ผลของการใช้กิจกรรมก่อนการฟังต่อความเข้าใจในการฟังของผู้เรียน
ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

นางเสียวเหลย ติง

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EFFECTS OF THE PRE-LISTENING TASKS ON

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

OF EFL LEARNERS

Xiaolei Ding

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เสียวเหลย ติง : ผลของการใช้กิจกรรมก่อนการฟังต่อความเข้าใจในการฟังของผู้เรียน
ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ (EFFECTS OF THE PRE-LISTENING TASKS ON
LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF EFL LEARNERS) อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา :
รองศาสตราจารย์ ทรงพร ทาเจริญศักดิ์, 229 หน้า

การศึกษาเกี่ยวกับผลกระทบของการใช้กิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงานต่อความสามารถในการ
ฟังของผู้เรียนชาวจีนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศนั้นเป็นประเด็นที่น่าสนใจทั้งในแง่
ทฤษฎีและการปฏิบัติ กิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) นั้นมีเป้าหมายเพื่อเตรียม
ผู้เรียนให้สามารถทำกิจกรรมที่ส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ภาษาได้ งานวิจัยเรื่องนี้จึงมุ่งตรวจสอบผลกระทบ
ของผลของการใช้กิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) ที่มีต่อความสามารถในการฟัง
ของผู้เรียนชาวจีนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ตลอดจนความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาต่อ
การทำกิจกรรมนั้นๆ ขั้นตอนในการทำกิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) มี ๓
ขั้นตอน คือ การวางกรอบคิด (concept mapping), การวางแผนอย่างมียุทธศาสตร์ (strategic
planning) และการฝึกซ้อม (rehearsal) คำถามของการวิจัยครั้งนี้มี ๒ ข้อ คือ ข้อที่ ๑ ผลกระทบของ
การใช้กิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) ที่มีต่อความสามารถในการฟังของผู้เรียนชาว
จีนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศนั้น มีขอบเขตกว้างขวางมากน้อยเพียงไร ข้อที่ ๒
ผู้เรียนมีทัศนคติอย่างไรต่อการทำ กิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) ในงานวิจัยครั้งนี้
มีการแบ่งผู้เรียนทั้ง ๔๐ คน เป็น ๒ กลุ่ม คือ กลุ่มทดลอง และ กลุ่มควบคุม เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการ
วิจัย ครั้งนี้ ประกอบด้วย ข้อทดสอบเพื่อวัดความเข้าใจในการฟัง (listening comprehension test)
บันทึกของครู (teacher's log) แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับความคิดเห็นของผู้เรียน (questionnaires about
the students' opinions) คำถามปลายเปิด (students' open-ended questionnaires) การสัมภาษณ์แบบ
กึ่งโครงสร้าง (semi-structured interviews) ตลอดจนการวิเคราะห์งานเขียนย่อความของนักศึกษา
(teacher's analysis of students' written summary).

ผลการวิจัยครั้งนี้พบว่ากิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) มีผลกระทบอย่างมี
นัยสำคัญต่อความสามารถในการฟังของผู้เรียนชาวจีนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ดัง
จะเห็นได้จากผลคะแนนของผู้เรียนในทำข้อทดสอบความเข้าใจในการฟัง ผลของการวิเคราะห์การ
เขียนข้อความของนักศึกษา และทัศนะเชิงบวกของนักศึกษาที่มีต่อการทำกิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน
(pre-task activities) งานวิจัยครั้งนี้มีนัยความหมายในเชิงวิชาการ ดังนี้ ประการแรก การสอนการ
เข้าใจในการฟังที่ครูจัดให้มีกิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) มีประโยชน์มากกว่าการ
สอนแบบดั้งเดิม ประการที่สอง กรอบการวิเคราะห์งานเขียนย่อความของนักศึกษา (teacher's
analysis of students' written summary) ที่ออกแบบโดยผู้วิจัยในการวิจัยครั้งนี้ มีประโยชน์มากใน

การประเมินความสามารถในการฟังของผู้เรียน ประการที่สาม จากการวิเคราะห์แบบสอบถาม
เกี่ยวกับความคิดเห็นของผู้เรียน (questionnaires about the students' opinions) คำถามปลายเปิด
(students' open-ended questionnaires) การสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง (semi-structured
interviews) แล้วจะเห็นว่า เมื่อเปรียบเทียบกิจกรรมก่อนเริ่มภาระงาน (pre-task activities) ทั้ง ๓
ขั้นตอนแล้วผู้เรียนยอมรับขั้นตอนการวางกรอบคิด (concept mapping) มากกว่าขั้นตอนการ
วางแผนอย่างมียุทธศาสตร์ (strategic planning) และ ขั้นตอนการฝึกซ้อม (rehearsal) ประการที่ ๔
ผู้วิจัยได้พบว่าการนำหลักการเรียนรู้ตามทฤษฎีการสร้างความรู้ด้วยตนเอง (Constructivism) และ
ทฤษฎีการรับภาษาที่สอง (SLA) มาใช้ในการสร้างบทเรียนเสริมในการสอนความเข้าใจในการฟัง
ก่อให้เกิดผลดีในการสอน ดังจะเห็นได้จากผลคะแนนการสอบวัดความเข้าใจการฟังและ
ความสามารถในการเขียนย่อความของผู้เรียน

สาขาวิชาภาษาต่างประเทศ   ลายมือชื่อนักศึกษา_____

ปีการศึกษา 2554   ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา_____

XIAOLEI DING : EFFECTS OF THE PRE-LISTENING TASKS ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF EFL LEARNERS. THESIS ADVISOR : ASSOC. PROF. SONGPHORN TAJAROENSUK, PH.D., 229 PP.

PRE-TASK PLANNING ACTIVITIES/ EFL LEARNERS/ LISTENING COMPREHENSION

The study of the effects of pre-task planning activities on how EFL learners perform listening tasks is of both theoretical and practical interest. The purpose of pre-task planning is to prepare students to perform tasks in ways that will promote their language acquisition.This study aims at investigating the effects of pre-task planning activities on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners as well as the students' opinions towards pre-task planning activities. Three steps, namely, concept mapping, strategic planning and rehearsal, are employed in the pre-task planning activities in the present study. The two research questions are: (1) To what extent can the pre-task planning activities have an effect on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners? and (2) What are the students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning activities in the present study?

There are forty participants who were assigned to an experimental group and a control group. The instruments employed in the present study to achieve the research purposes include a listening comprehension test, a teacher's log, questionnaires about the students' opinions, students' open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews as well as a teacher's analysis of students' listening summary.

The research findings revealed that there were significant effects on students' listening comprehension after training in the use of the pre-task planning activities, which was tested by a listening comprehension test as well as a teacher's analysis of students' written summary. It was found that students held positive attitudes towards the pre-task planning activities. The pedagogical implications in the present study include, firstly, that the teaching of EFL listening can benefit from the pre-task planning activities more than the traditional teaching employed in the classroom; secondly, the written summary analysis designed by the researcher in the present study can provide Chinese EFL listening teachers with a useful instrument to assess students'listening comprehension; thirdly, compared with the other two steps in the pre-task planning activities, namely, the steps of strategic planning and of rehearsal, the step of concept mapping was found to be more acceptable and welcometo Chinese EFL learners, as was shown by the students' questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews; fourthly, based on the learning theories of constructivism andthe SLA, the researcher and instructor supplemented the teaching materials in the EFL listening classroom in the present study and the supplementary materials used proved to have a good effect on teaching, as shown by the listening comprehension test as well as a teacher's analysis of students' listening summary.

School of Foreign Languages   Student's Signature_____

Academic Year 2011   Advisor's Signature_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL……………………………….…….English as a Foreign Language

ELT……………………………………..English Language Teaching

ESL…………………………….…….….English as a Second Language

LCT…………………………….……....Listening Comprehension Test

L2……………………………………….Second Language

MOE…………………………………….Ministry of Education

TBA…………………………………….Task-Based Approach

TBLT…………………………………….Task-Based Language Teaching

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present study aims at investigating the effects of pre-task planning activities on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners. This chapter serves as an introduction to the whole study and it covers the background to the study, namely, English language teaching (ELT) in China, the urgent need for efficient teaching of EFL listening as well as the existing problems in the teaching and learning of EFL listening in China. It also includes the rationale of the study, the significance of the study, the research purposes and the research questions. What follows are the definitions of the terms frequently used in the present study as well as a summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the Present Study

This section presents the background to the present study from the following perspectives: English language teaching in China, the urgent need for efficient teaching of EFL listening and the existing problems of the teaching and learning in EFL listening in China.

1.1.1 English Language Teaching in China

With the rapid development of economic globalization, especially after China's entry into WTO and the opening of its markets to the outside world, the demand for English proficiency among the Chinese is rising. In addition, having

successfully held the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Exposition, the urgent need for professionals with high levels of English language proficiency is now understood nation-wide. As a result, English language teaching has received a great deal of attention and has been gaining importance and popularity at an accelerating rate in China. It is recognized that the English language plays an important role in promoting international exchange, acquiring scientific knowledge and technological expertise, fostering economic progress, and participating in international competition (Zhang & Goh, 2006; Jin 2002).

However, the traditional ELT approach is considered as one of the most serious constraints on the adoption of educational innovations in the Chinese context (Goh, 2000; Zhang & Goh, 2006; Jin 2002; and Chen, 2005). A Chinese scholar, Hu (2001), has also pointed out that traditional ELT has taken root in, and has drawn strong support from, the Chinese culture of learning and failed to develop an adequate level of communicative competence, i.e. the ability to use the target language for authentic communication by millions of Chinese learners of English.

In 2001, the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) officially began to implement its policy of recognizing English as a compulsory subject for all students in compulsory education. Beginning in 2000, the Chinese MOE launched a program of teaching reform with an experimental study of TEFL programs across China. The Ministry issued its new document of College English Curriculum Requirements (March, 2000) for trial implementation which focused on the need for the development of students' communicative competence, particularly listening and speaking.

In 2001, the New Round National Curriculum Innovation was launched by the Chinese government, and TBLT has since been adopted as part of the official syllabus

(Hu, 2005). It is asserted that TBLT in the new curriculum can "develop students' positive attitudes toward learning" and "enhance students' competence in using the target language" through tasks (PEP, 2001, p. 2). To facilitate TBLT implementation, a series of new textbooks have been designed and published since 2001. It was claimed that these textbooks followed the communicative approach and, therefore, were compatible with the new task-based curriculum innovations.

The design of a task-based lesson involves consideration of the stages or components of a lesson that has a task as its principal component (Ellis, 2006). Various designs have been proposed (e.g. Prabhu 1987; Skehan 1996; Willis 1996). However, they all have in common three principal phases, namely pre-task, during-task and post-task. The purpose of the pre-task planning is to prepare students to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition. The study of the effects of pre-task planning on how EFL students perform listening tasks is of both theoretical and practical interest. The traditional way of teaching listening comprehension in China usually ignores pre-task planning and as a result, some problems occur (Hu, 2005; Li, 2004; Qi, 2007). An example of this is the high level of anxiety amongst students and the low level of input. The focus on pre-task planning in the teaching of EFL listening can change the role of listeners from passive "recorders" to active participants and increase the input. (Zhang & Adamson, 2003; Zhang 2005).

1.1.2 The Urgent Need for Efficient Teaching of EFL Listening

It has been noted that listening comprehension directly influences the improvement of general English proficiency, and more and more specialists and theorists have already recognized the necessity of actively teaching listening comprehension in the classroom (Long, 1990; Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Elkhafaifi,

2005; and Chung, 2002). According to Long (1989), only when listening proficiency is adequately developed can students become confident in their use of the language. In addition, many EFL learners need good listening ability to help them with school, work, travel or in other settings and language institutes and publishers have responded to these needs by providing a range of courses and materials to improve the teaching of listening. Thus, EFL listening in language programs has passed from being a neglected skill to appearing as a major part of the course in many language programs (Tyler, 2001; Macaro, Vandrplank & Graham, 2005; and Vandrgrift, 2003).

When the new document of the College English Curriculum Requirements was issued in 2003, the focus shifted to the need for the development of students' communicative competence, particularly listening and speaking. The changes to the requirements of the College English Test (Band 4 and Band 6), National Matriculation English Test, and Graduate Record Examination make the teaching of listening a priority all over the country. The need for competence in listening for English learners is increasingly recognized so that the teaching of listening has recently attracted considerable attention. However, the teaching of EFL listening remains a weak link in the English language teaching process. As analyzed by Yu (2001), in the process of English learning, major emphasis is put on the language skills of reading and writing throughout ELT. Although Chinese EFL learners' integrated skills in reading, writing, and translating have been improving, their listening and speaking capabilities have been left behind.

1.1.3 Existing Problems of EFL Listening in China

Zhang (2005) identified internal factors, namely, the lack of listening skills and neglect of basic training as the main obstacles in EFL listening in China. Yun

(2008) proposed a solution to the problems in English listening based on the aspects as psychology, the cultural background of English speaking countries, learners' listening habits, the environment, and the pronunciation, and the vocabulary as well as the grammar used in listening materials. This section of the present study provides an overview of the existing problems of the teaching and learning of EFL listening in China from the following perspectives: namely, the time allocation for the EFL listening, the teaching method of EFL listening, the EFL learners' learning habits as well as the EFL listening materials.

First and foremost, the teaching and learning of English listening is not given as much emphasis as the other language skills, such as writing and reading. Chinese EFL learners normally have six years of English learning in middle school before entry to college study. More focus is on writing and reading in English learning in middle school. For example, in Nanjing College of Population Program Management, where the researcher works as an English lecturer, few of the English majors have had any practice in listening to English in class during middle school. Even in some well-developed middle schools in big cities, listening to English only takes up a small portion of time in the curriculum. After students begin their college studies and major in English, a listening course is a compulsory course for them, but the study time for listening is still a small portion of the study time for all the language skills including reading, writing, speaking and listening. Based on the Curriculum Design for English Majors (2000), the study time for all the language skills in and for listening only is listed as follows.

Table 1.1 Study Time for English Majors in China

Academic Year	First-year		Second-year		Third-year		Fourth-year		Total	Proportion
Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Study Time for Language Skills (hours)	14	12	14	12	6	8	4	4	74	100%
Study Time for Listening(hours)	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	8	10.8%

With regard to the role of listening in everyday life, the point has frequently been made (Rivers & Temperly, 1978) that of the time an individual is engaged in communication, approximately 9 percent is devoted to writing, 16 percent to reading, 30 percent to speaking, and 45 percent to listening.

Table 1.2 Time of Language Skills Used in Communication

Language Skills	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
Time Engaged in Communication(%)	16	9	30	45

Compared with the time used for listening (45%), as pointed by Rivers & Temperly (1978), the time allocation for English listening of English majors (10.8%) is insufficient for Chinese EFL learners. The above two tables show that less emphasis is paid on the teaching and learning of EFL listening in China, compared with the other three skills of reading, writing and speaking.

Secondly, the traditional pedagogical methods have to some extent hindered EFL learning, especially English listening comprehension, in China. Most Chinese EFL learners are good at memorizing what they have learned from their text-books or teachers，but they are not in the habit of forming and expressing their own ideas. Their role in the process of language learning is more or less a passive one. Taking

the traditional listening class as an example, teaching listening is conducted in a fixed mode: explanation of new words, playing tapes for students to listen to, doing listening exercises, and then checking their answers. As Sheerin (1987) notes, this traditional English listening class is not actually teaching listening, but rather testing listening. As a result, students are likely to get into ineffective listening habits, "where [they] equate listening with sitting back and letting largely meaningless sequences of sounds wash over them" (Anderson, A. & T. Linch,1988, p.51). Thus, for a long period of time, Chinese EFL learners have been suffering from a time-consuming and ineffective process of training in listening.

Thirdly, lacking well-trained EFL teachers who are experienced in teaching listening is one of the main problems in China's EFL teaching field (Yu, 2001). Teaching listening is usually considered as easier than lecturing on English reading, writing and speaking since what a listening teacher needs to do is only to play the tape, assign exercises and check answers (Hu, 2001). Besides, EFL teachers of listening fail to relate their listening practice to real-life situations in which the students would actually need to use their listening skills (Hui, 1997; Li, 2004). By always listening to people speaking slowly and clearly and by not being sufficiently exposed to recordings of a variety of native English speakers, students will not be adequately prepared to cope with normal spoken English (Wang, 1994).

Fourthly, inappropriate listening material is also an important factor influencing Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension (Zhang, 2005, Hu, 2001). The listeners seldom have opportunities of hearing and experiencing real English communication between native speakers and to use English to communicate in real social interactions. Consequently, there is great difference between what the students

hear in their listening practice and the language which is used in real communication. Furthermore, when the listening materials used for listening are examined, one usually finds that what the textbooks provide the listeners with are often passages originally composed as written texts extracted from newspapers, novels and similar sources, which are recorded for use as listening materials.

1.1.4 Conclusion

This section presents the background to English language teaching in China, namely, the importance of enhancing English language teaching in China, an introduction to the policies of the Chinese MOE in English language teaching as well as task-based language teaching in a Chinese context, and the need for implementing pre-task planning in the teaching of EFL listening. What follows from this is that there is an urgent need for more efficient methods of teaching EFL listening. In the final section of this chapter, there is a summary of the existing problems of teaching EFL listening and learning in the Chinese context, which included insufficient allocation of time for the teaching of listening skills, the negative influence of traditional teaching methods, a shortage of well-trained EFL teachers and the problem of the use of inappropriate materials in the teaching of listening for EFL learners in China.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

This section discusses the reasons for undertaking the present study. Based on a review of the importance of promoting EFL listening in China and the necessity to focus on pre-task planning activities in the teaching of listening, the rationale of the study is also explained with reference to the inadequacies of previous research in this

area. In order to fill this gap, this present research addresses these inadequacies in the following ways.

Firstly, little research has been conducted on combining the aural pedagogy with pre-task planning in the field of teaching EFL listening in Chinese universities. In recent years, research on task-based approach (hereafter, TBA) has been a controversial issue in the field of applied linguistics and second language acquisition and there have been many theoretical discussions on TBA and some efforts have been made to integrate it into the practice (e.g. Crookes & Gass, 1993; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Nunan, 1989; Long & Crookes, 1993; Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 2001). There has also been little research on implementing TBA in to the teaching of English listening in middle schools (Jin, 2002; Mo, 2008; and Yun, 2008). Furthermore, no research has hitherto addressed the effects of pre-task planning on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL university students.

Secondly, there is little research on the systematic and comprehensive instruction of the pre-task planning mode. A number of studies have investigated the effects of pre-task planning on EFL learners' performance of oral narratives (e.g., Ellis, 1987; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Ortega, 2009; Robinson, 2001; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). However, among these studies, most have been concerned with how learners make up their own minds about how best they can plan and few have aimed at investigating the task-designer's instruction method in implementing the pre-task planning activities.

Thirdly, in the research on pre-task planning, no research has investigated the joint effects of the concept of mapping, rehearsal and strategic planning of listening comprehension of EFL learners. As regards pre-task planning study, the focus is on

the particular effects of the respective pre-task planning step of the concept mapping (Ojima, 2006), the step of rehearsal (Bygate, 2001 and Gass et al., 2008) and the strategic planning step (Foster and Skehan, 1996; Skehan and Foster, 1997).

