no absolute connection between self-efficacy and achievement because self-efficacy reflects how capable individuals believe they are rather than how capable they really are (Pajares, 2006).

The importance of self-efficacy beliefs and the problems I found during my teaching experience serve as the origin of the purpose of this thesis: to explore how to enhance self-efficacy in English listening comprehension of university

students in China.

## **1.2 Context in China**

With the trend of globalization and China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), highly qualified English learners are urgently demanded and English in China has unprecedentedly been regarded as one of the most important competencies for personal development. According to the research conducted by Luo & He (2007), attaining certificates and finding good jobs were ranked by Chinese university students as the two most important purposes for English learning. The significance of English to long-term career development served as the third purpose for students to spend a great amount of time learning English. A small portion of students claimed they learnt English without any definite purposes. Given the great emphasis on English, Chinese universities invested a huge number of educational resources in terms of personnel and funds while most students spent at least two hours everyday in English learning besides English classes (Wang, 2002). However, the outcomes of English learning of Chinese university students were disappointing. According to Wang's (2002) survey results from 293 second-year non-English majored students in a Chinese university, 30% of students were unable to speak English, 22% of them were unable to understand English-taught modules, and 14% of students found it difficult to write in English. The table below provides the current status of

English learning of Chinese university students Wang (2002).

**Table 1.1** *Current status of English learning of Chinese university students.*

Listening Level	Understand English taught modules	Understand simple sentences given by native-speakers	Understand lectures given in English	Difficult to understand English taught modules
	67%	8%	3%	22%
Speaking Level	Be able to demonstrate personal thinking in English	Be able to have simple conversations in English	Be able to answer questions in English in the class	Difficult to speak English
	0%	17%	53%	30%
Reading Level	Be able to read English magazines and newspapers	Be able to do simple English reading	Be able to read English articles with certain topics	Difficult to do English reading
	2%	59%	25%	14%
Writing Level	Be able to write simple summary in English	Be able to do practical writing in English	Be able to write propositional essays in English	Difficult to write in English
	3%	7%	68%	22%

Of the four parts of English comprehension, listening and speaking nowadays are emphasized more than reading and writing given the fact that the capabilities of listening and speaking are lower than those of reading and writing for Chinese university students. According to College English Curriculum Requirements (Xu, 2007) issued by Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE),

*“the objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and*

*careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges”.*

The findings of the research conducted by Li (2007) suggested that listening and speaking are regarded more important than reading and speaking by Chinese university students who claimed listening and speaking were the two capabilities they mostly desired to possess during college English learning. However, listening comprehension should be given more importance than speaking because poor English listening comprehension would undoubtedly result in difficulties in responding and speaking. Vandergrift (1999) argued that listening comprehension as a separate and important component of language learning should be given pre-eminence in the foreign language learning because an emphasis on listening comprehension provides a more natural way to learn a language. He asserted that “*to place speaking before listening is to put the cart before the horse*” (Vandergrift, 1999, P169). In this thesis therefore, we will focus on English listening comprehension because of its importance and ineffective learning of Chinese university students.

Students with poor English listening performance are characterized by low self-efficacy in English listening. It was not uncommon that a small portion of Chinese university students completely gave up by not wearing earphones during

the listening comprehension part when taking the English exams, even in College English Test 4 which is a national compulsory test serving as the precondition for every university student to attain the graduate certificate in China. These low-efficacious students are similar to those described earlier who completely depended on translation without even a bit of effort by themselves when taking English-taught modules given by native-speakers. They did not believe that they could understand even if they tried. In their minds, there was no difference between listening and not listening. Low level of self-efficacy in English listening led to the loss of interest, which negatively affected students' English learning and their listening performance. How to improve English listening self-efficacy of Chinese university students therefore, is an issue with great significance and urgency.

Now let us turn to the main reasons for students' poor English listening performance and low levels of self-efficacy. The most important cause for poor English listening performance of Chinese university students is a serious lack of appropriate learning strategies. A number of studies have been conducted exploring the reasons for unsuccessful English listening performance of Chinese students, which include limited vocabulary, poor memory when listening, no habits to listen to English news and watch English movies, lack of knowledge of background culture, poor self-regulated English learning and limited time spending on English learning. (Yao, 2010; Guo, 2009; Zhang, 2009; Wang, 2002).

All of these causes in fact, can be summarized as the results due to lack of effective learning strategies, which include both metacognitive and cognitive strategies. According to Anderson (2002), metacognitive strategies refer to thinking about thinking and include thinking and planning for learning, monitoring, and self-evaluation. Cognitive strategies however, “*are directly related to individual learning tasks and entail direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials*” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, P8). Metacognitive strategies are higher-order, executive control processes, while cognitive strategies are often specific to distinct learning activities. The details refer to learning strategies will be discussed in the next chapter. Without appropriate learning strategies, students have no sense about where their English listening problems lie and would be unable to employ efficient strategies and assign time properly to solve the problems mentioned above in the English listening comprehension.

Students’ lack of learning strategies is linked with absent concern of learning strategies during English teaching in Chinese universities. With the trend of rapid economic development and education marketization in China, the scores of college entrance examines has been decreasing and the number of students enrolled in the universities and colleges has been increasing. Expanded enrollment leads to the increased gap of academic performances among students. The worse is, due to the limited educational resources in terms of funds, time and

teaching staff, it is common in Chinese universities that hundreds of students with different English levels have been assigned to have the English classes together. In this case therefore, it is impossible for teachers to meet the specific demands of students in terms of their individual English capabilities and receptivity of knowledge (Zhang, 2009). Moreover, to finish the planned teaching programs, most teachers adopted spoon-feeding teaching style without any interactions with students. Playing audiotapes and explaining the listening texts have become the most prevalent English teaching process in Chinese universities without teaching students learning strategies to execute efficient learning and solve problems by themselves, as well as enlightening students to ask “*how*” and “*why*” (Zhang, 2009). Without the abilities to realize what the real problems are and what effective strategies they can implement to improve the performance, many low achieving students were likely to interpret their performance failures to incapability of English listening, lack of talent, or task difficulties.

Another important factor which influences self-efficacy of Chinese students is the discouragements from parents and teachers. As suggested by Bandura (1997), there are four sources of self-efficacy in which verbal persuasion is involved. People who are persuaded that they have capabilities to accomplish a certain task or encouraged verbally are more likely to persist and have a higher sense of efficacy. However, it is a tradition for many Chinese teachers and parents to

criticize and discourage students when they performed unsuccessfully academically (Sun, 2009). Such verbal discouragement would definitely put more pressures on students and make them suspect the capabilities of themselves.

Given the problems discussed above in relation to English learning and teaching in Chinese universities, studies have been conducted to investigate learning strategies used by effective and ineffective listeners in China (Wang, 2002; Goh, 1998; Yang, 1999). However, there have been very few studies investigating how to increase students' self-efficacy through effective learning strategy training. Given the importance of self-efficacy serving as a motivation construct, it is the aim of this thesis to explore how to enhance self-efficacy in English listening comprehension of Chinese university students through the combination of strategy training with feedback on strategy use and performance.

### **1.3 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One is introduction in which the background and context of the study were introduced.

Chapter Two is literature review including two major parts. The first part concerned with learning strategies. Given the significance of learning strategies for successful learning, three types of learning strategies were firstly presented.

However, cognitive and metacognitive strategies were the focus of the study. Thus followed by the introduction of the strategies, the differences between cognitive and metacognitive strategies were analyzed so as to have an explicit understanding of respective roles. Learning strategies used by good language learners and the methods to identify the strategies were introduced based on previous studies.

The second part of literature review systematically presented the conceptualization and implications of self-efficacy and attributions in academic settings. Specifically, conceptualization, characteristics, sources of self-efficacy, as well as the significance of self-efficacy were introduced. Due to the importance of self-efficacy, a large number of studies have been conducted aiming at enhancing self-efficacy beliefs. Researchers suggested that improved self-efficacy can be achieved by attributional retraining. Thus, attribution theory and the relationship between self-efficacy and attributions were introduced, followed by discussion of previous research focusing on examining the influences of attributional retraining on academic performance, persistence, effort, self-efficacy and achievement motivation. Subsequently, research on attributional retraining at higher education level and the limitations of previous studies were analyzed. As the present study aimed at exploring how to improve self-efficacy of in English listening comprehension of Chinese university students, self-efficacy and attributions, as well as their relationships were

analyzed from the perspective of foreign language learning. As studies demonstrated a close connection between self-efficacy and learning strategies, how to conduct effective listening strategy instruction was introduced afterward. However, more recent study of Graham (2007) pointed out that there might be problems during the process of strategy training, which prevent from improving self-efficacy and academic performance. Thus further research of listening comprehension self-efficacy and attribution, which combined strategy training with feedback on strategy use, was demonstrated. Based on Graham's (2007) research, the purposes and significance of the present study were introduced, followed by objectives, research questions, and hypotheses of the thesis.

Chapter three is methodology in which the methods and procedures used to collect data and analyze the data were explained. Specifically, it explained how the participants' performance, self-efficacy and attributions were examined, and how the whole training project was conducted. It also explained what methods were used to analyze the data collected.

Chapter Four displayed both quantitative and qualitative results. Influences on performance, self-efficacy and attributions of strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance were examined. The correlations between posttest self-efficacy and posttest performance, posttest self-efficacy and posttest attributions, posttest attributions and training performances were also

investigated. The qualitative results of students' strategy use diaries and their comments on feedback they received were also demonstrated.

Chapter Five is discussion in which the results associated with each research question was discussed and explained. In the chapter, the pedagogical recommendations were given from the perspective of strategy training instruction.

Chapter Six is the final chapter. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research were demonstrated, followed by the overall conclusions of the whole thesis.

## **Chapter Two --- Literature Review**

In chapter one, I introduced the background and the whole structure of my study.

In this chapter, relevant literature was analyzed to identify the purposes and significance of the present study.

### **2.1 Learning Strategies in Foreign Language Learning**

#### **2.1.1 Conceptualization and Significance of Learning Strategies**

Learning strategies are defined as “*specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques, such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task -- used by students to enhance their own learning*” (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, P63). (Chamot, 2005) pointed out that at the early stage of tackling an unfamiliar language task, learning strategies are most often conscious and goal-driven but they may be used automatically once they become familiar through repeated use. Learning strategies are given great importance because appropriate use of them may “*affect the learner’s motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrate new knowledge.*” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). However, Oxford (2003) suggested that a learning strategy works positively until the following conditions are met. Firstly, the strategy

relates well to the specific task. Secondly, the strategy fits the individual student's learning style and finally, the student executes the strategy effectively and relates it with other relevant strategies.

### **2.1.2 Classification of Language Learning Strategies**

There are three types of learning strategies in an information-processing, theoretical model. The first type is cognitive strategies, which “*operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning*” (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, P44). Individual learners use cognitive strategies to process, store and recall the incoming information, often with the help of existing knowledge from the long term memory (Goh, 1998). Cognitive strategies are applicable to the particular type of tasks and can be categorized into three groups (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, P45)

1. Rehearsal strategies refer to repeating the names of items to be learnt. They are supposed to help students select key information from texts and keep the information active in working memory but they may not reflect a deep level of processing (Pintrich, 1999).

2. Elaboration strategies include paraphrasing or summarizing the material to be learnt, linking the new knowledge with the known to produce a more complete

interpretation. A number of sub cognitive learning strategies for foreign language listening such as imagery, summarization, transfer and deduction are included in elaboration category.

3. Organizational strategy involves selecting or outlining the main idea from the text by using specific techniques such as grouping and classifying words or concepts according to their semantic or syntactic attributes.

Studies showed that cognitive strategies could be acquired by unsuccessful language learners through strategy training (Ford et al, 1998; Chularut & Debacker, 2004). However, research findings generate the other more important type of learning strategy- metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies do not manipulate and process the input directly. They involve thinking about in which way the information should be processed effectively and taking steps to execute control over the cognitive process. Metacognitive strategies therefore, refer to thinking about thinking (Anderson, 2002).

According to O'Malley & Chamot (1990), metacognitive strategies involve three processes: Planning, monitoring, and evaluating. When students are planning of a particular learning goal, they have many things to think about, such as what they need to achieve, the difficulty of the task, and which strategies should be the most effective. For example, when understanding the main idea of the listening

text is a particular goal, foreign language listeners should use catching the keywords as their strategy. However, it is not easy for language learners, especially for beginners, to select and use strategies effectively. Therefore, Carrell et al (1998) suggested that teachers should teach students what strategies are by providing a specific definition or description of strategies, why the strategies should be learnt by explaining the purpose and benefits of using strategies to students, and how they can be used by breaking down a certain strategy into components and explain the relationship between the components, analyzing the task and demonstrating the use of strategy. From the metacognitive perspective therefore, students' ability to select and use the appropriate strategies can be cultivated.

Once the learning goals and the strategies to be used are determined, a learner should monitor the ongoing activities to investigate whether comprehension or production is taking place. That is, learners should ask themselves periodically whether they are using the strategies as intended (Anderson, 2002). According to Schraw (1998, P121), learners should make several decisions in this stage: What is the goal? How far away am I from the goal? Am I closer to the goal than before? Monitoring the use of strategies can help students to track their performances and to accomplish their goals.

Evaluation refers to engaging in self-questioning to determine whether the goals

are being achieved or if problems are solved to a satisfactory degree after completion of a language activity (Blakey and Spence, 1990). When evaluating the use of strategies, Schraw (1998, P121) suggested that the students should ask themselves questions, such as: Have I reached my goal? If not, what are the reasons? Shall I change anything next time?

Anderson (2002) suggested that teachers should help students to self-reflect through the cycle of learning by encouraging them to think about (1) what is the goal? (2) What learning strategies am I using? (3) Do they work? (4) Do I need to change anything in the future?

It is essential to distinguish cognitive and metacognitive strategies because appropriate use of both strategies helps listeners to perform better. Researchers found that effective listeners use cognitive and metacognitive strategies frequently and interactively (Goh, 1998; Hasan, 2000; Griffiths, 2003). Metacognitive strategies are higher-order processes which help learners to understand and control cognitive processes. O'Malley et al (1985, P561) pointed out that "*students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishments, and future directions*". Graham (1997, P42-43) argued as well that:

*The distinctions between cognitive and metacognitive strategies are important, partly because they give some indication of which strategies are the most crucial in*

*determining the effectiveness of learning. It seems that metacognitive strategies, that allow students to plan, control, and evaluate their learning, have the most central role to play in this respect, rather than those that extremely maximize interaction and input... Thus the ability to choose and evaluate one's strategies is of central importance*

Another type of learning strategy is social/affective strategy “*which involves either interaction with another person or ideational control over affects*” (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, P45). Representative strategies consist of cooperation, through which learners solve problems and get information with peers; questioning for clarification, that is attaining additional explanation or examples from a teacher or peer; and self-talk, that is individuals reduce anxiety about a task or convince themselves a learning task can be performed successfully through mental control.

### **2.1.3 Previous Studies on Learning Strategies**

#### **2.1.3.1 Effective and Ineffective Learners In terms of Learning Strategy Use**

Various studies attempted to examine the differences between ineffective and effective learners in terms of learning strategies they employed while some others focused on identifying and describing the characteristics of “*good language learners*” (Rubin, 1975; Chamot, 2005) and discovered that students did use learning strategies which could be described and categorized (O'Malley

& Chamot, 1990). It was found that for listening comprehension, the most frequently used cognitive strategies by effective listeners include repetition, note-taking, transfer, contextualization, inferencing, and the most frequently used metacognitive strategies by high-ability listeners were selective attention, directive attention, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation (O'Malley et al, 1985, Goh, 1998, Hasan, 2000, Wang, 2002).

### **2.1.3.2 Identification of Learning Strategies**

However, research of language learning strategies is uneasy due to the fact that only a few such as note-taking can be observed directly, while most others can only be inferred from language learner behavior. As Ellis (1986, P14) described: *“It is a bit like trying to work out the classification system of a library when the only evidence to go on consists of the few books you have been allowed to take out.”* However, various methods for identifying learners' strategies have been developed through a number of researches. The first was retrospective interviews in which learners were encouraged to describe what they did to complete the task as soon as the learning task was completed (Chamot, 2005). Goh (1998) adopted such retrospective verbal reports to identify the strategies the Chinese students used. For example, a student reported that when she didn't understand the meaning of a particular word *“hump”* in a passage about camels, she thought the hump meant *“tuo feng”* because the article talked about how camel could store

food. According to the student's description, the researcher understood she used inferencing during listening.

The most frequently used way to identify learners' strategies is questionnaires, which were developed by researchers based on tasks that students had completed (Goh, 2002; Olivares-Cuhat, 2002; Cho et al, 2004).

Diaries and journals serve as another important way to identify students' learning strategies. Students are required to write down individual observations about their learning experiences and what they do to solve the problems in the certain task (Chamot, 2005). Graham (2007) asked students to keep a strategy log after a period of instructive listening strategy training with the purpose to foster learners' metacognitive awareness while identifying their listening strategies.

Another method is think-aloud individual interview through which the learner is given a particular learning task and asked to describe what he is thinking while working on it (Chamot, 2005). Chamot (2004) found that "*the rich insights into language learning strategies provided through think-aloud protocols tend to reveal on-line processing, rather than metacognitive aspects of planning or evaluating*". He also believed that all of these methods not only provided researchers the opportunities to identify the learning strategies of students, but also helped students develop their metacognitive awareness about themselves as

strategic learners.

In spite of efforts and enthusiasm researchers spent in the area of learning strategy in language acquisition, there are still many criticisms from different perspectives. In terms of the qualitative methods which had been used to identify learning strategies of good language users such as retrospective interviews and verbal reports, Seliger (1983, P180) doubted whether “*the verbalizations of learners represent some form of internal reality.*” With regard to the claims of some researchers that learning strategies can be described and classified (O’Malley & Chamot, 1985, 1990), Skehan (1991, P287) argued that there is a need to go beyond “*convenient classification*” although such categorization might be useful for strategy instruction. Criticisms are also made against the conclusion that there is a significant correlation between strategy use and success by arguing that ignoring the personal characteristics such as individual motivation and histories, learning strategies are far away from making a full explanation for language learning achievement (Gillette, 1994).

However, in spite of criticisms and doubts for learning strategy use in foreign language learning, a number of studies have been continuously conducted to explore the relation between strategy use and learning performance. Positive research outcomes suggested that there is a significant relationship between efficient strategy use and positive student achievement (Macaro, 2006; Naiman et

al, 1978, 1996), increased problem-solving ability (Mayer, 1998), improved motivation (Nunan, 1997; Vandergrift, 2005) and self-efficacy (Chamot et al., 1996).

## **2.2 Self-Efficacy**

### **2.2.1 Conceptualization of Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is one important motivation construct and it was derived from social cognitive theory which was developed by Bandura (1997). According to social cognitive theory, when facing a certain task and with an intention as a guide, individuals analyze the task, set their own goals, plan systematic strategies they will adopt and future behavior they will perform through forethought, aiming at attaining the desired outcome (Bandura, 2001; Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). Social cognitive theory regards human functioning as a product of a dynamic interplay of a) personal factors including cognitive, affective, and biological events; b) behavior and c) environment (Pajares, 2002). Three factors influence each other with a reciprocal relationship. That is, how individuals explain their performance outcomes informs and changes their environments and self-beliefs. These environments and self-beliefs in turn, inform and alter individuals' subsequent performance. Bandura (1986) regarded self-reflection as the most uniquely human capability through which individuals evaluate and alter

their behavior. Self-efficacy serves as one perception of these self-evaluations in social cognitive theory and a key personal factor which has a predictive function to one's behavior. Bandura (1997) demonstrated that individuals make causal attributions through mechanisms of personal agency, among which self-efficacy is the most pervasive and central. As people have no incentive to behave if they do not believe that they are capable of producing desired outcomes by their actions, self-efficacy belief serves as a basis of actions.

Self-efficacy is conceptualized as *“people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance”* (Bandura, 1997, P21). Therefore, self-efficacy is a belief about individual capabilities of performing a certain task rather than the real capabilities the individual have.

### **2.2.2 Characteristics of Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy has two distinctive characteristics which distinguishes itself from other self-beliefs. Firstly, *“Self-efficacy beliefs help determine what people will do with the knowledge and skills they possess and determine their behavior”* (Pajares, 2006, P342). Self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to influence individuals' thinking in either pessimistic or optimistic way, the amount of efforts individuals would like to spend on pursuing certain goals, and the degree of people's

persistence facing difficulties and setbacks, the ways people regulate their thinking and behavior, and the choices of tasks (Pajares, 2006; Schunk & Meece, 2006). Self-efficacy provides the foundation for human motivation, well-being and achievement (Pajares and Schunk, 2001). Therefore, self-efficacy beliefs make a powerful contribution to the prediction of individuals' outcomes. Secondly, self-efficacy percepts are not only context-specific but also domain- and task-specific (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). In terms of context-specific, a student may be with a lower sense of self-efficacy in learning English in a competitive classroom environment than in a non-competitive learning context. From the domain and subject specific perspective, personal efficacy varies across specific tasks within a particular domain. A student may be highly efficacious in performing well in English reading test but not confident in listening performance.

### **2.2.3 Four Sources of Self-Efficacy**

According to Bandura (1997), there are four sources of self-efficacy. Namely, *mastery experience* which refers to prior performance (failure or success). Individual performance serves as the most reliable source of self-efficacy and has the strongest effect on self-efficacy. In general, frequent performance successes generate a high sense of self-efficacy and consistent achievement failures result in lower self-efficacy. Zimmerman and Cleary (2006) however suggested that

individual perceived efficacy also depended on how individuals interpreted and evaluated the circumstances and factors surrounding the accomplishments. For example, self-efficacy of a student who performed well in a test may not increase if the test was perceived easy. However, a student who failed in an examination may not negatively change his self-efficacy if he believed the failure was caused by external factor such as bad mood.

Vicarious modeling is the third source of self-efficacy. People assess their capabilities in relation to the attainments of others. Individual behavioral, cognitive, and affective changes may occur after observing similar peers learn a task. The positive effect on self-efficacy is strong when observers believe that they are similar with the models and they can be successful as well by following the model's behaviors (Schunk, 1987). However, Schunk and Meece (2005) believed that vicarious modelling typically has a weaker impact than mastery experience because vicariously-induced self-efficacy can be lowered by following performance failures.

The third source of self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. People who are persuaded that they have capabilities to accomplish a certain task or encouraged verbally are more likely to persist and have a higher sense of efficacy. However, the effect of encouragements and praises such as "*I believe you can do it well*" might be vanished by the subsequent consistent performance failures. Researchers argued

that in academic settings, more long-lasting changes of self-efficacy beliefs can be realized by providing them with feedback linking achievement progress with strategy use and make students attribute performance failures to ineffective strategy use (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Graham, 2007).

The last source of information that individuals use to form perceptions of self-efficacy belief is physical and affective states. People partially rely upon somatic information conveyed by emotional states in judging their capabilities (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006).

#### **2.2.4 Research on Self-Efficacy**

Research has been conducted to explore the effects of self-efficacy on academic achievement, as well as on efforts and persistence. In the following paragraphs, the self-efficacy focused research was introduced.

##### **2.2.4.1 Self-efficacy and Enhanced Academic Performance**

Zimmerman and Cleary (2006) suggested that self-efficacy has an important effect on personal academic performance because merely possessing knowledge and abilities is not equivalent with effective use of them under difficult conditions. They claimed that there are many factors can be obstacles of learning

preventing students from behaving well. Students with high self-efficacy tend to effectively deal with the obstacles and are expected to perform successfully, even others have the same ability level. Their arguments were confirmed by a lot of studies which investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance. Caprara et al (2008) found that high perceived self-efficacy for self-regulated learning in junior high school resulted in high school grades. The study of Moos and Azevedo (2009) suggested a positive impact of computer self-efficacy on learning outcomes and learning processes. Other studies explored the effects of self-efficacy on problem-solving efficiency (Hoffman & Spataru, 2008, Malouff et al, 2007), self-regulations (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Schunk, 1983; Caprara et al, 2008), anxiety (Wilfong, 2006; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Numerous studies suggested that self-efficacy was a predictor for and had an important effect on academic performance.