Fourthly, there has been no research which deals with the connection between the listening and writing and no criteria for the written summary analysis of a listening passage has been found in previous research. Some research (Ellis, 1987; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Ortega, 1999; Robinson, 2001; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003) on pre-task planning, as mentioned previously, has aimed at testing the effects of pre-task planning on students' fluency, complexity and accuracy in EFL oral production. To date, most of the measures used in these studies have been developed for oral production, as this has been the focus of the bulk of the planning studies, except for that of Ellis & Yuan (2004) which develops procedures for written production.

Lastly, little research has been conducted on non-reciprocal tasks in the teaching and learning of EFL listening. Tasks can involve varying degrees of reciprocity (Ellis, cited in Bygate: 2001). Reciprocal tasks are tasks that require a two-way flow of information between a speaker and a listener, such as speaking tasks. Non-reciprocal tasks require only a one way flow of information from a speaker to a listener; such tasks are, in fact, listening tasks. In general, non-reciprocal tasks have been somewhat neglected in the pedagogic literature on tasks (Ellis, 2003). Furthermore, in the task-based research literature, little attention is given to the non-reciprocal listening tasks (e.g. Crookes and Gass, 1993; Skehan, 1998).

Based on the importance of promoting EFL listening as well as the necessity to focus on pre-task planning activities in EFL listening, this section illustrates a few

inadequacies of the previous research. The research gaps between previous research and the present study include: 1) studies on the combination of pre-task planning activities and the EFL listening; 2) the systematic and comprehensive pre-task planning activities employed in EFL listening pedagogy; 3) research on the joint effects of the three steps of pre-task planning activities, namely, the concept mapping step, the rehearsal step and the strategic planning step; 4) studies on the connection between research on listening and writing and the lack of criteria on how to measure the written summary analysis of a listening passage and 5) research on non-reciprocal tasks, especially in the teaching of EFL listening. Thus, taking account of the importance of promoting the teaching of EFL listening in China and the necessity of focussing on the implementation of pre-task planning activities for EFL listening, the present study aims at implementing a pre-task planning activities, designed by the researcher and instructor in the present study, and investigating the effects of the pre-task planning activities on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners in order to contribute to the research in this field.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The research gaps mentioned above can strongly support the rationale of the present study so that the significance of the study can be explained as follows:

First, the present study will add more evidence to prove the beneficial effects of the pre-task planning activities on the teaching of EFL listening to English majors in Chinese universities. As regards practical applications, the present study hopes to provide EFL learners with more incentives to develop their interest, confidence as well as motivation in EFL learning.

Second, the present study hopes to present a systematic and comprehensive teaching mode based on the pre-task planning activities employed in EFL listening pedagogy. The instructor has developed the pre-task planning activities including three steps, namely, concept mapping, strategic planning and rehearsal. Guidelines as well as related lesson plans can be shared by those instructors in the design of English language curriculum for English majors in Chinese universities.

Third, in the pre-task planning research field, it is hoped to provide more evidence on the joint effects of the three pre-task planning steps on Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension.

Fourth, the present study is expected to contribute to research on the connection between listening and writing, the written summary analysis, and the criteria for assessing the listening summary.

Last but not least, the present study will contribute to research on non-reciprocal tasks in EFL listening. The present study investigates not only the kind of processing which results from performing a listening task, but also what learners actually acquire from their performance.

1.4 Research Purposes of the Study

Based on the background and the rationale of the present study, two research purposes can be explained as follows:

(1) to investigate the effects of the pre-task planning activities on Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension;

(2) to explore the students' opinions towards the pre-task planning mode employed in the teaching of EFL listening

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve these purposes, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent can the pre-task planning activities have effect on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners?

2. What are the students' opinions of the pre-task planning activities in the present study?

1.6 Definitions of the Key Terms in the Present Study

The present study aims at investigating the effects of the pre-task planning activities on the listening comprehension of Chinese university EFL learners, which focuses on teaching second-year students of English majors at a college in the Eastern China. The following key terms in the present study are defined below: the EFL learners, listening comprehension, the pre-task planning activities, the concept mapping, the rehearsal as well as the strategic planning.

The EFL Learners

The EFL learners in the present study refer to the second-year undergraduates majoring in English at Nanjing College for Population Program Management where the author works.

Listening Comprehension

In the present study, the students' listening comprehension refers to the extent to which the students can comprehend the listening materials provided. Students' listening comprehension is tested by a listening comprehension test as well as a written summary analysis in this study.

The Pre-task Planning Activities

Based on previous research, in the present study, the pre-task planning activities refer to the teacher guided pre-task planning activities employed during the pre-task phase in teaching EFL listening and it contains three steps, namely, the concepts of mapping, rehearsal and strategic planning.

The Concept Mapping

Ojima (2006) states that instruction for the concept mapping usually includes a brainstorming session where students are encouraged to activate their prior knowledge of a topic and focus on the relevant content schema. In the present study, the concept mapping includes activities for setting the context, generating interest, activating existing knowledge, building on prior knowledge and activating vocabulary.

Strategic Planning

Ellis (2009) defines strategic planning as "planning what content to express and what language to use but without opportunity to rehearse the complete task". In the present study, strategic planning refers to providing the students in the experimental group with the format of a written summary designed by the researcher.

Rehearsal

As defined by Ellis (2009), the rehearsal step takes the form of an opportunity to perform the complete task once before performing it a second time. In the present study, the rehearsal step refers to the author and researcher asking the students in the experimental group to talk about what they want to write in the listening summary.

1.7 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher introduces the background to the present study, including the English language teaching situation in China, the urgent need for more efficient teaching of EFL listening and the existing problems of EFL listening in China. The rationale of the study includes the inadequacies of previous studies in the academic field related to the present study. Based on the rationale, this chapter also summarizes the significance of the study. According to the research purposes, the research questions are formulated and then the key terms in this study are defined. The theories and research related to the present study will be reviewed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature related to the present study, which consists of the related learning theories for the study, namely, the constructivist learning theory and the theory of second language acquisition (SLA). What follows is the literature review of task-based language teaching (TBLT). Next is a brief introduction to second language (L2) listening and a related review of the previous studies on pre-task planning. Based on the literature review, the theoretical framework of this study is summarized at the end of this chapter.

2.1 The Related Learning Theories

This section reviews the related learning theories in relation to the present study, namely,the constructivist learning theory, the schema theory, and the theory of second language acquisition (SLA).

2.1.1 The Learning Theoryof Constructivism

This section is concerned with a brief introduction to the constructivist learning theory in general as well as the application of constructivism in the process of EFL teaching and learning. What follows is a review of previous related research on constructivism.

2.1.1.1 Brief Introduction to Constructivism

The constructivist learning theory argues that people produce knowledge

and form meaning based upon their experiences (Kim, 2005). Duffy &Jonassen (1992) state that there are two key concepts involved in the constructivist learning theory which are assimilation and accommodation. The former causes an individual to incorporate new experiences into previous experiences, to rethink what were once misunderstandings, and evaluate what is important, ultimately altering their perceptions. The latter, on the other hand, is reframing the world and new experiences into a mental capacity which is already present.

Social constructivism views each learner as a unique individual with unique needs and backgrounds (Meyer, 2009). The learner is also seen as both complex and multidimensional. Social constructivism not only acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner, but actually encourages, utilizes and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process (DeVries et al., 2002). Schmidt (2001) argues that the basic assumption of constructivism includes knowledge constructed from experiences. Sweller (2003) states that constructivism relies in its theoretical framework on the earlier framework of cognitivism, which holds that learning should build upon the knowledge that a learner already knows. This prior knowledge is called a schema.

The application of constructivism in English language teaching shows that students should be exposed to data, primary sources, and should have the ability to interact with other students so that they can learn from the incorporation of their experiences (Duffy, 1992)). As noted by Cobb (1994), in the process of teaching, teachers should take into account the learners' feelings and structure the knowledge they acquire so that it can be easily understood by the learner and create the most effective sequence for presenting the material. Consequently, the classroom

experience should be an invitation for a myriad of different backgrounds and alearning experience which allows the different backgrounds of the students to come together and enable them to observe and analyze new information and ideas.

Teachers following Piaget's (1950) theory of constructivism must challenge the student by making them effective critical thinkers and not by being merely a "teacher", but also a mentor, a consultant, and a coach.According to the social constructivist approach, instructors have to adapt to the role of facilitators and not teachers (Kirschner, 2006). Instead of answering questions that only fit in with their curriculum, the facilitator in this case must help the studentstocome to their own conclusions without being told what to think. Also, teachers are continually in conversation with the students, creating a learning experience that is dependent upon the needs of the student as their learning progresses. The emphasis thus turns away from the instructor and the content and towards the learner (Cobb, 1994). This dramatic change of role implies that a facilitator needs to display a totally different set of skills to that of a teacher.

To sum up, constructivism has important implications for teaching. Constructivists suggest that learning is a more effective process when a student is actively engaged in the construction of knowledge rather than passively receiving it. Constructivism holds that learning should build upon the knowledge that a learner already knows.

2.1.1.2 Related Research on Constructivism

Constructivism is a psychological theory of knowledge which argues that humans construct knowledge from their experiences. Building on the prior knowledge and activating students' existing knowledge are an important part of the

learning process. Wang (1994) compared three instructional methods for third-grade reading: a traditional approach, a strategies instruction, and an approach with both instruction in strategies and in constructivist motivation techniques, including student choices, collaboration, and hands-on activities. The constructivist approach, called CORI (Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction), resulted in better student reading comprehension, cognitive strategies, and motivation.

Kim（2005） found that using constructivist teaching methods for 6th graders resulted in better student achievement than traditional teaching methods. This study also found that students preferred constructivist methods over traditional ones. However, Kim did not find any difference in the students'self-concept or learning strategies between those taught by constructivist and those taught by traditional methods.

Sweller(2003)compared science classrooms using traditional teacher-centered approaches to those using student-centered, constructivist methods. In their initial test of student performance immediately following the lessons, they found no significant difference between traditional and constructivist methods. However, in the follow-up assessment 15 days later, students who learned through constructivist methods showed better retention of knowledge than those who learned through traditional methods.

Based on an analysis of the social constructivist approach to education and the characteristics of English Language Teaching(ELT) in China,a Chinese scholar,Feng, (1995) examines the application of six elements of constructivist learning design in ELT,sothat the overall language teaching qualities can be enhanced.The study concludes six elements of constructivist learning design (CLD),

namely, developing situations, asking questions, building bridges, organizing groups, arranging exhibits and inviting reflections (Feng, 1995).

Based on constructivism, Faerch& Kasper (1986) conduct an empirical study of college English listening teaching reformation, mentioning that the listening teaching method of capability and application based on constructivism includes twofundamental approaches: listening-speaking and listening-writing. The experimental study proves that this method canenhance students' learning interests and motivation, improve their application in every aspect, including listening, and it also develops their learning autonomy.

Yan (2008) investigates the teaching of listening in Business English based on constructivist theory. The scholar points out that the current methods of teaching listening in Business English in some universities is not effective and the main problem of is thatthe students lack initiative and motivation in listening. This paper reviews constructivist theory andwith the guidance of constructivist theory, it investigatesthe teaching of listening in Business Englishto foster students'interest in listening and to improve their listening ability.

From the review of the literature concerning constructivism, several notions were found. First, in constructivism, learners construct a new understanding using what they have already learnt. Learners begin learning situations with knowledge gained from previous experiences, and that prior knowledge influences the new or modified knowledge they will construct from their new learning experiences. Second, in constructivism, the role of the teacher should change from that of an instructor providing lectures to that of a facilitator aiding students in the acquisition of new knowledge. Third, in constructivism, learning is active rather than passive.

Learners form their understanding in the light of what they encounter in the new learning situation by interacting with other learners. If what learners encounter is inconsistent with their current understanding, their understanding can change to accommodate their new experiences.

On the basis of the above review, the following conclusionsregarding the theoretical implications for the present study were found. First, more research on the implementation of constructivism in the teaching of listening in EFL should be encouraged. Second, the role of the teacher should be shifted from that of a lecturer to a that of a facilitator whose role is to help the students comprehend knowledge. Third, from the perspective of the learner's role, the teaching of EFL learning should cultivate the importance of the background and culture of the learner and encourage the students to take responsibility for their learning as well as to develop their motivation for learning.

2.1.2 The SLA Theory

This section is concerned with the history of SLA theory, the SLA hypothesis including the input, the interaction as well as the output hypothesis. What follows is the influence of the SLA theory on the teaching of EFL listening and the related teaching principles are also reviewed.

2.1.2.1 The History of SLA Theory

In the 1970s the general trend in SLA was for research exploring the ideas of Corder and Selinker, and refuting behaviorist theories of language acquisition (Vanpatten, 2010:3). The 70s were dominated by naturalistic studies of people learning English as a second language. By the 1980s, the theories of Stephen Krashen had become the prominent paradigm in SLA. In his theories, often collectively

known as the Input Hypothesis, Krashen suggested that language acquisition is driven solely by comprehensible input, or language input that learners can understand.

The 1990s saw a host of new theories introduced to the field, such as Merrill Swain's output hypothesis, and Richard Schmidt's noticing hypothesis. The 1990s also saw the introduction of socio-cultural theory, an approach to explain second language acquisition in terms of the social environment of the learner. In the 2000s research was focused on much the same areas as in the 1990s, with research split into two main camps, a linguistic and a psychological approach.

2.1.2.2 The SLA Hypothesis

Affective Filter Hypothesis

The affective filter was first proposed by Dulay and Burt(1975) to account for how affective variables influence the process of L2 learning.Based on the affective filter hypothesis, listening experiences that help students lessen their anxiety about listening was found to be generally beneficial. By taking into account learners' motives and attitudes towards listening, the instructor can better select input or point learners to the best resources and opportunities for appropriate input.

Input Hypothesis

Krashen's input hypothesis has had a great impact on SLA and has also profoundly influenced classroom approaches to EL teaching and learning.Input is probably one of the most important terms in SLA. Krashen identifies two primary ways in which input is made comprehensible. According to Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, learners need (1) access to comprehensible input and (2) a low affective filter that makes them open to the input in order to acquire new knowledge.

Output Hypothesis

Swain (1985, 1995) has suggested that the learner output also has a role to play in language comprehension and acquisition. She notes that learners can comprehend input by means of "semantic processing" and thus avoid having to attend to linguistic form.In order to work out the relationship between language comprehension and acquisition one must understand what kind of input (simplified or interactionally modified) is employed in the instruction and such kind of input has to work well for both comprehension and acquisition.

2.1.2.3 The SLA Influences on the Teaching of EFL Listening

The influences on the teaching of EFL listening that are derived directly from second language acquisition research are summarized in the following table(Rost 2002).

Table 2.1 Influences of SLA on EFL Listening Teaching

SLA Hypothesis	Influence on EFL Listening Teaching
Affective filter hypothesis	Listening experiences that help students lessen their anxiety about listening will generally be beneficial, By taking into account learners' motives and attitudes about listening, the instructor can better select input or point learners to the best resources and opportunities for appropriate input.
Input hypothesis	Instruction should aim only to provide comprehensible input, that is, input at a "i+1" level, slightly above the learner's current level of competence in terms of vocabulary, syntax, discourse features, length and complexity, Comprehensible input may be aural or written, or both. Contextualised input, input with visual and environmental support, will tend to be more comprehensible, Teachers do not need to force students to speak, as speaking will emerge naturally as a result of their work on listening.
Interaction hypotheses	Listening instruction should allow learners to figure out meanings for themselves and not depend on presentation by the instructor, Listening instruction should build on the need and opportunity for "negotiation of meaning" (e.g. information and opinion gap tasks). A substantial portion of instructional time should focus on such negotiation.
Output Hypothesis	Learners can comprehend input by means of "semantic processing" and thus avoid having to attend to linguistic form.When learners are forced to produce output that is concise and appropriate, they may come to notice the gap between the forms they use in their output and the forms present in the input, Output must work together with input as well as interaction.

According to the influences of second language acquisition learning theory on the teaching of EFL listening, the researcher should design pre-task planning instruction in order to enhance students' listening comprehension.

2.1.2.4 Conclusion

Based on the introduction to the history of SLA theory and the SLA hypothesis, the theoretical implications for the present study are as follows. On the one hand, comprehensible input is important for EFL learners. In the present study, the pre-task planning instruction is introduced to make language input comprehensible enough for the students to acquire. On the other hand, comprehension is necessary but not sufficient for acquisition to take place. Schmidt (2001) states that there are two ways of processing input, one involving comprehension and the other acquisition. He argues that acquisition will not occur if learners rely purely on top-down processing by utilizing non-linguistic input to infer what is meant; extensive bottom-up processing is also needed.

2.2 Task-based Language Teaching

This section is concerned with a review of the task-based language teaching method (TBLT), which includes definitions of the task, task design variables, task classification, the introduction to reciprocal tasks and non-reciprocal tasks. Previous research on TBLT is reviewed at the end of this section.

2.2.1 Definitions of the Task

The term 'task' plays an important role and can imply almost any activity in any SL/EFL classroom. As Ellis (2003) notes, the definitions of task address a number of dimensions: the scope of a task, the perspective from which a task is viewed, the

authenticity of a task, the linguistic skills required to perform a task, the psychological processes involved in task performance, and the outcome of a task.

In task-based learning (TBL), Skehan (2003)has defined the task as task features, consisting of two current features: goals and work or activity, namely, a task has to be goal-oriented and related to the work or activity in which participants take an active role in carrying out a task.In terms of goals, tasks are oriented towards goals in which participants are expected to meet an outcome and to carry out a task with a sense of what they need to accomplish through their talk or action. Whereas in terms of features, it refers to the work or activity in which participants take an active role in carrying out a task.

Krahnke (1987:57) expresses the view that "the defining characteristic of task-based content is that it uses activities that the learners have to do for non-instructional purposes outside of the classroom as opportunities for language learning. Tasks are distinct from other activities to the degree that they have non-instructional purposes".

Breen (1987:23) defines a task as "a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision making"

Swales (1990:76) defines a task as "one of a set of differentiated, sequenceable goal-directed activities drawing upon a range of cognitive and communicative procedures relatable to the acquisition of pre-genre and genre skills appropriate to a foreseen or emerging socio-rhetorical situation".

Skehan (1996:95) defines a task "···as an activity in which meaning is primary; there is some communication problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to

comparable real world activities; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome."

Ellis (2003) defines a task as (1) a classroom activity or exercise that has: (a) an objective obtainable only by the interaction among participants (b) a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and (c) a focus on meaning exchange; (2) a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of workplans.

Prabhu (1987) defines a task as an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process. Bachman and Palmer (1996) define a language use task as an activity that involves individuals in using language for the purpose of achieving a particular goal or objective in a particular situation.

In short, the different definitions addressed above are based on different dimensions (for example, the scope of a task, the perspective from which a task is viewed and so on). The researcher has adapted the definitions from previous researchers, such asPrabhu (1987), Bachman and Palmer (1996), which focus on conveying meaning, understanding as well as comprehending. The task of writing a summary after listening is employed in the pre-task planning mode in the present study. The following section is about the task design variables.

2.2.2 Task Design Variables

As mentioned by Ellis (2003), listening tasks provide an excellent means for measuring whether learners have acquired the feature in questions. Further, listening tasks can be devised to facilitate the acquisition of the targeted feature. And listening tasks can provide a means of investigating the effect of different kinds of input

modification. For teachers, listening tasks provide the obvious starting point for a task-based course designed for low-proficiency learners and teachers can use listening tasks to present the students with input enriched with the specific features they wish to target.

Ellis also summarizes the variables involved in the task design, which include: (1) the type of input the task supplies; (2) the task conditions; and (3) the task outcomes. The input variables include the contextual support, the number of elements in a task, and the topic. The contextual support involves the question of the medium through which the support is provided - pictorial, written, or aural. In the present study, the listening tasks involved can provide integrated contextual support with pictorial features (the pictures related the topic), written features(the scripts of the listening materials) and aural features (the sound file is broadcast using multimedia).

Ellis also states that an input variable that has received little attention is that of the topic. To a large extent the topic effects will be variable, depending on the individual learner's familiarity with a particular subject area. Topic familiarity has a dampening effect on the amount of meaning negotiation that occurs (Gass and Varonis 1984). Chang (1999), for example, found that when learners had prior knowledge of a topic they performed a monologic task more fluently. In the present study, four topics are selected according to topic familiarity, which include Shopping (Unit 1), Hobbies and Interests (Unit 2), Arts and Culture (Unit 3), and Interpersonal Relationships (Unit 4). The classification of the tasks will be considered in the next section.

2.2.3 Task Classification

Willis (1996:40) classified six types of tasks "that could be adapted for use with almost any topic." According to Willis, simple tasks may consist of one type

only, such as listing, more complex tasks may incorporate two or more types, such as

listing and comparing lists or then ranking lists.

Table 2.2 Willis's Six Types of Tasks

Tasks types	Examples
1.Listing	Students can hear/read other pair's lists and consolidate their own to see how many items they get altogether, vote on the most comprehensive list.
2.Ordering and sorting	Students can hear/read other pair's lists and consolidate their own to see how many items they get altogether, vote on the most comprehensive list.
3.Comparing	Students can see how many have done the task the same way, or have things in common with presenter, find out how many agree/disagree with the content of the report and why.
4.Problem solving	Students can compare (and list) strategies for solving the problem, justify/evaluate solution, vote on the best/cheapest solution, recommend one solution.
5.Sharing personal experiences	Students can note points of interest and compare them later, write questions to ask speakers, set quiz questions as a memory challenge, keep a record of main points or themes mentioned for review or classification later, select one experience to summarize or react to in writing.
6.Creative task	Students can say what they most enjoyed in the other group's work, write a review of another groups' product for them to read.

Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002:232)

classify tasks according to the type of interaction that occurs in task accomplishment

and propose the following categorization, as listed below.

Table 2.3 Pica, Kanagy and Falodun's Five Types of Task

Task types	Examples
1.Jigsaw tasks	Three individuals or group may have a different part of a story and have to piece the story together.
2.Information-gap tasks	One student or group of students has one set of information and another student or group has a complementary set of information. They must negotiate and find out what the other party's information is in order to complete an activity.
3.Problem-solving tasks	Students are given a problem and a set of information. They must arrive at a solution to the problem. There is generally a single resolution of the outcome.
4.Decision-making tasks	Students are given a problem for which there are a number of possible outcomes and they must choose one through negotiation and discussion.
5.Opinion-exchange tasks	Learners engage in discussion and exchange of ideas. They do not need to reach agreement.

Prabhu (1987:46-47) lists three main activity types used in his experiment on task outcome rather than form: information gap, reasoning gap and opinion gap, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 2.4 Prabhu's Three Types of Tasks

Task types	Explanation
1.Information gap activity	Which involves a transfer of given information from one person to another, or from one form to another, or from one place to another-generally calling for the decoding or encoding of information from or into language as well, and learners may have to meet criteria of completeness and correctness in making the transfer.
2.Reasoning gap activity	Which involves deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns.
3.Opinion-gap activity	Which involves identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation.

Pattison (1987, cited in Nunan, 2004:68) also enumerates seven activity types: (1) questions and answers; (2) dialogues and role-plays; (3) matching activities; (4) communicative strategies; (5) pictures and picture stories; (6) puzzles and problems; and (7) discussions and decisions.

In addition, Chen, Belkada, and Okamoto (2004), in a paper describing an experimental study aimed at investigating the learning effectiveness of a web-based course for Japanese learners of English, group tasks into inter-personal tasks and intra-personal tasks. In fact, these two types of tasks are the two types of treatment in the experiment and the task types are defined in the study as dictation, note-taking, and information-gap activities. The first group was assigned to the intra-personal treatment (i.e., where language is used for a functional purpose) comprised of a note-taking and a dictation task. The other group was assigned to inter-personal treatment (i.e., where language is used for a communication purpose) comprised of an information-gap task.

In conclusion, in terms of different perspectives, a task can be classified into different categories. For example, Willis (1996:40) classified six types of tasks, according to the complexity involved in a task, and according to the type of interaction that occurs in task accomplishment; Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993) classify the task into five different categories; Pattison (1987) classifies the task into different types in terms of classroom activities while Chen (2004) lists two task types based on different treatments. The following section deals with other classifications, based on Ellis (2003), namely, reciprocal tasks vs. non-reciprocal tasks.

2.2.4 Reciprocal Tasks vs. Non-reciprocal Tasks

Ellis (2003) divides tasks into reciprocal tasks and non-reciprocal tasks according to the degrees of reciprocity. The former refers to tasks that require a two-way flow of information between a speaker and a listener and they are speaking tasks; the latter refers to the tasks that require only a one-way flow of information from a speaker to a listener. The tasks involved in the present study are only concerned with non-reciprocaltasks, where the learners are addressees, such tasks are, in fact, as stated by Ellis, listening tasks.

Ellis (2003) also proposes reasons for examining non-reciprocal tasks. For example, in general, non-reciprocal tasks have been somewhat neglected in the pedagogic literature on tasks. According to Skehan (1998), too much focus is on reciprocal tasks in the task-based research literature. This emphasis on reciprocal tasks in teaching and research, however, is not reflected in common definitions of a task.

Another reason is that, from the second language acquisition (SLA) researcher's perspective, non-reciprocal tasks have certain advantages; they make it

possible to investigate not only the kind of processing that results from performing a listening task, but also what learners actually acquire from the performance, as non-reciprocal tasks provide a means by which researchers can directly investigate the relationship between task performance and acquisition.

2.2.5 Previous Research Related to TBLT

Tasks hold a central place in current SLA research and also in language pedagogy. This is proved by a large number of recent publications relating to task-based learning and teaching (Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Lee, 2000; Bygate et al., 2001). The use of tasks in SLA has been closely linked to developments in the study of SLA.

As reviewed by Ellis (2005), in the early years of SLA, researchers were primarily concerned with describing how learners acquired an L2, documenting the order and sequence in which the grammar of a language was acquired and the types of oral interactions in which child and adult language learners participated (Hatch, 1978). Tasks have played an important role in both the early descriptive research and the later more theoretically based research (Ellis, 2005:21).

Previous research involved in second language pedagogic tasks contains different themes, main themes in task research, namely, language focus, task phase, complexity of task design, task structure, task familiarity, distribution of roles, task repetition, participants of roles, as well as the dimension and the process of task design. The following table illustrates related research into second language pedagogic task in terms of researchers, main themes in thetask research as well as the results of the study.

Table 2.5 Research into Second Language Pedagogic Tasks

Researcher (s)	Main themes in task research	Results
Vanpatten (1996)	Language focus: targeted information-processing in listening tasks	Learners' attention can be drawn to particular grammatical features in the context of communicative listening tasks.
Bygate (1988)	Language focus: question forms and lexical sets	This study provided early indications that tasks could be used to target grammar as well as lexis.
Newton and Kennedy (1996)	Language focus: prepositions and conjunctions	Tasks concerned with the layout of a zoo were significantly more likely to motivate the use of prepositions; where information was shared at the outset, and students had to focus on arguing a case rather than transferring information to each other, there was a greater use of conjunctions.
Mackey (1999)	Language focus: different types of question formation	Mackey found that various question forms could be effectively targeted by the four tasks, and demonstrated that performance on these tasks led to learners showing clear improvements in their production of questions as measured in pre/post tests.
Samuda (2001)	Language focus: epistemic modality	Reported the use of the TIP (things in pocket) task as a way of drawing students into expressing degrees of certainty.
Bygate (1988)	Language focus: discourse patterns	Reported a degree of patterning in the discourse structures that appeared on different tasks and some tasks resulted in less varied discourse patterns than others.
Bygate (1988)	Task phases	The five tasks in his study contrasted in terms of the types of phases they seemed to give rise to.
Brown and Yule(1983);	Complexity of task design: design features and complexity of task	The former proposed using the number and distinctiveness of different referential information features present in a task as a basis for distinguishing between tasks; the latter found that the ability to use referential language was consistently affected by variations in task complexity.
Robinson (2001)	Complexity of task design: features of a task contributing to increased complexity	The results suggest that the dimension can be used to influence the language, and that students' perceptions of the difficulty of the tasks will be congruent with these effects.
Foster and Skehan (1996); Skehan and Foster (1997)	Discourse type: impact of task on discourse type	The conclusions suggested an effect for two factors: task familiarity and the cognitive complexity of the tasks, and hence gave rise to less complex use of language.
Skehan and foster (1999)	Task structure	The researchers used a similar set of task types and found differences in the linguistic

Table 2.5 Research into Second Language Pedagogic Tasks (Cont.)

Researcher (s)	Main themes in task research	Results
		complexity produced by students working on different narrative tasks.
Song (2000)	Task structure: structure of task and complexity of language produced	Where pictures for a picture story were not pre-sequenced, students tended to have difficulty working out the motivations of the characters, the connections between the events and sometimes even had difficulty working out from the pictures what the characters were actually doing. The result was that the parts of the talk in which the students verbalized the connections between pictures were linguistically more complex.
Pica et al. (1993)	Participant roles: task typology relating to participant role	Participant roles can be defined in terms of following task typology: required exchange tasks; two-way tasks; optional exchange tasks; convergent tasks; divergent tasks.
Plough and Gass (1993)	Task familiarity: effects of task familiarity	They operationalised familiarity as familiarity with a particular type of task rather than with the context. The conclusion was that novelty produces more negotiation of meaning than familiarity.
Foster (2001)	Planning: effects of planning on the use of formulaic language	Planning has a different impact on the use of formulaic language by native and non-native speakers.
Bygate (1996); Bygate (2001); Bygate and Samuda (2005)	Task repetition: effects of repeating the same task	The first study showed how repetition of the same task can result in increased idiomaticity and increased accuracy; the second study found that repetition of a specific task resulted in increased complexity and fluency; the third study found that familiarity established through prior engagement with the content material in the target language seems to affect people's subsequent use of the language on the same task.
Lynch and Maclean (2000)	Task repletion: effects of task repetition	Tasks structured to ensure that interaction demands required students to retell their material to a series of different interlocutors had the effect of leading speakers to rework aspects of their talk, whether in terms of their pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar, with individual speakers altering and improving different aspects of their own talk.
Yule and Mcdonald (1990)	Distribution of roles: effects of differences in proficiency levels of participants	Information was negotiated far more successfully when it was entrusted to the low proficiency student. When problems arose, the LP students were more committed to resolving the problem, and the HP student

Table 2.5 Research into Second Language Pedagogic Tasks (Cont.)

Researcher (s)	Main themes in task research	Results
		more supportive, than when it was the HP student who was holding the material to be communicated.
Swain and Lapkin (2000, 2001)	Constructivist processes: collaborative talk on tasks	They used micro-analysis on different types of episodes occurring during task enactment to show how students help each other to recover language, negotiating for meaning and for form, that they had both heard and with appropriate grammatical features.
Brooks &Donato (1994)	Constructivist process: construction of meaning in tasks	The results highlight the role of peers jointly scaffolding each other's talk - providing prompts, directions, reminders, evaluations including corrections, as well as additional contributions.
Ellis, Tanaka and Yamazaki (1994); Ellis and Heimback (1997); Ellis and He (1999)	Acquisition: vocabulary learning through listening tasks	They first checked the impact of the types of input on comprehension and found that although modification seems to help comprehension, this is probably mainly due to the additional time created for the student to do the task. They then checked for the impact on acquisition in post-tests. They found that premodified and interactionally modified input facilitate acquisition, but that the advantage for the latter largely reflects the additional time learners obtain for processing the input when they are given the opportunity to signal non-comprehension.
Johnson (2000, 2003)	Dimensions and processes of task design	Second language pedagogic task design is a specialized activity. As a preliminary step towards understanding what this entails, Johnson frames his findings as a set of hypotheses about the characteristics of a good task designer.
Samuda (2005)	Dimensions and processes of task design	Samuda investigated whether the differences in the design process identified in Johnson (2003) are reflected in the tasks produced, and finds a number of differences in the kinds of design features deployed by specialist and non-specialist designers.

From the above table, the features as well as the limitations of the previous research into task-based language teaching can be enumerated.Firstly, the themes of previous task-based research emphasize language focus more than the comprehension

process. The language focus involved in these researches includes question forms andlexical sets, prepositions and conjunctions, question formation as well as discourse patterns. For example, Bygate's (1988) study focuses on the question forms and lexical sets and Newton and Kennedy (1996) give more attention to the language focus of prepositions and conjunctions involved.Secondly, more research studies employ reciprocal tasks than non-reciprocal tasks. Few research studiesdeal with the combination of a task-based approach with EFL listening. As summarized in the table, only Bygate (1988) is concerned with the targeted information-processing in listening tasks and Ellis, et al., (1994) focus on vocabulary learning through listening tasks. Lastly, there is no comprehensive and systematic instruction process in the previous research in the field of task-based language teaching.

2.3 Second Language Listening

This section is concerned with four parts: the process of listening comprehension, the instructional principles involved in L2 listening, the teaching approaches to English listening, and the previous research into L2 listening.

2.3.1 Processes in Listening Comprehension

As Rost (2001) states, comprehension is often considered to be the first-order goal of listening, the highest priority of the listener, and sometimes the sole purpose of listening. Comprehension is the process of relating language to concepts in one's memory and to references in the real world. Comprehension is the sense of understanding what the language used refers to in one's experience or in the outside world. So complete comprehension refers to the listener having a clear concept in memory for every referent used by the speaker.

In Rost's (2001:60) opinion, comprehension involves the mapping and updating of references that the speaker uses and the process of comprehending occurs in an ongoing cycle, as the listener is attending to speech. In this way, comprehension consequently begins at the stage of "given and new", then goes on to the stage of "integration", which is the most fundamental aspect of comprehension and next to the stage of "locus of the new information". To return to the issue of comprehension, it is important to consider what the listener actually takes away from the listening event; thus, the listener has to store a "mental representation" of the discourse and continuously update the representation with new information. The listener's representation of a comprehended text is stored as sets of interrelated "propositions" (Goetz et al., 1981; Johnson-Laird, 1984, cited in Rost 2001:62). This kind of listening comprehension process can be summarized in Figure 2.1.
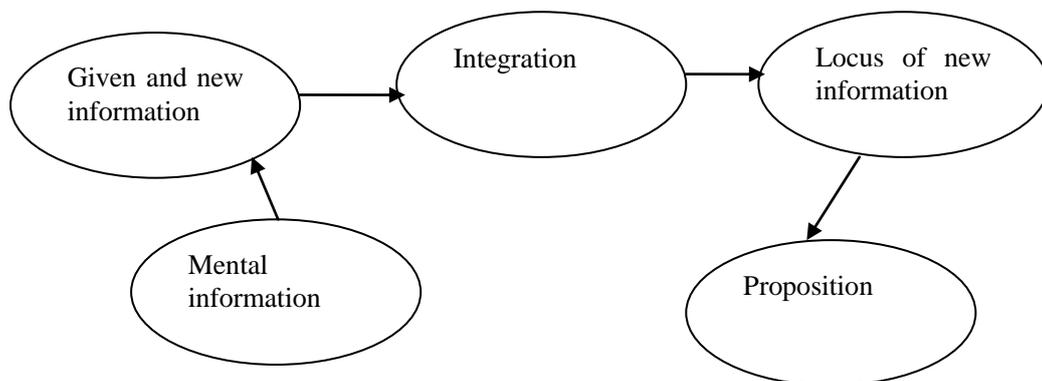
Figure 2.1 Comprehension Process 1

Comprehension is essentially a constructive process that takes place in the listener's short-term and long-term memory. It is a process of relating language to references in the real world as well as to concepts and representations in personal

memory, and consists of four overlapping sub-processes: identifying salient information, activating appropriate schemata, inferencing, and updating representations. (Rost, cited in Eli Hinkel, 2005) (see Figure 2.2)
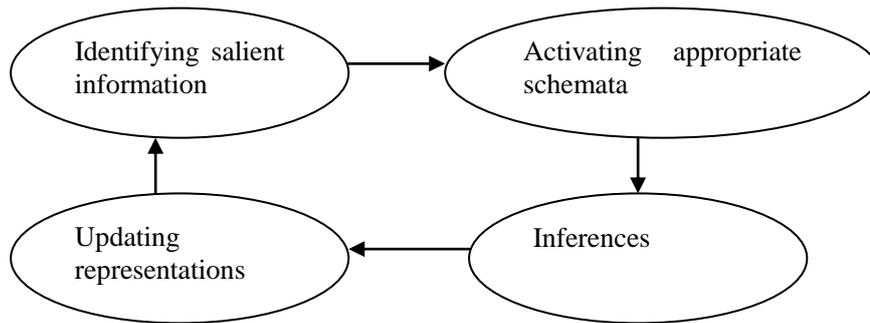
Figure 2.2 Comprehension Process 2

Furthermore, Buck (2001) states that listening comprehension is the result of an interaction between a number of information sources, which includes the acoustic input, different types of linguistic knowledge, details of context, and general world knowledge and listeners use whatever information they have available, or whatever information seems relevant to help them interpret what the speaker is saying. (see Figure 2.3)
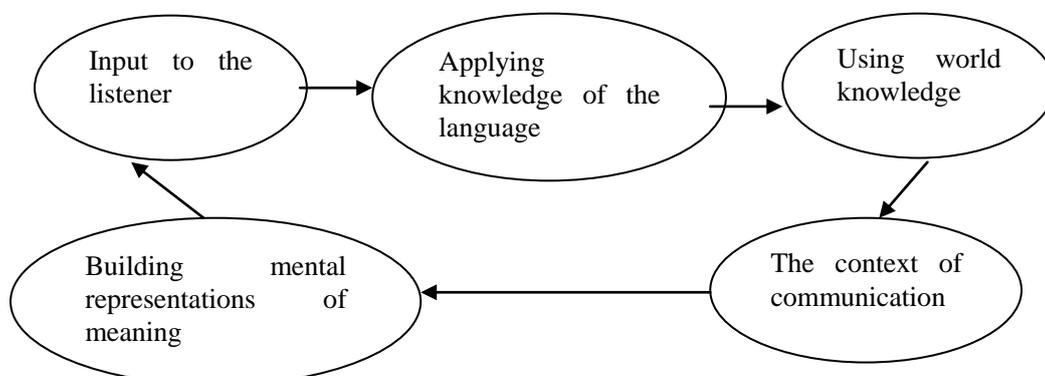
Figure 2.3 Comprehension Process 3

In conclusion, three kinds of listening comprehension process are described in the above section and they are illustrated by three figures. Based on the processes of listening as well as listening comprehension, the approaches to teaching L2/EFL listening are reviewed in the following section.