#### **2.2.4.2 Self-Efficacy and Sustained Efforts and Persistence**

Self-efficacy beliefs serve as a good predictor of academic performance because individuals' subsequent behaviors are influenced by these beliefs of capabilities in performing certain tasks. In the academic settings, students holding different efficacy levels behave differently in terms of both effort and persistence. Studies suggested that students with low self-efficacy tend to engage in fewer efforts and give up more easily when encounter obstacles. This resulted in poor performance

and their lower self-efficacy. Comparatively however, students who are highly efficacious in their capabilities of performing certain tasks tend to make greater efforts and persist longer even when they have difficulties or challenges (Gist, 1987; Bandura, 1977; Salomon, 1984).

It can be seen that self-efficacy which influences individuals' behaviors is a better predictor for academic performance than actual abilities as students with same level of abilities but different degrees of self-efficacy behave differently in terms of both efforts and persistence, which in turn affect their academic achievement. However, Pajares (1997) argued that it does not mean that only by believing they can, people can successfully produce outcomes even beyond their abilities as desired performance requires both self-efficacy and necessary skills and knowledge. However, how individuals perceive their capabilities determine the attitudes and actions individuals take toward the knowledge and skills they have. Also, how well knowledge and skills are acquired is largely affected by personal efficacy beliefs.

### **2.2.5 Self-Efficacy for Performance and Self-Efficacy for Learning**

Self-efficacy is predictive for subsequent performance as the beliefs of individuals' capabilities for performing certain tasks, which were formed from

the previous performance outcomes, influence individuals' behaviors. However, researchers distinguished self-efficacy for learning from self-efficacy for performance in terms of task familiarity (Schunk, 1996; Schunk, 1989; Zimmerman et al, 1992). They suggested that when students are familiar with the tasks, they tend to form self-efficacy for performing the tasks by interpreting the prior achievements and acquired skills. At this level, self-efficacy for performance can predict performance well. However, when students are unfamiliar with tasks, it is impossible for them to judge the capabilities based on relevant skills because they have no idea about what skills will be required for the tasks. Schunk (1989) claimed that at this level, students' self-efficacy is based on their perceived abilities for self-regulatory learning. They make judgments about how effectively they learnt similar skills in the past, what new skills will be required for the tasks, how easily they will master the new skills, and how skillfully they can monitor and evaluate the learning outcomes. While self-efficacy for performance is predictive for performance, studies found the importance of self-efficacy for learning for subsequent performance, skills and self-efficacy assessments (Schunk, 1996; Zimmerman et al, 1992; Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Pajares, 1996).

Given the significance of self-efficacy, a large number of studies have been conducted aiming at enhancing self-efficacy beliefs. According to Schunk (1981, 1982, 1983), Schunk & Gunn (1986), and Relich et al (1986) suggested that

improved self-efficacy can be achieved by modifying causal attributions of learners. In the following paragraph, attribution theory and causal attributions were specifically introduced.

## **2.3 Attribution Theory**

Attribution theory describes how individuals explain the causes of certain performance outcomes and attributions refer to the explanations individuals give for their performance successes or failure (Weiner, 1986). Causes for performance successes or failures are categorized by three dimensions: locus of control referring to internal or external to the individual, stability referring to stable or unstable over time, and controllability referring to controllable or uncontrollable by the individual. According to Weiner (1985, 1986), effort, ability, task difficulty, and luck are generally perceived as the four main causal attributions for students' performance successes and failures in academic settings. Effort is considered as internal, unstable and controllable; ability is regarded as internal, stable and uncontrollable; task difficulty is generally perceived as external, unstable and uncontrollable; and luck is considered as external, unstable and uncontrollable. Although many other factors were regarded as attributions influencing students' performance outcomes as well such as mood, teaching materials, teaching quality, environment of learning, but to a less extent (Boruchovitch, 2004). Weiner (2000) proposed that attributions can influence

students' expectancy, values, and beliefs about their competencies, which in turn influence their motivation and academic performance. Kistner et al (1988) investigated the relationship between children's attributions and achievement progress in a longitudinal study lasting for two years. It was found that children who attributed learning difficulties to stable and uncontrollable factors such as ability made less academic progress than those who attributed learning difficulties to internal and unstable factors such as efforts. Therefore, how students attributed their performance successes or failures has a great impact on their motivation and subsequent performance.

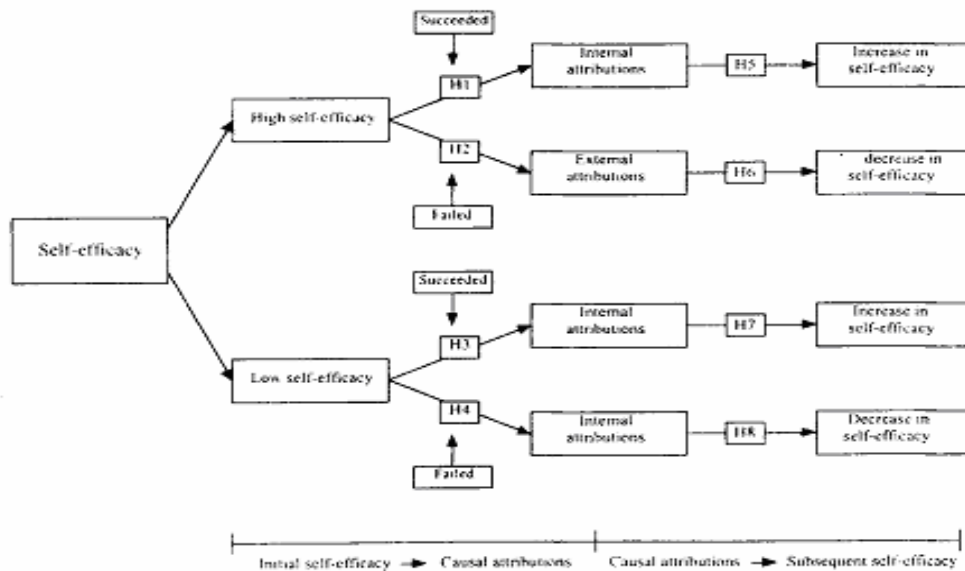
## **2.4 Relationship between causal attribution and self-efficacy**

Zimmerman and Cleary (2006) believed that although mastery experiences serve as the strongest source of self-efficacy, cognitive explanations for the causes of the individual performance successes or failures is an essential factor for changing self-efficacy. The relationship between self-efficacy and attribution is confirmed for its existence by researchers. As a matter of fact, the reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and causal attribution has been proposed by Bandura as early as in 1977. He suggested that the effects of performance feedback on subsequent self-efficacy will vary as individuals attribute performance feedback differently. Hsieh and Schallert (2008) pointed out that

although this connection between causal attribution and self-efficacy was explicitly suggested by Bandura, yet very few studies have examined this link and mostly in the area of sports.

Stajkovic and Sommer (2000) examined Bandura's propositions that self-efficacy provides information for one's explanations of an outcome, which in turn influence formation of subsequent self-efficacy. They developed a model of direct and indirect links between self-efficacy and causal attributions which is shown in Figure 2.1. They found that initial self-efficacy and performance feedback were both important factors influencing causal attributions, which were a significant predictor of subsequent self-efficacy. Highly self-efficacious individuals who succeeded in performing a task made internal attributions and increased subsequent self-efficacy. However, they attributed performance failure to external attributions and subsequent self-efficacy decreased significantly. Self-inefficacious individuals tended to attribute performance success to internal causes as well because the authors believed people were likely to perceive a positive relationship between performance success and their behaviors. Internal attributions of self-inefficacious individuals for successful performance contributed to increased subsequent self-efficacy. Self-inefficacious ones however, unlike highly self-efficacious people who attribute failure to external causes, tend to make internal attributions when they encounter failures. Their subsequent self-efficacy therefore, decreased significantly.

**Figure 2.1** Model of relationships between self-efficacy and attributions  
(Stajkovic & Sommer, 2000)



In achievement contexts, students who attribute their academic outcomes to internal and controllable causes such as effort display a high sense of self-efficacy. They are likely to be motivated to pursue goals and perform well ultimately (Stajkovic & Sommer, 2000). Comparatively, students who perceive their performance as due to internal, stable, and uncontrollable factors tend to be self-inefficacious and difficult to be motivated, which in turn make them perform worse than self-efficacious ones (Gernigon & Delloye, 2003; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008).

## **2.5 Modifying Causal Attributions through Attributional Retraining**

Given the significant reciprocal connection between self-efficacy and causal attributions, numerous researches were conducted aiming at modifying attributional variables serving as conveyors of efficacy information. Based on studies of both self-efficacy theory and attributional theories, one solution might be providing attributional feedback to enhance students' perceived self-efficacy and academic achievement (Schunk, 1982, 1983). According to Schunk (1982), the role of effort should be received great attention because unlike ability, luck and task difficulty, effort is under personal control and is able to change. When individuals believe enhanced efforts will produce success, they will persist longer, increase perceptions of self-efficacy and improve performance level. Effort attributional feedback focuses on encouraging students to "*try harder*". Students were typically told "*That was very good. That means you tried*" when they were succeed and once they failed, the feedback of "*No you didn't get that, that means you should have tried harder*" (Meyer and Dyck, 1986) were given. A number of studies were conducted and results indicated improved academic achievement performance and persistence through enhanced effort attribution by giving effort attribution to both success and failure outcomes (Chapin and Dyck, 1986; Dweck, 1975; Fowler and Peterson, 1981). However, there were also studies with the results of improved performance or persistence but no improvement in effort

attribution after attributional retraining (Meyer and Dyck, 1986; Okalo, 1992, Thomas and Pashley, 1982). Few studies have been conducted to examine the effect of effort attributional feedback on self-efficacy. In Schunk's experiment (1982), children who lacked subtraction skills received subtraction training with effort attributional feedback concerning past achievement, with feedback concerning future achievement or with no feedback. The results indicated that effort attributional feedback for past achievement led to improved skill development and higher self-efficacy because effort attributional feedback helped children link past achievement with the controllable and changeable factor, promoting academic performance and self-efficacy.

In his later study (1983), Schunk investigated the effect of ability and effort attributional feedback on children's motivation, attributions, self-efficacy and academic performance. *"The rationale for adding ability was related to attribution theory, which identified both ability and effort as being a source of pride."*(Robertson, 2000, Weiner, 1986) When children are provided with ability attributional feedback for their success and believed that their past success largely depend on their personal ability, children are expected to produce high motivation and future success (Schunk, 1983). Additionally, students prefer to be viewed as ones with high ability than as ones who work hard because they hope to be thought of smart rather than hard workers who can succeed only through effort. In the study (Schunk, 1983), 44 third-grade children participated in the

experiment. During the project four treatments of periodical ability attributional feedback, effort attributional feedback, ability + effort attributional feedback, or no attributional feedback were given. The results indicated that children received only ability feedback had the highest performance skill and self-efficacy. There was no significant difference between effort and ability + effort condition groups, but each outperformed the no-feedback condition. Unfortunately however, although the significant roles of attributional retraining to children's performance and self-efficacy through modified causal attribution was strongly proposed, the author did not include measures of attributional change in both studies(1982, 1983). Therefore, it was in fact unknown if the changes in children's performance and self-efficacy were mediated by modified causal attributions, other potential mediating factors, or influenced directly by attributional feedback.

Craven et al (1991) attempted to compare experimental to classroom effects of effort-ability attributions on children's attributions. Both researchers and teachers provided effort and ability attributional feedback for performance success and attribute lack of effort for failures. Teachers also included internal positive statement such as "*This is good work. You must feel good about your abilities in reading*" for success. However, the results indicated only modest gains in the research condition for improved attributions but not in the classroom condition.

A large number of studies on attribution retraining in the past more than two

decades therefore, examined the influences on academic performance, persistence and achievement motivation (Borkowski et al, 1998; Chapin and Dyck, 1986; Craske, 1985; Dweck, 1975; Haynes et al, 2008; Toland and Boyle, 2008). Few studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between attribution retraining and self-efficacy. Those studies aiming at improving self-efficacy by modifying the learners' attribution through attributional training usually failed measuring the changes in attribution. Therefore the mediating role of attribution to improved self-efficacy cannot be known as a matter of fact. The other problem is: many studies were conducted with elementary school children and middle school children. Relatively few studies focused on college or university students. Whether attribution training can effectively change attributions of these students is unsure because there might be difference between children and adults in terms of their learning experience, attitudes toward past performance, attributional patterns and feedback from others. In the following section, the studies of attributional retraining for university students were analyzed.

## **2.6 Attributional Retraining at Higher Education Level**

### **2.6.1 The Effect of Attributional Retraining on Academic Performance**

With the similar goals as studies focusing on children, few studies have been conducted in higher education settings trying to preventing university students from negatively attributing performance failures and undermining their motivation and subsequent academic performances. Noel et al (1987) selected first year students whose grades were either D or F on the first two exams in the course and divided them into a training group and a control group. For the experimental group, videotapes of two seniors giving reasons for their academic performance were shown. The seniors noted that their initial performance were poor and attributed their failures to external factors such as teaching problems, difficult tasks. However, their performance improved gradually in later semesters and they found that efforts and study habits were more responsible for their performance. After the videotapes were shown, the subjects received a written summary listing the points made previously. The results of the study found that through attributional retraining, students' test performance and grades were improved and their attributions were moderately changed. Other studies which offered attributional retraining by attributing ability and effort for performance success and lack of effort for performance failure, found the similar results of

improved academic achievements including test performance, GPA scores, and final grades (Overwalle et al, 1989; Perry & Penner, 1990; Haynes et al, 2006) of those subjects whose initial academic performances were poor.

While most studies investigated the effects on academic performance of attributional retraining which tried to change students' uncontrollable and stable attributions to controllable and unstable factors, few studies provided strategy training with attributional retraining together to explore how university students' performance changed. Cavanaugh (1991) for example, selected students who were enrolled in a development program in a junior college with below the average reading scores and divided them into three groups. For the first group, the students received text comprehension strategy training. For the second group, the subjects received both attributional retraining and strategy training. The students in the control group had no intervention. The findings indicated that both training groups performed better on recall and short-answer tests than the control group. However, it was also found that the group receiving both attribution retraining and strategy training did not perform significantly greater than the one receiving only strategy training. It was possible that after enough time, the attributional retraining was unnecessary anymore because students had already effectively used strategies to enhance their performances.

## **2.6.2 The Effect of Attributional Retraining on Attributional Schema**

Although many studies at higher education level investigated the effects of attributional retraining on academic performance of students, few found the significant changes of causal attributions after attributional retraining. Noel et al (1987) found only moderate attribution changes after attributional retraining. Cavanaugh (1991) claimed that there was no attribution change for either the group which received both strategy training and attributional retraining, or the one received only strategy training. Menec et al (1992) indicated that students receiving attributional retraining attributed academic performance more to effort and ability, and desired to do well than the control group. However, this impact was only found for students with an external, rather than those with internal, locus of control. Perry et al (1993) believed that a lack of findings for attribution changes might be due to inappropriate methodologies utilized in the studies. They pointed out that on one hand, some researchers failed to consider subjects' perceptions of the specific attributional information provided during the intervention and gave an example of a study of Jesse and Gregory (1986-1987) in which changes in attributions were not measured directly but were inferred from the questions about learning strategies. Perry et al (1993) pointed out that giving academic performance alone did not help students realize the relation between poor performance and ineffective use of learning strategies. As a result, their

causal attributions were not changed after the study. Perry et al (1993) argued that on the other hand, many studies did not assess the students' pretest attributions so as to compare pretest and posttest attributions. This problem has been mentioned above with regard to the studies of attributional retraining for children. As such, it is unknown whether students' academic performances were enhanced by modified attributions or other potential mediating factors. Comparing only posttest attributions between the experimental and control groups does not provide enough evidence of attribution changes by the attributional retraining intervention (Perry et al, 1993). Few of more recent studies however, compared the pretest and posttest attributions and found attributional retraining helped improve students' effort attributions (Haynes et al, 2006).

### **2.6.3 The Effect of Attributional Retraining on Motivation**

While many researchers for the two decades aimed at improving academic performance of students by attributional retraining within higher education settings, few studies explored the impacts of attributional retraining on motivation and emotions. Struthers and Perry (1996) firstly examined the effects of academic attributional styles of college students on their performance, motivation and emotion. The results showed that students who attributed performance failures to unstable and controllable factors produced higher

performance and motivation than those who attributed to stable and uncontrollable factors. The study provided attributional retraining subsequently and it was found that through such training, students' performance, emotion and motivation were enhanced. The more recent study of Ruthig et al (2004) found the relations between attributional retraining and test anxiety, voluntary course withdrawals.

#### **2.6.4 Sample Selection of Attributional Retraining at Higher Education level**

It is worthwhile to notice the sample selection of the studies of attributional retraining at higher education level. As the purposes of attributional retraining are to positively change students' attributions, and to enhance their motivation, effort, persistence, and academic achievement, many studies selected students who experienced frequent performance failures and set the low performance scores as a criterion for selecting the subjects (Wilson & Linville, 1982; Noel et al, 1987; Hall et al, 2006). Van Overwalle et al (1989) pointed out that the ideal subjects for attributional retraining are those students who performed slightly lower than the passing level as they have enough ground to make up. However, the subjects cannot be those who performed much worse than the passing level and had such poor ability as it is too difficult for them to increase either motivation or academic performance even through attributional retraining.

### **2.6.5 Limitations of previous Studies**

In a summary, studies at higher education level of more than two decades confirmed the use of attributional retraining on improved performance. Haynes (2008) demonstrated that the underlying hypothesis of the relevant studies is that attributional retraining modifies attributions and leads to increases in student motivation, which in turn improves academic performance. However, few previous studies compared the pretest and posttest attributions, or found significant changes in attributions. Also, as Haynes (2008) pointed out, relatively few studies examined the effect of attributional retraining on motivation. The researches investigating the impact of attributional retraining on self-efficacy at higher education level are even more hardly found.

## **2.7 Self-efficacy and Attribution: Students as Foreign Language Learners**

### **2.7.1 Connections between Attributions and Foreign Language Performance**

With regard to students' causal attributions for foreign language learning, there have been studies investigating the relationships between the causes of performance success or failure perceived by foreign language students and

academic performance. In a qualitative study conducted by Yan and Li (2008), four Chinese postgraduates were divided into two groups of low achievers and high achievers to report the factors they attribute for their success and failures in English learning. While high achievers attributed their success to internal factors such as effort, interest in English, and language ability, low achievers attributed their failures to both external uncontrollable factors such as bad learning environment, negative role of teachers, and an internal uncontrollable factor-low ability. Similar findings were reported by Liu and Wei (2006). The poorly-performed Chinese EFL students were likely to attribute their bad performance to lack of ability or perceived English as a very difficult language which was impossible to be learnt well. However, as Yan and Li (2008) further analyzed, although these students claimed that their poor outcomes were due to the above uncontrollable factors through their so-called “*hard effort*”, the reality was that their behaviors were far away from being “*hard effort*” compared with well-performed students. While the two high-achievers spent more than two hours on English learning besides English classes, the two low achievers did not study as hard as they have claimed because both reported that they did not spend any more time on it after English classes. However, they regarded such behavior as “*hard effort*” when they sat up for hours without any concentration but thinking about social activities.

However, some other studies exploring the connections between foreign

language performances and attributions yield different and inconsistent results. Both Tao et al (2008) and He et al (2010) found that Chinese university students including both successful and unsuccessful ones attributed lack of effort as the main factor for failures of foreign language performance. These findings are different with the results of previous two which reported that low achievers made external unstable, and internal stable attributions for performance failures. He et al (2010) also found that successful and unsuccessful foreign language learners differed significantly in task difficulty attribution for performance failures. While successful learners believed that difficult examinations would not influence their performance greatly due to their high ability, the unsuccessful students asserted their performances largely depended upon the difficulty of tasks. However, these findings of He et al (2010) are inconsistent with the study of Zhao (2007) who found that successful Chinese university students attributed task difficulty as the main factor for foreign language performance failures.

### **2.7.2 Connections between Attributions and Self-Efficacy in Foreign Language Learning**

As Bandura (1986) pointed out, judgments of self-efficacy are task and context, domain and task specific, a number of studies have explored students' self-efficacy in many different areas such as mathematics, science and sports. However, the research of self-efficacy in foreign language learning has been

surprisingly neglected (Pei-Hsuan, 2005; Pei-Hsuan et al, 2008). Few studies investigated the connections between self-efficacy in foreign language learning and causal attributions. Pei-Hsuan (2005) and Pei-Hsuan et al (2008) asked 500 undergraduates who were enrolled in Spanish, German, and French courses to make perceived attributions for their academic performance. It was found that self-efficacy correlated with ability and effort positively. It was also found that students with high self-efficacy tended to attribute internal and stable factor such as ability for their successes and made internal unstable attribution such as effort for their performance failures. Those low self-efficacious students however, made luck which is external and unstable for their successes and ability which is internal and stable for performance failures.

### **2.7.3 Connections between Self-Efficacy and Language Learning Strategies**

Some other studies focusing on self-efficacy in foreign language learning pointed out the close connection between self-efficacy and strategy use (National Capital Language Resource Center, 1996; Yang, 1999). The findings of Yang (1999) showed that students with high levels of perceived capability in foreign language learning used more learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies. Also, students who used more learning strategies were more confident in foreign language learning. As Zimmerman (1990) suggested, an individual's judgments

of capability in performing a certain task are closely connected with effective use of learning strategies. Those self-efficacious students are confident in solving problems because they have found the most effective ways to solve problems during learning process in the past (National Capital Language Resource Center, 1996). Yang's (1999) study which connected foreign language learners' self-efficacy with learning strategy use was supported by Graham (2004), who argued that the role of learning strategies should not be neglected in foreign language learning. The researcher believed that strategy use attribution is likely to affect students' expectations of future success or failure, that is, self-efficacy. As learning strategy use attribution is internal and controllable, students who explain their performance by this attribution tend to pay a great attention on problem solving and pursue more effective learning strategies. However, Graham (2004) pointed out that the problem is that very few students realized the importance of effective learning strategy use for their successful performance. Her argument is true and from the findings of studies discussed above, it can be seen that almost no students regarded ineffective strategy use as the main reason for their poor performance. Rather, they attributed low ability and task difficulty for their unsuccessful foreign language learning.

However, the accuracy of findings of Yang's study (1999) was questioned by Chen (2007) in terms of the self-efficacy instrument. According to Chen (2007), Yang (1999) investigated the self-efficacy in English learning of Taiwan

University students by using the items such as “*I have a special ability for learning foreign languages*” and “*I enjoy practicing English with the Americans I meet*”. However, these items from *Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI) which were developed by Horwitz (1987) were employed to assess students’ beliefs in foreign language aptitude rather than self-efficacy. Chen (2007) argued that the misunderstanding of self-efficacy would make the study fail to capture what is being assessed and decrease the predictive role of self-efficacy. This is true as according to Bandura (2005), who emphasized self-efficacy scales should be task and domain specific:

*“The efficacy belief system is not a global trait but a differentiated set of self-beliefs linked to distinct realms of functioning... .. There is no all-purpose measure of perceived self-efficacy. The ‘one measure fits all’ approach usually has limited explanatory and predictive value because most of the items in an all-purpose test may have little or no relevance to the domain of functioning.”*

Nevertheless, Yang’s (1999) study helped researchers pay a great attention to the connection between self-efficacy in foreign language learning and effective learning strategies.

## **2.8 Effect of Learning Strategy Training on Self-efficacy in Foreign Language Learning**

Given the close relations between the two variables, foreign language strategy training has attracted the attention of many researchers. Kinoshita (2003) believed that language learning strategy training is effective as:

*“(Learners) become active participants in the language learning process and ca become more efficient and positive in their approach to learning. Through this reactive approach to learning, learners’ knowledge of learning strategies become procedural and a positive backwash effect on motivation levels, self-efficacy, learner autonomy, transfer skills and language proficiency will result.”*

There were studies investigating the effect of learning strategies on learners’ self-efficacy in foreign language learning. Zheng et al (2009) conducted a study to explore the impact of metacognitive learning strategies on English self-efficacy of Chinese university students. It was found that through the training, both of students’ use of metacognitive learning strategies and English self-efficacy improved. The effectiveness of learning strategies thus was confirmed. The similar results were found by Chularut and DeBacker (2004) who suggested that the use of concept mapping as a cognitive learning strategy is effective to improve self-efficacy in reading of EFL students.

## **2.9 Self-efficacy and Attribution: English Listening Comprehension of Chinese University EFL Students**

In the setting of foreign language learning, it is worthwhile to focus on English language learners with a low level of self-efficacy in English listening comprehension. According to Yang's (1999) survey study focusing on college students in Taiwan, although most of them expressed their desire and need to master English listening skills, 56% of the students believed that it was more difficult than other areas of English learning such as reading and writing. According to Qin (2010), for many Chinese students, listening is the most difficult part in English acquisition and their performance is largely depends upon the difficulty of listening materials.