2.3.2 Instructional Principles in L2 Listening

Rose (2001) illustrates the theories and principles which are related to L2 listening instruction. The theories are concerned with the intention of listening instruction and the related principles are listed in the following table. (Rost, 2001:107)

Table 2.6 EFL Listening Instruction Principles

Principle	Instructional design element
Aptitude specific instruction	Input based on interests and needs of learners; focus on individualizing learning and increasing motivation
Cognitive flexibility	Input is multimodal, with multiple representations of content; focus on use of resources, keeping learning flexible and enjoyable
Coordination of teaching and learning	Instruction organized into holistic learning events, focus on cross-cultural communication between instructor, learners and other sources
Modes of learning	Inclusion of metacognitive strategies; focus on developing learning strategies
Positive climate for learning	Instructor organizes, facilitates, interacts; focus on positive climate for cross-cultural communication
Anchored instruction	Use of macro-context and problem texts; focus on integrating listening with other areas of learning
Course structures	Instruction organized around transactional focus on developing learner autonomy
Spiral learning	Focus on inferences as primary learning strategy; focus on developing language-use strategies
Elaborative sequencing	Increasing complexity and demands on learners, focus on deepening critical thinking
Criterion referencing	Agreed instructional goals and clear feedback provide link between teachers and learners; focus on favorable outcomes of learning

In summary, the theoretical implications of the present study, which is based on the instructional design elements listed in the above table, can be illustrated as

follows. Firstly, the input employed in the pre-task planning instruction in the present study should be based on the interests and needs of the students, and should focus on students' learning and also increase their motivation. Secondly, the role of the teacher should shift from a lecture giver to an organizer as well as a facilitator who organizes the teaching process, facilitates the students to understand and interacts with the students during the teaching and learning process of the EFL listening. Lastly, the whole instruction should be organized into a holistic and systematic learning process, focusing on the use of resources, and keeping learning flexible and enjoyable.

2.3.3 Teaching Approaches to L2 Listening

2.3.3.1 Bottom-up and Top-down Approaches

Two views of listening have dominated language pedagogy over the last twenty years. These are the bottom-up processing view and the top-down interpretation view. The bottom-up processing model assumes that listening is a process of decoding the sounds that one hears in a linear fashion, from the smallest meaningful units (or phonemes) to complete texts. According to this view, phonemic units are decoded and linked together to form words, words are linked together to form phrases, phrases are linked together to form utterances, and utterances are linked together to form complete meaningful texts. In other words, the process is a linear one, in which meaning itself is derived as the last step in the process. In their introduction to listening, Anderson and Lynch (1988) call this "the listener as tape-recorder view of listening because it assumes that the listener takes in and stores messages in much the same way as a tape-recorder, sequentially, one sound, word, phrase, and utterance at a time."

The alternative top-down view, suggests that the listener actively constructs (or, more accurately, reconstructs) the original meaning of the speaker using incoming sounds as clues. In this reconstruction process, the listener uses prior knowledge of the context of the situation within which the listening takes place to make sense of what he or she hears. The context of the situation includes such things as knowledge of the topic in hand, the speakers and their relationship to the situation as well as to each other, and prior events.

A number of experiments have investigated the effects of a bottom-up approach to teaching L2 listening. Kiany and Shiramiry (2002) provide empirical evidence for the use of dictation to improve L2 listening performance. The effects of exact repetition and reduced speech rate were examined by Jensen and Vinther (2003). Wilson (2003) argues that the use of dictogloss can help listeners notice differences between their reconstructed text and a written transcription of the original. More recently, Goh (2002) and Field (2005) have outlined a number of different possibilities, including analysis of parts of the text transcript, dictation, analogy exercises, as well as other remedial exercises.

For top-down approaches to teaching L2 listening, related research focusses on developing metacognitive knowledge (Berne, 2004; Goh, 2000; Zhang &Goh, 2006; Vandergrift et al. 2006; Goh, 2002a; Valiente, 2005; Vandergrift, 2003; Goh&Tabit, 2006; Jin 2002; Carrier, 2003; Chen, 2005;) and using prior knowledge (Long, 1990; Chiang &Dunkel, 1992; Elkhafaifi, 2005b; Chung, 2002; Tyler, 2001; Macaro, Vandrplank& Graham, 2005; Vandergrift, 2003).

2.3.3.2 Integrated Teaching Model of L2 Listening

Morley (1999) notes that the teaching of L2 listening has moved from

repetition exercises to discrete-point comprehension to real-time listening with a focus on completing tasks that reflect real-life communication. Furthermore, a range of teaching strategies are now recognized as essentials for teaching L2 listening: helping students to listen for gist, activating schema in pre-listening, and making predictions and inferences (Hinkel, 2006).

Based on bottom-up approaches and top-down approaches, Vandergrift (2007) goes on to investigates an integrated model for teaching L2 listening. As reviewed by Vandergrift (ditto), instruction of listening should include ample practice in listening to realistic texts, so that L2 listeners develop real-life listening skills. This opinion is also proved by Buck (1995), Goh (2002b), Vandergrift (2004), and Field (2007). Such listening practice, without the threat of evaluation, can help listeners gain a greater awareness of the metacognitive processes underlying successful listening and learn to control these processes themselves. The following table illustrates the integrated model for teaching L2 listening in terms of different stages.

Table 2.7 Stages of Listening Instruction (adapted from Vandergrift, 2004)

Planning/predicting stage	
1.Once students know the topic and text type, they predict type of information and possible words they may hear.	1.Planning and directed attention
First verification stage	
2.Students listen to verify initial hypotheses, correct as required and note additional information understood.	2.Monitoring
3.Students compare what they have written with peers, modify as required, establish what needs resolution and decide on the important detail that still needs special attention.	3.Monitoring, planning, and selective attention
Second verification stage 4.Students selectively attend to points of disagreement, make corrections and write down additional details understood.	4.Monitoring and problem-solving
5.Class discussion in which all class members contribute to the reconstruction of the text's main points and most pertinent details, interspersed with reflection on how students arrive at the meaning of certain words or parts of the text.	5.Monitoring and evaluation

Table 2.7 Stages of Listening Instruction (adapted from Vandergrift, 2004)
(Cont.)

Final verification stage	
6.Students listen for the information revealed in the class discussion which they were not able to decipher earlier and/or compare all or selected sections of the aural form of the text with a transcription of the text.	6.Selective attention and monitoring
Reflection stage	
7.Based on the earlier discussion of the strategies used to compensate for what was not understood, students write goals for the next listening activity. A discussion of discrepancies between the aural and written form of the text could also take place at this stage.	7.Evaluation

In short, whereas L2 listening instruction may have improved, as noted by Vandergrift (2007), it still focuses largely on the product of listening: the correct answer. Answers may verify comprehension but they reveal nothing about how students arrived at comprehension or, more importantly, how comprehension failed. Moreover, for the L2 listener, a focus on the right answer often creates a high level of anxiety. On the other hand, a focus on the process of listening through regular classroom practice, unencumbered by the threat of evaluation, can help listeners to develop their listening skills.

2.3.4 Previous Research on L2 Listening

As mentioned by Nunan (2005), listening has been alternately overlooked and elevated to the status of a movement. Dunkel (1993), in her excellent overview of the state of the art in listening research and pedagogy, suggests that the current interest in listening comprehension research has been driven by relatively recent developments in second language acquisition theory. Research on L2 listening, reviewed in the present study, is listed in the following table in terms of researcher, characteristics of the subjects, focus of the study, invested variables, instruments and data collection method, and data analysis method.

Table 2.8 Previous Studies Related to L2 Listening

Researchers	Characteristics of the Subjects	Focus of Study	Involved Variables	Instruments &Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
Goh (2000)	a group of foreign tertiary-level students from the People's Republic of China, aged 19	cognitive perspective on the comprehension problems of second language listeners	-Listening comprehension problem -listening abilities	-learners' self-Reports -learner diaries, small group interviews -a cognitive framework	Qualitative method
Goh (2002)	a group of Chinese ESL learners aged between 18 and 19 in two naturally occurring classes	Exploring listening comprehension tactics and their interaction patterns	-Listening strategies; -Interactive processes in comprehension -listening abilities	-strategy framework - 'think-aloud' -weekly listening diaries	Qualitative method
Field (2004)	students at Eurocentre Cambridge, a leading British EFL school	explore the relationship between top-down and bottom-up information in the processing of second-language listeners	Language processing, Speech signals, Lexis	3 experiments with listening tests	Quantitative method
Chang (2007)	A total of 117 Taiwanese college students, aged from 18 to 24	The impact of vocabulary preparation on L2 listening comprehension, confidence and strategy use	-the scores obtained from the tests and the questionnaire -Groups A–C -learners listening proficiency	-vocabulary test, - listening comprehension test, -a questionnaire, -semi-structured interview	Quantitative and Qualitativemethods
In'nami (2006)	79 Japanese first-year university students enrolled in three general English classes with special focus on listening	The effects of test anxiety on listening test performance	-Listening test performance -Test anxiety,	-listening performance test -Two types of questionnaires (Test Anxiety Scale and the Test Influence Inventory	-exploratory factor analysis, - confirmatory factor analysis -item analysis
Abdelhafez (2006)	80 first year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education, MiniaUniversity	investigating the effects of a suggested training program in some Metacognitive Language Learning Strategies on developing listening comprehension	-language proficiency levels -metacognitive language learning strategies -listening comprehension	-a pre- and post-test -listening comprehension test -English Proficiency Examination	Quantitative method t-test
Vandergrift (2005)	Fifty-seven core French learners from two suburban Canadian Junior High	the relationships among motivation, metacognition, and	-types of motivation -metacognitive listening strategies	a listening strategy questionnaire; a motivation questionnaire;	Quantitative method

Table 2.8 Previous Studies Related to L2 Listening (Cont.)

	Schools, ranged in age from 13 to 14 years.	proficiency in listening comprehension	-listening proficiency - listening comprehension	and a listening comprehension test.	
Jeanette (2007)	64 international students at intermediate to advanced level of language proficiency studying ESL at two universities in the Eastern United States	beliefs about strategy use for the improvement of second language listening comprehension	-school attended, -level of instruction, - native language, -proficiency level	-Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) -researcher-designed post-intervention surveys, - researcher-designed post-study survey	Quantitative method -descriptive analyses, - ANOVA, - ANCOVA
Vandergrift, . Goh and . Mareschal (2006)	-a large sample of respondents (N = 966) in various countries, in different learning contexts, and at different levels of language proficiency -another large sample of respondents (N = 512).	the development and validation of a listening questionnaire designed to assess L2 listeners' metacognitive awareness and perceived use of strategies while listening to oral texts	-MALQ scores - listening comprehension test scores	-a review of the relevant literature -examine existing instruments designed to assess strategy use in comprehension processes -use expert judgment to determine the emerging factors	An exploratory factor analysis of the responses of a large sample (N = 966) of language learners and a subsequent confirmatory factor analysis with another large but different sample (N =512)
Othman And Vanathas	Thirty-four intermediate level students who were majoring in Business Studies at a private tertiary institution	the impact of topic familiarity on listening comprehension	-topic familiarity-listening - comprehension of pretest and posttest	-Placement test -The Listening Text -The Listening Experiment -The written responses to open-ended questions -Semi Structured Interviews	Quantitative and Qualitativeme thods
Jung (2003)	80 Korean EFL learners, studying English for 7 years on average	Effects of discourse signaling on English listening comprehension	-Listening comprehension scores -Listening proficiency -types of listening task	-4 treatments assigned to 2 groups, -Listening comprehension test -A response sheet -A topic familiarity survey sheet -Personal information and background questionnaire	Quantitative methods

Table 2.8 Previous Studies Related to L2 Listening (Cont.)

Tang (2006)	a total number of 58 students, non-English major postgraduates of Shandong University of Science and Technology	listening strategy use among non-English major postgraduates	Listening Strategies	a Questionnaire for Listening Strategies	Quantitative methods
Roy, et al.(2005)	180 potential TOEFL takers residing in the western United States, either precollege students enrolled in intensive language institutes and/or in TOEFL preparation courses or undergraduate or graduate college students.	Testing the effects of Regional, Ethnic, and International Dialects of English on Listening Comprehension	-The listener's NL (NNS of English or NS of English) and the speaker's dialect of English were the two independent variables. - The score achieved on the Listening Comprehension Trial Test was the dependent variable.	-Listening Comprehension - Trial Test Selection of Speaker Dialects Selection of Speakers Test Administration	Quantitative methods -professional statistician performed a 2_2_5 ANOVA
Jackie and Horwitz(2008)	532 first-year through fourth-year business majors in a university in Shanghai, People's Republic of China	Learners' Perceptions of How Anxiety Interacts With Personal and Instructional Factors to Influence Their Achievement in English	language anxiety; affective factors; individual differences; social influences	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) Interview Protocol	Qualitative methods -Thematic analysis. - Generation of affinities or variables. Step 3: Interrelationship digraph analysis.
Vandergrift (2003)	36 Junior High school students in grade 7 (12–13 year olds) from intact classes in two different schools in a large Canadian urban setting	Orchestrating Strategy Use: Toward a Model of the Skilled Second Language Listener	-cognitive strategies -metacognitive strategies -listening skills -listening comprehension	-Think-aloud listening comprehension test, -using mathematics problems or verbal reasoning tasks and actual oral texts in French	Quantitative and qualitative methods

In summary, we have reviewed the theories and research related to L2/EFL listening above. Previous relevant studies have been listed in the table, in terms of researcher(s), characteristics of the subjects, focus of the study, invested variables, data collection and analysis methods, and the factors related to the developing L2/EFL listening comprehensionhave been summarized. The most important features which

emerge from these studies will be described below. First, previous research into listening shows that comprehensible input is an important factor in language acquisition. A comprehension-before-production approach can facilitate language acquisition, particularly in the early stage. This is also proved by Asher (1982) and Krashen (1982).

Second, previous research into listening shows that certain factors exist which affect listening comprehension. These factors may include speakers, listening, content and amount of support (Brown and Yule, 1983). Watson and Smeltzer (1984) consider that factors internal to the learner such as attentiveness, motivation, interest in and knowledge of the topic, can have a marked bearing on listening success. While Chaudron and Richards (1986) consider that knowledge of discourse markers can facilitate comprehension. Other researchers such as Anderson and Lynch (1988) list the significant factors in listening comprehension: the organization of information, the familiarity of the topic, the explicitness and sufficiency of the information, the type of referring expressions used, and whether the text describes a static or dynamic relationship. Nunan (1997) puts out that depth of content processing is a significant factor in listening comprehension.

Furthermore, previous research in second language studies have suffered from the following five limitations, all of which were addressed in the current study: (a) no control of measurement errors, (b) insufficient validation of questionnaires, (c) little attention to the effects of test anxiety on test performance, (d) insufficient teaching time involved, (e) lack of comprehensive and systematic instruction design in listening, (f) lack of non-reciprocal listening tasks, (g) lack of triangulation of data collection methods and (h) no clear theoretical framework employed.

2.3.5 Conclusion

The present study aims to investigate the effects of pre-task planning on Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension. Based on the purposes of this research, the related literature on second language listening is reviewed in this section. After an introduction to three comprehension processes in listening, the researcher reviews the instructional principles in EFL listening and illustrates the theoretical implications for the present study based on these principles. Next, the bottom-up and top-down teaching approaches in listening is reviewed and a kind of integrated teaching method is also introduced in this part. Lastly.the previous research into L2 listening is considered and the author concludes with the features as well as the limitations of this research in order to fill in the research gaps between the existing research and the present study.

2.4 Pre-task Planning

In the present study, pre-task planning is considered as the instructional pre-task planning activities during the pre-task phase. These activities are planned and designed systematically by the author and researcher, based on the research purposes, during the instructional period, before students do the listening task of writing a summary. Some of these planning activities occur before listening to the passage, namely, during the pre-listening phase, for example, the concept of mapping and the strategic planning activities; while other planning activities occur in the after listening phase, for example, the activity of rehearsal. Consequently, the related literature about the three task phases and the pre-listening activities was useful in helping the author to design the pre-task planning activities and implement them in the EFL listening classroom.

2.4.1 The Three Task Phases

The design of a task-based lesson involves consideration of the stages or components of a lesson that has a task as its principal component. Various designs have been proposed (for example, Prabhu, 1987; Estaire and Zanon, 1994; Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996; Lee, 2000). Ellis (2003) proposes a three-phase approach to a task-based lesson. The first phase is the pre-task phase and concerns the various activities that teachers and students can undertake before they start the task, such as how much time students are given to plan the performance of the task. The second phase, the during task phase, centers around the task itself and affords various instructional pressure or not. The final phase is the post-task phase and involves procedures for following up on the task-based teaching. Table 2.9 illustrates the three phases and provided examples of the options respectively.

Table 2.9 A Framework for Designing Task-based Lessons (Ellis, 2003:244)

Phase	Examples of options
Pre-task	Framing the activity, e.g. establishing the outcome of the task Planning the time Doing a similar task
During task	Time pressure Number of participants
Post-task	Learner report Consciousness raising Repeat task

The purpose of the pre-task phase is to prepare students to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition (Ellis, 2003). Lee (2000) describes the importance of framing the task to be performed and suggests that one way of doing this is to provide an advance organizer of what the students will be required to do and the nature of the outcome they will arrive at.

The use of a pre-task was a key feature of the Communicational Teaching

Project (Prabhu, 1987). Skehan (1996) refers to two broad alternatives available to the teacher during the pre-task phase: an emphasis on the general cognitive demands of the task, and/or an emphasis on linguistic factors. These alternatives can be tackled procedurally in one of four ways: (1) supporting learners in performing a task similar to the task they will perform in the during-task phase of the lesson; (2) asking students to observe a model of how to perform the task; (3) engaging learners in non-task activities designed to prepare them to perform the task; and (4) strategic planning of the main task performance. Ellis (2003) also describes four options in the pre-task phase, as explained below.

Performing a Similar Task

Prabhu (1987) explains that the pre-task phase was conducted through interactions of the question-and-answer type. The teacher was provided with a lesson plan that included (1) the pre-task and (2) a set of graded questions or instructions together with parallel questions to be used as needed.

Providing a Model in the Pre-task Phase

Providing a model in the pre-task phase means that the students observe a model of how the task can be performed without requiring them to undertake a trial performance of the task (Ellis, 2003). Both Skehan (1996) and Willis (1996) suggest that the model can be accompanied by activities designed to raise learners' consciousness about specific features of the task performance. Such activities might require the learners to identify and analysecertain features in the model texts. Alternatively, they might involve pre-training in the use of specific strategies.

Non-task Preparation Activities

There are a variety of non-task preparation activities that teachers can choose

from. These can centre on reducing the cognitive or the linguistic demands placed on the learner. Activating learners' content schemata or providing them with background information serves as a means of defining the topic area of a task. Willis (1996) provides a list of activities for achieving this, for example, brainstorming and mind maps. When learners know what they are going to talk or write about they have more processing space available for formulating the language needed to express their ideas with the result that the quantity of the output will be enhanced and also its fluency and complexity.

Strategic Planning

According to Ellis (2003), in the process of strategic planning, learners can be given time to plan how they will perform the task. The strategic planning contrasts with the online planning that can occur during the performance of the task. It can be distinguished from other pre-task options in that it does not involve students in a trial performance or the task or in observing a model. The difference between the non-task preparation procedures described above and strategic planning is that the former occur without the students having access to the task they will be asked to perform while strategic planning involves the students considering the forms they will need to execute the task workplan they have been given.

The role of strategic planning has attracted considerable attention from researchers. As reviewed by Ellis (2003), the methodological options involved in the strategic planning include whether the students are simply given the task workplan and left to decide for themselves what to plan, or whether they are given guidance in what to plan. In the case of the latter option, the guidance may focus learners' attention on form or content, or as in Sangarun's (2001) study, form and content

together. Another option concerns the amount of time students are given to carry out the pre-task planning.

2.4.2 Pre-listening Activities

Pre-listening activities are things learners do before a listening activity in order to prepare for listening. These activities have various purposes, including pre-teaching or activating vocabulary, predicting content, generating interest and checking understanding of task. Sui and Wang (2005) suggested pre-listening activities including vocabulary introduction, brainstorming, asking questions, and using visual support. Gareth (2002) also illustrated a few types of pre-listening activities as shown in the following table by the author.

Table 2.10 Pre-listening Activities (Gareth, 2002)

Pre-listening activities	Explanation and Examples
Setting the context	Give an idea about who is speaking, where and why; provide the listeners with some idea of the context of something they are listening to.
Generating interest	Use some dramatic pictures to raise students' interest; personalization activities, such as pair-work, or discussion to lead them into the topic.
Activating current knowledge	Ask the students questions like "What do you know about…?; Based on the topic, the questions could be like "What are they?", "What problems do they face?", or "Why are they important?", etc.
Acquiring knowledge	Students may have limited general knowledge about a topic. Providing knowledge input will build their confidence for dealing with a listening task. This could be done by giving a related text to read, or, to make it a little more fun, a quiz.
Activating vocabulary/knowledge	Ask students to brainstorm language beforehand, and then perform the scene. By giving them the time to think about the language needs of a situation, they will be better prepared to cope with the listening.
Predicting content	Try giving students a choice of things that they may or may not expect to hear, and ask them to choose those they think will be mentioned.
Pre-learning vocabulary	Select some vocabulary for the students to study before listening, perhaps matching words to definitions, followed by a simple practice activity such as filling the gaps in sentences.
Checking/understanding the listening tasks	By giving the students plenty of time to read and understand the main listening comprehension tasks, the teacher may allow them to get some idea of the content of the listening. They may even try to predict answers before listening.

In addition, Devine (1982) included several strategies that students and their teachers can use to prepare for a listening experience during the pre-listening phase, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 2.11 Pre-listening Strategies (Devine, 1982)

Pre-listening strategies	Explanation and Examples
Activating existing knowledge	Students should be encouraged to ask the question: what do I already know about this topic?;students can brainstorm, discuss, read, view films or photos, and write and share journal entries.
Build prior knowledge	Teachers can provide the appropriate background information including information about the speaker, topic of the presentation, purpose of the presentation, and the concepts and vocabulary that are likely to be embedded in the presentation.
Review standard for listening	Teachers should stress the importance of the audience's role in a listening situation.
Establish purpose	Teachers should encourage students to ask: "Why am I listening?" "What is my purpose?" Students should be encouraged to articulate their purpose.
Use a listening guide	A guide may provide an overview of the presentation, its main ideas, questions to be answered while listening, a summary of the presentation, or an outline.

2.4.3 Previous Research on Pre-task Planning

As reviewed in Chapter One, Ellis (2009) states that pre-task planning can be further divided into rehearsal (planning takes the form of an opportunity to perform the complete task once before performing it a second time) or strategic planning (planning what content to express and what language to use but without opportunity to rehearse the complete task). In addition, Ojima (2006) considers concept mapping as one of the pre-task planning forms based on a case study of three Japanese ESL writers. In the present study, the above three forms of pre-task planning were employed in the instruction for the experimental group.

Therefore, rehearsal can be seen as a special type of pre-task planning. That is, performance of a task at one time can be seen as providing planning for performance of the same task a second time. Table 2.11 summarizes three studies that have investigated the effects of rehearsal on L2 learners' fluency, complexity, and accuracy.

Table 2.12 Studies Investigating the Effects of Rehearsal

Study	Participants	Research Questions	Method	Results
Bygate (1996)	One learner of English	What effects does repeating a narrative task have on the learner's use of language?	Learner asked to narrate a Tom and Jerry cartoon on two occasions—three days apart.	Only a small improvement in accuracy as observed. Clearer evidence in changes in complexity. There was also a reduction in the number of inappropriate expressions.
Gass et al. (1999)	One hundred and four undergraduate students in fourth semester Spanish course	Does task repetition yield more sophisticated language use? Will more accurate/sophisticated language use carry over to a new context?	Oral narratives based on snippets from Mr Bean videos learners recorded the stories as they watched the videos. Three groups: same content group recorded the same narrative three times (with 2-to-3day intervals) followed by a new narrative. Different content group recorded a new narrative on four occasions. Control group recorded their narrative twice (2 weeks apart).	The same content group's holistic ratings improved from tasks 1-3 but were not sustained in task 4 (the new task). The group differences on task 4 were not significant. The same content group also improved more than the different content group, but this improvement did not generalize to task 4. Less common words used more frequently by the same content group.
Bygate (2001)	Forty-eight ESL learners in UK	What effects does practicing the same type of tasks have on learner performance of a new task type? What effect would repeating the same task have on performance of a new task?	Two sets of tasks: a narrative set and an interview set. Three groups: Over a 10-week period all did time 1 and time 5 narrative and interview tasks. At time 5, they repeated the time 1 task and also did a new task. Two experimental groups each worked on one of the task types, repeating each task once. Control group completed only time 1 and 5 tasks.	Task repetition led to increased complexity on both the narrative and interview tasks and to decreased fluency in the interview task. The increase in accuracy in both task types was not statistically significant. Task-type practice had a very weak effect. Only limited evidence that practicing a task type aided performance of a new task of the same type. Little evidence of any trade-off effects.

All three studies summarized above provide only limited evidence regarding the effects that rehearsal has on performance. The studies have examined two principal questions: does repeating a task have any effect on performance of the same task?

Does repeating the same task have any effect on performance of a new task? All three studies addressed the first question, while Bygate (2001) and Gass et al. (1999) addressed the second question. All three studies produced evidence to show that rehearsal of a task has a beneficial effect on learners' subsequent performance of the same task. However, both Bygate and Gass et al.'s studies found there is no transference of the rehearsal effect to a different task, even when this is the same type as the original task. All three studies raise a crucial issue: the relationship between performance in the L2 and acquisition. From the results of the three studies, there is no clear evidence that task rehearsal assists acquisition.

Strategic planning also can be seen as a special type of pre-task planning. Table 2.12 summarizes the studies that investigated the effects of strategic planning on task-based performance in terms of participants, research questions, method, and results.

Table 2.13 Studies Investigating the Effects of Strategic Planning on Fluency, Complexity, and Accuracy

Study	Participants	Research Questions	Method	Results
Foster (1996)	32 intermediate ESL learners in the UK	What effects does planning time have on students' fluency, complexity, and accuracy?	Three tasks: personal information, narrative and decision making. Three groups: guided planning, unguided planning and control	Planners paused less, were silent less, and produced fewer repetitions than non-planners. Unguided planning benefited accuracy but only in the personal information and the decision making task.
Wendel (19970	40 Japanese learners of English in a Junior College—low intermediate to intermediate	Planning will lead to increased fluency, complexity and accuracy in oral narratives.	Learners watched two films and then retold them under two conditions:10 min unguided planning (with note-taking) and no planning	Overall effect for planning found; no effect for film and no interaction between planning and film. Planning led to more syllables per minute and shorter pauses. Planning led to higher T-unit scores but not to more word families being used. Effect of planning not evident in correctness of verbs
Skehan and Foster (1997）	40 pre-intermediate ESL learners in UK	What effect does planning have on oral task performance?	As in Foster (1996). Two variables examined: planning time (10 min); post-task (public performance)	Planners paused less than no-planners in the personal and narrative tasks but not in the decision-making task. Planners produced more complex language in tasks1 and 3 but not 2. Planners were more accurate than non-planners but only in the narrative task.
Ortega (1999)	64 advanced level learners of Spanish as a FL	Does pre-task planning increase complexity, accuracy, and fluency? What do learners do when they plan?	Within-subject comparison of planning and no planning. Two narrative tasks based on a picture series. Ten minutes unguided planning+note-taking. Retrospective semi-structured interviews.	Planning produced significant increases on all measures except type-token ratio.
Rutherford (2001)	31 ESL adult students at mid-intermediate level	What effect does teacher-directed planning have on students' oral production and actual nature of their planning?	Two oral narrative tasks based on tightly structured picture stories; questionnaire asking students what types of planning activity they had engaged in; five minutes guided planning time.	No statistically significant effect found for planning on either complexity or accuracy measures. Descriptive statistics showed differential effects for the two tasks in the planned and unplanned conditions.

Table 2.13 Studies Investigating the Effects of Strategic Planning on Fluency,

Complexity, and Accuracy (Cont.)

Study	Participants	Research Questions	Method	Results
Yuan and Ellis (2003)	42 Chinese undergraduate students (English majors)	What are the effects of pre-task planning on fluency, complexity, and accuracy in an oral narrative?	An oral narrative picture task. No planning and pre-task planning (10min) - written notes. Task performance pressured.	Fluency: Planning group produced more pruned syllables per minute than non-planning group. Complexity: Planning group produced more clauses per T-unit than no-planning group (no difference on other two measures). Accuracy: no statistically significant differences found.
Kawauchi (2005)	12 high-intermediate and 11 advanced Japanese EFL learners	What effect does proficiency have on planned oral performance?	Three picture-based narrative tasks from STEP test. Learners performed all two tasks in three cycles. Within-subjects design: learners performed same task in both unplanned and planned conditions. Three types of planning activities (10 min): writing; rehearsal; and reading –carried out after unplanned task.	Fluency: in unplanned condition order was low < high < advanced but in planned condition it was low < high = advanced. Complexity: advanced group did not differ in planned and unplanned conditions. Accuracy: low proficiency significantly different from other two groups in both conditions. Results varied according to verb categories. Planning type: no differences found in the effect of the three planning activities on any of the measures.
Skehan and Foster (2005)	61 inter-mediate level ESL students	The study investigated the effects of guided vs. unguided planning and also the effects of planning at two different times during a task performance.	Decision-making task. Three groups: no planning; 10 min guided planning; and 10 min unguided planning.	Both planning conditions produced fewer end of clauses pauses than the no-planning group at both times. Detailed planners produced more filled pauses than undetailed and no-planners but only at time 2. Detailed planners produced more subordinate clauses than other two groups but only at time 1. Detailed planners produced more accurate speech than no planning but only at time 1.
Guara-tavares (2008)	50 intermediate Brazilian learners of English enrolled in university courses	What effect does planning have on learners' fluency, complexity, and accuracy? Is there a	Two-picture-cued narrative tasks. Task 1 performed by both control and experimental groups under no-planning condition. Task 2 performed by control group under no-	No statistically significant differences between control and experimental groups on task 1. On task 2 the experimental group was significantly more accurate and complex than the control group. In the control group, working memory correlated significantly with

Table 2.13 Studies Investigating the Effects of Strategic Planning on Fluency,

Complexity, and Accuracy (Cont.)

Study	Participants	Research Questions	Method	Results
		relationship between working memory and learners' L2 production under no-planning and planning conditions?	planning condition and under the planning condition by the experimental group. Planning = 10 min. All learners completed the Speaking Span Test as a test of working memory. On-line and retrospective reports of planning collected from the experimental group in task 2.	accuracy in task 2 (unplanned). In the experimental group,working memory significantly related with measures of fluency and complexity in task 2 (planned).

The studies summarized above were divided between second-language and foreign-language learners. Many of the studies provide only a very crude indication of the proficiency level of the learners. Most of the studies investigated learners who were at the intermediate proficiency level. The settings involved in the studies include the classroom, laboratory, and testing. The task employed in the studies include interactive vs. monologic; simple vs. complex and a variable of considerable interest to task-based researchers is the effect that the design of the task has on L2 performance. It should be noted that many of the tasks involved are narrative tasks and that they can be performed in both an interactive or monologic mode. The learners can be asked to tell a story to another person or can be asked to speak into a cassette recorder.

The studies mentioned above also varied in terms of whether the planning was unguided or guided. In the unguided condition, learners were simply given the task, told they would have to perform it, and asked to prepare to do so. In guided planning,

their attention was directed to specific aspects of planning. In Kawauchi's (2005) study, three types of planning activity were investigated: writing (the learners were asked to write out what they wanted to say); rehearsal (they were told to say out aloud what they wanted to say); and reading (they were provided with a model passage to read).

From this summary it will be noted that strategic planning has a clear effect on task performance but also that few conclusions regarding the role played by specific learners and task variables are possible. Task variables are almost certainly important but no clear conclusions can be drawn yet. One task variable that has an impact on performance is the degree of structure of the information in the task. Several studies investigated this and showed that, in general, greater structure leads to greater fluency, complexity, and accuracy. What is less clear is to what extent and in what ways task structure interacts with planning. Another inadequacy in the overall studies is that all the attention is given to the effects strategic planning have on the learners' oral production in terms of fluency, complexity and accuracy. As pointed out by Ellis (2004), in contrast to the number of studies that have investigated the effects of planning on oral narratives, there have been very few task-based studies of the effects of planning on written narratives.

As to concept mapping, another form of pre-task planning, Carrell etal., 1992) states that instruction for concept mapping usually includes a brainstorming session where students are encouraged to activate their prior knowledge of a topic and focus on the relevant content schema. The technique of concept mapping has been widely practiced and studied under different terms, such as semantic mapping (e.g., Cronin et al., 1992; Heimlich and Pittelman, 1986; Lipson, 1995; Scultz, 1991), cognitive mapping (e.g., Boyle, 1996; Peresich et al., 1990; Reynolds and Hart, 1990) and

webbing (e.g., Brown and Salisch, 1996; Norton, 1993; Pieronek, 1994). As reviewed by Ojima (2006), the distinction between these terms mentioned above is not clear in the literature, and they are likely to be used as equivalent in both L1 and L2.

In the study of Ojima (2006), the researcher explored whether and how concept mapping as a form of pre-task planning could benefit the writing performance of three Japanese ESL learners. This study analyzed four compositions from each of the learners, written with and without concept mapping: using measures of accuracy, complexity, fluency and examined through a questionnaire, retrospective interview, and logs,and the learners' applications of the strategy in their writing processes. The results showed that the pre-task planning was associated positively with the overall measures of the learners' written production during in-class compositions, with the exception of accuracy.

In a listening study reported in Nunan (1997), the use of a concept mapping technique also proved effective. Students were put into one of three groups, and asked to listen to an interview with a television journalist. The first group was required simply to listen to the tape, make notes, and complete a comprehension test. The second group listened, checked off key words/phrases, and completed the test. As the third group listened, they were required to complete a concept map which showed not only the key words and phrases, but the relationships between them. The study showed that the additional depth of processing required by the third group resulted in superior comprehension.

2.4.4 Conclusion

To sum up, in this section we have explained the relationship between task-based research and fluency, accuracy and complexity; the pre-task planning forms

involved in the previous research as well as in the present study, and the related studies that have investigated the effects of the different forms of pre-planning on the fluency, complexity, and accuracy of learners' performance of oral tasks as well as written tasks.

2.5 Theoretical Framework for the Present Study

As reviewed previously, this study draws on two different but potentially commensurable research areas: constructivism learning theory and second language acquisition (SLA) theory. Based on these two theories, task-based language learning and second language listening are reviewed. Then, explanations for the pre-task phase, the pre-listening activities/strategies as well as the pre-task planning instruction are given. Consequently, in keeping with the findings reviewed, the researcher proposes a diagram for the theoretical framework in the present study, as illustrated in Figure 2.4 below.

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┌──────────────────┐                          ┌──────────────────┐
│  Constructivism  │─────────────────────────▶│       SLA        │
│   and Schema     │─────┐                     │     Theory       │
│     Theory       │     │                     │                  │
└──────────────────┘     │                     └──────────────────┘
         │               │                              │
         ▼               ▼                              ▼
┌──────────────────┐                          ┌──────────────────┐
│   Task-based     │◀─────────────────────────│     Second       │
│    Language      │                          │    Language      │
│    Teaching      │─────────────────────────▶│    Listening     │
└──────────────────┘                          └──────────────────┘
         │                                              │
         ▼                                              ▼
┌──────────────────┐                          ┌──────────────────┐
│    Pre-task      │                          │   Pre-listening  │
│     Phase        │                          │    activities    │
└──────────────────┘                          └──────────────────┘
          \                                          /
           ▼                                        ▼
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │      The Pre-task        │
              │   Planning Instruction   │
              └──────────────────────────┘
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Concept Mapping   **Strategic Planning**   **Rehearsal**

1. Setting the context	Providing students with the format ofawritten summary	Asking students to say out loud what they want to write
2. Generating interest		
3. Activating existing knowledge		
4. Building prior knowledge		
5. Activating vocabulary		

Proposed effects of pre-task planning on students' listening comprehension

Figure 2.4: Theoretical Framework of the Study

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this present study is discussed in this chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the study was carried out. It explains the principles of the present research methodology which includes the research design, method of data collection and data analysis. In this section we dealt with the research design, the characteristics of the participants, a description of variables, the instruments involved in this study and the procedures of data collection. Then we conducted a data analysis from the methods used in this study. Finally, the results as well as the implications of the pilot study were discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Research Methodology

A triangulation method was used in the present study. As (Denzin, 2003) states, triangulation involves various guises, e.g. (1) data triangulation, involving time, space and persons; (2) investigator triangulation, consisting of using more than one observer; (3) theory triangulation, consisting of adoption of more than one theory framework to interpret the phenomenon; (4) methodological triangulation, involving using more than one method to collect data.

The advantage of employing methodological triangulation mainly lies in that it may be used to address different but complementary questions within a study and enhance the interpretability of the research outcomes. As stated by Robson (1993),

the interpretation of statistical data may be strengthened by qualitative descriptions, in turn a qualitative account can be enhanced by supporting quantitative data. For these reasons, methodological triangulation has been employed in the present study.

In short, as Wiersma and Jurs (2005) state, intervention designed to improve students' achievement should take on the form of an experimental treatment. Therefore, this present study employs an experimental research study involving two groups, and uses methodological triangulation with both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. As many interventional studies use mainly a pretest and a posttest to assess the outcome, the present study, therefore, will also employ a pretest and a posttest to achieve the research purposes.

3.2 The Research Design

According to the research methodology mentioned above and the research purposes, the main procedures of the research design in the present study are as shown in the following table.

Table 3.1: Research Design

Group	Pretest	Treatments	Posttest
CG	LCT	Instruction 1	LCT
EG	LCT	Instruction 2	LCT

CG = Control Group
EG = Experimental Group
LCT = Listening Comprehension Test
Instruction 1 = In the unguided condition, learners are simply given the task, told to follow the traditional classroom activities without the pre-task planning steps.
Instruction 2 = In the guided pre-task planning condition, the learners' attention is directed to specific aspects of the pre-task planning steps.

Two groups were involved in this study: the Control Group was in the unguided condition and learners were simply given the task without the pre-task planning steps, told they would have to perform it, and asked to prepare to do so; and the Experimental Group was in the guided pre-task planning condition and the learners' attention was directed to specific aspects of the pre-task planning steps. In addition, a listening comprehension test was used as the pretest before intervention and the posttest after the treatment. A student questionnaire as well as an open-ended questionnaire, a teacher's log, and a semi-structured interview were employed to collect the data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were involved in the process of data analysis in the present study.

3.3 The Participants

The participants involved in the present study were 40 full-time undergraduate English majors at a college in Nanjing, Jiangsu, China. They are foreign language learners of English (EFL learners): a departure from other planning studies to date, which have focused on "second" rather than "foreign" language learners. The participants in this study had learned their English more or less entirely in an instructional setting. They were between 18 and 20 years old. At the time of the data collection, most of them had been learning English as a foreign language in Chinese schools for about 7 years on average, first in elementary school and middle school and then in college. None had ever been to an English-speaking country, and they had little opportunity to use English for communicative purposes outside the classroom. All the participants were from two second-year EFL classes and volunteered for the present study. They had a similar English learning background and their English

scores in the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) were between 90 and 105 for which the maximum score is 120. They were all taking a required semester-long course in English listening. The participants were from two classes, which were formed at the beginning of their first year at the college following normal administrative procedures, in a manner that might be expected to result in classes of very similar ability. The participants could be considered to constitute a fairly homogeneous group in terms of their learning history and English listening proficiency. To test this assumption, all the participants were given the listening comprehension test as the pretest before the main study.