Listening comprehension is often described as *“the construction of meaning using both the decoded and language and the comprehender's prior knowledge”* (Lund, 1991, P196) and the listening process is defined as *“an active process in which listeners select and interpret information that comes from auditory and visual clues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to express”* (Thompson & Rubin, 1996, P331). Underwood (from Chen, 2005) summarized several main listening problems existing among many students of EFL as:

1. *lack of control over the speed at which speakers speaks;*
2. *not being able to get things repeated;*
3. *the listener's limited vocabulary;*
4. *failure to recognize the "signals";*
5. *problems of interpretation;*
6. *inability to concentrate, and*
7. *established bad learning habits.*

Therefore, given the dilemmas above, many Chinese university students perceive it is difficult to perform well for English listening. The other important factor preventing Chinese university students from improving English listening is the traditional teaching methods in China. According to Hao (2009), almost all teachers have the English classes with the same or similar pattern: introducing the background, translating the contents, analyzing the grammar and vocabulary. After English tests especially the listening comprehension part, most teachers only gave the original listening text and told students the right answers. Very few of them teach students to analyze their problems objectively, use the learning strategies effectively and monitor the learning process skillfully. Therefore, when facing the problems, many poorly performed students are lack of solutions and display low self-efficacy and tend to attribute their failures in English listening to lack of ability because no matter how much effort they have spent, the performance of English listening is poor anyway. They do not realize learning

strategies do exist and effective use of them helps improve English listening substantially. The findings of Yang's (1999) study suggested that it is an urgency to explore how to increase EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' self-efficacy in English listening comprehension. However, it is unfortunate the research area of improving self-efficacy of Chinese university EFL students, especially self-efficacy beliefs in English listening, is still immature. Therefore, how to enhance self-efficacy in English listening of Chinese university students as EFL learners serves as the focus of the present study.

## **2.10 Effective Instruction of Listening Learning Strategies**

In spite of significance of learning strategy training, the quality of learning strategy instruction is also an essential factor determining how effectively students learn strategies. Kinoshita (2005) suggested that learning strategies are teachable and they do help students improve language motivation and performance as long as the format of instruction is direct and explicit. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggested that learning strategy instruction can be divided as direct or embedded. Direct instruction informs students the value and purposes of strategy training. In embedded instruction however, students are not informed the reasons for strategy training. In stead, they are presented training materials and activities to elicit the use of strategies. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) presented

that learning strategy instruction can also be separated or integrated. That is, students are taught only learning strategies or strategies integrated with classroom practicing. Kinoshita (2005) suggested that direct and integrated instruction should be adopted as such approach informs learners the value and purposes of learning strategies, helps them identify the learning strategies being used and provided them with opportunities to practice systematically.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) presented scope and sequence frameworks for learning strategy instruction. The recent study of Ozeki (2000) developed the sequence for listening strategy instruction based on the basic structure of strategy training of O'Malley and Chamot (1990). In the preparation stage, earlier strategies were reviewed and new learning strategies were presented explicitly including the name of them, when and why to use. In the lesson stage, students were provided with opportunities to practice the strategies with various listening comprehension tasks. To investigate the impact of strategy training, pretest and posttest performance scores were compared.

## **2.11 Further research of listening comprehension self-efficacy and attribution: Feedback Linking Performance with Strategy Use to Enhance Self-Efficacy**

In the above sessions, the close relations between self-efficacy in foreign

language learning and learning strategies were discussed. Research on learning strategy also demonstrated the importance of effective strategy instruction for successful foreign language learning. Researchers believed that effective learning strategy use results in successful learning achievement which in turn, improves self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 1990; Schmidt & Ford, 2003; Ching, 2002). Such explanation however, is partially right from the perspective of mastery experience as one source of self-efficacy. There might be still problems during the process of strategy training. Firstly, most studies focusing on the effect of strategy training neglect that students' self-efficacy may be difficult to be enhanced because it is possible that some of them who performed poorly and rarely tried effective strategies in past still cannot understand how to select and use strategies effectively even with strategy training. Graham (1997) claimed that there are many cases students rarely use the strategies correctly when they believe they are aware of the use of learning strategies, or even when they are taught a series of learning strategies. She explained it is a phenomenon particularly common in listening comprehension of foreign language learning when students believe they listen for "*key word*" but actually they just pay attention to the words they can understand rather than the "*key*" ones which are useful for understanding the text (Graham, 1997, 2006). In spite of strategy training, different students have different degrees of understanding of those strategies. That is, there might be a gap between what is aimed to be understood and what is actually understood (Hattie, 2002). The findings of Graham's studies

indicate that it would be a pity if students were failed to understand learning strategies explicitly and consequently, attribute their failures to lack of ability or task difficulty, which in turn undermine their self-efficacy beliefs and future performance.

Graham (2007) thus suggested the above problem might be addressed through teachers' feedback which should include comments on students' strategy use, explain explicitly and give suggestions when students failed to use strategies effectively. As such, the gap between what is aimed to be understood and what is actually understood can be reduced (Hattie, 2002). Moreover, Graham (2007) believed that such feedback which completely focuses on students' strategy use encourages students to think about the relations between their performance and strategy use, which in turn help them modify negative attributions of inability or task difficulty. Brophy (1998) suggested that students' negative attributions for their performance failures can be modified to insufficient effort, lack of information, or ineffective strategies use rather than to lack of ability by feedback from teachers which direct students to "*retracing their steps to find their mistakes or by analyzing the problem to find another approach*".

Graham (2007) therefore conducted a study in which she hypothesized that listening self-efficacy of foreign language learners can be improved through the combination of strategy training with teacher's feedback on strategy use, which

help students realize foreign language listening comprehension is within their control by linking their academic performance and strategy use. In the study, different interventions were provided to three groups of students: students in one group (HS) received learning strategy training and got feedback from the researcher only in relation with their strategy use. The students in this group were also required to keep a strategy use log and give comments on the listening strategies they had used during the sessions. Students were encouraged to list plans and steps they were going to use subsequently and indicate how to achieve them in the strategy use diaries. The instructor's feedback on students' diaries was given to help alter students' negative attributions of "*task difficulty*" or "*inability*" to "*inappropriate strategy use*". Students of the other group (LS) received strategy training but did not keep a strategy use diaries and did not receive feedback on their strategy use. The comparison group received no strategy training but only a range of tests. Results showed that students in the HS group had made the biggest gains in some aspects of self-efficacy as well as their listening achievement although their gains, compared to the LS group were not as great as anticipated which may due to insufficient feedback students got on their strategy use. The researcher analyzed the improved self-efficacy from the perspective of enhanced listening ability. She explained it is possible that students felt more confident about their listening because they were able to understand more of the post-test passages through the feedback on their strategy use.

In the study the author also compared the most likely reasons for perceived successes or failures in language learning of students in the HS group before and after strategy training. They were also asked, at the end of the project, to comment on how much they felt their listening had enhanced during the project and how helpful they felt the strategy instruction had been. The findings indicated that although students rated the training highly, the most common perceived reasons for failures in language learning were still low ability and task difficulty. The findings demonstrated that the researcher's aim to help students link their strategy use and learning outcomes through feedback was not achieved and students' causal attributions were not modified. The researcher suggested that it may be the case that changing learners' causal attributions takes long time.

Graham's (2007) study provided us with a more effective strategy training approach to help improve students' self-efficacy in foreign language learning. However, there were two important issues. The first is with regard to her explanations of improved self-efficacy. The researcher speculated that students' improved self-efficacy was because of their enhanced listening comprehension ability. However, it can not be guaranteed that the improved ability is the only reason for enhanced self-efficacy. There might also be students who were more confident in their capabilities in performing tasks without improvement in performance. As a matter of fact, asking students to comment on feedback they received could help explain the changes in self-efficacy because it can be known

more clearly why students perceive feedback as helpful/unhelpful for their performance. Asking students to comment on feedback also helps researchers understand how to give more effective feedback in future from the perspective of students. Unfortunately however, the study only asked students to comment on strategy instruction rather than feedback, which may provide us with more inspiring information to improve self-efficacy.

In literature review above, the importance of a learner's self-efficacy in foreign language learning has been demonstrated and a number of studies have been conducted over the decades aiming at improving self-efficacy through attributional retraining. However few of them compared the pretest and posttest attributions, failing to understand whether the changes in self-efficacy were caused by modified attributions, other mediating factors or attributional feedback directly. Some other researchers believed that learning strategy training helped improve a learner's self-efficacy and performance of foreign language learning. Graham (2007) further argued that mere learning strategy training was insufficient because it was possible that some poorly performed students still could not understand how to select and use strategies effectively even with strategy training. The researcher thus suggested providing teachers' feedback on students' strategy use besides strategy training, so as to help them understand learning strategies better. Graham also believed that feedback encouraged students to link their performance with learning strategy use, which in turn

helped them modify negative attributions of inability and task difficulty. However, there were still limitations of Graham's study which have been analyzed above. Moreover, as discussed in detail in the following section, in spite of an urgency to improve English self-efficacy and performance of Chinese university students, very few relevant studies can be found. Therefore, given the limitations of previous research and the significance to improve English self-efficacy of Chinese university students, the study examined how listening strategy training with feedback on strategy use and performance affected English self-efficacy, performance and attributions of Chinese university students.

## **2.12 Purposes and Significance of the Present Study**

### **2.12.1 Purposes and Research Questions of the Study**

Based on Graham's (2007) study, the present study investigated the impacts of the combination of listening strategy training with feedback on English listening self-efficacy, English listening performance, and attributions of Chinese university students. Different with Graham's research however, feedback in the current study involved not only comments on students' strategy use, explanations and suggestions for strategy use, but also comments on their performance by presenting explicitly to students the relations between great efforts, effective strategy use and improved performance. In other words, the feedback in the

present study included both comment on strategy use and attributional retraining. There were two reasons for involving attributional retraining in feedback in the current study. Firstly, Grahams' (2007) research aimed at encouraging students to think about and realize the relationship between strategy use and performance so as to modify negative attributions through feedback on their strategy use. However, the findings showed that feedback failed to help students link the relations between the two variables. Therefore, it was a purpose of the present study to explore whether students can relate their performance failures to ineffective strategy use and lack of efforts by directly and explicitly presenting them the impacts of effective strategy use and efforts.

Secondly, as learning strategy training focuses on students who perform unsuccessfully, some students of them are the ones who are difficult to be motivated and have no confidence in trying any new learning strategy and performing successfully anyway (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Providing only strategy training without encouraging them to use the strategies is insufficient. Jones et al (1987) therefore suggested that teachers should teach and emphasize to them that "*their failures can be attributed to the lack of effective strategies rather than to the lack of ability*" in addition to learning strategy training. Thus to persuade and motivate students to seek and use strategies, feedback in the current study presented students directly the relations between performance, efforts and strategy use.

In the middle of the whole training, to understand how students perceived the strategies instructed, as well as to cultivate their metacognitive awareness, students who received both strategy training and feedback were asked to submit a strategy use diary and write down the strategies they have learnt and used successfully, as well as the ones they perceived difficult to understand or utilized ineffectively. They were also required to think about what they planned to do for subsequent similar tasks.

Moreover, at the end of the present study students who received both strategy training and feedback were asked to comment on feedback they received. As discussed above, such activity would make researchers understand more clearly why students perceive feedback as helpful or unhelpful for their foreign language learning. It helps researchers understand how to give more effective feedback in future from the perspective of students.

Besides investigating the impacts of the combination of listening strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance on English listening self-efficacy, English listening performance and attributions, the study also explored the correlations between posttest performance and posttest self-efficacy to examine how students' self-efficacy as individuals' judgments of capabilities to perform certain tasks predicted their performances after the training. As students were required to complete the attribution scales based on their training

experience over the project, the correlations between the attributions and training performance were examined to see how students with different performance levels attribute their academic failures. The correlation between the four posttest attributions and posttest self-efficacy was also investigated.

In summary, the over-arching aims of the study were to investigate how three groups receiving different interventions differed in terms of English listening self-efficacy, performance and performance attributions. It was also the objective of the study to explore how students perceived the strategies and feedback they were offered, so as to understand what makes more effective feedback.

The specific research questions of the thesis were:

- 1) How did the combinations of strategy training with feedback on learning strategy use and performance influence Chinese university students in terms of English listening self-efficacy, performance on English listening tests and performance attribution?
- 2) What were the correlations between posttest performance and posttest self-efficacy, posttest attributions and posttest self-efficacy, as well as post attributions and training performance?
- 3) How did students perceive the strategies instructed and what were the reasons for their perceptions?

- 4) How did students perceive the feedback they received and what made effective feedback?

Hypothesis:

1. The combinations of strategy training with feedback on learning strategy use and performance helped Chinese university students improve performance of English listening tests better than only strategy training did.
2. The combinations of strategy training with feedback on learning strategy use and performance helped Chinese university students improve their performance of English listening tests over the project.
3. The combinations of strategy training with feedback on learning strategy use and performance helped Chinese university students improve English listening self-efficacy better than merely strategy training did.
4. The combinations of strategy training with feedback on learning strategy use and performance enhanced English listening self-efficacy of Chinese university students over the project.

## **2.12.2 Significance of the Study**

### **2.12.2.1 Urgency to improve English Listening Self-efficacy of Chinese University Students**

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, listening comprehension was perceived by Chinese university students as the most difficult part in English acquisition. Facing a number of difficulties, many Chinese university students have no idea about how to solve the problems due to lack of effective learning strategies. Given the traditional teaching mode, most English teachers in China only ask students to practice as much as possible or explain the correct answers after each test. Very few of them help students realize the importance of learning strategies and instruct them how to select and use the strategies effectively (Chen et al, 2003). Without knowing how to solve the problems during learning process and due to lack of performance improvement, students' self-efficacy would be difficult to be enhanced. Therefore, it is of great importance to explore how to improve English listening self-efficacy of Chinese university students. From the perspective of pedagogy, the study provided pedagogical implications for English teachers in Chinese universities to help students use learning strategies effectively and improve their English listening achievements.

### **2.12.2.2 Lack of Studies Focusing on Improving Self-efficacy of Chinese University Students**

With regard to research on self-efficacy in foreign language learning of Chinese university students, most studies focused on investigated the relations between self-efficacy and attributions (Li, 2008; Zhang, 2002), academic performance (Zhang and Chen, 2008; Hu et al, 2006) and learning strategies (Yang, 1999; Zhang, 2004; Li, 2005), as well as gender differences in self-efficacy (Guo, 2007). There were very few studies exploring how to improve Chinese university students' self-efficacy in foreign language learning. The present study contributed to reduce the gap.

### **2.12.2.3 Lack of Research on Relating Attributional Retraining with Self-efficacy within Higher Education**

From the perspective of attributional retraining, much of the research has focused on school children and relatively fewer studies on university students. Besides, most studies of attributional retraining within higher education focused on investigating the impact of attributional retraining on academic performance in terms of test scores, GPAs, and final grades (Haynes et al, 2008). Although the reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and attributions has been advocated by Bandura in 1977, and Schunk (1982, 1984, 1986) suggested that attributional

retraining improved self-efficacy through modified attributions, few studies in higher education have examined the effect of attributional retraining on self-efficacy. Also, a number of studies did not compare the pretest and posttest attribution. Therefore, it is unclear whether attributional retraining helped improve self-efficacy and attributions of university students, and whether self-efficacy can be enhanced through the mediating role of attributions as assumed. In the current study therefore, self-efficacy of pretest and posttest were compared, as well as pretest and posttest attributions.

This chapter analyzed the relevant literature and demonstrated the purpose and significance of the present study. In the next chapter, methodologies of the study were presented.

## **Chapter Three --- Methodology**

The previous chapter analyzed the literature relevant to the study. The purposes, research questions and significance of the present work were demonstrated. In this chapter, the processes through which the training was conducted, the instruments by which data was collected, as well as methods by which data was analyzed were specifically presented.

### **3.1 Participants**

Because the English listening self-efficacy questionnaire in the present study focused on self-efficacy for performance and the items were developed relating to English listening of CET4 (College English Test 4) which was demonstrated below in instruments, and our training materials in the whole project were associated with English listening of CET4, students selected to participate in our study were those who were familiar with the task. Given that in Chinese universities most students start to devote a large amount of time on practicing and preparing for CET4 from the second year, all 315 second year non-English majored undergraduate students from a college in a Chinese university were invited to take part in the pretest. According to their performance scores, 96 students were selected to participate in the study.

### **3.2 Mixed Methods Research and Instruments**

In this study mixed methods including both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) believed that complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses can be achieved through combining the methods. Kington et al (2010) also argued that mixed methods research enables studies to explore both broad and complex research questions without the constraints of using a single method.

As one purpose of the study was to explore how students' English listening performance, self-efficacy and causal attributions changed over the training program, performance tests and questionnaires (quantitative) were necessary. However, the quantitative data was unable to explain why there were changes. Therefore, students receiving feedback were asked to give comments (qualitative) on feedback and were encouraged to report specifically why they perceived feedback in a certain way. As such, it was helpful to explain the changes of quantitative data. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter, Graham (2007) suggested that students' improved self-efficacy was because of enhanced listening ability through strategy training. However, we cannot ensure that enhanced ability and performance was the only reason as there might be students who were more confident in their listening capabilities through training without significant performance improvement. Thus, while quantitative data in the study

provided the results of training program, the qualitative data was expected to help analyze the results more comprehensively and the study sought to integrate both data in an interactive way.

Moreover, as it was an aim of the study to explore how students perceived the strategies they used, a strategy use diary (qualitative) was requested for students receiving both strategy training and feedback. These qualitative data provided concrete information on students' perceptions and interpretations of their effective or ineffective strategy use. Besides, students' self-evaluations in strategy use diaries enabled me to understand how well students' metacognitive awareness was cultivated after getting strategy instruction, thinking about and writing down the strategies they used while having the class tests, and receiving feedback of their strategy use. Comparatively, it was difficult to explore such complex research question through quantitative research method. The mixed methods research design therefore, as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) and Kington et al (2011) suggested, provided further analysis and greater explanation for the research.

### **3.2.1 English listening performance**

The listening part of College English Test 4 (CET4) was employed to examine students' English listening performance. College English Test 4 (CET4) is

mandatory national English as a foreign language test for all non-English majored undergraduate students and a prerequisite for a bachelor's degree in Chinese universities. There were two main reasons for adopting CET 4 to examine students' English listening performance in the present study. Firstly, CET4 has become the most widely used qualifying examination today in China with the aim to develop students' English ability in an all-round way, especially in listening and speaking. In order to ensure scientific, objective, unified and standardized testing, the design of CET strictly follows the procedures of questions setting, initial examining, predicting, item analyzing, further examining, test composing, testing, scoring, statistic analyzing and bank building (Yang, 2006). According to the findings of a three year project conducted jointly by the National College English Test Committee and the British Council, CET is of high validity (92% of teachers believe that CET does reflect students' actual English level and 86% believe the test contents are reasonable), and of high reliability (0.90) (Yang & Weir, 1998). The more important reason for choosing listening test of CET4 concerned with self-efficacy measure. As this mandatory test is the prerequisite to get a bachelor's degree, most second year students spend a large amount of time on practicing it and have been familiar with the examination. Pajares (1996) suggested that when students are familiar with the skills required to accomplish an academic task, they can interpret their prior attainments and identify the skills on which to formulate their self-efficacy for future performance. Given that most second year students have been familiar with this

certain task before the study, they could form the self-belief in their capability to perform the CET4 listening tasks according to their past attainment.

The listening comprehension part of CET4 consists of four types of tasks. The first is short conversations in which multiple choices are employed and each conversation is followed by one question and students are required to select one answer from four choices. Short conversations examine students' ability to understand general idea, and details of the dialogues. An example is as below:

*Listen to the short conversation and the question. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause you must decide the best answer from the four choices marked A), B), C) and D).*

*A) She used to be in poor health.*

*B) She was somewhat overweight.*

*C) She was popular among boys.*

*D) She didn't do well at high schools.*

The second type of listening task is long conversations and students are required to answer 4-5 questions after a conversation. This type of listening task focuses on examining students' ability to understand details (Gan, 2008). An example was given below:

*Listen to the long conversation and the questions. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause, you must decide the best answer from the four choices marked*

*A), B), C) and D).*

*1. A) She has packed it in one of her bags.*

*B) She has probably left it in a taxi.*

*C) She is going to get it at the airport.*

*D) She is afraid that she has lost it.*

The third type is short passages in the form of multiple choices and each passage is followed by 3-4 questions. Short passages are more difficult than the other two mentioned above because passages include a large number of information and involve topics of culture, technology, and news commentary which many students are not familiar with. Short passages require the abilities to understand main ideas, unknown words and details (Gan, 2008). One example was given as below:

*Listen to the short passage and questions. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A),B),C)and D).*

*1. A) They care a lot about children.*

*B) They need looking after in their old age.*

*C) They want to enrich their life experience.*

*D) They want children to keep them company.*

Compound dictations serve as the fourth type of listening task in CET and they examine students' ability to understand keywords and take effective notes (Gan, 2008). Whilst some words and sentences are left out from the passages, students are required to fill in the missing words in the original forms and sentences either

in the original forms or in students' own words. An example of compound dictations is given below:

*Listen to the passage three times. You are required to fill in the blanks numbered from 1 to 8 with the exact words you have just heard and the missing information in the blanks from 9 to 11 with either exact words you have heard or the main points in your own words.*

*More and more of the world's population are living in towns or cities. The speed at which cities are growing in the less developed countries is (1) \_\_\_\_... ...Without a base of people working in industry, these cities cannot pay for their growth; (11)\_\_\_\_\_.*

### **3.2.2 Self-efficacy**

Students' perceived capabilities of performing various listening tasks of CET4 were investigated through English Listening Self-Efficacy Questionnaire which was developed based on the ones used in the previous studies which examined the relationship between language learning strategies and self-efficacy (Graham 2007; National Capital Language Resource Centre, 2000), and the impact of English listening self-efficacy on listening performance (Chen, 2007). According to the syllabus of CET4, the abilities to understand main ideas, details, and opinions of listening texts by catching keywords including negatives, transition words and discourse markers such as “*but*”, “*however*”, “*therefore*”, “*firstly*”, “*essential*”, as well as the abilities to understand unknown words of the whole

passages or dialogues by inferencing are important to students and are regarded as the typical challenges the students are faced in listening of CET4. Based on these challenges and the corresponding listening tasks employed in the classes during the training project, 16 items were developed and students were asked to indicate how confident they were that they could accomplish the four types of listening questions of CET4 (short conversations, long conversations, short passages and compound Dictations) from the perspective of:

Understanding main ideas;

Understanding details;

Understanding the meaning of unknown words;

Catching the keyword.

To ensure the content validity of self-efficacy items, the items were phrased as “*how confident are you that you can perform the following tasks*”. The wording of can is suggested by Bandura (2006) who stated that “*Efficacy items should accurately reflect the construct. Self-efficacy is concerned with perceived capability....Can is a judgment of capability.*” In the present study, students’ efficacy beliefs were measured on a 11-point scale, ranging from 0 (not at all sure), through intermediate degrees of certainty, 5(moderately sure), to complete certainty, 10 (completely sure). This scale is a simplified version of 100-point response scale developed by Bandura (2006), which is with the same scale structure and descriptions. The 100-point scale ranges in 10-unit intervals from 0

(not at all sure) to 100 (completely sure). Bandura (2006) advocated that scales that use only a few steps should be avoided because they are less sensitive and less reliable. *“Including too few steps loses differentiating information because people who use the same response category may differ if intermediate steps were included”* (Bandura, 2006). Therefore both Bandura (2006) and Pajares et al (2001) strongly suggested that a 100-point efficacy rating scale is a stronger predictor of performance than a 5-interval scale. The simplified format of Bandura’s 100-point scale was chosen in our study as the scale made intuitive sense and was easier for students to fill out. Comparatively, scales with fewer points seem more susceptible to grade inflation (Reichheld, 2006). The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.956.

An example of English listening Self-efficacy items is:

*In terms of short conversations in College English Test 4, how confident are you that you can:*

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <i>1. Understand the main ideas of a conversation</i> | <i>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</i> |
| <i>between two English speakers</i>                   |                               |
| <i>2. Understand the details of a conversation</i>    | <i>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</i> |
| <i>between two English speakers</i>                   |                               |
| <i>3. Understand the meaning of unknown words by</i>  | <i>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</i> |
| <i>inferencing</i>                                    |                               |
| <i>4. Catch the keyword</i>                           | <i>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</i> |



2. The English listening self-efficacy questionnaire was given to these students and they were required to estimate how well they can perform four listening tasks in terms of the four aspects.