As second year English majors at the college, the participants had 10 hours of English per week: 4 hours for reading, 2 hours for writing, 2 hours for speaking and 2 hours for listening. All the participants agreed to participate in the whole study. They were told by the researcher that the tests and tasks were for purposes of research only and assured that the information collected would not affect their course grades. The participants were randomly divided into two groups of 20 each. The gender composition of each group was not considered in the present study. No participants withdrew from the study.

The participants involved in the present study were divided into three groups in terms of listening comprehension proficiency levels. The z value, obtained from the equation of "$z = (x - \mu) / \sigma$", based on the scores of the pretest, was employed to group the students into high proficiency, medium proficiency and low proficiency levels. In this equation, x means the individual student's score in the pretest; μ refers to the mean score of all the participants in the pretest; σ refers to the standard deviation, which indicates whether a given value is above or below the mean (Triola,

2000). Thus, the high proficiency level students in this study refer to those who obtained a z value higher than 1.00 ($z > 1.00$), the medium proficiency students are those whose z values are between -1.00 and 1.00 (-1.00 $\leqslant z \leqslant$ 1.00), and the low proficiency level students refer to those whose z value is lower than 1.00 ($z < 1.00$)

3.4 The Variables

There were independent and dependent variables in the present study. The independent variables of the quantitative phase of the study was a method represented by non-planning and the pre-task planning instruction involving the control group and the experimental group, whilst the dependent variables which could be affected by the independent variables are the participants' scores of the pretest and the posttest designed for the two groups.

Table 3.2 The Format of Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	
Instruction Method	Test	Scores
Non-planning & Pre-task planning instruction	Pretest	
(Control group and Experimental group)	Posttest	

3.5 The Instruments

The instruments employed in the present study to achieve the research purposes include a Listening Comprehension Test (LCT), a teacher's log, students' questionnaires including the students' questionnaires and open-ended questionnaires, a semi-structured interview and an analysis by the teacher of a written summary.

3.5.1 The Listening Comprehension Test (LCT)

Probably the most common tasks used to assess listening are comprehension questions (Buck, 2001). This task is used when a listening text is presented to test–takers, who are then asked to answer questions designed to measure how well they have understood the content. This is a common procedure; comprehension questions can be used with a variety of text types, and they can be used to test a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities. The listening comprehension test used in this study consists of 30 items of multiple-choice questions and writing a summary after listening. Different types of listening texts involved in the LCT are listening to conversations, listening to passages and to news items.

3.5.1.1 Testing Items in the Listening Comprehension Test

The LCT employed in the present study consists of multiple-choice questions and writing a summary. Listening comprehension test may employ different test types, such as Short-answer questions, Multiple-choice questions, True/False questions and Inference questions. The rationale for the researcher to adopt multiple-choice questions is explained below.

1. Multiple-choice questions in LCT are the most popular and familiar of test forms to the students. Alderson (2000: 211) states that multiple-choice test items are so popular because they provide testers with the means to control test-takers' thought processes when responding; they "…allow testers to control the range of possible answers…". The students' familiarity with multiple-choice questions may reduce anxiety in LCT, as mentioned by Alderson (2000), and it is better for students to take a familiar test type to reduce anxiety than to introduce an unfamiliar task type in a test.

2. It is easier and more objective for the researcher to score multiple-choice questions. Multiple-choice questions are fashionable since marking them is totally objective (Weir 1993). Besides, doing multiple-choice involves less use of other language skills, such as writing and reading, which may be factors affecting listening comprehension during the test. The questions are based on the sound file and only a small number of words are involved in the multiple-choice items so that the text type of multiple- choice questions is a basic skill to be tested in the LCT. After the 30 items of Multiple-choice questions in LCT, the participants are required to write a summary after listening to two passages.

3.5.1.2 Listening Texts in the Listening Comprehension Test

Selecting listening materials is more complicated than selecting reading materials (Buck, 2001:154). Written language is preserved by its nature, and learners have more choice in obtaining reading materials, for example, books, periodicals and other materials are easily available, and if they cannot find anything appropriate, they can easily write something. While in selecting listening materials, there will be choices between using an existing text or creating one. However, spoken language is much harder to preserve than written language, and there is less variety of listening texts available. Creating recordings needs more technology and requires more equipment than creating written texts. Therefore, to design listening texts in LCT one must consider both providing suitable texts and ensuring good quality sound.

• **Providing Suitable Texts**

Considering the difficulty in creating listening materials, the researcher decided to follow the suggestions of the experts, that is, by finding pre-recorded texts. People hear recorded material all the time, which may include radio

and television recordings, and internet-based audio materials. More and more audio materials are becoming available over the World-Wide Web. News, radio broadcasts and much else is kept in archives that can often be searched. Thus, it is very convenient to use some of these materials. And when considering the characteristics of the participants involved in this study, the researcher decidedto adapt the existing listening materials from online tests bank based on TEM-4 (Tests for English majors, Band 4, in China) in LCT as the pretest and posttest in the present study.

TEM is a test battery administered in China which consists of two tests: TEM-4 and TEM-8. TEM-4 is designed for students majoring in English language and literature, and it is given near the end of the two year's foundation stage of a four-year degree program. The test is held in June every year by Shanghai International Studies University under the auspices of the Ministry of Education in China. The purpose of TEM is to check the implementation of the English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors of Institutions of Higher Learning (ETSEMIHL) and to bring about a beneficial backwash effect on teaching and learning. According to the syllabus, the aim of English teaching is to "foster versatile English majors who are at once proficient in English knowledge to take up such professions as translators, interpreters, teachers, managers, and researchers in the fields involving English"(ETSEMIHL 2000:17)

The objective of the TEM-4 listening sub-test is to test candidates' ability to comprehend verbal messages. The test covers general topics related to daily life and matters related to study. The input information is delivered at a speech rate of 120 words per minute (hereafter wpm) and read only once. According to the Testing Syllabus (2004), the test requirements are as follows:

1. Candidates are expected to be able to, within 15 minutes, take a dictation which runs to about 200 words and is delivered at a speech rate of 120 wpm.

2. Candidates are expected to be able to understand English native speakers' talks about their daily and social life, and to comprehend the listening materials at an intermediate level of difficulty (e.g. the mini talk in TOEFL), to understand the main idea and to identify the speaker's attitudes, emotions and real intentions.

3. Candidates are expected to be able to understant the gist of the news programs broadcast at normal speed on the VOA and the BBC.

4. Candidates are expected to be able to understand such varieties of English as American English, British English and Australian English.

5. Time limit on Listening Comprehension is about 15 minutes.

The participants involved in the present study were required to take TEM-4 after the treatment. Thus, the LCT employed in the present study could take the form of the TEM-4 listening sub-test, which consists of 30 multiple-choice items based on three types of listening texts as listening conversations, passages, and news, with which the students are very familiar. For the purpose of testing the students' listening comprehension, the dictation part in the TEM-4 listening sub-set, which involves more specific linguistic knowledge, was excluded in the LCT in this study. All the listening texts are based on the TEM-4 listening sub-set, which assures the test validity of the listening in the present study. The listening passages for writing a summary are selected from the students' textbook, which is provided by the English Department of the college and suitable for the students' level.

• **Ensuring Good Quality Sound**

Listeners, unlike readers, need to comprehend spoken language;

therefore, they must pay attention to additional factors that can complicate the process of listening comprehension considerably in comparison to reading and render it more cognitively demanding (Buck, 2001, as cited in Vandergrift, L., 2007). Thus, the first point for listeners is to pay attention to the sounds, which can often be indistinct, and to the prosodic features of stress and intonation that carry important information. In this present study, the Cool Editor Pro. 2.1 was employed to edit the sound file based on the online TEM-4 listening sub-set so that a good sound quality could be ensured and a well-equipped listening lab was utilized to hold the LCT.

3.5.2 The Teacher's Logs

Diaries, logs, and journals are important introspective tools in language research (Nunan, D., 1992). Bailey (2007) defines the diary study as "a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analyzed for recurring patterns or salient events". A teacher's log can help language teachers (both beginning and experienced) to think about their work (Burton, 2005). A teacher's log can be an opportunity for the researcher to use the process of writing to describe and explore her own teaching practices and observe the students' learning processes. In the present study, the researcher wrote a teacher's log after each unit and the data from the teacher's log are used to analyze the effects of pre-task planning on the listening comprehension of the EFL learners as well as the participants' attitudes towards the pre-task planning steps utilized in the present study.

3.5.3 The Students' Questionnaires

The students' questionnaire consist of the students' opinion questionnaires and the open-ended questionnaires. The former was used to obtain the data on students'

opinions or attitudes towards the pre-task planning activities they experienced when completing the listening tasks. The questionnaires employed in the present study took the form of a five-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of eight statements which participants would rate on the 5-point Likert scale according to their level of agreement. Values on the scale are "strongly disagree", "disagree", "uncertain", "agree", and "strongly agree" and the data obtained would be analyzed quantitatively. The open-ended questionnaires were used to obtain more detailed data about the students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning and the data would be analyzed qualitatively.

3.5.4 The Semi-structured Interviews

To elicit more detailed qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was also employed in the present study. As stated by Nunan (1992), in a semi-structured interview, the researcher will have a general idea of how he or she wants the interview to unfold and may even have a set of prepared questions. However, he or she will use these questions as a point of departure for the interview and will not be constrained by them. Thus, a semi-structured interview may be more popular, compared with a structured or unstructured interview because of the flexibility, that is, the interviewee is allowed a greater degree of power and control over the course of interview. In the present study, the selected participants from the experimental group were interviewed by the researcher in their L1 (Chinese) for the purpose of convenience and better understanding. The "windows movie-maker" will be used to record the interview, and the data will be transcribed and translated later on for qualitative data analysis.

3.5.5 The Analysis of the Written Summary

Marshall (1998) defines a written summary as a concise paraphrase of all the

main ideas in an essay. A written summary starts with a lead, including title, author, text type, and the main idea of the text. It has a clearly arranged structure and is paraphrased with new words without quotations from the text. It contains the essay's thesis and supporting ideas; it may use direct quotation of forceful or concise statements of the author's ideas; it will not usually cite the author's examples or supporting details unless they are central to the main idea. As to the author's knowledge, there is lacking the formal criteria of a analysis of the written summary. However, taking account the key points of a written summary, it would be accepted that a summary should be brief, complete, accurate, coherent, and objective (Browne & King, 2004). *Brief* refers to omitting unnecessary details like examples, explanations and other unimportant information and the length of written summary may be one fourth or one third of the original text. *Complete* refers to including all the main and supporting points delivered in the writer's own words in a condensed manner. *Accurate* is to give the same attention and stress to the points as the author does and *coherent* is rather than an outline listed as key words and phrases, as a written summary is a paragraph with necessary transitions and function structures to make it flow. While *objective* means it unnecessary to include the writer's own ideas or emotions on the topic since the summary should reflect the content of the original passage only.

Ellis and Yuan (2004) researched the effects of planning on fluency, complexity and accuracy in second language narrative writing and proposed measures of accuracy, fluency, and complexity to evaluate the quality of the participants' written production. The following Table 3.3 explains the measures of fluency, complexity, and accuracy respectively:

Table 3.3 Measures of Fluency, Complexity and Accuracy in the Written

      Production (Ellis and Yuan, 2004)

Variables	Measures	Explanation
Fluency	Syllables per minute	The total number of syllables produced divided by the total number of minutes a participant took to complete the task.
	Number of dysfluencies	The total number of words a participant reformulated (i.e., crossed out and changed) divided by the total number of words produced.
Complexity	Syntactic complexity	The ratio of clauses to T-units in the participants' production.
	Syntactic variety	The total number of different grammatical verb forms used in the task.
	Mean Segmental Type-Token Ratio (MSTTR)	The participants' narratives were divided into segments of 40 words and the type-token ratio of each segment calculated by dividing the total number of different words by the total number of words in the segment.
Accuracy	Error-free clauses	The percentage of clauses that did not contain any errors. All errors in syntax, morphology, and lexical choice were considered.
	Correct verb forms	The percentage of accurately used in terms of tense, aspect, modality, and subject-verb agreement.

Based on the above mentioned key points of a written summary as well as the measures involved in a written production, the analysis of the written summary employed in the present study could be summarized in the following Table 3.4:

Table 3.4 The Analysis of the Written Summary in the Present Study

Categories	Measures	Explanation
Completeness	Key points	The percentage of key points used in the task.
Accuracy	Error-free sentences	The percentage of sentences that did not contain any errors. All errors in syntax, morphology, and lexical choice were considered as well as accurately used verbs in terms of tense, aspect, modality, and subject-verb agreement.
Coherence	Transitions and functional structures	The total number of transitions and functions used in the task, such as, *first, second, next, then, afterwards, after that, in addition to that, also, furthermore, finally, at last, in the end, as a conclusion, on the whole, in a word, to sum up, last but not least, as a result, so,* and so on.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The purpose of the present study is to determine whether the pre-task planning activities have significant effects on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners. As mentioned above, the participants involved volunteered in the present study which was conducted in the students' spare time. The instruction consisted of four two-hour sessions and took place over a four-week period.

The procedures used for data collection in this study are as follows. First, the 40 participants who volunteered for the present study were randomly assigned to one of two groups: a control group which performed listening tasks under the unguided condition without doing pre-task planning after listening and an experimental group which performed listening tasks under the guided condition with pre-task planning activities. Subsequently, the two groups of participants were pretested by a LCT to decide if there were significance differences among them before the intervention. Based on the scores of the pretest, the participants were divided into three groups in terms of listening comprehension proficiency level, that is, high, medium and low proficiency level, evaluated by the z scores, as mentioned in Section 3.3. The instruction was held in a well-equipped listening lab, where the students listen to the material with separate earphones, so that a good sound quality could be assured. At the end of the four-week period, all of the two groups of students were posttested by using the same LCT as in the pretest which includes 30 items of multiple choice questions and writing a summary, but the order of the multiple choice items was changed in case the students could remember the items from the pretest. After the posttest, the researcher administered the close-ended and open-ended questionnaires to the students of the experimental group and also conducted a semi-structured

interview with them. During all the procedures of instruction, the researcher kept a teacher's log. The specific procedures of how the pretest, the posttest were conducted, how the teaching material was provided, how the questionnaires were administered, and the details of how a lesson plan was designed for instruction are presented as follows.

3.6.1 Pretest

The quasi-experiment was carried out in an audiovisual language classroom, where every student had a separate seat, a monitor, a set of headphones and a computer linked with the internet. The listening materials were played through the language laboratory console, and the students could listen either on the room speakers or through the headphones, according to their personal preference. The participants of the two groups were randomly assigned to the pre-task planning group and the non-planning group.

The Listening Comprehension Test (LCT) was used as the pretest for the participants in this audiovisual language classroom to test the assumption that all the students from both groups have similar ability in listening comprehension. The listening material of the LCT was played twice for the students with an interval of five minutes and sixty minutes was allowed in total for the pretest. The LCT was marked by the researcher and approved by a second EFL teacher, who had been teaching EFL listening to English majors for more than five years at the college. The Pearson correlation was used to assure the reliability of the test type of writing a summary in the LCT between the scales of the two raters and the average score was adopted in calculating the total scores in the LCT.

3.**6.2 Instructional Process**

This section includes the instructional material and time used in the present study as well as the procedures of instruction.

3.6.2.1 Instructional Material and Time

The instructional materials used in the present study include the textbook provided by the English Department at the college and the supplementary materials designed by the researcher and instructor (see Appendix B: A Sample of Instructional Materials). The supplementary instructional material includes four parts: play games, background knowledge, vocabulary practice and a comprehension task. The textbook, namely "A Listening Course", published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, is designed for English majors, which integrates activities for both listening and speaking skills training. The book includes sixteen units plus one unit of tests. Each unit contains four sections: Tactics for Listening; Listening Comprehension; Oral Work; and Supplementary Exercises. Normally the instructor selects ten units for the students to learn in class. Each unit begins with Tactics for Listening, which provides students with some basic listening skills training. Listening Comprehension contains major listening exercises, including listening exercises, including listening for gist, identifying specific information, and drawing inferences. There is a section for oral work in which the students have the opportunity to practice spoken English with the help of the listening material they have just heard. The supplementary exercises give the students a chance to test their listening comprehension for themselves and also they are given a chance to express their opinions freely (Shi, 2004).

The recorded tapes are provided with the textbook. The four topics from the textbook are, Shopping, Hobbies and Interests, Arts and Culture, and Interpersonal

Relationships, which were selected by the students according to the students' familiarity with the topic. The instructional time in the present study was a two-hour session once a week and it lasted four weeks. As some previous studies (Foster, 1996, Bygate, 1996, Gasser al., 1999, Bygate, 2001, mentioned, a task planning activity needed at least one class hour of fifty minutes and at most two class hours. It was planned that the real instruction would be conducted after the participants' regular class time in order not to interrupt their regular learning. The following table shows the instructional plan:

Table 3.5 The Instructional Plan in the Study

Time	Topics
The first week: two hours	Shopping
The second week: two hours	Hobbies and Interests
The third week: two hours	Arts and Culture
The fourth week: two hours	Interpersonal Relationships

3.6.2.2 Instructional Procedures

To arrange the instructional procedures in the present study, the lesson plan should also be considered. The researcher reviewed the related literature on instructional system design, studied the curriculum for university level Listening Courses, adapted the previous scholars' framework for a task based approach and finally conducted the lesson plan for both groups of this present study. As reviewed in Chapter Two, Ellis (2003) proposes four ways in the pre-task phase, namely, performing a similar task, providing a model, non-task preparation activities as well as strategic planning. In the article of Ellis (2009), pre-task planning can be divided into rehearsal and strategic planning. The within task planning can also be divided into two forms in which the students are either under pressure or not under pressure.

Thus researchers involved in task planning always arrange the experimental study into two groups with one group having to perform the task rapidly in a specific amount of time and the other group having to perform the task in an unlimited amount of time. While in the pre-task planning phase, different planning activities are involved.

As reviewed in Chapter Two, Bygate (1996), Gass et al. (1999), and Bygate (2001) provide only limited evidence regarding the effects that rehearsal has on task performance. These three studies examined two principal questions: (i) Does repeating a task have any effect on performance of the same task? (ii) Does repeating the same task have any effect on the performance of a new task? Four studies (Ortega 1999; Tajima 2003; Sangarum 2005; Guara-Tavares 2008) investigated how learners responded to the opportunity to plan and how they used their planning time.