3. After the self-efficacy questionnaire, all 315 students immediately took a listening test of CET4. Based on performance of the test, 96 students were selected and divided into three groups with almost the same average score of each group, which serves as a prerequisite to compare their post performance. Although a large sample size is generally recommended in quantitative research to provide a precise indicator of fit in a population (MacCallum et al, 1996), sometimes it is impossible to obtain a larger sample because of limited time, expenses, especially when the whole population is unknown. In this study, the university is a middle-ranking one in China and the performance of these 315 non-English majored students represented the overall English listening performance of Chinese university students. 96 were selected and divided into three groups with 32 in each group to participate in the study from these 315 students because Gall et al (1996) suggested a minimum of 15 participants to be compared in every group in experimental or causal-comparative research. The samples employed therefore, were sufficient in the study.

As one purpose of the research was to investigate how the interventions influenced performance attributions of adult students who had longer learning

experiences than children, all the participants involved in the study were adult students who were aged from nineteen to twenty-one. Besides, the average English listening test score of each group was approximately 110, lower than that of all students participated in the pretest, which was 132. The 96 students involved in the study were those with scores lower than 132, ranging from 90 to 130. As Wilson & Linville (1982), Noel et al (1987), and Hall et al (2006) pointed out, to help students enhance effort, academic achievement and change their attributions, the low performance scores should be set as a criterion for selecting the subjects. However, students who performed worse than 90 were excluded as it might be difficult for them to increase academic performance even with interventions.

To investigate whether the combination of both strategy training with feedback on strategy use and performance helped improve students' performance and self-efficacy more than only strategy training did, both strategy training and feedback were provided to the first group and it was named TF, strategy training with no feedback to the second group (Group T), and neither strategy training nor feedback to a control group (Group C).

### 3.3.2 Intervention

The strategy training program lasted for seven weeks. Both group TF and group T received the English listening classes once a week. Each English listening class lasted for 45 minutes.

**Table 3.1** *Cognitive and Metacognitive Listening strategies instructed in the study.*

<u>Listening Strategies</u>	<u>Description</u>
COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
1. Repetition	Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal
2. Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language
3. Note Taking	Writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing
4. Imagery	Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable visualizations, phrases, or locations
5. Keyword	Paying attention to negatives, transition words and discourse markers which signal a main idea or a detail.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 6. Contextualization | Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence  |
| 7. Elaboration       | Relating new information to other concepts in memory  |
| 8. Inferencing       | Using available information to guess meanings of unfamiliar words and parts, or fill in missing information               |
| 9. Prediction        | Predicting the contents from the title or topic before listening or anticipating details in the next part while listening |

#### METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Directed Attention       | Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distracters   |
| 2. Selective Attention      | Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input |
| 3. Comprehension monitoring | Checking and confirming how well one understands the input during listening  |
| 4. Real-time assessment     | Deciding whether a particular part of the input is necessary for achieving comprehension goals   |
| 5. Comprehension evaluation | Determining the accuracy and completeness of comprehension   |

Group TF: For each class, I focused on a particular listening task and both specific cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies which were relevant to the listening task were introduced. The table above listed listening strategies including cognitive and metacognitive strategies which were suggested by O'Malley et al (1985, 1990) and Goh (1998), and being instructed and taught to students in our study. The strategies were taught by direct instruction and students were presented directly the purposes and values of the strategies. After introduction and explanation of the strategies, students were subsequently given a range of listening activities with specific instruction of strategy use for the particular listening task. For example, students were instructed to selectively pay attention to discourse markers such as "but", "therefore", "because" when listen to the conversations and passages. With regard to compound dictations, they were reminded to take notes effectively by repetition and translation, and evaluate the accuracy and completeness when listen for the third time. Before the end of each session, a listening test was given and students were required to write down what strategies they used for the tasks. There were five class tests in total for the whole project. Specifically, the first two tests were short conversations, the third one was long conversations, the forth one was short passages and the final one was compound dictations. Feedback was given on each student's test outcomes and their use of strategy. Explanations and suggestions of strategies were provided. A great emphasis was placed on effort and ability to use effective strategies for success. For example, for a student who indicated she used

prediction and note-taking effectively for a certain test in general but did wrong for a selective question which asked about the identity of two speakers after a short conversation, the feedback was given as:

*You are good at taking notes and predicting before listening from the signals and marks you made. They are very useful strategies and you could continue to use them in future English listening activities. The only question you did wrong revealed that you didn't understand the key words in the conversation cause you wrote down "pick up the .." and gave a question mark for "fair". Actually, it doesn't matter if you can fully understand the conversation. We sometimes can guess the meaning from inferencing. For this short conversation which asked about the identities of two speakers, it might be difficult to understand the whole conversation, but one asked "It's the next house on the left, how much will it be?" then we look through the four selections and can guess the conversation is most likely happen between a driver and a customer rather than other three types of relations. Anyway, you did quite well and you can definitely do much better with enough practice and appropriate strategy use.*

Each student was also required to keep a strategy use diary to record their comments on their strategy use. Specifically students were asked to respond to three key questions developed by Graham (2007). They were:

- 1) How do you feel about the strategies you used? Which strategies were successful?
- 2) Which strategies were unsuccessful? Why?
- 3) What do you plan to do next time?

Students were required to submit their diaries in the middle of the whole training. Feedback was given for students' comments on their strategy use. Efforts, effective or ineffective use of strategies, and progress were emphasized. There were two aims of the diary. The first was to understand how well students used the strategies and how they perceived these strategies. The second was to investigate how well students' metacognitive awarenesses of their learning processes were through strategy training involving introduction of what and how to use the strategies, thinking about and writing down strategies used during the listening process, receiving feedback on their performance and strategy use, and finally being encouraged to recall, evaluate their learning experiences. To explore these complex and specific questions, this particular self-reported qualitative method was more appropriate than quantitative ones. However, the validity might be affected by respondents' misunderstanding of questions or reluctance to give true answers. (JOG et al, 2003). Therefore, before asking students to write the diary, I emphasized to the students that all the results were confidential and I only kept their student numbers rather than names to track the data. I also carefully explained each question to make sure that students understand. However, how to make students to take the strategy use diary seriously is still an issue as many of them were reluctant to do such complex activity and few handed in the diaries. Therefore, there might be a threat to the reliability of the data.

An example of a student who reported her learning experience during the project is as below:

*I think some strategies are useful for me and some are not. Selective attention while listening and trying to catch keywords in the listening texts are very successful. Note-taking sometimes does work. However, I cannot use prediction well because I sometimes don't have enough times to understand the passage due to the fast speaking speed. I therefore cannot predict what is going on next. I Plan to learn more words to enlarge my vocabulary because poor vocabulary has been a main reason preventing me from understanding listening texts well even I learnt some very useful strategies from you.*

The feedback was given as below:

*Thank you for your reflection of the problems you had and evaluation on the strategy use. I'm happy note-taking and catching the key words are appropriate for you. With regard to prediction, actually you can try it in this way: before answering, read the questions and selections as soon as you get the test paper. This helps you to have a general idea of the conversations and passages. As such you know which part you should pay attention to while listening. You can also guess what kind of questions would be asked from the selections such as number, and keywords expressing attitudes of the speakers. With such preparation, it'd be easier for you to listen to the text and you don't have to focus on every detail. Reading the questions helps you to some extent to understand the passages. With regard to vocabulary, I think it's bright to enlarge it because it serves as a basis of English listening and various ways can be adopted such as watching interesting English movies or documentaries, listening to news and stories by native-speakers, or English songs. However, I don't recommend reciting vocabulary in English dictionaries or textbooks without learning how to use it. Because it's really boring and sometimes you*

*cannot understand them well or tend to forget quickly when the new words are difficult or abstract. Thus you probably still have no idea about how to use them properly and you don't understand the words in the listening texts even you recite them in past. Anyway, it is great you are willing to seek and use strategies suit you the most and you are working hard although without obvious improvement of performance temporarily. English learning does take time and requires a large number of efforts and appropriate strategies. Do persist and good luck!*

Group T: For each class, both specific cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies which were relevant to a particular listening task were introduced. A range of listening activities were subsequently given to students with specific instruction of how to use the strategies for the particular listening task. Before the end of each session, a listening test was given but students were not required to write down what strategies they used for the tasks. For the whole project the students in group T had five training tests and strategy training in the class as same as students in group TF had. However the participants in group T were not required to keep a strategy diary. No feedback was given on either strategy use or performance. In another word, there was no obvious difference between group TF and T in terms of English listening strategy instruction except asking writing down strategies and keeping a strategy use diary or not. It was feedback after the classes differentiating the interventions between the two groups.

Group C: No strategy training was given. Students were not required to report their strategy use and to keep a strategy use diary. No feedback was given on

either strategy use or performance attribution. Students were merely asked to participate in the same listening tests during the project.

### **3.3.3 Post-Test**

1. At the end the project, students of three groups were asked to, according to their training performance during the study, complete Attribution questionnaire and identify main reasons for not performing well at English listening
2. The self-efficacy Questionnaire was given to the three groups to investigate their estimated capabilities of performing similar tasks again in future.
3. A listening test of CET4 was given to all students in all three groups to examine whether there was any change of listening performance after the project and to compare the performance of three groups.
4. To understand whether feedback was helpful to students from their perspective and to understand how to give effective feedback, students in group TF were asked to comment on feedback they received.

### **3.4 Pilot Test**

A pilot test was conducted before the project for three purposes: (1) to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity of format, wording and items of the questionnaires;

(2) to enhance validity of the instruments, (3) to check the testing time the students spent on answering the questionnaire and determine how much time should be allocated for each instrument. The original English Listening Self-Efficacy Questionnaire and Attribution Questionnaire were tested on 10 second year non-English majored undergraduate students prior to the project. Consideration of translating English version to the Chinese one was made as the participants of the study were Chinese. However, students reported that it was not difficult to complete the questionnaire in English because it was understandable. Two questionnaires therefore, were not translated. Students were enquired whether there were any difficulties or ambiguities in order to improve the quality and validity of questionnaire. It took approximately 20 minutes of students to complete two questionnaires.

## **3.5 Methods of analysis**

### **3.5.1 Listening Tests Performance**

The data of seven English listening tests including the pre test, five class tests and the post test were analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). First of all, to examine the first hypothesis: whether English listening performances differed among three groups during the project, the mean listening scores of five class tests of three groups were compared by one-way

ANOVA, which compared means of two or more samples. Furthermore, to identify where the specific statistically differences lie, post-hoc comparisons using the method of Least Significant Difference were employed. With regard to the second hypothesis, as five training tests focused on different listening task, it did not make sense to compare the scores of five tests over time. Therefore to examine whether the combinations of strategy training with feedback on learning strategy use and performance helped students improve their English listening performance, paired-samples T-test was utilized to compare the pretest and posttest mean scores.

### **3.5.2 Self-efficacy**

With regard to students' English listening self-efficacy, all the data from the self-efficacy questionnaire was analyzed by SPSS as well. Firstly, One-Way ANOVA was utilized to test hypothesis three and explore whether significant difference exist among three groups in terms of their self-efficacy at the end of the project. Post-hoc comparisons using the method of Least Significant Difference were employed to examine where the specific significant differences lie. Secondly, I compared the pretest and posttest self-efficacy of three groups respectively using paired-samples T-test to examine hypothesis four and explore whether the three groups made gains in self-efficacy over two months. Furthermore, the mean gains of self-efficacy of three groups in terms of students'

capability to understand main idea, details, unknown words and catch key words for four types of listening tasks were specifically examined.

### **3.5.3 Attribution**

The changes on each attribution factor (pretest to posttest) of three groups were analyzed by paired-samples T test to explore whether there were significant changes after the training project.

### **3.5.4 Correlational Analysis**

Product-moment correlations were computed between posttest performance and posttest self-efficacy, posttest performance and four posttest attribution factors, posttest self-efficacy and posttest four attributions to analyze how these variables relate to each other.

### **3.5.5 Strategy Use Diary**

In the current study, the students of group TF were asked to keep a strategy use diary to write down what strategies they have learnt and used successfully, as well as the ones they perceived difficult to understand or utilized effectively. They were also required to think about what they planned to do next. It was

unfortunate however, such activity was not successful and very few students seriously wrote their diaries. Therefore there was insufficient data to do the content analysis comprehensively. According to the diaries collected, I identified the strategies that were successfully and unsuccessfully utilized by students and the reasons for their perceptions.

### **3.5.6 Comments on Feedback**

Students in group TF were also required, in the end of the study, to comment on the researcher's feedback on their strategy use and training performance. Base on their comments, I identified the elements that the students perceived as particular useful and explored how to make more effective feedback in future strategy training

### **3.5.7 Ethical Issues**

It is important for researchers to take ethical issues into account and protect the rights of participants while carrying out the research. A number of measures were adopted to ensure the rights of participants of this study. Firstly, the whole procedures of the research were introduced specifically and every student was given an informed consent form which allowed them to choose whether to participate in the study or not. The results were positive and all students gave

their consent to participate the study.

It is also researchers' responsibility to guarantee the participants' anonymity, which means they would remain anonymous through the whole study. To track each participant's data, student numbers were utilized in stead of their names which can reveal their identities. Moreover, the principle of confidentiality was applied and the participants were assured that their information would not be available to anyone else without their permission.

This chapter displayed how the training was conducted, and the methods used to analyze the data. The next chapter presented specifically the results of the study.

## Chapter 4 --- Results

This chapter presented all results relevant to the study. The data were presented in the form of tables below comparing the three groups in terms of class tests performance, pretest-posttest performance, pretest-posttest self-efficacy, mean gains of self-efficacy in performing four tasks in terms of four abilities, and pretest-posttest attributions. All between-group analysis were carried out using a one-way ANOVA with post-hoc comparisons carried out using the least significant differences test (LSD). The differences between pre and post tests were examined using paired-samples T-test. The number for all groups was 32 per group. Levene's test showed that for all comparisons, distributions of scores across all three groups were normal distributed. The correlation findings were displayed by presenting Pearson's product moment correlations in the tables as well.

### 4.1 Performance on English Listening Tests

With regard to the first research question: *“how do the combinations of strategy training with teachers' feedback on learning strategy use and performance attribution influence the performance of English listening tests of Chinese university students?”*, the mean scores of five class tests were compared to investigate whether there was performance difference between three groups with

the interventions.

**Table 4.1** Mean Scores for Tests One to Five. Maximum score for all tests was 150. Standard deviations are in parentheses and italics. Means not sharing common subscripts are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ )

	<i>Group TF</i>	<i>Group T</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Test One	111.88(15.12) <sub>a</sub>	104.06(15.42) <sub>b</sub>	104.38(11.34) <sub>b</sub>	3.156*	0.064
Test Two	115.47(15.93) <sub>a</sub>	105.16(13.35) <sub>b</sub>	99.69(18.58) <sub>b</sub>	7.933***	0.146
Test Three	80.16(17.39) <sub>a</sub>	69.38(17.77) <sub>b</sub>	63.91(15.44) <sub>b</sub>	7.664***	0.141
Test Four	75.78(25.21) <sub>a</sub>	65.94(21.64) <sub>ab</sub>	57.66(15.66) <sub>b</sub>	5.858*	0.112
Test Five	86.09(23.24) <sub>a</sub>	74.06(19.11) <sub>b</sub>	68.28(15.27) <sub>b</sub>	6.964*	0.130

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .

One-way ANOVA showed that in test one, group TF had an average performance score of 111.88 ( $SD=15.12$ ); group T had an average performance score of 104.06 ( $SD=15.42$ ), and group C had a mean of 104.38 ( $SD=11.34$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to performance of Test One,  $F(2, 93) = 3.156$ ,  $p = .047$ . The effect size was found to be small ( $\eta_p^2 = .064$ ) according to Curtin (2007), Kinnear and Gray (2008), who stated that for partial eta square, a small effect is 0.01 to 0.06, medium effect is 0.06-0.14, and a large effect is 0.14 and higher. The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that group TF had significantly greater performance than group T and C. Group T and C did not significantly differ.

In Test Two, group TF had an average performance score of 115.47 ( $SD=15.93$ );

group T had an average performance score of 105.16 ( $SD=13.35$ ), and group C had a mean of 99.69 ( $SD=18.58$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to performance of Test Two,  $F(2, 93) = 7.933$ ,  $p = .001$ . The effect size was found to be large ( $\eta_p^2 = .146$ ). The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that group TF had significantly greater performance than group T and group C. Group T and group C did not significantly differ.

In test three, group TF had an average performance score of 80.16 ( $SD=17.39$ ); group T had an average performance score of 69.38 ( $SD=17.77$ ), and group C had a mean of 63.91 ( $SD=15.44$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to performance of Test Three,  $F(2, 93) = 7.664$ ,  $p = .001$ . The effect size was found to be large ( $\eta_p^2 = .141$ ). The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that group TF had significantly greater performance than group T and group C. Group T and group C did not significantly differ.

With regard to Test Four, group TF had an average performance score of 75.78 ( $SD=25.21$ ); group T had an average performance score of 65.94 ( $SD=21.64$ ), and group C had a mean of 57.66 ( $SD=15.66$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to performance of Test Four,  $F(2, 93) = 5.858$ ,  $p = .004$ . The effect size was found to be moderate ( $\eta_p^2 = .112$ ). The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that group C had significantly lower performance than group TF. Group TF and group T did not significantly differ, as

well as between group T and group C.

In Test Five, group TF had an average performance score of 86.09 ( $SD=23.24$ ); group T had an average performance score of 74.06 ( $SD=19.11$ ), and group C had a mean of 68.28( $SD=15.27$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to performance of Test Five,  $F(2, 93) = 6.964, p = .002$ . The effect size was found to be moderate ( $\eta_p^2 = .130$ ). The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that group TF had significantly greater performance than group T and group C. Group T and group C did not significantly differ.

## **4.2 Pretest and Posttest English listening Performance**

I examined how listening performance changed for different groups with and without training by comparing the mean scores of pretest and posttests. Paired-samples T test was employed to examine the differences within each group before and after the study. One-way ANOVA was used to investigate the difference between the three groups. The results were displayed in the table below.

**Table 4.2** Mean Scores for Pretest and Posttest Performance. Maximum score for all tests was 150. Standard deviations are in parentheses and italics. Means not sharing common subscripts are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ )

	<i>Group TF</i>	<i>Group T</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Pretest	111.25(8.72) <sub>a</sub>	110.36(9.38) <sub>a</sub>	109.84(8.05) <sub>a</sub>	0.210	0.005
Posttest	120.00(15.81) <sub>a</sub>	110.16(13.77) <sub>b</sub>	103.91(18.08) <sub>b</sub>	8.245	0.151

One-way ANOVA showed that in the pretest, group TF had an average performance score of 111.25 ( $SD=8.72$ ); group T had an average performance score of 110.36 ( $SD=9.38$ ), and group C had a mean of 109.84 ( $SD=8.05$ ). The group in which students participated had no significant relation with performance in the pretest,  $F(2, 93) = 0.210, p = .809$ . In the posttest, group TF had an average performance score of 120.00 ( $SD=15.81$ ); group T had an average performance score of 110.16 ( $SD=13.77$ ), and group C had a mean of 103.91 ( $SD=18.08$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to the posttest performance,  $F(2, 93) = 8.245, p = .001$ . The effect size was found to be large ( $\eta_p^2 = .151$ ). The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that group TF had significantly greater performance than group T and group C. Group T and group C did not significantly differ.

To examine whether the difference within each group before and after the study was significant, paired-samples T-test was employed. The result showed that performance for Group TF increased significantly after the project,  $t(31) = -3.22, p = .003$ ; for Group T, performance did not significantly enhance after the study,  $t(31) = .106, p = .917$ . For Group C, there was no significant difference between the

pretest and posttest performance either,  $t(31)=1.745, p=.091$ .

Overall, the results above showed that group TF consistently performed better than group T and the control group. The combination of strategy training and feedback therefore, helped students perform better academically than other two groups. However, the intervention of mere strategy training did not help students differ from those in the control group in terms of CET4 listening performance. Therefore the findings supported the first hypothesis that strategy training plus feedback would be more beneficial than just strategy training for improving English listening performance. The findings also confirmed the second hypothesis that English listening performance of students who received both strategy training and feedback was expected to be significantly increased after the project.

### **4.3 Pretest and Posttest CET4 Listening Self-efficacy**

Now let us turn to the second research question to see how students' self-efficacy in English listening comprehension of CET4 changes over two months. Similarly, paired-samples T test was employed to examine the differences within each group and one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the difference between the three groups. The results were displayed in the table below.

**Table 4.3** Mean Scores for Pretest and Posttest Self-efficacy. Maximum score for all tests was 160. Standard deviations are in parentheses and italics. Means not sharing common subscripts are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ )

	<i>Group TF</i>	<i>Group T</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Pretest	82.75(21.77) <sub>a</sub>	79.34(26.22) <sub>a</sub>	79.56(17.17) <sub>a</sub>	0.240	0.005
Posttest	99.63(23.28) <sub>a</sub>	83.22(26.24) <sub>b</sub>	80.25(19.98) <sub>b</sub>	6.414	0.121

One-way ANOVA showed that in the pretest, group TF had an average self-efficacy score of 82.75 ( $SD=21.77$ ); group T had an average self-efficacy score of 79.34( $SD=26.22$ ), and group C had a mean of 79.56 ( $SD=17.17$ ). The group in which students participated had no significant relation with self-efficacy in the pretest,  $F(2, 93) = 0.240, p = .787$ . In the posttest, group TF had an average self-efficacy score of 99.63 ( $SD=23.28$ ); group T had an average self-efficacy score of 83.22 ( $SD=26.24$ ), and group C had a mean of 80.25 ( $SD=19.98$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to the posttest self-efficacy,  $F(2, 93) = 6.414, p = .002$ . The effect size was found to be moderate ( $\eta_p^2 = .121$ ). The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that group TF had significantly greater self-efficacy than group T and C. Group T and C did not significantly differ. Paired-samples T-test showed that for group TF, self-efficacy increased significantly after the study,  $t(31) = -7.506, p < .001$ . For group T, self-efficacy also enhanced significantly,  $t(31) = -2.140, p = 0.040$ . For group C however, there was no significant difference between the pretest self-efficacy and posttest self-efficacy,  $t(31) = -0.385, p = 0.703$ . The findings therefore supported both the third hypothesis that both strategy training and feedback was more beneficial than mere strategy training for improving English listening

self-efficacy, and the forth hypothesis that strategy training with feedback significantly enhanced students' English listening self-efficacy

#### **4.4 Comparisons of Mean Gains of Self-Efficacy in Four Abilities for Various Listening Tasks**

In the self-efficacy questionnaire, students were required to estimate their capability to perform the tasks of short conversations, long conversations, short passages and compound dictations in terms of their ability to understand main ideas, details, unknown words, and catch the keyword. Based upon the changes of students' self-efficacy over two months, the mean gains of three groups were compared by one-way ANOVA to examine whether they differed significantly from each other in terms of students' estimated capabilities of four abilities for four types of listening tasks.

##### **4.4.1 Comparisons of Mean Gains of Self-Efficacy in Performing Short Conversations**

One-way ANOVA showed that for gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas of short conversations, group TF had a mean gain of 0.97 ( $SD=1.40$ ); group T had a mean gain of -0.31 ( $SD=1.73$ ), and group C had a mean gain of -0.25 ( $SD=1.14$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to

gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas of short conversations,  $F(2, 93) = 8.011, p = 0.001, \eta_p^2 = .147$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains of self-efficacy in understanding main idea of Group TF were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant self-efficacy gain difference between group T and group C.

**Table 4.4** Mean gains on self-efficacy in performing short conversations of three groups. Standard deviations are in parentheses and Italics. Mean gains not sharing common subscripts are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ ).

	<i>Group TF</i>	<i>Group T</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Understanding Main Idea	0.97(1.40) <sub>a</sub>	-0.31(1.73) <sub>b</sub>	-0.25(1.14) <sub>b</sub>	8.011	.147
Understanding Details	0.34(1.52) <sub>a</sub>	0.09(1.17) <sub>a</sub>	0.09(1.30) <sub>a</sub>	0.372	.008
Understanding Unknown Words	1.12(1.10) <sub>a</sub>	0.62(1.29) <sub>ab</sub>	0.25(1.44) <sub>b</sub>	3.748	.075
Catching Keywords	1.19(1.42) <sub>a</sub>	-0.12(1.93) <sub>b</sub>	0.19(1.26) <sub>b</sub>	6.156	.117

For gains of self-efficacy in understanding details, group TF had an average gain of 0.34 ( $SD=1.52$ ); group T had an average gain of 0.09 ( $SD=1.17$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.09 ( $SD=1.30$ ). There was no significant difference of the three groups  $F(2, 93) = 0.372, p = 0.690, \eta_p^2 = .008$ . For gains of self-efficacy in understanding unknown words, group TF had an average gain of 1.12 ( $SD=1.10$ ); group T had an average gain of 0.62 ( $SD=1.29$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.25 ( $SD=1.44$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly

related to gains of self-efficacy in understanding unknown words,  $F(2, 93) = 3.748, p = 0.027, \eta_p^2 = .075$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that there was no significant gain difference between group TF and T, neither between group T and group C. However, the gains of self-efficacy in understanding unknown words of group TF were significantly greater than those of group C. With regard to catching keywords, group TF had an average gain of 1.19 ( $SD = 1.42$ ); group T had a mean gain of -0.12 ( $SD = 1.93$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.19 ( $SD = 1.26$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains of self-efficacy in catching keywords,  $F(2, 93) = 6.156, p = 0.003, \eta_p^2 = .117$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains of self-efficacy of group TF in catching keywords were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant gain difference between group T and group C.

#### 4.4.2 Comparisons of Mean Gains of Self-Efficacy in Performing Long Conversations

**Table 4.5** Mean gains of self-efficacy in performing long conversations of three groups. Standard deviations are in parentheses and Italics. Mean gains not sharing common subscripts are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ ).

	<i>Group TF</i>	<i>Group T</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Understanding Main Idea	1.62(1.45) <sub>a</sub>	-0.06(1.08) <sub>b</sub>	-0.03(1.36) <sub>b</sub>	17.516	.274
Understanding Details	0.94(1.27) <sub>a</sub>	0.16(1.19) <sub>b</sub>	0.12(1.21) <sub>b</sub>	4.518	.089
Understanding Unknown Words	0.66(1.45) <sub>a</sub>	0.56(1.39) <sub>a</sub>	0.31(1.23) <sub>a</sub>	0.546	.012
Catching Keywords	1.22(1.81) <sub>a</sub>	-0.12(1.45) <sub>b</sub>	0.41(1.16) <sub>b</sub>	6.531	.123

One-way ANOVA indicated that for gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas of long conversations, group TF had a mean gain of 1.62 ( $SD=1.45$ ); group T had a mean gain of -0.06 ( $SD=1.08$ ), and group C had a mean gain of -0.03 ( $SD=1.36$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas,  $F(2, 93)= 17.516$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .274$ . A post-hoc LSD test demonstrated that the gains of self-efficacy of group TF in understanding main idea were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant gain difference between group T and group C. For gains of self-efficacy in understanding details, group TF had an average gain of 0.94 ( $SD=1.27$ ); group T had an average gain of 0.16 ( $SD=1.19$ ),

and group C had a mean gain of 0.12 ( $SD=1.21$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains of self-efficacy in understanding details,  $F(2, 93) = 4.518$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .089$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains on self-efficacy of group TF in understanding details were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant gain difference between group T and group C. For gains on self-efficacy in understanding unknown words, group TF had an average gain of 0.66 ( $SD=1.45$ ); group T had an average gain of 0.56 ( $SD=1.39$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.31 ( $SD=1.23$ ). There was no significant difference of the three groups  $F(2, 93) = 0.546$ ,  $p = 0.581$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .012$ . With regard to catching keywords, group TF had an average gain of 1.22 ( $SD=1.81$ ); group T had a mean gain of -0.12 ( $SD=1.45$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.41 ( $SD=1.16$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains on self-efficacy in catching keywords,  $F(2, 93) = 6.531$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .123$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains of self-efficacy of group TF in catching keywords were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant gain difference between group T and group C.

### 4.4.3 Comparisons of Mean Gains of Self-Efficacy in Performing Short Passages

**Table 4.6** Mean gains of self-efficacy in performing short passages of three groups. Standard deviations are in parentheses and Italics. Mean gains not sharing common subscripts are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ ).

	<i>Group TF</i>	<i>Group T</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Understanding Main Idea	0.31(1.28) <sub>a</sub>	0.12(1.19) <sub>a</sub>	-0.28 (1.67) <sub>a</sub>	1.516	.032
Understanding Details	0.91(1.61) <sub>a</sub>	0.25(1.27) <sub>ab</sub>	-0.09(1.12) <sub>b</sub>	4.534	.089
Understanding Unknown Words	1.00(1.69) <sub>a</sub>	0.47(1.44) <sub>a</sub>	0.47(1.32) <sub>a</sub>	1.359	.028
Catching Keywords	1.22(2.01) <sub>a</sub>	0.25(1.22) <sub>b</sub>	0.12(1.48) <sub>b</sub>	4.463	.088

One-way ANOVA showed that for gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas of short passages, group TF had a mean gain of 0.31 ( $SD=1.28$ ); group T had a mean gain of 0.12 ( $SD=1.19$ ), and group C had a mean gain of -0.28 ( $SD=1.67$ ). There was no significant difference of the three groups,  $F(2, 93) = 1.516$ ,  $p=0.225$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.032$ . For gains of self-efficacy in understanding details, group TF had an average gain of 0.91( $SD=1.61$ ); group T had an average gain of 0.25 ( $SD=1.27$ ), and group C had a mean gain of -0.09 ( $SD=1.12$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains of self-efficacy in understanding details,  $F(2, 93) = 4.534$ ,  $p=0.013$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.089$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that there was no significant gain difference between

group TF and T, neither between group T and group C. However, the gains of self-efficacy in understanding details of group TF were significantly greater than those of group C. For gains of self-efficacy in understanding unknown words, group TF had an average gain of 1.00 ( $SD=1.69$ ); group T had an average gain of 0.47 ( $SD=1.44$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.47 ( $SD=1.32$ ). There was no significant difference of the three groups,  $F(2, 93) = 1.359$ ,  $p=0.262$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.028$ . With regard to catching keywords, group TF had an average gain of 1.22 ( $SD=2.01$ ); group T had a mean gain of 0.25( $SD=1.22$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.12 ( $SD=1.48$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains of self-efficacy in catching keywords,  $F(2, 93) = 4.463$ ,  $p=0.014$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.088$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains of self-efficacy of group TF in catching keywords were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant gain difference between group T and group C.

#### 4.4.4 Comparisons of Mean Gains of Self-Efficacy in Performing Compound Dictations

**Table 4.7** Mean gains of self-efficacy in performing compound dictations of three groups. Standard deviations are in parentheses and Italics. Mean gains not sharing common subscripts are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ ).

	<i>Group TF</i>	<i>Group T</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Understanding Main Idea	1.81(1.42) <sub>a</sub>	0.16(1.30) <sub>b</sub>	-0.31(1.33) <sub>b</sub>	21.824	.319
Understanding Details	0.72(1.28) <sub>a</sub>	0.53(1.11) <sub>a</sub>	-0.34(1.13) <sub>b</sub>	7.498	.139
Understanding Unknown Words	1.06(1.39) <sub>a</sub>	0.69(1.33) <sub>a</sub>	0.25(1.65) <sub>a</sub>	2.476	.051
Catching Keywords	2.12(1.36) <sub>a</sub>	0.59(1.21) <sub>b</sub>	-0.06(1.70) <sub>b</sub>	19.421	.295

One-way ANOVA demonstrated that for gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas of compound dictations, group TF had a mean gain of 1.81 ( $SD=1.42$ ); group T had a mean gain of 0.16 ( $SD=1.30$ ), and group C had a mean gain of -0.31 ( $SD=1.33$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas,  $F(2, 93) = 21.824$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .319$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas of group TF were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant difference between group T and group C. For gains on self-efficacy in understanding details, group TF had an average gain of 0.72 ( $SD=1.28$ ); group T had an average gain of

0.53 ( $SD=1.11$ ), and group C had a mean gain of -0.34 ( $SD=1.13$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains of self-efficacy in understanding details,  $F(2, 93) = 7.498$ ,  $p=0.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.139$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains on self-efficacy in understanding details of group C was significantly lower than those of group TF and group T. There was no significant difference between group TF and group T. For gains of self-efficacy in understanding unknown words, group TF had an average gain of 1.06 ( $SD=1.39$ ); group T had an average gain of 0.69( $SD=1.33$ ), and group C had a mean gain of 0.25 ( $SD=1.65$ ). There was no significant difference of the three groups,  $F(2, 93) = 2.476$ ,  $p=0.09$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.051$ . With regard to self-efficacy in catching keywords, group TF had an average gain of 2.12 ( $SD=1.36$ ); group T had a mean gain of 0.59( $SD=1.21$ ), and group C had a mean gain of -0.06 ( $SD=1.70$ ). The group in which students participated was significantly related to gains on self-efficacy in catching keywords,  $F(2, 93) = 19.421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.295$ . The results of a post-hoc LSD test indicated that the gains of self-efficacy of group TF in catching keywords were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. There was no significant difference between group T and group C.

The results of the project therefore, confirmed our hypothesis that group TF receiving both strategy training and feedback was expected to enhance English listening self-efficacy significantly after the project. The comparisons of mean

gains of self-efficacy in performing four aspects of four CET4 listening tasks among three groups by one-way ANOVA indicated that group TF made the greatest gains of self-efficacy compared with other two groups. It was also found that the gains of self-efficacy in catching keywords for all four listening tasks of group TF were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. Moreover group TF made the significantly greatest gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas for short conversations, long conversations and compound dictations. The findings also demonstrated that gains of self-efficacy in understanding details of long conversations of group TF were significantly greater than those of other two groups. No statistically significant gain difference of self-efficacy in understanding unknown words was found among three groups. Group T made greater gains of self-efficacy than group C. No statistically significant self-efficacy gain difference was found between the two groups.

#### **4.5 Pretest and Posttest Perceived Attributions of the Three Groups**

How the participants' attributions changed after the training project was examined. Paired samples t-test was utilized to compare the differences of four pretest and posttest attributions

**Table 4.8** Means of pretest and posttest attributions of group TF. Standard deviations are in parentheses and Italics.

Measures	Group TF		
	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>
<b>Ability(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	5.06 ( <i>1.70</i> )	-0.597	31
Posttest	5.19 ( <i>2.33</i> )		
<b>Task(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	6.16 ( <i>1.27</i> )	-1.824	31
Posttest	6.50 ( <i>1.27</i> )		
<b>Effort(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	6.66 ( <i>1.72</i> )	-0.925	31
Posttest	6.88 ( <i>2.15</i> )		
<b>Luck(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	3.56 ( <i>1.11</i> )	1.824	31
Posttest	3.22 ( <i>1.60</i> )		

A Paired-Samples t-test was conducted to compare the four pre and posttest attributions of group TF. For ability attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 5.06 ( $SD= 1.70$ ) and that of post test 5.19 ( $SD= 2.33$ ),  $t(31) = -0.597$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . For task attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 6.16 ( $SD=1.27$ ) and that of posttest 6.50 ( $SD=1.27$ ),  $t(31) = -1.824$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . With regard to effort, the mean of pretest 6.66 ( $SD=1.72$ ) and that of posttest 6.88 ( $SD=2.15$ ) were not significantly different either,  $t(31) = -0.925$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . For luck attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 3.56 ( $SD=1.11$ ) and that of posttest 3.22 ( $SD=1.60$ ),  $t(31) = 1.824$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . The results therefore showed that there was no

significant difference of perceived attributions before and after the study for group TF.

**Table 4.9** Means of pretest and posttest attributions of group T. Standard deviations are in parentheses and Italics.

Measures	Group T		
	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>
<b>Ability(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	5.00 ( <i>1.97</i> )	-0.162	31
Posttest	5.03 ( <i>2.01</i> )		
<b>Task(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	6.22 ( <i>1.34</i> )	-0.190	31
Posttest	6.25 ( <i>1.44</i> )		
<b>Effort(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	6.22 ( <i>1.04</i> )	-1.070	31
Posttest	6.44 ( <i>1.39</i> )		
<b>Luck(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	3.12 ( <i>1.07</i> )	0.403	31
Posttest	3.06 ( <i>1.16</i> )		

The four pre and posttest attributions of group T were compared through a Paired-Samples t-test. For ability attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 5.00 (*SD= 1.97*) and that of posttest 5.03 (*SD= 2.01*),  $t(31) = -0.162$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . For task attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 6.22 (*SD=1.34*) and that of posttest 6.25 (*SD=1.44*),  $t(31) = -0.190$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . With regard to effort, the mean of pretest 6.22 (*SD=1.04*) and that of posttest 6.44 (*SD=1.39*) were not significantly different either,  $t(31)$

=-1.070,  $p>0.05$ . For luck attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 3.12 ( $SD=1.07$ ) and that of posttest 3.06 ( $SD=1.16$ ),  $t(31) = 0.403$ ,  $p>0.05$ . The results therefore showed that there was no significant difference of perceived attributions before and after the study for group T.

**Table 4.10** Means of pretest and posttest attributions of group C. Standard deviations are in parentheses and Italics.

Measures	Group C		
	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
<b>Ability(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	4.28 ( <i>1.78</i> )	0.680	31
Posttest	4.16 ( <i>2.22</i> )		
<b>Task(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	6.00 ( <i>1.34</i> )	-0.580	31
Posttest	6.12 ( <i>0.98</i> )		
<b>Effort(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	6.12 ( <i>0.71</i> )	0.291	31
Posttest	6.06 ( <i>1.24</i> )		
<b>Luck(0-10)</b>			
Pretest	3.22 ( <i>0.94</i> )	-0.528	31
Posttest	3.34 ( <i>1.13</i> )		

A Paired-Samples t-test was conducted to compare the four pretest and posttest attributions of group C. For ability attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 4.28 ( $SD= 1.78$ ) and that of post test 4.16 ( $SD=2.22$ ),  $t(31) = 0.680$ ,  $p>0.05$ . For task attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 6.00 ( $SD=1.34$ ) and that of posttest 6.12 ( $SD=0.98$ ),

$t(31) = -0.580, p > 0.05$ . With regard to effort, the mean of pretest 6.12 ( $SD=0.71$ ) and that of posttest 6.06 ( $SD=1.24$ ) were not significantly different either,  $t(31) = 0.291, p > 0.05$ . For luck attribution, there was no significant difference between the mean of pretest 3.22 ( $SD=0.94$ ) and that of posttest 3.34 ( $SD=1.13$ ),  $t(31) = -0.528, p > 0.05$ . The results therefore demonstrated that there was no significant difference of perceived attributions before and after the study for group C.

## **4.6 Correlations**

While it was the aim of the study to explore how English listening performance, self-efficacy and causal attribution changed with the intervention of strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance, I also would like to explore the relations between posttest performance and posttest self-efficacy to examine how students' self-efficacy as individuals' judgments of capabilities to perform certain tasks predicted their performances after the training. While students were required to complete the attribution scale based on their training experience over the project, the correlations between the attributions and training performance were examined to see how students with different performance levels attribute their academic failure. The correlation between the four posttest attributions and posttest self-efficacy was also investigated. However, as there was no comparability among the three groups in terms of these correlations, also there was no significant difference of any variables before and after the study for

group T and group C, the study only focused on investigating and analyzing the correlations of group TF.

#### 4.6.1 Posttest performance and Posttest self-efficacy

The correlation between posttest performance and post self-efficacy was computed and the results were revealed in the table below. It can be seen that the two variables were positively correlated,  $r(28) = 0.485, p < 0.01$ . The coefficient of determination was 0.235, which means the relationship between them for Group TF was weak.

**Table 4.11** *Pearson's Product Moment Correlations for Posttest Self-efficacy with Posttest Performance.*

	<i>Posttest Self-Efficacy</i>
Posttest Performance	0.485**

Notes: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ . N=32

#### 4.6.2 Posttest Attributions and Training Performance

In the end of our project the participants were asked to evaluate failure attributions according to their five training tests performance during the whole study. Therefore the correlations between four posttest attribution factors and training performance of group TF were examined to explore how students differed in their attributions with different academic achievement. A student's

training performance is the average of his/her five training tests.

**Table 4.12** *Pearson's Product Moment Correlations for Four Posttest Attributions with Training Performance.*

Posttest Attributions	Training Performance
Poor Ability	-0.858**
Difficult Task	-0.424**
Insufficient Efforts	0.633**
Bad Luck	-0.296

Notes: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ . N=32

The results in the table above demonstrate that the training performance was negatively correlated with poor ability attribution,  $r(28) = -0.858$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , the coefficient of determination was 0.736, which meant the two variables shared 73.6% of their variation in common. Thus the relationship between them for Group TF was strong. That is to say, the better the training performances, the less the students attributed their performance failure to low ability. The training performance of group TF and difficult task attribution were negatively correlated,  $r(28) = -0.424$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , the coefficient of determination is 0.180, which meant the two variables only shared 18% of variation in common and the relationship between them was weak. With regard to the third attribution, it was positively correlated with training performance,  $r(28) = 0.633$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The coefficient of determination was 0.401 and the relationship between them was moderate. The results demonstrate that the better the training performance, the higher the students attributed their failures to insufficient effort. The final failure attribution

was bad luck. From the table we can see that the two variables had no significant correlations,  $r(28) = -0.296$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . The well and poor performers therefore, did not differ significantly in luck attribution.

### 4.6.3 Posttest Attributions and posttest self-efficacy

The correlations between posttest attributions and posttest self-efficacy were examined to explore how self-efficacy related with four attribution factors.

**Table 4.13** *Pearson's Product Moment Correlations for Four Posttest Attributions with Posttest Self-efficacy.*

Posttest Attributions	Posttest Self-efficacy
Poor Ability	-0.511**
Difficult Task	-0.374**
Insufficient Efforts	0.551**
Bad Luck	-0.288

Notes: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ . N=32

The table above demonstrated that poor ability was negatively correlated with posttest self-efficacy,  $r(28) = -0.511$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , the coefficient of determination between them was 0.261, which meant the two variables only shared 26% of variation in common and the relationship between them for Group TF was weak. The results showed that the second attribution task had a negative correlation with posttest self-efficacy,  $r(28) = -0.374$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The coefficient of determination was 0.140 and therefore the correlation was weak. The third

attribution, insufficient efforts was positively correlated with posttest self-efficacy,  $r(28) = 0.551$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The coefficient of determination was 0.304, which revealed a moderate relationship between the two variables. With regard to the last attribution, it was found that there was no significant correlation between luck and posttest self-efficacy,  $r(28) = -0.288$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . In other words, there was no significant difference between high self-efficacious and low efficacious students in terms of luck attribution.

## **4.7 Strategy Use Diary**

In the whole study, the students of group TF were required to keep a strategy use diary and write down the successful and unsuccessful strategies they utilized, analyze the reasons for not using well and their following plans. However most students were impatient and were reluctant to do this activity. A small number of data was collected and only fifteen out of thirty-two students kept and handed in the diaries. Based on the data we collected however, I still identified both effectively and ineffectively used strategies perceived by students and the potential reasons.

### **4.7.1 Perceived Effective Strategies**

In terms of effectively used strategies, cognitive strategies including repetition

(thirteen times mentioned), note-taking (nine times mentioned), inferencing (nine times mentioned), translation (eight times mentioned), prediction (eight times mentioned), catching keywords (seven times mentioned) were the most frequently used. Metacognitive strategies were seldom used and only two students reported that they used both directed attention and selective attention when performing the listening tasks. Few students perceived contextualization (twice mentioned), imagery (twice mentioned) and elaboration (once mentioned) as useful and effective listening strategies for them.

#### **4.7.2 Perceived Ineffective Strategies**

While some strategies were regarded as effective listening strategies, some other students perceived them as unsuccessful ones. Prediction (five times mentioned), for example, was also regarded as the ineffective strategies by some students, followed by note-taking (five times mentioned), imagery (four times mentioned), elaboration (twice mentioned), and contextualization (twice mentioned). Students also analyzed their own reasons for each ineffectively used strategy and I categorized students' explanations for the main unsuccessfully used strategies.

#### **4.7.2.1 Prediction**

##### *Insufficient time to predict*

Prediction was introduced as a useful cognitive listening strategy. Students were instructed to predict the contents from the title or questions before listening and anticipate the details in the next part while listening. While most students who submitted strategy use diaries found it was useful and helpful to predict the contents before listening, five of them perceived it was difficult to predict the details while listening due to insufficient time.

One student (Student No:0103080605) put it, *“I seldom used prediction because I feel I do not have enough time to predict what will be said in the next part while I am busy with understanding the listening texts with a fast speaking speed and making notes.”*

#### **4.7.2.2 Note-taking**

##### *1. Poor understanding of main idea*

Two students who perceived note-taking as an ineffective strategy reported that they completely had no idea about what to write because they were unable to understand what the input was about and identify the important information.

One (0103080110) put it, *“I cannot take notes effectively. Especially for the first time I listened to the tape, I can hardly understand the general idea and usually wrote nothing. This frustrated me a lot and I cannot focus completely. Sometimes I can only write down the words I understand but unimportant in fact.”*

The other (Student No: 0102080203) put it, *“...Actually I have no idea about how to make effective notes because sometimes I even cannot understand what the passage is about. Thus even I wanted to make some notes I cannot do it successfully.”*

## 2. *Easily forget what was heard*

The other two students reported that a large number of information and fast speaking speed made them easily forgot what was heard and hardly make useful notes.

One (Student No: 0103080605) put it, *“I cannot take effective notes because of the accent and fast speed of speakers. I often wrote down only a few words and forgot what I just heard.”*

The other put it (Student No: 0103080405), *“During the process of listening, fast speed and a lot of information are two problems, especially in compound dictation. If the sentences are long, I tend to forget the former part when listening*

*to the later part. Thus I usually do not have enough time to write down what I think is important.”*

### *3. Lack of note-taking tactics*

One student perceived lack of appropriate tactics as an important factor preventing from effective note-taking although the key words and sentences could be caught.

The student (Student No: 0103080312) put it, *“I cannot take notes effectively because my response toward what I heard and my writing speed are really slow. Besides, I’m not good at using signals or abbreviations while taking notes. This disadvantage prevents me from performing well especially in compound dictation, although I understood the listening texts and key words.”*

### **4.7.2.3 Imagery**

#### *Poor understanding of word meanings*

Imagery was instructed to students by telling them to relate new information to visual concepts in memory. However it was regarded as an ineffectively used strategy by four students who reported that they were unable to even understand the words meanings.

For example, a student (Student No: 0103080605) put it, *“Imagery is not a useful strategy for me because it is impossible to form an image when I even do not understand the meaning of words or the main idea of listening texts.”*

#### **4.7.2.4 Contextualization, elaboration**

Very few students remembered contextualization and elaboration well and commented on these two strategies. These two cognitive strategies were regarded as the least frequently used cognitive strategies as they were perceived as abstract and difficult to understand, not to say use them naturally.

One student (Student No: 0102080103) put it, *“I seldom used contextualization and elaboration because in fact I am still confused about what they really are. I never heard them before and it was really difficult to understand all the strategies and use them smoothly.”*

The other student (Student No: 0103080405) put, *“I never used contextualization and elaboration. I cannot understand what they mean and even cannot remember the names of these abstract strategies. They are not as understandable as other strategies such as note-taking, inferencing, prediction, and catching key words.”*

Based on students’ diaries therefore, it can be found that the most frequently used

strategies were note-taking, repetition, translation, catching keywords, and imagery. However, how effectively they were utilized such as note-taking, prediction and imagery somehow depended on students' original English listening level and their understanding of listening texts. Elaboration and contextualization were the most rarely used. Moreover, compared with cognitive strategies, it was found that metacognitive strategies were rarely used. Besides directed attention and selective attention mentioned by only two students, nobody used other metacognitive strategies including monitoring, real-time assessment, and comprehension evaluation. Therefore it seems that the instruction of metaconitive strategies were not as successful as expected.