It should be noted that many of the tasks involved in the pre-task planning research were narrative in nature but that these can be performed in both an interactive or monologic mode (Ellis 2009). The pre-task planning variables mentioned in the previous studies include the length of planning time; guided vs. unguided instruction; form vs. meaning focused. In the unguided condition, learners were simply given the task, told they would have to perform it, and asked to prepare to do so. In guided planning, their attention was directed to specific aspects of planning; in Sangarun's (2005) study, three types of planning activity were investigated: (i) writing (i.e. the learners were asked to write out what they wanted to say); (ii) rehearsal (i.e. they were told to say out loud what they wanted to say); and (iii) reading (i.e. they were provided with a model passage to read). Chapter Two also reviewed the Concept Mapping as one of the activities in pre-task planning in Ojima's (2006) study, which was conducted to test the effect of pre-task planning on EFL

learners' written production. The researcher states that the instruction for concept mapping usually includes a brainstorming session where students are encouraged to activate their prior knowledge of a topic and focus on the relevant content schema. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the concept mapping of the pre-task planning in the present study includes the activities of setting the context, generating interest, activating existing knowledge, building prior knowledge, and activating vocabulary/language. Consequently, adapting from what as been reviewed above, the following tables show the pre-task planning activities and the instructional procedures involved in the present study (for a sample of the detailed lesson plan, see Appendix C).

Table 3.6 The Pre-task Planning Mode in the Study

Pre-task Planning Mode	Explanation
Concept Mapping	The learners do brainstorming activities including playing games, discussion, answering questions, new word explanations and an introduction to the background information; the researcher introduces the listening tasks for writing a summary and a description
Rehearsal	The learners do the rehearsal activity after listening to the listening materials. They are asked to say out loud what they want to write in the while-task phase.
Strategic Planning	In the present study, the learners are provided with the format for writing a summary and some related questions before writing a description.

Based on the above, the instructional procedures in the present study are summarized in the following table:

Table 3.7 The Instructional Procedures in the Study

Procedures	Experimental Group (Pre-task planning)	Control Group (Non-pre-task planning)
Pre-task Activities: Step 1	Concept Mapping: Setting the context: Teacher explain the topic; Generating interest: Students play games; Activating existing knowledge: Teacher asks questions; Building prior knowledge: Teacher introduces background information; Activating vocabulary/language: Teacher explains new words and students do vocabulary practice	Learners do the pre-listening exercises in the textbook involved in the present study.
Pre-task Activities: Step 2	Strategic Planning: The learners are provided with a format for summary writing and some questions for description writing	The learners listen to the tape and do the exercises in the textbook.
Pre-task Activities: Step 3	Rehearsal: In pair work, the learners are asked to say out loud what they want to write in the listening summary	Students are asked to do the listening tasks for writing a summary and a description in detail.
	Students are asked to do the listening tasks for writing a summary in brief and a description in detail.	

In conclusion, the instructional procedures reveal different treatments between the experimental group and the control group, namely, doing pre-task planning activities under the guided condition versus doing pre-listening exercises in the textbook under unguided conditions in the pre-task phase. It was anticipated that the experiment would achieve the proposed effects of pre-task planning on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners.

3.6.3 Posttest

After the four-week intervention, no matter which group the students belonged to, the posttest of LCT was used to test the students of both groups. The data obtained from the students' scores on the posttest was submitted to quantitative analysis to determine the effects of the intervention as well as the difference between the two groups.

The LCT for the posttest is the same as the one used for the pretest. In order to reduce the possibility that the students' posttest might be influenced by their

development after the treatment, the researcher did not make the answers known to the students or allow them to see the listening scripts. Furthermore, the pre-test paper was returned to the researcher as soon as the students finished the test and the order of the multiple question items was changed in order to reduce the likelihood of the students remembering the content of the test. The skill of listening requires more from the short-term memory, compared with other language skills such as reading, or writing. In addition, a 4-week intervention period may not be long enough for the students to forget the listening material and the test items in the pretest. The quantitative analysis was carried out on the data obtained from the pretest and posttest.

To elicit more detailed information about the students' opinions about the pre-task planning activities they had done in the intervention period, a follow-up of semi-structured interviews was conducted one week after the LCT for the posttest. Based on the questionnaire about the participants' attitudes towards the pre-task planning, six students from the experimental group were selected for the interviews. It was proposed that two would have positive opinions on the pre-task planning, another two would have moderate opinions, and the other two would be of negative opinion. As mentioned above, for the purpose of convenience and better understanding, the respondents' L1, Chinese, was used in the interviews and the windows movie maker was used to record the sound file. Data obtained from the interviews was transcribed and translated into English for the qualitative analysis.

3.6.4 Scoring Procedures for the Listening Comprehension Test

As mentioned previously, the LCT consists of multiple choice items and summary writing. In marking the multiple choice items, the correct answer is given "1" and the incorrect or unanswered item is given "0". This criterion works well with

multiple-choice question items. Thus, the maximum score of LCT is 30 as there were 30 question items based on several types of listening texts such as listening passages, listening conversations, and news items.

In marking the summaries, the two evaluators checked the categories and measures in the analysis of the written summary as mentioned in section 3.5.5 and they paid more attention to the category of completeness than to the categories of accuracy and coherency in order to test learners' comprehension ability. The rating criteria were based on Melvin's (2006) format of a summary writing: This passage is about ( ); There are (how many) main ideas; First, ( ); Second, ( ); Third, ( ); The conclusion is ( ). The researcher and a second rater checked the listening scripts for the written summary and listed six key points which they thought should be included in the written summary .

In addition, Hudson's (2001) format was adapted for use in the written summary. In Hudson's format, the appropriacy or appropriateness was marked by an analysis using the Likert scale of 5, i.e. scale 5 refers to "completely appropriate"; scale 4 indicates "mostly appropriate"; scale 3 means "generally appropriate"; scale 2 means "not very appropriate but acceptable"; and scale 1 indicates "not appropriate or not acceptable". Table 3.8 shows the criteria used for the scales in the LCT of the present study:

Table 3.8 The Scales Criteria for the Written Summary in the LCT

Scale	Criteria for Three Categories in the Written Summary		
	Completeness	Accuracy	Coherence
5	Completely appropriate	Completely appropriate	Completely appropriate
4	Mostly appropriate	Mostly appropriate	Mostly appropriate
3	Generally appropriate	Generally appropriate	Generally appropriate
2	Not very appropriate but acceptable	Not very appropriate but acceptable	Not very appropriate but acceptable
1	Not appropriate or not acceptable	Not appropriate or not acceptable	Not appropriate or not acceptable
O	The mean score of the above three items		

O = Overall Score

In the present study, as the focus is to test the learners' comprehension abilities, the completeness of the key points, based on all aspects of the written summary, was employed and marked by using the Likert 5 scale. There are at least five points awarded for each aspect of the written summary. However, similar words were also accepted as correct. Table 3.9 shows the criteria for the scales used to rate the completeness of six key points.

Table 3.9 Criteria for Scales of Completeness of Key Points in the Written

Summary of LCT

Scales	Criteria for Completeness in Six Aspects					
	The passage is about ( )	**There are 4 main ideas**				**The conclusion is ( )**
		First ( )	**Second ( )**	**Third ( )**	**Fourth ( )**	
5	Totally complete, 5 key points included	Totally complete, 5 key points included	Totally complete, 5 key points included	Totally complete, 5 key points included	Totally complete, 5 key points included	Totally complete, 5 key points included
4	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included
3	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included
2	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included
1	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included

To take account of the other two categories of accuracy and coherence in the analysis of the written summary, the criteria were illustrated as follows:

Table 3.10 Scales Criteria for Accuracy and Coherence in the Written Summary

of LCT

Scale	Criteria	Explanations	
		Accuracy	**Coherence**
5	Completely appropriate	Completely appropriate clauses and verb forms without grammatical mistakes	Completely appropriate transitions and function structures without any mistakes
4	Mostly appropriate	Mostly appropriate clauses and verb forms, no grammatical mistakes or at most one	Mostly appropriate transitions and function structures, no mistake or at most one.
3	Generally appropriate	Generally appropriate clauses and verb forms, one grammatical mistake	Generally appropriate transitions and function structures, one mistake
2	Not very appropriate but acceptable	Not very appropriate clauses and verb forms, two or three grammatical mistakes	Not very appropriate transitions and functional structures, two or three mistakes
1	Not appropriate or not acceptable	Not appropriate clauses and verb forms, more than three grammatical mistakes	Not appropriate transitions and functional structures, more than three mistakes

The overall score for each item from all six aspects involved in the written summary of LCT was the mean score of scores for the three categories including completeness, accuracy and coherence. This score was obtained through the adding of three scores for each category and divided by 3 and the nearest whole number was used without a decimal point. If the decimal point was above 5, it was rounded up; if it was lower than 4, it was rounded down. For instance, (4+4+3)/3=3.67, the final score for one item was 4; and (3+3+4)/3=3.33, the final score was 3. The full score for the written summary in LCT was 30 since there were 6 aspects involved in the written summary, as shown in Table 3.10, i.e., 5 (full score for each aspect) times 6 (aspects in the written summary) = 30. The final total score for each student was the

mean score of the two raters. In the same way by means of calculating the score for each aspect, the final score was rounded off, i.e., for (25+20)/2=22.5, the final score was 23. The full score of the written summary was 30 since there were six aspects altogether and five points for each aspect respectively. Consequently, the full score for the LCT was 60 and the final total score for each student was the mean score of the two raters. The two raters discussed the criteria and negotiated agreement on the scoring of the criteria before they started their marking. Then they marked independently without further discussion. The Pearson correlation value was employed to examine the reliability of the interraters.

3.7 Data Analysis

Both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis was conducted for the present study. Data obtained from the five-point Likert scale applied to the questionnaire and the students' scores for the LCT for both the pretest and the posttest were submitted to quantitative analysis, while data obtained from the students' open-ended questionnaires, the teacher's log, and the semi-structured interviews were submitted to a qualitative analysis.

3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

• **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data. In the present study, descriptive statistics was employed to test students' attitudes toward pre-task planning in terms of frequency and the percentages

of the opinions expressed in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the frequency of the distribution in the posttest was also counted to test the teaching effects since this is a reliable indicator of the teaching effect and it can offer a full picture of the distribution of the scores.

- *t* **Test**

One widely used statistical tool for determining significant differences between two means is the *t*-test. The *t*-test is only used if the measurements consist of interval data, such as scores. Also, *t*-tests are always used to compare only two sets of data. Another characteristic of the *t*-test is that it is designed to work well with small data sets. Since language classroom research often involves small data sets, the *t*-test is frequently used in this field. Before the intervention, the students' mean scores on the LCT for the pretest were analyzed by an Independent *t*-test to see if there were any significant differences between the two groups for their different assignments. After the intervention, the Independent *t*-test was used again to determine whether there were significant differences between the two groups. In addition, the Paired-sample *t*-test was also calculated to compare the participants' mean scores on the pretest and posttest for the two groups. The purpose was to see if there are any significant differences between the students' scores for the pretest and the posttest, in order to determine whether the students had developed their listening comprehension after the intervention.

- **Effect Size**

In statistics, effect size is a measure of the strength of the relationship between two variables. In scientific experiments, it is often useful to know not only whether an experiment has a statistically significant effect, but also the size of any

observed effects. In this present study, the mean score and standard deviation of both groups, obtained from a *t*-test, was tested via the online software of Effect Size Calculator in order to test the size of the effects between the two groups, after the s *t*-test was carried out, which was used to determine whether there were significant differences between the two groups. The value of "Cohen's d" of Effect Size was used to determine whether the size of the effect was large enough to satisfy the criterion of .80 as suggested in Cohen (1988).

- **Chi-Square**

    In addition, a one-way analysis of the chi-square test (K^2) in the SPSS was employed to compare the frequency of different attitudes towards each item and a probability of .05 or less is considered to be a significant difference.

3.7.2 Qualitative Analysis

As mentioned above, data obtained from the analysis of the written summary, students' open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and teacher's log were submitted to qualitative analysis, so that the students' opinions and perceptions of the pre-task planning could be transcribed and coded into different categories and the implications for the present study would also be obtained in detail. Table 3.11 shows the instruments and data analysis methods involved in the present study based on the research questions.

Table 3.11 Summary of Instruments and Data Analysis

Research Questions	Instruments	Data Analysis Method
1. To what extent can the pre-task planning have effects on the listening comprehension of the Chinese EFL learners?	Pretest; Posttest; Teacher's Log; Pre-task Planning Instruction; Analysis of the written summary	Independent t-test; Paired Sample t-test; Descriptives; Effect Size; Qualitative analysis
2. What are the students' opinions of the pre-task planning in the present study?	Students' Questionnaires; Students' Open-ended Questionnaires; Semi-structured Interviews; Teacher's Log	Descriptives; Chi-square; Qualitative Analysis

3.8 The Pilot Study

A pilot study can be used to pre-test a particular research instrument. According to Nunan (1992), one of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated.

3.8.1 The Purpose of the Pilot Study

Based on the feedback that the pilot study allowed the researcher to collect about how the instruments worked, the pilot study of the present research was conducted for the following purposes:

- To develop and test the adequacy of the research instruments

- To assess the feasibility of the full study

- To assess whether the research design was realistic and workable

- To assess the proposed data analysis techniques to uncover potential problems

- To test the design of the paper and the instructional procedures

- To test the reliability of the items involved in the LCT

- To test the reliability of the two raters of the LCT

- To record the time taken to complete the LCT

3.8.2 The Participants

The participants involved in the present study were 40 second-year undergraduate English majors at a college in Nanjing, Jiangsu, China. No students withdrew from any part of the pilot study. Thus, valid data were collected from forty students. They were randomly divided into two groups of twenty each. Based on the background information survey about the participants, they all had a similar English learning background. None had ever been to an English-speaking country, and they had little opportunity to use English for communicative purposes outside the classroom. Only one participant reported he had been to the English Corner, held in his middle school once a week, to talk to native speakers. Their English scores in the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) were between 90 and 105 for which the maximum score is 120. In addition, based on the statistics obtained from an independent sample t-test, no significant difference between the two groups was found in terms of English level ($p = .84 > .05$).

3.8.3 Administration of Instruction and LCT

The pilot study was conducted in March, 2010, at Nanjing College of Population Management Programme, Jiangsu Province. The pretest was administered first, one month before the instruction and it was conducted smoothly, following the procedures in section 3.6.1. The instruction began in April, one month after the pretest and it lasted four weeks. The instructional process followed what has previously been described in sections 3.6.2.1 and 3.6.2.2. After the treatment the

posttest was conducted as planned at the beginning of May. The participants studied all the materials very carefully and the researcher carried out the instruction carefully. The students also treated the LCT in the same way as their usual exams. The instruction and the posttest finished at the end of the first week of May.

3.8.4 Method of Data Collection

All the instruments involved in the present study were tried out for the data collection in the pilot study. As mentioned in Section 3.5.1, the listening material in LCT of the present study was selected from a bank of tests for TEM-4 so that validity would be assured. Furthermore, before the administration of LCT in the pretest and the instruction process, three EFL teachers, who are the colleagues of the researcher and have been teaching EFL listening for more than five years, were invited to check and evaluate the LCT as well as the instructional contents of four units involved in the present study. They all agreed that the listening material as well as the test items involved in the LCT and the instructional contents were suitable for the participants in the present study.

In order to achieve the validity of the scoring procedures, one of the three colleagues was invited to be trained in how to mark with the researcher. The researcher discussed the criteria with the trainee and they both marked two parts of the test paper together and then the rest were marked independently. The final score of each participant was the average mean score of the two raters, as mentioned in Section 3.6.4. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation was employed in the present study to guarantee the reliability of the two raters. Based on the p value in both the pretest and posttest of the two groups, the Pearson correlations of the two raters were significantly correlated, as the p values of the two tests were less than $0.01 < .05$.

Furthermore, before the administration of the students' questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the supervisor of the researcher helped to check the question items involved. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficiency (α) was employed to test the internal reliability of the students' questionnaires. The results of the pilot study reveal that the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.803, which was higher than 0.70 (α= 0.803 > 0.70), which showed that the reliability of the questionnaires was achieved.

In addition, the other rater of the LCT in the present study was also invited to make an analysis of the written summary to guarantee reliability. Furthermore, before doing so, the researcher and the other rater reviewed the previous research on how to analyze a written summary. However, to the researcher's knowledge, there is no existing format for an analysis of the written summary. Consequently, based on the discussion between the two raters as well as the review of previous research, and including suggestions from the supervisor, the researcher adapted the format of Ellis and Yuan' s research (2004) about the effects of planning on fluency, complexity and accuracy in second language narrative writing, as mentioned in Section 3.5.5 and worked out the format in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity to evaluate the quality of the participants' written summary. All the instruments involved were administered following the procedures as planned.

3.8.5 Results of the Pilot Study

3.8.5.1 Results of the Pretest and Posttest

The scores of the pretest and posttest within the control group and the experimental group were compared respectively in order to find out if there were any differences for Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension before and after the

pre-task planning instruction. The results of a paired samples *t*-test showed that only the scores within the experimental group were significantly different (t=-15.234, p= .000 < .05). The mean score in the pretest in EG was 32.60, but it increased to 41.90 in the posttest. This result indicates that participants in EG improved their listening comprehension after the pre-task planning instruction. The control group was not significantly different in that the p value is .068 > .05, although the mean score of the posttest was higher than that of the pretest (36.6 > 35.8). Furthermore, the result of the effect size calculator (Cepeda's, 2008) showed that the effect size in the experimental group was large, d=-2.623> .8 (Cohen, 1988), whereas the effect size in the control group was -0.429 < .5, which indicates that the pre-task planning instruction was effective.

In addition, an independent sample *t*-test was employed to test the mean difference between EG and CG of the posttest. Then, the online effect size calculator was used to calculate the Cohen's d value with the *t* value, the mean score and the standard deviation so that the effect size between the two groups could be tested. The result reveals that the mean scores of EG and CG were significantly different (t=5.847, p= .001 < .05). In addition, the effect size in the posttest of the experimental group was large, (d=1.84 > .8), whereas the effect size of the pretest in the control group was 0.08 < 0.2 (Cohen, 1988). Thus, the effect size between EG and CG was larger in the posttest and smaller in the pretest. This result means that the results of the instruction for the experimental group were statistically higher than that for the control group with regard to the teaching effect.

3.8.5.2 Results of an Analysis of the Written Summary

As mentioned in Section 3.5.5,, three main categories with respect to the

measures of completeness, accuracy and coherence, were considered in the analysis of the written summary in order to examine the improvement in the students' listening comprehension. The significant difference between EG and CG within the three categories was measured by means of a paired sample t-test with regard to the percentage of completeness as well as accuracy and numbers of coherence. Firstly, in terms of completeness, students in the experimental group obtained a higher percentage than those in the control group from Unit 1 to Unit 4 (82.1% > 65.2%; 74.6% > 54.8%; 83.5% > 69.3%; 76.4% > 63.4%) and through the paired samples *t*-test, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups (0.00 < 0.05). Secondly, in terms of accuracy, only for Unit 2, EG students obtained a higher percentage of error-free sentences than CG students (82.3% > 81.5%); for Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 4, EG students obtained a lower percentage (85.1% < 87.2%; 81.4% < 80.2%; 77.6% < 79.3%). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups (0.283 > 0.05), measured through t value in the paired sample *t*-test. Thirdly, according to the results of coherence, students in the experimental group employed a larger number of transitions and functional structures in the written summary than those in the control group in the four units (1892>1260; 1931>1264; 1872>1284; 1796>1232). Tested by the t value in the paired samples *t*-test, the significant difference between the two groups was found in terms of coherence (0.00<0.05). Regarding the results of the students' written summary, some differences between the two groups were found during the instructional period, which means the experimental group achieved more effects than the control group in terms of the three categories of measurement.