It was also found that of the students who submitted the strategy use diaries, those who reported ineffective use of many strategies did not perform well in training tests on average. For example, there was a student (Student No: 0103080605) who reported that prediction, note-taking and imagery were all ineffective and no helpful strategy has been found performed lower than the mean scores for all English listening tests including pretest and posttest. The other student (Student No: 0103080405) who wrote “.....*I still have not found pretty good strategies for myself.....I do not know what the right strategies are for me to use.....*” also performed much poorer than the average in the whole study. In contrast, students who perceived themselves as effective strategy users and who used metacognitive strategies performed much better. A student

(Student No: 0103080730) who used cognitive strategies including catching keywords, note-taking, inferencing and metacognitive strategies including directed and selective attention performed successfully in all tests through the study. The other student (Student No: 01013080108) who performed outstandingly for every test put: *“Prediction, elaboration, inferencing, contextualization, catching keywords were used most successfully. In fact, I have not found any ineffective strategies because most of them are very useful for me.”*

#### **4.7.3 Plans for Future Tasks**

With regard to their plans for the following similar activities, most students demonstrated that they would continue to use the successfully used strategies and would try to use them more effectively and naturally. Some students responded that for those strategies they perceived as useful but have not successfully used, they would like to adopt the suggestions given in the feedback and exercise more to make them effective. One student (Student No: 0103080312) put, *“I cannot take notes effectively because I’m not good at using signals and abbreviations while taking notes. I think I should focus on practicing taking notes effectively in future.”* The other one (Student No: 0103080206) put, *“I found just taking notes did not work well in compound dictation because we do not have enough time to record complete sentences. I think we should understand the main idea of the sentences rather than just taking notes. So I will try to combine*

*understanding main idea with taking notes in future practice.” Only two students reported that they still have not found any successful strategies and had no idea about what should be done. One student (Student No: 0103080405) put, “In fact I still have not found pretty good strategies for myself. Often when the listening test finished, I do not know what the right strategies are for me to use. My vocabulary and memory are too poor and I always failed to catch any key words or understand the main idea even I tried to use some strategies. I do not know how to solve these problems.”*

However, as demonstrated before, the participants’ impatience and reluctance toward writing strategy use diaries resulted in insufficient data, based on which I analyzed and attained the above results. Therefore the reliability of the data could be low and it could not be ensured these findings from such a small sample can be suggested to a whole population.

## **4.8 Comments on Feedback**

After each strategy training class, there was a listening test and students in Group TF were required to write down the strategies they used while listening. The researcher’s feedback was given to everyone on their strategy use and listening performance. At the end of the study, these students were asked to comment on the feedback they received. those elements students found particular useful were

identified, aiming at 1) obtaining some information about students' attitude toward feedback, which might indicate the reasons for the change of self-efficacy; 2) understanding how to make effective feedback for Chinese university students and finding the direction for further pedagogical research in future. Twenty-three comments were received and most students perceived the feedback as useful in terms of three aspects.

#### **4.8.1 Students' Perceptions For feedback**

##### **4.8.1.1 Feedback Provided Specific Suggestions and Guidance for Future Learning**

Seventeen students mentioned that feedback was useful for them because it provided specific suggestions for individuals according to their respective strategy use and performance.

Some of them mentioned that their English listening abilities did improve after adopting the strategies which fit themselves and suggestions in the feedback. Enhanced ability then resulted in improved confidence in English listening.

As one (Student No: 0102080107) put, *"The feedback for students is what I like the most. Because it analyzed different problems specifically for every different*

*student and we would know what to do next. The feedback enhanced my confidence in English listening because I perform better than other classmates after adopting your suggestions given in the feedback.”*

There were also students who considered that their English listening performance have not been improved substantially by either strategy training or feedback. However, they demonstrated that they understood what their strategy use problems were and had the direction of what should be done next by the suggestions in the feedback.

As one student (Student No: 0103080132) put, *“Although I cannot remember and use every strategy effectively and flexibly now, your feedback helped me understand what my problems are and how to use strategies correctly when I misunderstood them and used them ineffectively. Now I know what I should do. Although my current performance has not been enhanced obviously due to limited training time, I believe I can do much better than before as long as I make efforts and find the most appropriate strategies for myself.”*

#### **4.8.1.2 Feedback Encouraged Students and Improved their Persistence**

Encouragement in the feedback was perceived by almost every student as a very important factor for improving their confidence and persistence. Some poorly

performed students mentioned that before the feedback in this study, they were seldom encouraged but always criticized by both teachers and parents as long as they performed badly. However they were strongly encouraged through the feedback the researcher gave to them, which in turn helped improve their willingness to try the strategies and enhanced persistence.

As one student (Student No: 0103080705) put, *“The feedback helped me very much because you gave me a lot of suggestions and I know what I should do to improve my English listening. The more important is you always encouraged me and told me I can do well. This never happened before and no teacher said I can. Your feedback relaxed me as well and I am not nervous while taking the listening tests in your class.”*

The other student (Student No: 0103080830) put, *“Your feedback impressed me and because of your encouragement, I began to like English. I hated it before because of both my poor test scores and pressures and criticism from my parents. But your feedback made me rethink maybe I can. Although my performance is still poor now, I will try my best and be persistent.”*

Three students responded that encouragement in the feedback helped them believe that the strategy use was successful. They therefore were determined to use strategies more effectively and were motivated to try new ones.

One student (Student No:1013080108) put, *“I like the feedback and I expect it before each class because every time you encouraged me when I used strategies correctly, I confirm I found the appropriate strategies and I’d like to continue to use them or to try the new ones.”*

#### **4.8.1.3 Feedback was Perceived as A care For Individuals Which Never Happened Before**

Fourteen students mentioned in the comments that such feedback on individual strategy use and performance was completely new for them and no English teacher did it for them before. Besides, two of them considered such feedback as consideration for individuals.

One student (Student No: 0103080730) put, *“Such project of combing strategy training and performance feedback is much better than mere English listening classes we have as usual.”*

The other student (Student No: 0103080818) put, *“I like your classes. They attracted me better than the current English classes we have in the college. I think the feedback focusing on every student is very useful because besides the suggestions you gave, I feel I am paid attention to and cared as an individual. I’m more confident and expect to perform well in English listening.”*

In this chapter, I examined how strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance influenced students' English listening performance, self-efficacy and attributions. The correlations between posttest performance and posttest self-efficacy, posttest attribution and training performance, posttest attributions and posttest self-efficacy were also investigated. Moreover, the results indicated how students perceived the strategies instructed during the study and feedback they received. The next chapter dealt with the discussion and analysis of these results.

## **Chapter Five --- Discussion and Analysis**

In this chapter, the reasons and potential possibilities behind the results were discussed and analyzed by linking the explanations with relevant literatures. Moreover, implications of the study in terms of pedagogy were presented

### **5.1 The Impacts on English listening Performance**

The present study showed that the application of strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance had a beneficial impact on students' English listening performance. Group TF consistently performed significantly greater than Group T which received only strategy training and the control group. Also, group TF improved listening performance significantly after the project. These findings are consistent with previous work suggesting that strategy use feedback is important for foreign language learning (Graham, 2007). In our study, the participants were from a Chinese university. It is a tradition that in Chinese education, teachers are always the centre of classes. Almost all teachers organize the English classes based on the same or similar pattern: Introducing the background, translating the contents, analyzing the grammar and vocabulary (Hao, 2009). After English tests especially the listening comprehension part, most teachers only gave the original listening text and told students the right answers. Few of them teach students how to effectively listen through strategy

use instruction, which in turn resulted in poor performance of English listening for many Chinese university students without knowing how to solve the problems. In the present study, various strategies were taught with the purpose of making students think about the strategies while listening and selecting the correct ones for themselves. However, only strategy training would not have the significant beneficial impact without feedback. In many Chinese universities, class interactions between teachers and students are very limited. In most cases there is only “*one-way teaching*” due to limited teaching time and large numbers of students in a class. Teachers have no idea about what individual students’ problems are and how effectively they use strategies even if strategies are instructed. Therefore there might be a gap between the purpose of instruction and students’ understanding. Hattie (2002) proposed that effective feedback is necessary because it is information about performance that fills a gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood. In the present study, besides strategy training, students of group TF were given feedback on their strategy use after each English listening test and such feedback to some extent helped them understand what their problems were while listening, correct the misunderstanding of certain strategies and encourage them to seek the most appropriate strategies. Therefore, compared with the listening tests including the posttest of Group T which received only strategy training, Group TF performed significantly greater.

## **5.2 The Impacts on Causal Attributions**

### **5.2.1 Main Attributions Perceived By Students**

In the present study, the effects of strategy training and feedback on students' causal attributions were examined. I would like to explore through feedback on students' strategy use and performance, in which the connection between achievement success and effective strategy use, as well as efforts were greatly emphasized, whether students' causal attribution could be positively modified. Firstly, the results showed that in both pretest and posttest for all three groups, except bad luck, the other three attributions were rated between moderate and more than moderate. Comparatively, insufficient effort and difficult task were regarded as two main reasons for unsuccessful performance, followed by poor ability. The least important attribution for unsuccessful performance was bad luck. Therefore, it can be seen that students realized insufficient efforts as the main reason when not performing well. Such attribution was positive as "*a student who attribute poor performance to effort is more likely to engage in adaptive behaviours, given the belief that such actions will positively affect academic outcomes*" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). However difficult task serving as an external and uncontrollable factor was regarded as the second most important factor for not performing well by the three groups. It was possible that such perceived importance of task difficulty was caused by the difficulty of

foreign language listening from the perspective of Chinese students. According to Qin (2010), for many Chinese students, listening is the most difficult part in English acquisition and whether students performed well or badly has a direct and essential relationship with the selection of listening materials. In the present study, it can be noticed that the mean scores for the five listening tests differed substantially and students generally performed much worse for the last three tests than for the former two as the last three tests, which were long conversations, short passages, and compound dictations respectively, were more difficult than the former two which were short conversations. Therefore, it was reasonable that students attributed difficult tasks as the other important reason for not performing well when they realized the obviously fluctuating scores of different tests. Ability was perceived as a moderate attribution and bad luck was regarded as the least important factor for poor performance.

### **5.2.2 Changes in Attributions**

Moreover, the results indicated that through strategy training and feedback on strategy use and training performance, there was no significant difference between the pretest and post test attributions for group TF. In other words, the students' attributions did not change significantly because of feedback which emphasized the attributions of lack of efforts and inefficient use of strategy for poor performance. There might be several possibilities for these findings. First of

all, in terms of effort attribution, attributional retraining is especially functional to improve effort attributions when learners had low original levels of effort attribution, as such learners have more ground to make up (Duby, 1981). The participants in the current study however, already displayed rather high level of effort attribution, and thus had less space for improvement. Secondly, the findings of insignificant changes of high task difficulty attributions in the study seems were inconsistent with the statements of researchers (McDowell, 2009, Cheong, 2003) which suggested that attribution retraining can have a substantial impact on attributions of learners who perceived external, unstable and uncontrollable causes for poor performance. However, such findings of the present study were probably due to one important demographic variable-age of my participants and short training period. In the previous studies (Borkowski et al, 1988; Carr & Borkowski, 1989), external causes of students were changed to internal/controllable attributions. However, the participants involved in these studies were children aged approximately from ten to fourteen, while the students of the present study were already adult learners who had more years of learning experiences. Guskey et al (1984) advocated that it was likely that attributions of these students were more firmly established and less apt to change over a short training period. Therefore, although significant improvement of listening performance and self-efficacy were found for students of group TF, their attributions as a self-belief were less prone to be changed. Only when improved performance lasts for long period, students might reconsider about the

attributions for their academic performances and regard task difficulty as not a so important factor determining their achievements. The results of insignificant difference between pretest and posttest ability attributions had such possibility too. In spite of improved training performance and self-efficacy, some students still tended to attribute performance failure to poor ability due to the established belief for long time and short training period. Therefore, the combination of strategy training with feedback did not significantly change the participants' attributions for failure.

### **5.3 The Effects on English Listening Self-efficacy**

#### **5.3.1 Improved Self-Efficacy of Group TF**

As we expected, posttest self-efficacy of students in Group TF improved significantly compared with pretest. It was also significantly greater than posttest of students in Group T. However, as we already discussed above, the causal attributions of the students in group TF did not change significantly. That is to say, their self-efficacy improved directly by the training, rather than the mediating role of causal attributions (i.e. attributional retraining → modified attributional schema → self-efficacy). There might be several reasons for this improvement of Group TF.

### **5.3.1.1 Improved Self-Efficacy Because of Enhanced Listening Capability**

Firstly, there were students who did improve their English listening ability through strategy training, which in turn improved their self-efficacy. As Bandura (1997) advocated, mastery experience which refers to prior performance (success or failure) serves as the most influential source of self-efficacy outcomes interpreted as successful raise self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002).

### **5.3.1.2 Improved Self-Efficacy Because of Explanations and Suggestions in Feedback**

However, there were also students who had enhanced self-efficacy without significant improvement in performance. We may explain it from students' comments on feedback. In their comments, some students mentioned that their motivation and confidence in English listening were improved because feedback provided them with specific suggestions for strategy use and pointed out their misunderstanding of some strategies. It helped them understand how to use the strategies more effectively when accomplishing similar tasks although there was no significant improvement in performance currently. Hattie (2002) suggested that effective feedback leads to alternative strategies to understand the material, indicates more information is available or needed, and points to directions that the students could pursue. Therefore it is possible that these students'

self-efficacy improved due to suggestions and guides for strategy use in the feedback which led to students' expectation of future competence (Wang, 2006), and their beliefs in the relationship between correct strategy use and positive outcomes.

### **5.3.1.3 Improved Self-Efficacy Because of Encouragements in Feedback**

The other possibility for the enhanced self-efficacy might be due to praise and encouragement in the feedback, which helped them to be persistent to seek actively effective strategies. Encouragements and praises which serve as a form of verbal persuasion, is a source of self-efficacy. Students were praised for their efforts and ability to execute strategy effectively when they performed well through active seeking of strategies. Research showed that feedback informing students their mastery of learning strategies helped improve students' self-efficacy (Zimmerman & Kitsantas 2002). When performed badly during the training, they were also encouraged to be persistent as success was attainable through correct and effective strategy use. Erikson's (1959/1980, P95, from Pajares 1997) demonstrated that praise should be given with caution and knee-jerk praises would be useless because learners "*cannot be fooled by empty praise and condescending encouragement*". Pajares (1997) also stressed that persuaders must cultivate people's beliefs in their capabilities while at the same time ensuring that the envisioned success is attainable. Therefore, in the feedback

of current study, students' hard work and effective strategy use were highly praised and I avoided just telling them "*you are good*" or "*you are a great student*". For those poor performed students who reported have not found any effective strategies, I tried the best to explain specifically how to use various strategies in the feedback and continuously persuaded them that their performance improvement can be attained as long as they were willing to actively pursue effective strategies and be persistent.

On one hand, encouragements and praises serving as verbal persuasion contributed to improve students' self-efficacy. On the other, teachers' feedback has an important direct effect on self-efficacy of Chinese students in particular. According to Chen (2007), in Chinese culture, teachers are not challenged and are respected. Teachers' evaluations always have a powerful influence on students' self-evaluations of capabilities. In the present study, although some students did not perform well during the training, they were not criticized but persuaded and encouraged that they could succeed through efforts and strategy use. Their self-efficacy consequently was influenced positively

However, on the other side it should be noticed that self-efficacy of these students might not last long if their performance would not improve after utilizing the strategies for a period of time. Their self-efficacy temporarily increased as they received continues encouragement, supposed they understood

explanations and suggestions of strategies provided in the feedback and believed future success was attainable through effective strategy use. However, whether they indeed completely understood the feedback as they reported and were capable of implementing strategies effectively in future tasks were another thing. What's more, as discussed later in the chapter and as can be seen from students' strategy use diaries, few of the participants understood and used metacognitive strategies for English learning. Lack of metacognitive strategies may cause many problems. Pajares (1996) demonstrated a correlation between academic self-efficacy and self-regulation through use of metacognitive strategies. It is possible that these students have no idea about how the most effective strategies should be selected to accomplish tasks, what steps should be adopted to improve performance if they later find that they actually still cannot use strategies effectively or face new difficulties. In such circumstances, their self-efficacy is likely to decline without obvious performance improvement once there is no more feedback from which they were advised and encouraged.

In above, the findings of enhanced self-efficacy but unchanged attributions of group TF, as well as the potential reasons for such results were analyzed. In spite of improved self-efficacy and unmodified attributions, it did not mean the reciprocal relationship between the two variables was disproved because limited training time prevented students from modifying their attributions. Graham (2007) suggested that it takes longer than six to eight months to change learners'

attributions. With sufficient training time and steadily enhanced performance, learners' improved self-efficacy might help change their attributional tendencies.

### **5.3.2 Improved Self-Efficacy of Group T**

It is surprising that group T improved self-efficacy significantly without significant enhancement in performance. It was possible that because in pretest, students in group T had the lowest levels of self-efficacy compared with group TF and group C, they had the most ground to make up and improved self-efficacy significantly at posttest. The other possibility was although the students of group T did not receive feedback and improve performance significantly, they were instructed a series of English listening strategies through the study, which were completely new for them and never been taught before in any English classes as mentioned by students in group TF. With such strategy training by specifically teaching them how to use appropriate strategies in various listening tasks, it is possible that these students to some extent understood the strategies, had a new direction of where they efforts should go and believed the relation between effective strategy use and performance success, which in turn instils a sense of control over achievement outcomes and raises self-efficacy (Corno, 1989; Schunk, 1989). However, temporarily they have not improved performance as significantly as group TF, probably due to lack of feedback in which specific strategies were once again explained and suggestions

were given. Therefore, they need more time to exercise and search for the most effective strategies. However, similar with those students in group TF who improved self-efficacy significantly without performance enhancement, it is possible that students of group T decrease self-efficacy once again if their achievement outcomes cannot be improved over time.

### **5.3.3 Gains of Self-Efficacy in Accomplishing Four Types of Tasks in Terms of Four Abilities**

The gains of self-efficacy of the participants in accomplishing four types of tasks in terms of understanding main ideas, understanding details catching keywords and understanding unknown words was specifically examined in the previous chapter. The results demonstrated that compared with other two groups, group TF made the greatest gains of self-efficacy for all tasks in terms of understanding main ideas, understanding details, catching keywords and understanding unknown words through the strategy training. Results also revealed that gains of self-efficacy of group TF in understanding keywords of four listening tasks were significantly greater than those of group T and group C. Group TF also differed significantly with other two groups in terms of gains of self-efficacy in understanding main idea of short conversations, long conversations and compound dictations. However, there were no statistically significant difference among three groups in terms of gains of self-efficacy in understanding details

and unknown words.

### **5.3.3.1 Self-Efficacy in Understanding Main Ideas and Catching Keywords**

Abilities in catching keywords and understanding main ideas serving as the basis of performance success are two important aspects emphasized in syllabus of CET4. During strategy training, a large amount of time were spent to instruct students to pay great attention to transition words and discourse markers in the listening texts, so as to catch key words, which in turn helped understanding main ideas. In the feedback as well, I tried to explain in detail to students with poor understanding how to catch key words by providing specific examples, and analyzing to them which were real key words in the texts when they caught the wrong key words. Therefore, it was possible that students of group TF had the significantly greatest gains of self-efficacy in catching keywords because their abilities of catching keywords did improve. Concerned with students of group T however, there was only strategy training by introducing them the meaning of various strategies and how to use them while listening. Students were not required to write down any strategy used and we did not give any feedback. While some students might have difficulties in understanding how to catch key words effectively, some others caught the “*key words*” they supposed but were in fact wrong. Without feedback correcting their understanding, the training made it still difficult for the students to understand how to catch keywords

effectively and their self-efficacy in catching keywords did not improve substantially. Therefore, group TF significantly differed from other two groups in the gains of self-efficacy in catching keywords for all listening tasks.

It is also encouraging to see that group TF made the significantly greatest gains of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas for three listening tasks. During the training, those strategies which were important for understanding general ideas of listening texts but usually difficult for students to master such as prediction, elaboration and effective note-taking were especially greatly emphasized and explained in the feedback, which to some extent helped improve students' ability and self-efficacy in understanding main ideas of conversations and compound dictations which were relatively easy to understand. Comparatively however, short passages were more difficult to understand than conversations and compound dictations because passages included a large amount of information, various topics and more complicated phrases sentences (Yang et al, 2007). Group TF possibly was still incapable of understanding main ideas of this task and thus did not improve self-efficacy significantly. With regard to group T, their understanding of strategies especially those difficult to master as mentioned above, might be largely limited due to a lack of feedback analyzing and explaining specifically how to use these strategies according to their respective performance. Such gap between what the students understood and what is aimed to be understood prevented them from improving the abilities to use strategies

substantially, which in turn resulted in small change of self-efficacy in understanding main ideas for any tasks.

### **5.3.3.2 Self-Efficacy in Understanding Unknown Words**

From the results, it was found that there was one aspect for which there was no significant gain difference of self-efficacy between group TF and group T- understanding unknown words. Both groups improved self-efficacy in understanding unknown words for almost all four tasks. It was possible that such findings were found because of the strategies being instructed. Inferencing served as an important strategy when encountering unknown words. It to some extent, helped students to guess unfamiliar words by using available information and this strategy was relatively easy to be explained and understood in the training session. For example, during one class when we were talking about a conversation between a taxi driver and a woman, many students did not understand the meaning of “*meter*” when the driver responded “*The fare is on the meter*” to the woman’s question “*What is the price?*” We told the students that the meaning of meter actually can be guessed based on the woman’s question and the first half of the driver’s response: the price is on something. Then according to our daily experience, it can be definitely sure the meaning of meter. Although this was an easy example and in some occasions the unknown words especially those abstract ones were difficult to be guessed, students at least had a clear

understanding of how to inference the meaning of unknown words through available information when necessary. From the strategies being used for each test and the strategy use diaries of the students in group TF, we found that inferencing was used frequently and popularly. This cognitive strategy was also regarded as one of the most effectively used strategies as it was easy to instruct this strategy clearly and students also found it not difficult to learn it well without specific explanation in the feedback. This might be the reason for insignificant gain difference between the two groups.

#### **5.3.3.3 Gains of Self-Efficacy in Understanding Details**

Group TF did not differ significantly with other two groups in gains of self-efficacy in understanding details of listening tasks except long details. In terms of short conversations, both group TF and group T had the higher pretest self-efficacy in understanding details than the other three listening tasks. It was possible that most students regarded short conversations as a relatively easy task and it was not difficult to understand details. Therefore given the already high pretest self-efficacy, there was no big ground for students to make up and there was no difference in terms of self-efficacy gains in understanding details of short conversations between the groups. Comparatively however, it was more difficult to understand details of short passages because they included a number of information and complicated phrases. Moreover, short passages in general

involved topics of culture, technology, and news commentary which students were not familiar with. Thus it was more difficult for students to understand the details. The insignificant difference of self-efficacy gains between group TF and group T in understanding details of short passages indicated that feedback could not substantially help students improve ability and self-efficacy in dealing with difficult tasks in a short period. With regard to compound dictations, students were required to dictate the exact missing words and a couple of sentences in either original form or in students' own words. That is, students only needed to completely focus on the contents to dictate and it was not difficult for them to catch details in few sentences as the purpose of compound dictation is to make students take effective notes. Therefore both groups made great gains of self-efficacy in understanding details of compound dictations after the training and there was no significant difference in self-efficacy gains.

Overall, through the comparisons of gains of self-efficacy in the four abilities, it can be seen that strategy training and feedback was especially beneficial to improve students' self-efficacy in understanding main ideas and catching keywords, which were the most essential and basic abilities for English listening comprehension. For self-efficacy in higher level abilities such as understanding details, strategy training plus feedback only worked for easy tasks in a short training period. Here cautions must be given for the explanation of the gains of self-efficacy in these abilities. As mentioned above, it was possible that strategy

training and feedback improved the participants' relevant abilities, which in turn improved self-efficacy. However it was also possible that students' self-efficacy in performing these aspects enhanced because of direct influence of feedback, which provided them with explanations and suggestions and led to students' expectation of future competence (Wang, 2006).

## **5.4 Correlations**

### **5.4.1 Correlations between Posttest Performance and Posttest Self-Efficacy**

Pajares (2006) suggested that a student with a high sense of self-efficacy tend to perform better than a lowly self-efficacious student does although there is no absolute connection between the two variables. In the present study, the correlation between students' posttest self-efficacy and posttest performance of group TF were examined to explore how they were related. The findings showed that although a positive correlation was found between posttest performance and posttest self-efficacy, the relationship was weak because of a small value coefficient of determination (0.235). The reasons for improved self-efficacy of group TF might explain such results. While some students enhanced the abilities of performing the CET4 listening tasks through the training, both of their self-efficacy and posttest performance got improved. However, there were might

also a part of students who did not academically enhanced during training but increased self-efficacy because of feedback on strategy use and performance, which gave them encouragement, specific suggestions and explanations for strategy use and led to students' expectations of future competence, which has been analyzed above in the chapter. Therefore, it was possible that the correlation between the two variables was not strong enough.

#### **5.4.2 Correlations between Posttest Attributions and Training Performance**

In the study, the students' perceived attributions were based on their training performance which was the average of five class tests rather than a particular performance outcome. Therefore, the training performance could to some extent, reflect a normal and stable performance level of a student. The results showed that there was a strong and negative correlation between poor ability attribution and training performance. That is, the better the training performance, the less the students attributed their performance failure to low ability. The results were consistent with the findings of Schunk (1986) which found the more problems that children completed during training, the higher were their high ability attributions. Snowman et al (2009) advocated that students with histories of academic failure typically attribute their failures to lack of ability.

Difficult task, however, had a weak and negative correlation with training performance. Such weak correlation possibly because of the difficulty of English listening perceived by Chinese students mentioned above. That is, in spite of a negative correlation, students with different training performance tended to perceive difficult task as an important factor for performance failure because listening was regarded by Chinese students as the most difficult in English acquisition and the difficulty of tasks would affect to some extent their performance (Qin, 2010). Therefore, the correlation between these two variables was weak.

Lack of efforts was positively and moderately correlated with students' training performance. According to Snowman et al (2009), success-oriented students tended to attribute failure to insufficient effort. In the present study however, the two variables were moderately related and it was possible that while some successfully performed students regarded lack of effort as the important reason when they do not perform well, some other successful learners perceived other reasons rather than efforts such as bad mood, noisy environment, ineffective strategy use which were not included in the current attribution scales as the factors influencing their performance.

Finally, it was found that the fourth attribution, bad luck had no significant correlation with training performance at all. According to the average scores in

the pretest and posttest, bad luck was regarded as the least important factor and therefore it was possible that both unsuccessful and successful perceived bad luck as the least essential attribution for performance failure.

Therefore, the correlations between four posttest attributions and training performance indicated that while successful learners tended to attribute their failure to lack of effort, those unsuccessful students tend to attribute their poor training performance to lack of ability. Such findings in general were consistent with those of Snowman et al (2009) and Schunk (1986).

### **5.4.3 Correlations between Posttest Attributions and posttest self-efficacy**

The findings showed that although significant correlations were found between posttest self-efficacy and posttest attributions except bad luck, the correlations were very weak due to the small values of coefficient of determination. That is to say, as a whole, students' attributions did not affect their self-efficacy. As explained above, it was possible that students' improved self-efficacy were due to the specific explanations and suggestions for strategy use and encouragement provided in the feedback even they did not perform well in the training tests. However, their attributions as a firm self-belief which was established according to their long histories of academic failures were not easily to be changed. Even those students who performed poorly in past but learnt strategies effectively

during the whole training and behaved well in the training tests, their attributions were still difficult to be changed. Because there were after all only five class tests in our study and students were less prone to change their attributions only based on five well performed tests. Therefore, the correlations between their posttest attributions and posttest self-efficacy were weak.

## **5.5 Strategy Use Diary**

### **5.5.1 Effective and Ineffective Used Strategies**

From students' strategy use diaries, it was inspiring to see that they did try to learn and use various strategies for English listening although there were still a number of strategies which could not be effectively used. According to their responses for effectively and ineffectively used strategies, it can be found that the strategies such as note-taking, repetition, translation, catching keywords which were reported most frequently and effectively used were those easily understood and naturally operated. It was also found that those strategies students were unfamiliar with and difficult to understand were seldom used such as elaboration and contextualization. Besides, very few students mentioned the metacognitive strategies used including directed attention and directive attention. Other metacognitive strategies involving comprehension monitoring, real-time assessment, and comprehension evaluation were not mentioned at all. The

similar results were found by Teng (2003) who considered complicated strategies such as “*reasoning deductively*” “*transferring*” were ineffectively used because it was difficult to teach students how to apply logical thinking to listening comprehension and use abstract strategies, while some other strategies including “*highlighting*” “*taking-notes*” were used effectively because they were more concrete mechanical in nature, thus can be instructed more easily.

It was also found that students who reported ineffective use of many strategies did not perform well in training tests on average. In contrast, students who perceived themselves as effective strategy users and who used metacognitive strategies perform much better. These findings were actually consistent with the findings of Goh (1998) which found that the use of English listening strategies of high-ability listeners was different with that of low-ability listeners in terms of both the number and level of strategies. While high-ability listeners used more complicated cognitive strategies and almost all metacognitive strategies, the low-ability listeners used only a few simple cognitive strategies. Vandergrift (1997) suggested that a skilled and a less skilled listener differed in metacognitive strategy use including analyzing the requirements of a listening task, arranging the effective listening processes required, making proper prediction, monitoring their listening comprehension and evaluating their performance of their approach.

## **5.5.2 Perceived Reasons for Ineffective Strategy Use**

### **5.5.2.1 Reason 1: Poor Understanding of Strategies**

Besides, students were asked to analyze their own reasons for ineffective strategy use, which included poor understanding of strategies, lack of relevant tactics and original English listening levels. Researchers claimed that there were usually gaps between what was understood and what was aimed to be understood (Graham, 2007; Hattie, 2002; Sadler, 1989). When strategies were taught, students might have different degrees of understanding. For example, as mentioned in results, some students regarded prediction as an ineffective strategy because they had no time to predict what will be said in the next part while busy with taking notes and understanding the listening texts. However, prediction was taught to be used not only while listening, but especially before listening while pre-reviewing the questions. By neglecting the use of prediction during pre-review, the students found it difficult to use this strategy effectively.

### **5.5.2.2 Reason 2: Lack of Tactics**

Some other students did understand the purpose and use of strategies but could not use them effectively because of lack of tactics. For instance, some students mentioned that poor use of abbreviations and marks resulted in ineffective use of

note-taking although they identified the key phrases and important information. For these students such problems were caused because of bad listening habits (Yang, 2007). He claimed that some students did not take notes but merely memorize while listening although the information they memorized might get weakened as time went by. Thus these students might have poor tactics which were appropriate for themselves when taking notes. However, such tactics could be attained through lasting practice.

### **5.5.2.3 Reason 3: Initial Poor English Listening Levels**

There were also students who were unable to use strategies effectively due to their original poor English listening levels. For example, some claimed that note-taking was ineffective because they could not even understand main ideas, not to say catch important words and phrases and take notes. Some others regarded imagery as an unhelpful strategy because it was impossible to form an image without understanding of the words or main ideas of listening texts. For these students with poor vocabularies and low English listening levels, strategy training for only two months might be ineffective and they need more time than others to gradually improve their listening.

### **5.5.3 Plans for Subsequent Similar Tasks**

Students were required to think about plans they were going to execute for the future similar tasks and most of them who wrote strategy use diaries were able to specify the steps they would follow according to their respective situations. However, as mentioned above, it was unfortunate that only half of students in group TF wrote and submitted the strategy use diaries due to their impatience and reluctance toward strategy use diary, which was attempted to be used to help increase students' metacognitive awareness. The participants' negative attitudes toward strategy use diary can be caused by the Chinese context. According to Liu et al (2007), it is a tradition in China that teachers are respected and they are never challenged. Therefore, many students rely heavily on teachers during learning process without self-regulatory learning. Besides, spoon-feeding education is popular in China and teachers rarely encourage and teach students the correct ways to analyze overall performance and find the best learning strategies by themselves. Thus Chinese students have poor metacognitive awareness and do not realize the importance of metacognition.

### **5.6 Comments of Students on Feedback**

Based on students' comments on feedback on their strategy use and performance, it can be seen that feedback provided in the experiment was effective. Students

reported that feedback provided them with suggestions and directions for more effective strategy use in future. In the study, the researcher made efforts to provide students with specific explanations of strategies which can be used for the questions students did wrong through feedback. So they understood clearly the purpose of strategies and how to utilize them more effectively by given the examples. Hattie (2002) suggested that effective feedback leads to alternative strategies to understand the material, indicates more information is available or needed, and points to directions that the students could pursue. As such, students set goals, use strategies and expect future competences (Pang, 2000).

Some students regarded feedback as important because it encouraged learners to be persistent no matter they perform well or not, and persuaded them success was achievable after specific explanations and suggestions for strategy use were given. It was understandable that encouragements as a part of feedback from teachers are especially important for Chinese unsuccessful students. Mu (2010) pointed out it is not uncommon that Chinese students with poor performances were usually criticized by both teachers and parents, sometimes even in public. These students tended to be nervous and lose interest in learning, not to say get motivated to be persistent (Liu, 2009). Besides, as discussed above, Chinese students respect teachers and believe evaluations from them. Thus, teachers' negative evaluations would have a negative impact on students. In the present study however, while successful students were encouraged to continue to seek

and use effective strategies, those unsuccessful ones were encouraged as well by persuading them to be persistent. Here caution should be given for two important points. The first is, persuaders must cultivate people's beliefs in their capabilities while at the same time ensuring that the envisioned success is attainable (Pajares, 1997). The second is feedback which is about the self rather than related with the student's understanding on the task has too little value for learning gains (Hattie, 2002). The researcher argued that feedback aimed at self which does not produce more engagement, commitment to the learning intentions or understanding about the task is ineffective as such feedback provides too little useful information and has almost no value for learning gains.

It was out of the expectation but interesting that few students like feedback because they perceived it as a care for individuals. Students claimed that this novel method was not used by any teacher before and they felt they were paid attention to and cared as an individual. Such feeling made them expect better performance. These comments were to some extent similar with those in which encouragement was perceived as an important factor for effective feedback. As Li & Zhou (2008) suggested, while students' successful performance depends largely on personal efforts, it also has an essential relation with teachers' respect for them as individuals. The researchers stated that because students might lose interest in learning if they are always criticized and not respected once they performed badly, which in turn undermines their subsequent learning and

academic achievements. However, many Chinese teachers neglect the negative impact of such disrespect and caused students lose learning motivation. As some students involved in the study stated, they were encouraged, paid attention to and cared. They began not to hate English listening so much and would like to have a try.

Through students' comments on feedback, it can be seen that feedback on strategy use in the present study to some extent contributed to improve students' understanding of strategies and English listening abilities on one hand, the comments on their training performance was beneficial to encourage students to seek and use strategies persistently on the other. There were students who did not perform well during the training but always kept using strategies and writing them down while listening. They were willing to participate in such activities because they were convinced that success was attainable once they found effective strategies and continuously encourage. Therefore, although the feedback in the present study failed to modify students' attributions of task difficulty and poor ability for performance failures to lack of efforts, it did not mean feedback including evaluations on students' performance as attributional retraining was unnecessary because it did motivate students, especially those difficult ones to use strategies. Also, as a source of self-efficacy, such verbal persuasion contributed to students' improved self-efficacy.

Students' comments on feedback helped explain their improved self-efficacy in English listening on one hand, they contributed to have a more explicit understanding of effective feedback for teachers from the perspective of students on the other. As Hattie (2002) suggested, effective feedback should provide students with useful information which produces more engagement, commitment to the learning intentions or understanding about the task. Feedback about the self should be avoided. Moreover, effective feedback should praise students for their effective strategy use and great efforts when they performed successfully, and encourage students to be persistent and persuade them that success is attainable as long as they find effective strategies.

## **5.7 Role of Feedback from Social Constructivism Perspective**

Given the influence of feedback on students' performance and self-efficacy discussed above, I would like to further analyze the role of feedback from social constructivism perspective. According to Vygotsky who suggested the social development theory of learning, the learning process is not a sole exploration of the environment but dependent on social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) formulated the concept of ZPD which was defined as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult

guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.” That is, as Riddle (2003) explained, a student cannot perform a task alone until with the adult assistance or peer collaboration. With regard to teachers’ roles in facilitating students’ progress in school context, there is an important concept: scaffolding. According to Vygotsky, scaffolding refers to an instructional structure that a teacher guides and assists students by tools, strategies, or activities so as to help students expand ZDP. However, the scaffold is dismantled when learners internalize the knowledge and problem-solving process (Turuk, 2008).

In the study, although learning strategies were instructed, there still might be a gap between the actual and expected understanding. It was my expectation that students could be scaffolded by feedback to be capable of using strategies efficiently. However Azevedo et al (2011) pointed out, scaffolding requires a shared understanding of goals of a task between students and teachers. Moreover, it requires teachers to give effective support based on students’ individual knowledge and skills. At the beginning of my strategy training therefore, I clearly described the purposes of strategy training and reasons for asking them to think about and write down used strategies. To give them individualized feedback, I understood performance levels of students in the pretest and gave them feedback based on their prior performance, the strategies they used and even the notes they took, from which some errors can be a signal for me to provide guidance.

Besides, the feedback not only gave interpretations and recommendations, but encouragements as well, which was regarded as an important element of effective feedback by the subjects. Such encouragements were consistent with the point of view of Azevedo et al (2011) who suggested that teachers should scaffold learners by providing them with hints and feedback on performance so as to motivate them to be persistent.

Through feedback providing students with specific interpretation and recommendation of strategies, it was the purpose to cultivate the capabilities of students to understand, plan, select and use strategies systematically. Therefore, I motivated students to think and select the most appropriate strategies rather than commenting on correctness of strategies selected. Once students internalize such integrated problem-solving process, feedback can be dismantled.

## **5.8 Pedagogical Implications**

The study indicated that the combination of both strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance was an inspiring way to help Chinese university students enhance English listening performance and self-efficacy. There were several important aspects in terms of pedagogy to make the intervention effective. Firstly, teachers should *“raise students’ awareness of the fact that strategies for listening do exist, and that these can make the listening process easier and more*

*successful.*” (Graham, 2007) O’Malley and Chamot (1990) also recommended that students should be informed directly the purposes and value of strategy training. The next step is to provide opportunities and training materials for learning strategies practice. To encourage students accept and use the strategies, students can be asked to reflect the strategies they used during the English listening tasks. Teachers’ feedback on strategy use and performance is recommended so as to help students understand better how strategies should be used effectively and set goals for future tasks. However, giving specific and helpful feedback is time-consuming and it is impossible for Chinese university English teachers who always have a large number of students during classes to give feedback to each student after every test. They are however, recommended to give feedback to a different and small portion of students for each test. Therefore each student would have an opportunity to get feedback from teachers. To understand how effectively the learning strategies were used, strategy use diary can be employed. However, it should be with caution that students might be reluctant to take this activity just as the participants in the present study. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to raise students’ awareness and attention on metacognition during the learning strategy training. It is also recommended to keep the strategy use diary as a part of assignments which is compulsory so as to make students treat it seriously.

In this chapter, the reasons and possible explanations for the results were

analyzed. As feedback to some extent helped students identify their problems during listening, correct misunderstanding of certain strategies and encourage them to seek the most appropriate strategies, Group TF improved listening performance significantly over the project. With regard to enhanced self-efficacy, there might be three reasons including enhanced listening capability, specific explanations and suggestions, as well as encouragement in the feedback. However, strategy training with feedback did not help modify students' causal attributions. It was likely that attributions of adult students were more firmly established and less apt to change over a short training period. However it did not mean the reciprocal relationship between the two variables was disproved because it was limited training time preventing students from modifying their attributions. With sufficient training time and steadily enhanced performance, learners' improved self-efficacy might help change their attributional tendencies. Although great efforts were contributed to the study, there were still some limitations which should be addressed in the future research. The final chapter presented the limitations and the general conclusions of the study.

## **Chapter Six --- Limitations and Conclusions**

This final chapter summarized limitations of this study, followed by general conclusions.

### **6.1 Limitations**

The present study showed that the application of both strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance helped Chinese university students improve English listening performance and self-efficacy. However, there were still some limitations of this study which can be addressed in the future research.

#### **6.1.1 Sample Size**

Based on the consideration that giving specific feedback including explanations and suggestions for strategy use for every student according to their individual performance after each test is time-consuming when the sample size is large, 96 students in total were invited to take part in the study with 30 in each group. However, reliability and generalizability of the study might be influenced by the small sample size. Therefore, a larger sample sized will be needed for future research.

### **6.1.2 Study Period**

In spite of increased English listening performance and self-efficacy, the participants' causal attributions were not changed significantly after the study. As discussed in the previous paragraph, the attribution beliefs were established on the long histories of past performance and it was difficult for those unsuccessful students to change positively their causal attributions over merely two months. Only when their improved performance could be stable for long term, they might begin to modify their attributions positively. Thus in order to investigate whether the combination of strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance could help students positively modify their attributions, the future study should be longitudinal.

### **6.1.3 Strategy Use Diary**

In the present study, although actively learnt the strategies and wrote down the strategies used, few participants in group TF kept and submitted the strategy use diaries. Many of them were impatient and reluctant toward this activity which aimed at raising their metacognitive awareness. As a result, the study failed to collect sufficient relevant data and reliability cannot be guaranteed. It is necessary therefore, raising students' awareness on the importance of metacognition during strategy training and keeping strategy use diary as a

portion of assignments is recommended so as to make students treat this activity seriously.

#### **6.1.4 Causal Attribution Questionnaire**

The attribution questionnaire employed in the study included only four main attributions based on Weiner's attribution theory (1986). However there are many other factors which might influence Chinese university students' English performance such as mood, noisy environment, teaching materials. As a matter of fact, a causal attribution scale including a list of attributions for successful/unsuccessful English listening performance was developed before the study. However, students in group TF complained that it was too long and they were reluctant to complete it seriously especially when they were informed that they were required to not only complete pretest and posttest self-efficacy questionnaire, attribution scale, seven English listening tests, but also write down the used strategies and strategy use diary for the whole project. Therefore in order to ensure students treat the study seriously and give their real responses for every activity, many attribution items were deleted and the four main attributions were remained. The simplified attribution scales prevented me from understanding other important attributions for English listening performance failure perceived by students. Further research therefore, needs to identify more clearly and specifically the Chinese university students' perceived attributions for

English listening performance.

## **6.2 Conclusions**

Self-efficacy which is people's evaluation of their capabilities of performing certain tasks serves as one perception of self-reflections in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. In academic settings, it influences students' subsequent behaviours because unless students believe they are capable of producing desired outcomes, they have no incentive to act. Students' self-efficacy beliefs affect their persistence, effort, and academic performance. Therefore, it is of great significance to improve students' learning self-efficacy in academic settings.

This present study aimed at exploring how to improving English listening self-efficacy of Chinese university students. According to Qin (2010) and Duan (2011), listening comprehension is the most difficult part of English acquisition perceived by Chinese university students. They encounter various difficulties in listening comprehension but have few ideas of how to solve the problems. Therefore, their English listening performance largely depends upon the difficulty level of listening materials. Such situation makes many students display low self-efficacy when performed poorly and tend to attribute their performance failures to internal and stable factors such as inability and external and unstable factors including task difficulty. The negative attribution would

consequently undermine their self-efficacy and subsequent performance.

The reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and attributions has been confirmed for its existence. Previous research (Schunk, 1982, 1983) demonstrated that self-efficacy and academic performance can be enhanced through attributional retraining which modifies students' negative attributions. However, within higher education level, most studies of attributional retraining investigated the impacts of attributional retraining on academic performance, efforts and persistence, as well as academic motivation. Very few of them examined the effect of attributional retraining on self-efficacy.

In foreign language learning, studies demonstrated that students' self-efficacy and their performance are closely connected with learning strategy use. It was found that highly efficacious students used more learning strategies than those lowly efficacious students. Therefore, it is important to conduct learning strategy training to improve students' foreign language performance and self-efficacy. Graham (2007) conducted a study to examine the impact of learning strategy training and feedback on students' strategy use on listening self-efficacy of learners of French. The researcher aimed at improving students' self-efficacy by helping them realize and link their performance with strategy use rather than inability through feedback on strategy use.

The present study, based on Graham's (2007) study, examined the impact of strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance on English listening self-efficacy, English listening performance and attributions of Chinese university students. The correlations between posttest attributions and training performance, posttest performance and posttest self-efficacy, as well as posttest attributions and posttest self-efficacy were also examined. Three groups were involved in the study with different interventions. Group TF received both strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance, aiming at demonstrating explicitly and directly to students the important role of effective strategy use on their performance. Students in this group were also required to keep a strategy use diary and feedback was also given for their strategy use diary. At the end of training, they were asked to comment on feedback they received. Such activity was conducted to help understand how students perceived feedback from their perspective and what made effective feedback. Group T received only strategy training; group C was a control group. The whole study lasted for two months.

In terms of listening performance, the results showed that group TF consistently outperformed significantly than other two groups and the posttest listening performance is significantly greater than the pretest performance for group TF. The findings demonstrated that the combination of strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance had a beneficial impact on English listening

performance.

With regard to attributions, it was found that in both pretest and posttest, lack of effort and difficult task were regarded as two main reasons for unsuccessful performance for all three groups, followed by poor ability. Bad luck was perceived as the least important factor influencing their performance. However, it was also found that attributions of group TF did not change significantly after the study in spite of significantly improved performance. It was possible that for adult learners, their attributions as a self-belief which has been firmly established for many years were difficult to be changed over a short training period. When their improved performance lasts for long time, students might reconsider their attributions.

With regard to self-efficacy, group TF improved self-efficacy significantly after the study and posttest self-efficacy of group TF was significantly greater than that of other two groups. It was possible that some students improved English listening ability, which in turn produced enhanced self-efficacy. The other reason for improved self-efficacy might due to the specific explanations and suggestions for students' strategy use, which provided them with more information, direction and expectation for pursuing future attainments. Encouragement and praises possibly served as another reason for improved self-efficacy because they are involved in verbal persuasion as a source of self-efficacy. Students were praised

for their efforts and ability to use strategies effectively when they performed well through active seeking of strategies. When performed badly, they were also encouraged to be persistent as success was attainable through effective strategy use. Moreover, teachers' feedback has a powerful effect on students' self-efficacy based on Chinese culture, in which teachers are respected and never be challenged. Therefore, positive feedback helps students enhance their self-evaluations of capabilities.

However, it should be noticed that although there were students who improved self-efficacy without significant changes in listening performance, their self-efficacy would be possibly decreased again if their achievement outcomes cannot be improved over time. These students enhanced self-efficacy because of suggestions and encouragement provided in feedback which produced their expectations of future competences. However, once there is not feedback anymore which persuades them success is attainable through persistence, effort and effective strategy use, their self-efficacy might decrease again without improvement in performance. Mastery experience after all, serves as the most influential source of self-efficacy.

The findings demonstrated that group T also improved self-efficacy significantly in spite of no enhancement in performance over the study. It was possible that students of group T had the lowest level of self-efficacy in the pretest and thus

had the most ground to make up. Moreover, they were instructed a series of English listening strategies through the study, which were completely new for them and never been taught before in any English classes. With such strategy training, it was possible that these students to some extent understood the strategies, had a new direction where they efforts go and believed the relation between effective strategy use and performance success, which in turn instils a sense of control over achievement outcomes and raises self-efficacy (Corno, 1989; Schunk, 1989).

Self-efficacy of the participants in accomplishing four types of tasks in terms of understanding main ideas, understanding details, catching keywords and understanding unknown words were examined. It was found that group TF made the greatest gains in self-efficacy for all tasks in terms of these four abilities compared with other two groups. Results also reveals that gains in self-efficacy of group TF in understanding main ideas and keywords of CET4 listening tasks were significantly greater than those of group T and group C.

The findings therefore, confirmed that strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance had a beneficial impact on students' English listening performance and self-efficacy.

The correlation analysis demonstrated that there was a weak correlation between

posttest self-efficacy and posttest performance. It was possible that there were a part of students who did not academically enhanced during training but increased self-efficacy because of feedback on strategy use and performance, which gave them encouragement, specific suggestions and explanations for strategy use and led to students' expectations of future competence.

The correlation between posttest attributions and training performance demonstrated that there was a strong and negative correlation between poor ability attribution and training performance. Such finding was consistent with the statements of Snowman et al (2009) who advocated that students with histories of academic failure typically attribute their failures to lack of ability. However, task difficulty was negatively and weakly related with training performance. That is, in spite of a negative correlation, students with different training performance tended to perceive difficult task as an important factor for performance failure because listening is regarded by Chinese students as the most difficult in English acquisition and the difficulty of tasks would affect to some extent their performance (Qin, 2010). Lack of efforts was positively and moderately correlated with students' training performance and it was possible that while some successfully performed students regarded lack of effort as the important reason when they did not perform well, some other successful learners perceived other reasons which were not included in the current attribution scales. Finally, it was found that bad luck had no significant correlation with training performance.

Therefore, the correlations between four posttest attributions and training performance indicated that while successful learners tended to attribute their failure to lack of effort, those unsuccessful students tended to attribute their poor training performance to lack of ability. Such findings in general were consistent with those of Snowman et al (2009) and Schunk (1986).

The correlation between posttest self-efficacy and posttest attributions showed that in spite of significant correlations between posttest self-efficacy and posttest attributions except bad luck, the correlations were weak. That is to say, as a whole, students' attributions did not affect their self-efficacy and it was due to improved self-efficacy but unchanged attributions.

The students of group TF were required to keep a strategy use diary with the purpose to cultivate their metacognitive awareness and understand how students perceive the strategies. From the submitted strategy use diaries, it can be found that most of them were clear about which strategies they used effectively or ineffectively, why they used the strategies ineffectively, and their subsequent steps as well. However, the present study failed to collect enough strategy use diaries. Reliability of the data thus, cannot be guaranteed.

The participants in group TF were also asked to comment on feedback they received. Their comments demonstrated that these Chinese university students

liked such feedback which was never given to them in the past by any other teachers. There were three main reasons for the importance of feedback perceived by students. The first was it provided them with useful and specific information including explanations and suggestions of strategy use for each question answered incorrectly. So they understood clearly the purpose of strategies and how to utilize them more effectively by given the examples. As such, students set goals, use strategies and expect future competences (Pang, 2000). Secondly, it encouraged students to be persistent no matter they perform well or not and persuaded them success was achievable after specific explanations and suggestions for strategy use were given. As in Chinese culture, teachers' evaluations had a powerful influence on students' self-evaluations. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to encourage rather than criticize students when they performed badly. However, persuaders must cultivate people's beliefs in their capabilities while at the same time ensuring that the envisioned success is attainable (Pajares, 1997). Moreover, feedback about the self such as "*You are a great student*", "*I know you can*" should be avoided because such feedback provides too little useful information and has almost no value for learning gains. Students also regarded feedback as a care for individuals and claimed that this novel method was not used by any teacher before made them felt they were paid attention to and cared as an individual.

Through students' comments on feedback, it can be seen that comments on

strategy use of feedback in the present study to some extent contributed to improve students' understanding of strategies and English listening abilities on one hand, the comments on their training performance was beneficial to encourage students to seek and use strategies persistently on the other. Therefore, although the feedback in the present study failed to modify students' attributions of task difficulty and poor ability for performance failures to lack of efforts, it did motivate students, especially those difficult ones to use strategies. Also, as a source of self-efficacy, such verbal persuasion contributed to their improved self-efficacy.

Students' comments on feedback contributed to an explicit understanding of effective feedback for teachers from the perspective of students. As Hattie (2002) suggested, effective feedback should provide students with useful information which produces more engagement, commitment to the learning intentions or understanding about the task. Feedback about the self should be avoided. Moreover, effective feedback should praise students for their effective strategy use and great efforts when they performed successfully, and encourage students to be persistent and persuade them that success is attainable as long as they find effective strategies.

Future research should involve a larger sample size to ensure reliability and generalizability of the study. In order to investigate whether the combination of

strategy training and feedback on strategy use and performance could help students positively modify their attributions, the future study should last for a longer period. To raise students' awareness on the importance of metacognition and understand how well students' use of strategies, in future study strategy use diary can be assigned as a portion of assignments so as to make students treat this activity seriously. Finally, further research needs to identify more clearly and specifically the Chinese university students' perceived attributions for English listening performance so as to investigate how these specific attributions be affected by the training.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 ---- Pretest

#### Section A

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 3 short conversations and 1 long conversation. At the end of each conversation, one or more questions will be asked about what was said. Both the conversation and the questions will be spoken only once. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause, you must read the four choices marked A), B), C) and D), and decide which the best answer is. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

1. A) She used to be in poor health.  
B) She was somewhat overweight.  
C) She was popular among boys.  
D) She didn't do well at high school.
  
2. A) At the airport.  
B) In a booking office.  
C) In a restaurant.  
D) At the hotel reception.

3. A) Have a short break.
- B) Continue her work outdoors.
- C) Take two weeks off.
- D) Go on vacation with the man.

Questions 4 to 6 are based on the conversation you have just heard.

4. A) She is thirsty for promotion.
- B) She is tired of her present work.
- C) She wants a much higher salary.
- D) She wants to save travel expenses.
5. A) Translator.
- B) Travel agent.
- C) Language instructor.
- D) Environmental engineer.
6. A) Lively personality and inquiring mind.
- B) Communication skills and team spirit.
- C) Devotion and work efficiency.
- D) Education and experience.

## Section B

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 1 short passage. At the end of the passage, you will hear three questions. Both the passage and the questions will be spoken only once. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A), B), C) and D). Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

- 7 A) He suffered from mental illness.
- B) He bought *The Washington Post*.
- C) He turned a failing newspaper into a success.
- D) He was once a reporter for a major newspaper.
8. A) She was the first woman to lead a big U.S. publishing company.
- B) She got her first job as a teacher at the University of Chicago.
- C) She committed suicide because of her mental disorder.
- D) She took over her father's position when he died.
- 9 A) People came to see the role of woman in the business world.
- B) Katharine played a major part in reshaping Americans' mind.
- C) American media would be quite different without Katharine.
- D) Katharine had exerted an important influence on the world.

## Section C

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear a passage three times. When the passage is read for the first time, you should listen carefully for its general idea. When the passage is read for the second time, you are required to fill in the blanks numbered from 1 to 4 with the exact words you have just heard. For blanks numbered from 5 and 6 you are required to fill in the missing information. For these blanks, you can either use the exact words you have just heard or write down the main points in your own words. Finally, when the passage is read for the third time, you should check what you have written.*

Crime rates have always been high in multicultural industrialized societies such as the United States, but a new (1) \_\_\_\_\_ has appeared on the world (2) \_\_\_\_\_, especially rising crime rates in nations that previously reported few (3) \_\_\_\_\_. Street crimes such as robbery, rape, (4) \_\_\_\_\_ and auto theft are clearly rising.

These conditions are increasingly observable around the world. For instance, cultures that were previously isolated and homogeneous, such as Japan, Denmark, and Greece, (5) \_\_\_\_\_.

Multiculturalism can be a rewarding enriching experience, but it can also lead to a clash of values. Heterogeneity in societies will be the rule in the twenty-first century, and (6) \_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix 2 ---- Test 1 Short Conversation

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 15 short conversations. At the end of each conversation, one question will be asked about what was said. Both the conversation and the question will be spoken only once. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause, you must read the four choices marked A), B), C) and D), and decide which the best answer is. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

1. A) At 2:35.

B) At 2:45.

C) At 3:00.

D) At 3:20.

2. A) 5:00.

B) 5:15.

C) 5:30

D) 5:45.

3. A) 5:30.

B) 5:00.

C) 4:30.

D) 5:15.

4. A) Around 5:00.

B) Around 3:00.

C) At 2:00.

D) At 1:00.

5. A) More than an hour and a half.

B) Not more than half an hour.

C) More than two hours.

D) Less than an hour and a half.

6. A) In a car.

B) On the street.

C) In a restaurant.

D) At home.

7 A) At a restaurant.

B) At a car dealer's.

C) At a publishing house.

D) At a newspaper office.

- 8 A) At a theatre.  
B) At a booking office.  
C) At a railway station.  
D) At a restaurant.
- 9 A) To the bank.  
B) To a bookstore.  
C) To a shoe store.  
D) To the grocer's.
- 10 A) At home.  
B) At the riverside.  
C) At the health center.  
D) At his office.
- 11 A) colleagues.  
B) Husband and wife.  
C) Employer and employee.  
D) Mother and son.
- 12 A) They are twins.  
B) They are classmates.

- C) They are friends.
- D) They are colleagues.

- 13 A) Librarian and student.
- B) Operator and caller.
  - C) Boss and secretary.
  - D) Customer and repairman.

- 14 A) He is a driver.
- B) He is a real estate salesman.
  - C) He is a meter reader.
  - D) He works at a fair.

15. A) A writer.
- B) A teacher.
  - C) A reporter.
  - D) A student.

## Appendix 3 ---- Test 2 Short Conversation

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 15 short conversations. At the end of each conversation, one question will be asked about what was said. Both the conversation and the question will be spoken only once. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause, you must read the four choices marked A), B), C) and D), and decide which the best answer is. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

1. A) \$500

B) \$600

C) \$1,000

D) \$1,100

2. A) In the library

B) In the bank

C) In the clinic

D) In the accounting office

3. A) A physician

B) A dentist

C) A surgeon

D) A pediatrician

4. A) The pears

B) The weather

C) The sea food

D) The cold

5. A) The teacher reviewed a previous lesson.

B) The teacher taught a new lesson.

C) The teacher postponed the class until Friday.

D) The teacher made the students write in class.

6. A) He enjoys writing home every week.

B) He never fails to write a weekly letter home.

C) He doesn't write home once a week now.

D) He has been asked to write home every week.

7. A) She read it selectively.

B) She went over it chapter by chapter.

C) She read it slowly.

D) She finished it at a stretch.

8. A) Have a fifth ice cream.
- B) Finish the work after dinner time.
- C) Go to work straight away.
- D) Give up the work.
9. A) He found it interesting.
- B) He found it boring.
- C) He found it informative.
- D) He found it enjoyable.
10. A) She thinks Kari is a thief.
- B) She thinks Kari is stupid.
- C) She is suspicious of Kari.
- D) She thinks Kari makes a mistake.
11. A) Not hanging the poster.
- B) Using tape for the poster.
- C) Peeling off the wallpaper.
- D) Not hiding the damage.
12. A) He doesn't like either of them.
- B) John copied it from Jim.

C) Jim copied it from John.

D) One copied from the other.

13. A) Don't use ice cubes.

B) Be nice.

C) Boil the water first.

D) Lose some weight.

14. A) Only true friendship can last long.

B) Letter writing is going out of style.

C) She keeps in regular touch with her classmates.

D) She has lost contact with most of her old friends.

15. A) A painter.

B) A porter.

C) A mechanic.

D) A carpenter.

## Appendix 4 ---- Test 3 Long Conversation

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 4 long conversations. At the end of each conversation, several questions will be asked about what was said. Both the conversation and the questions will be spoken only once. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause, you must read the four choices marked A), B), C) and D), and decide which the best answer is. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

**Answer Q1-3 based on the conversation between two drama students.**

1. A) The students needed off-campus jobs.  
B) The theatre department needed more talented students.  
C) The opera company was looking for volunteers.  
D) The new dean thought it would provide good experience for the students.
  
2. A) Work with an opera troupe.  
B) Work part-time for the dean.  
C) Perform on the radio.  
D) Submit their suggestions to the dean.
  
3. A) A good singing voice.

- B) A certain grade point average.
- C) An academic concentration in theatre arts.
- D) A commitment to the project for two semesters.

**Answer the following four questions based on the conversation between two friends.**

- 4.
  - A) To choose a topic for a team paper.
  - B) To type some research materials.
  - C) To find material not available at the main library.
  - D) To learn to use the computer there.
  
- 5.
  - A) An analysis of early presidential elections.
  - B) A comparison of political journals.
  - C) The use of computers in calculating election results.
  - D) The impact of television on recent presidential elections.
  
- 6.
  - A) It is quite general.
  - B) She thinks he should change it.
  - C) Most of the information he needs will be found in newspaper.
  - D) It should take a very short time to find material on it.

7. A) Travel to the library to get it.
- B) Pay to use it.
- C) Read it in the graduate school library.
- D) Order the material from the publisher.

**Answer the following four questions based on the conversation between two friends.**

8. A) She was impressed by it.
- B) It was a waster of money.
- C) She was amazing it had opened so soon.
- D) She didn't like it as much as the other wings.
9. A) He took a tour of the city.
- B) He read about it.
- C) He wrote an article about it.
- D) He worked there as a guide.
10. A) They came from the original wing.
- B) They are made if the same material.
- C) They are similar in shape.
- D) They were designed by the same person.

11. A) It was made of aluminium.  
B) It wasn't large enough.  
C) It wouldn't move in the wind.  
D) It was too heavy to put up.

**Answer the following four questions based on the conversation between two classmates.**

12. A) She's worried about the seminar.  
B) The man keeps interrupting her.  
C) She finds it too hard.  
D) She lacks interest in it.
13. A) The lectures are boring.  
B) The course is poorly designed.  
C) She prefers Philosophy to English.  
D) She enjoys literature more.
14. A) Karen's friend.  
B) Karen's parents.  
C) Karen's lecturers.  
D) Karen herself.

15. A) Changing her major.
- B) Spending less of her parents' money.
- C) Getting transferred to the English Department.
- D) Leaving the university.

## Appendix 5 ---- Test 4 Short Passages

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 3 short passages. At the end of each passage, you will hear several questions. Both the passage and the questions will be spoken only once. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A), B), C) and D). Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

### Passage 1

Questions 1 to 4 are based on the passage you have just heard.

1. A). Mr. King  
B) Mrs. King  
C). Mr. King's sister  
D) Mrs. King's sister
  
2. A). Mrs. King  
B) Mrs. King's sister  
C) Mr. King's sister  
D) someone acting as a nurse

3. A) Because he had to take his wife to the station
- B) Because he had to take his sister home
- C) Because he had to look after someone in another town.
- D) Because he worked in another town.
4. A) Mr. King would be in real trouble when the women met with each other.
- B) Those women would get angry with Mr. King for what he was doing.
- C) The porter really thought Mr. King was having a lot of fun.
- D) The porter misunderstood what Mr. King was doing.

## **Passage 2**

Questions 5 to 7 are based on the passage you have just heard.

5. A) 50 miles away.
- B) 15 miles away.
- C) 20 miles away.
- D) 12 miles away.
6. A) He was a poor guy.
- B) He liked to take a walk.
- C) He always wanted to go to sleep.
- D) He could not fall asleep easily.

7. A) No more than 15 minutes' ride.
- B) About an hour's ride.
- C) A little less than an hour's ride.
- D) About half an hour's ride.

### **Passage 3**

Questions 8 to 10 are based on the passage you have just heard.

8. A) It promised to give gifts to customers every day.
- B) It promised to give gifts to lucky customers every day.
- C) It promised their customers could get free goods on a lucky day.
- D) It promised one lucky customer could get free goods on a lucky day.
9. A) They never hoped to be lucky customers.
- B) They believed one day they would be lucky customers.
- C) They hoped but they thought that was almost impossible.
- D) Nothing was mentioned about her friends.
10. A) Quite happy
- B) Too excited.
- C) Very sad.
- D) A little disappointed.

## Appendix 6 ---- Test 5 Compound Dictations

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear a passage three times. When the passage is read for the first time, you should listen carefully for its general idea. When the passage is read for the second time, you are required to fill in the blanks numbered from S1 to S7 with the exact words you have just heard. For blanks numbered from S8 to S10 you are required to fill in the missing information. For these blanks, you can either use the exact words you have just heard or write down the main points in your own words. Finally, when the passage is read for the third time, you should check what you have written.*

The authors of the (S1) \_\_\_\_\_ note that as long as responsibility for childcare is with the women they will remain (S2) \_\_\_\_\_ in the family. They also point out that concessions to women in the world of work often result in women being (S3) \_\_\_\_\_ into less well paid jobs. This already happens in (S4) \_\_\_\_\_ to part-time workers who are paid a lower (S5) \_\_\_\_\_ Wage than full-time workers. They point out that men have to square on their responsibility as others. The key they (S6) \_\_\_\_\_ is a change in men's (S7) \_\_\_\_\_.

However what was not mentioned is that (S8) \_\_\_\_\_

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With all the goodwill in the world they cannot change their employer/employee relationship,

(S9) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. A more fundamental conclusion would be that society at the moment, capitalism, does not want to accommodate any of the problems of childcare,

(S10) \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 7 ---- Posttest

### Section A

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 3 short conversations and 1 long conversation. At the end of each conversation, one or more questions will be asked about what was said. Both the conversation and the questions will be spoken only once. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause, you must read the four choices marked A), B), C) and D), and decide which the best answer is. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

1. A) in 1978

B) In 1869

C) In 1982

D) In 1975

2. A) In a department store

B) In a bank

C) In an airport

D) In a hotel

3. A) He thinks it is a satisfactory house.
- B) He doesn't like it at all.
- C) He complains about the small bedroom.
- D) He thinks the kitchen is not in the right place.

Questions 4 to 6 are based on the conversation you have just heard.

4. A) She asked others about the job.
- B) She knew these from the Internet.
- C) She did the same job before.
- D) She learned these from the professor.

5. A) It is a good salary.
- B) It is just so-so.
- C) It is a low salary.
- D) It is a much higher salary.

6. A) The salary the job can offer.
- B) The hard working for the job.
- C) The time it might take.
- D) The fame he will get from the job.

## Section B

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear 1 short passage. At the end of the passage, you will hear three questions. Both the passage and the questions will be spoken only once. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A), B), C) and D). Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

7. A) Because they have good memories.  
B) Because they are not poetic.  
C) Because they are not great men.  
D) Because they have bad memories.
8. A) Because they are lazy and absent-minded.  
B) Because they have so little time for it.  
C) Because they have no interest in it.  
D) Because they are too small to understand so many rules.
9. A) A picture.  
B) A camera.  
C) A photo.  
D) A film.

## Section C

**Directions:** *In this section, you will hear a passage three times. When the passage is read for the first time, you should listen carefully for its general idea. When the passage is read for the second time, you are required to fill in the blanks numbered from 1 to 4 with the exact words you have just heard. For blanks numbered from 5 and 6 you are required to fill in the missing information. For these blanks, you can either use the exact words you have just heard or write down the main points in your own words. Finally, when the passage is read for the third time, you should check what you have written.*

Time is (1)\_\_\_\_\_. A famous Chinese saying goes like this: “A second of time cannot be (2) \_\_\_\_\_with an ounce of gold.” Time is so (3) that nothing can buy it. The (4) \_\_\_\_\_time will never come back, therefore, we should cherish time.

Apparently,

(5)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_For example, students can use the early morning for physical exercise or academic studies instead of lying in bed, looking at the ceiling. (6) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix 8 --- English Listening Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

*Please use the following scale to answer the following statements. There is no right or wrong answer. Circle the number that best describes how sure you are that you can perform each of the English listening skills below.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

*Not at all sure*

*Moderately sure*

*Completely sure*

**A. In terms of short conversations in College English Test 4, how sure are you that you can**

1. Understand the main ideas of a short conversation between two English speakers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Understand the details of a short conversation between two English speakers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Understand the meaning of unknown words by inferencing

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Catch the keyword

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**B. In terms of long conversations in College English Test 4, how sure are you that you can**

1. Understand the main ideas of a long conversation between two English speakers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Understand the details of a long conversation between two English speakers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Understand the meaning of unknown words by inferencing

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Catch the keyword

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**C. In terms of short passages in College English Test 4, how sure are you that you can**

1. Understand the main ideas of a short passage about diverse topics given by an English speaker

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Understand the details of a short passage about diverse topics given by an English speaker

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Understand the meaning of unknown words by inferencing

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Catch the keyword

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**D. In terms of Compound Dictations in College English Test 4, how sure are you that you can**

1. Understand the main ideas of a passage given by an English speaker

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Understand the details of a passage given by an English speaker

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Understand the meaning of unknown words by inferencing

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Catch the keyword

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Appendix 9 ---- Pretest Attribution Scales

*Based on your learning experience in past, how much do you agree that the four factors below are the main reason when you performed unsuccessfully in CET4 Listening Comprehension?*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

*Not at agree*

*Moderately agree*

*Completely agree*

1. Poor Ability (I am not good at English listening)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Task Difficulty (The listening materials were too difficult for me)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Lack of Effort (I did not make enough efforts)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Bad luck (I was too unlucky to perform well)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Appendix 10 ---- Posttest Attribution Scales

*Based on your learning experience during the training over two months, how much do you agree that the four factors below are the main reason when you performed unsuccessfully in the training tests?*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

*Not at agree*

*Moderately agree*

*Completely agree*

1. Poor Ability (I am not good at English listening)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Task Difficulty (The listening materials were too difficult for me)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Lack of Effort (I did not make enough efforts)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Bad luck (I was too unlucky to perform well)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Appendix 11 ----Training Activities

Date	Group TF				Group T				Group C			
	Tasks	Procedure	Strategy Type	Strategies	Tasks	Procedure	Strategy Type	Strategies	Tasks	Procedure	Strategy Type	Strategies
01.04	Pre-test -Attributions -Self-efficacy -CET4 listening				Pre-test -Attributions -Self-efficacy -CET4 listening				Pre-test -Attributions -Self-efficacy -CET4 listening			
08.04	Short Conversations	1.Introducing names and purposes of strategies. 2. Strategy use instruction 3.Class test with used strategies recorded	Cognitive  Meta-cognitive	-Key words -Prediction -Note taking  -Directed attention	Short Conversations	1. Introducing names and purposes of strategies. 2. Strategy use instruction 3.Class test without used strategies recorded	Cognitive  Meta-cognitive	-Key words -Prediction -Note taking  -Directed attention	Short Conversations	No strategy training  Only class test	N/A	N/A
15.04	Short Conversations	1.Distributed feedback to every student and ten minutes	Cognitive  Meta-	- Imagery -Repetition  -Directed	Short Conversations	1. Introducing names and purposes of strategies.	Cognitive  Meta-	- Imagery -Repetition  -Directed	Short Conversations	No strategy training  Only class	N/A	N/A

<p>for them to read and think.</p> <p>2.Introducing names and purposes of strategies.</p> <p>3. Strategy use instruction</p> <p>4.Class test with used strategies recorded</p>	<p>Cognitive</p>	<p>attention</p>		<p>2. Strategy use instruction</p> <p>3.Class test without used strategies recorded</p>	<p>cognitive</p>	<p>attention</p>		<p>test</p>	
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22.04	Long Conversations	1. Distributed feedback to every student and ten minutes for them to read and think. 2. Introducing names and purposes of strategies. 3. Strategy use instruction 4. Class test with used strategies recorded	Cognitive  Meta-Cognitive	-Elaboration -Prediction -Inferencing -Note-taking  -Selective Attention -Comprehension monitoring	Long Conversations	1. Introducing names and purposes of strategies. 2. Strategy use instruction 3. Class test without used strategies recorded	Cognitive  Meta-Cognitive	-Elaboration -Prediction -Inferencing -Note-taking  -Selective Attention -Comprehension monitoring	Long Conversations	No strategy training  Only class test	N/A	N/A
29.04	Short Passages	1. Distributed feedback to every student and ten minutes for them to read and think. 2. Students were asked to write strategy use	Cognitive  Meta-Cognitive	-Contextualization -Elaboration -Inferencing -Prediction  -Selective Attention -Comprehension	Short Passages	1. Introducing names and purposes of strategies. 2. Strategy use instruction 3. Class test without used strategies	Cognitive  Meta-Cognitive	-Contextualization -Elaboration -Inferencing -Prediction  -Selective Attention -Comprehension	Short Passages	No strategy training  Only class test	N/A	N/A

		<p>diaries and handed them in.</p> <p>3. Introducing names and purposes of strategies.</p> <p>4. Strategy use instruction</p> <p>5. Class test with used strategies recorded</p>		<p>on monitoring</p> <p>-Real time assessment</p>		<p>recorded</p>		<p>on monitoring</p> <p>-Real time assessment</p>				
06.05	Compound Dictation	<p>1. Distributed feedback for both strategies and strategy use diaries to every student and ten minutes for them to read and think.</p> <p>2. Introducing names and purposes of strategies.</p> <p>4. Strategy</p>	<p>Cognitive</p> <p>Meta-Cognitive</p>	<p>-Repetition</p> <p>-Translation</p> <p>-Note-taking</p> <p>-Selective attention</p> <p>-Comprehension evaluation</p>	Compound Dictation	<p>1. Introducing names and purposes of strategies.</p> <p>2. Strategy use instruction</p> <p>3. Class test without used strategies recorded</p>	<p>Cognitive</p> <p>Meta-Cognitive</p>	<p>-Repetition</p> <p>-Translation</p> <p>-Note-taking</p> <p>-Selective attention</p> <p>-Comprehension evaluation</p>	Compound Dictation	<p>No strategy training</p> <p>Only class test</p>	N/A	N/A

		use instruction 5. Class test with used strategies recorded									
13.05	Posttest -Attributions -Self-efficacy -CET4 listening	1. Distributed feedback to every student and ten minutes for them to read and think. 2. Posttest			Posttest -Attributions -Self-efficacy -CET4 listening	Only Posttest			Posttest -Attributions -Self-efficacy -CET4 listening	Only Posttest	

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