3.8.5.3 Results of Students' Questionnaires

The percentages in the SPSS program were employed to analyze the students' response to the questionnaires, which used a 5-point Likert-scale that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The purpose of Items 1-6 and Item 10 was to test the students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning instruction, and the results showed that the students' general responses to these items were positive (85%, 75%, 85%, 85%, 70%, 80%, and 85%). This result reveals that the students held positive attitudes towards the implementation of the pre-task planning instruction. However, there were different responses to items 7 to 10, 15% (or 3) students reported that they thought the rehearsal step/stage was the most important among the pre-task planning activities; 20% (or 4) students agreed that the strategic planning step was the most important; and the highest percentage of the students who considered the concept mapping step as the most important among the pre-task planning activities was 65% (or 13). In addition, a one-way analysis of the chi-square test (K^2) in the SPSS was employed to compare the frequency of different attitudes towards each item and the result reveals that the students' opinions of the pre-task planning in terms of 10 items were significantly different because the chi-square values (K^2) for the 10 items were 68.2^2, 85.6^2, 48.5^2, 65.3^2, 49.8^2, 52.4^2, 46.2^2, 46.3^2, 41.7^2, 48.0^2, $1.365E^2$ and the significance of each item was 0.000, which is less than 0.05

The open-ended questionnaires were administered to elicit detailed data in order to answer Research Question Two about the students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning instruction. From the responses of the participants in the experimental group, the majority of the students showed their positive attitudes towards the pre-task planning instruction as well as different opinions on the various

steps involved in the pre-task planning instruction. In addition, the students illustrated the problems encountered while doing pre-task planning as well as the task of writing a summary and proposed their suggestions about the pre-task planning instruction.

3.8.5.4 Results of the Semi-structured Interview

There were 6 students among 20 participants in the experimental group who were randomly chosen to participate in the interviews in the pilot study. The results of the semi-structured interviews served as secondary evidence to answer the second research question about the students' opinions towards the pre-task planning in the English listening class. All the interviewees agreed that pre-task planning was important for their listening comprehension in the present study. Their reasons for their opinions varied from one another. Furthermore, 5 interviewees showed their preference for the concept mapping step and the reasons for this varied from one student to another. Only 1 interviewee preferred the strategic planning step to the other two steps and none of the students showed positive attitudes towards the rehearsal step. Furthermore, all the interviewees presented different responses to the problems they encountered in doing the pre-task planning activities as well as different suggestions about the pre-task planning instruction.

3.8.6 Implications of the Pilot Study

With regard to the purpose of the pilot study, as indicated in Section 3.8.1, the researcher has summarized the implications for the main study in relation to the following aspects in which the participants of the present study were involved, namely, in, the instructional procedures, as well as the methods of data collection and data analysis.

Firstly, in terms of the participants, the volunteers chosen as the participants in the present study were suitable. They were active and cooperative during the pilot

study since they volunteered for the whole study program without reluctance. Moreover, the number of the participants was also adequate for the purposes of the study.

Secondly, regarding the teaching procedures, instructional material, time, as well as the process of the instruction, all of these also proved to be satisfactory. However, it always took some time to collect all the participants together since the participants involved in the study were are all volunteers and the researcher had to make use of their after class time once a week. Thus, it became clear that it would be necessary to set a regular time once a week to conduct the main study.

Thirdly, considering the data collection methods, it was found to be appropriate to employ z scores to classify the students into three different groups in terms of language proficiency. In addition, the online calculator is also useful to test accurately the effects of size by employing a t-test in the present study. However, in order to use the process of writing to describe and explore the teaching practice and observe the students' learning progress, it was decided that a teacher's log should be employed in the main study.

Lastly, in relation to the data analysis methods, it would also be necessary to train raters in how to score the analysis of the written summary, namely, by examining and checking the scoring criteria as well as piloting two parts of the test paper with all the raters. However, with regard to the amount of time required for scoring, it would be quicker for the raters if examples of scoring were provided for the analysis of the written summary.

3.9 Summary

This chapter explains the research methodology employed in the present study. It starts with the research design, the participants involved in the study, the variables, and the instruments, including the listening comprehension test, an analysis of the written summary, students' opinions obtained from a questionnaire as well as open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and teacher's logs. After that the procedures of data collection were presented as well as the data analysis methods. These were followed by the procedures for conducting the pilot study, and then, lastly, the results and the implications of the pilot study were presented. The main study started immediately after the pilot study and the next chapter presents the results of the findings for the main study in detail.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents both the quantitative and qualitative results of the main study. The research findings are presented in response to the two research questions: (1) To what extent can the pre-task planning activities have effects on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners; and (2) What are the students' opinions of the pre-task planning activities in the present study?

4.1 Introduction

The quantitative results presented in this chapter include a general comparison between the pretest and the posttest for the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG), a comparison between the EG and the CG for the posttest, the frequency distribution of the scores in the posttest between EG and CG as well as the results of the students' questionnaires.

The qualitative results in the present study include the results of the teacher's logs, the results of the student open-ended questionnaires and the results of the student interviews. In addition, the results of the students' written summaries were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

4.2 Results in Relation to Research Question 1

This section is concerned with the research findings based on the first research question as mentioned in Chapter One: "To what extent can the pre-task planning activities have effects on the listening comprehension of the Chinese EFL learners?" Consequently, the results of the listening comprehension test is firstly reported in this section, including a general comparison between the pretest and the posttest for the experimental group and the control group as well as a comparison between the experimental group and the control group for the pretest and the posttest respectively. After that the results of the written summary and the teacher's logs are presented.

4.2.1 Results of the Listening Comprehension Test

4.2.1.1 A Comparison between the Pretest and the Posttest for the EG and the CG

In response to the first research question: To what extent can the pre-task planning have effects on the listening comprehension of the Chinese EFL learners? The analysis of the teaching effects in general was considered as evidence to the answer, which is reflected by a comparison of the mean scores between the pretest and the posttest. A comparison of the mean scores were employed to test if there was a significant difference between the two tests and the effect size calculator was employed to measure the magnitude of the treatment effect. Furthermore, the distribution of improvement can test to what extent the students improved after the instruction.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, a paired sample *t*-test was employed to test if there was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest for the experimental group and the control group. Thus the scores of the pretest and the

posttest from the two groups were compared respectively and the comparison can be illustrated as follows:

Table 4.1: The Comparison between the Pretest and Posttest for EG and the CG

Group	Scores	Mean	SD	n	df	t	Sig.
EG*	Pretest	33.70	5.36	20	19	-17.097**	.000
	Posttest	43.70	5.41				
CG*	Pretest	33.45	6.12	20	19	-3.234**	.004
	Posttest	36.60	5.57				

*EG: the Experimental Group; CG: the Control Group
**t value is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.1 shows the results of the comparison between the pretest and the posttest for the experimental group and the control group. It shows that the pretest and the posttest in both groups were significantly different, that is, the p value of the EG and CG were less than 0.05. The mean scores in the pretest of the EG and the CG were very low, 33.70 for the EG and 33.45 for the CG, whereas the mean scores of the CG were not as high as that of the EG in the posttest, which were 36.60 for the CG, and 43.70 for the EG. Based on the t-value, the mean score and the standard deviation, the value of Cohen's *d* was calculated through the Cepeda's (2008) effect size calculator, as shown in the following table:

Table 4.2: The Effect Size of Pretest and Posttest within EG and CG

Group	Scores	Mean	SD	n	df	Correlation	d
EG*	Pretest	33.70	5.36	20	19	0.882	-3.823
	Posttest	43.70	5.41				
CG*	Pretest	33.45	6.12	20	19	0.727	-0.729
	Posttest	36.60	5.57				

*EG: the Experimental Group; CG: the Control Group

According to Cohen (1988), the value of Cohen's *d* was defined as the difference between the means and the effect size. The *d* value can be classified into 3 levels: small *(d=.2)*, medium *(d=.5)*, and large *(d =.8)*. Table 4.2 indicates that the effect size in the experimental group was large, d=-3.823, which was larger than the value of large size .8 according to Cohen (1988), whereas the effect size in the control group was -0.729, which was between the value of medium (.5) and the large size (.8). From the above results it can be concluded that there was an increase in the scores in the posttest for both groups and the effect size of the scores in the posttest of the experimental group was larger than that of the control group.

4.2.1.2 The Comparison between the EG and the CG for the Pretest and the Posttest

Based on the comparison between the pretest and the posttest for the control group and the experimental group, a comparison of the posttest between the EG and the CG was made in terms of the mean scores of LCT, the effect size, and the distribution of the scores in response to the first research question. Thus, an independent sample t-test was employed to test the mean difference between the EG and the CG of the posttest. Furthermore, the online effect size calculator was used to calculate the Cohen's d value with the t value, the mean score and the standard deviation. It was found that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group for the posttest. Table 4.3 shows the results of the comparison between the EG and the CG for the pretest and the posttest.

Table 4.3: Comparison between the EG and the CG for Pretest and the Posttest

Test	Group	Mean	SD	n	df	t	Sig.
Pretest	EG*	33.70	5.36	20	38	.137**	0.891
	CG*	33.45	6.12				
Posttest	EG*	43.70	5.41	20	38	4.087**	0.000
	CG*	36.60	5.57				

*EG: Experimental Group; CG: Control Group
**t value is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From the above table, it can be seen that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group for the pretest, t= .137, p= .891> .05, while the mean scores of EG and CG were significantly different for the posttest, t=4.807, p= .000 < .05. Table 4.4 shows the results from the effect size:

Table 4.4 The Effect Size between the EG and the CG for the Pretest and the Posttest

Test	Group	Mean	SD	n	df	t	d
Pretest	EG*	33.70	5.36	20	38	.137**	0.04
	CG*	33.45	6.12				
Posttest	EG*	43.70	5.41	20	38	4.087**	1.29
	CG*	36.60	5.57				

*EG: the Experimental Group; CG: the Control Group

Table 4.4 indicates that the effect size in the posttest of the experimental group was large, Cohen d=1.29, which was larger than the value of large size .8 according to Cohen (1988), whereas the effect size of the pretest in the control group was 0.04, which was even less than d= 0.2, based on Cohen (1988). Thus, the difference in the effect size between the EG and the CG was larger in the posttest and smaller in the

pretest.   This result means that the pre-task planning mode employed in the experimental group proved to be an effective way of improving the Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension.

Furthermore, in order to test whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest in terms of students' listening proficiency in the experimental group, a paired sample *t*-test was employed to show the comparison. The following Table 4.5 shows the results:

Table 4.5 Comparison between Pretest and Posttest in Terms of Language Proficiency

Proficiency	Scores	Mean	n	df	t	Sig.
High	Pretest	40.36	6	10	-23.980*	.000
	Posttest	50.73				
Medium	Pretest	32.40	11	19	-15.228*	.000
	Posttest	41.30				
Low	Pretest	26.57	3	5	-24.794*	.000
	Posttest	38.50				

*t value is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The table shows that the posttest mean scores at each proficiency level (50.73/41.30/38.50) were higher than the pretest mean scores (40.36/32.40/26.57). The *P* value of each proficiency group (high/medium/low) was .000, less than the significant level of 0.05. The mean scores of the three proficiency levels between the pretest and the posttest in the experimental group were significantly different, which suggests that the students' listening comprehension whatever their level of listening proficiency improved after the pre-task planning.

In addition, in order to see the details of the scores in each group, the distribution of scores in the experimental group and the control group was counted based on the frequency of the scores. Table 4.6 shows the figures:

Table 4.6 The Distribution of the Scores in the Posttest for the EG and the CG

Score	EG		CG	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
##26	0	0	1	5
28	0	0	1	5
Total 1	0	0	2	10
30	0	0	1	5
32	0	0	2	10
33	0	0	2	10
35	0	0	2	10
#36	1	5	0	0
38	2	10	5	25
39	3	15	0	0
Total 2	6	30	12	60
40	1	5	2	10
41	3	15	0	0
42	2	10	0	0
43	0	0	1	5
44	0	0	1	5
45	0	0	1	5
**46	1	5	1	5
48	2	10	0	0
Total 3	9	45	6	30
51	4	20	0	0
*52	1	5	0	0
Total 4	5	25	0	0
Grand Total	20	100	20	100

*52: highest in EG; **46: highest in CG; #36: lowest in EG; ##26: lowest in CG

Table 4.6 shows that the students in the experimental group who obtained scores above 50 were 25% of the total; while no student in the control group gained a score above 50. The EG student with the highest score obtained 52 compared to the highest score for a CG student which was 46. Only 6 CG students obtained scores between 40 and 49 (30% of the total); whereas 9 EG students obtained score between 40 and 49 (45% of the total). Most students in CG obtained scores between 30 and 39 (60% of the total); while 6 EG students gained that score, which was 30% of the total. No student in EG got a score below 30, while 2 CG students scored below 30, which

was 10% of the total. The lowest score for an EG student was 36; while the lowest score for a CG student was 26. The above figures show that the majority of students in the EG scored above 40, which is a percentage of 70%; while the majority of the scores in the CG was concentrated score below 39, which was also a percentage of 70%. The following Figure 4.1 shows these differences in the form of a graph:
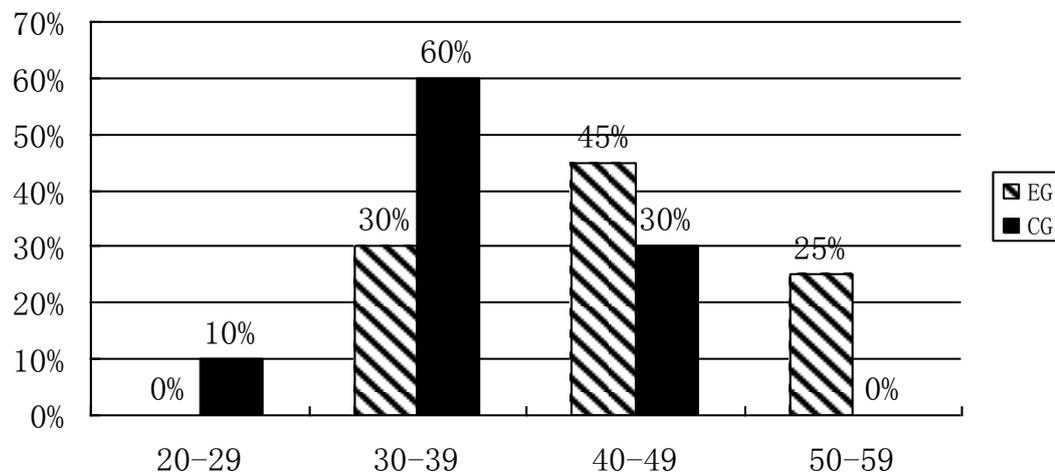
Figure 4.1 A Comparison of EG and CG for the LCT Posttest

To sum up, according to the above results, the pre-task planning mode employed in the experimental group resulted in a better effect than that for the control group using quantitative criteria. Though there was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest for the EG and the CG respectively, the effect size of the EG was comparatively larger than that of the CG between the pretest and the posttest. The frequency of the higher scores in EG was higher than that of CG as well. There was also a significant difference between EG and CG for the posttest. Thus, in response to Research Question 1, the above results prove quantitatively that there was a difference between the two groups and the pre-task planning mode employed in the experimental group resulted in a better performance in the LCT.

4.2.2 The Results of the Students' Written summary

In line with the previous data analysis, the students' written summary was considered the third item of evidence to answer the first research question. To the author's knowledge, there is a lack of research studies on the use of written summaries to examine the listening comprehension of EFL learners. In the present study, the students' written summary was employed to obtain more informative data in order to investgate any improvement in their listening comprehension. Three main categories with respective measures, which were completeness, accuracy and coherence, as mentioned in Session 3.5.5, were considered in the written summary to examine the improvement in the students' listening comprehension. The following Table 4.7 summarizes the results of the written summary of the four units during the instruction period:

Table 4.7 The Results of the Students' Written Summary

Group		Measures of Categories		
		Completeness	Accuracy	Coherence
		Percentage of key points (%)	Error-free sentences (%)	Number of transitions and function structures
EG	Unit 1	74.3	83.1	1880
	Unit 2	77.6	80.3	1902
	Unit 3	81.3	85.3	1920
	Unit 4	78.4	79.2	1804
CG	Unit 1	55.2	83.4	1160
	Unit 2	58.5	81.3	1224
	Unit 3	67.4	84.5	1164
	Unit 4	65.7	80.4	1106

The significant difference between the EG and the CG for the measures of three categories is illustrated in the following Table 4.8; the t value was measured through the paired sample t-test and was significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.8 Comparisons between the EG and the CG in terms of Completeness,

Accuracy and Coherence

Categories	Group	Mean	n	df	t	Sig.
Completeness	EG	77.9	4	3	9.574*	.002
	CG	61.7				
Accuracy	EG	81.97	4	3	-0.941*	.416
	CG	82.40				
Coherence	EG	1876	4	3	42.686*	.000
	CG	1163				

*t value is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Based on the results of the students' written summaries and the comparison between the EG and CG for the three categories of measurement, there were differences between the two groups during the instructional period. In terms of completeness, students in the experimental group obtained a higher percentage than those in the control group from Unit 1 to Unit 4 (74.3%>55.2%; 77.6%>58.5%; 81.3%>67.4%; 78.4%>65.7%) and there were statistically significant differences between the two groups (0.002<0.05). In terms of accuracy, only for Unit 3 did students in the experimental group obtain a higher percentage of error-free sentences than students in the control group (85.3%>84.5%); for Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 4, students in the control group students obtained higher percentages (83.1%<83.4%; 80.3%<81.3%; 79.2%<80.4%), although there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups (0.416>0.05). According to the results for coherence, students in the experimental group employed a larger number of transitions and functional structures in the written summary than those in the control group in the four units (1880>1160; 1902>1224; 1960>1164; 1804>1106), in addition, a significant difference between the two groups was found in terms of coherence (0.00<0.05). Based on Unit 1, in terms of proficiency level, the examples of the

students' written summaries are illustrated as follows. (See Units 2, 3 and 4 in

Appendix F).

Table 4.9 Examples of the Students' Written Summaries (Unit 1)

Examples		Control Group	Experimental Group
Low Proficiency	1	There are many bargain shop in the author's hometown. But bargain is not allowed in big stores of America. At last the author found bargain store in the USA. Then the author tell us some information about bargain in the USA. The things can be bargained are advertised, the things can't be bargained are unadvertised. The author also tell us how to find bargain store. For example, read newspaper to find this kind of information.	This passage described when the authors work was fixed in the US. He found bargainning in big stores was not allowed, which was quite different from his home country. And then introduce some techniques to buy discounts in the US. First, watch fro sales, they were always advertised. Check the local papers on Sundays. The clearen sales were always big bargins. Second, use coupons. You'll find them on magazines, Sundays, and even telephone books. If you find the goods in night brard and size and also within its expiration, it'll save you 40 cents. On –day, it'll save you 80 cents.
	2	Budgets shopping is necessary to people. There are different shopping element in the shopping, usually all the sale is the way of seller use. A low price can attact the customer, at the same time, the seller will not suffer losses, on the contrary, for sale can bring great benefit.	A man just move to a new place in US. Through the help of his neighbor and collegues, he got some ways to purchase in bargain stores. First, he could look for the same goods in different stores and then compared their prices so that he could get someone cheaper. Second, he could get the coupons in Sunday newspaper, and other magazines then using the coupons to shop. Third, when finding something good, he could go to the second-hand store to look for some good news. By all those means, he will get a good habit in life and save a lot of money.
Medium Proficiency	1	Bargain can been seen everywhere in my own country but is not allowed in the US large stores. So I collected some information to support what I knew the first time of bargain in US. Firstly is watching for sales which will be announced by shops for week. Secondly is to use coupons found in magazines or telephones books describing specific items helps you have a discount.	This passage was about how purchase a bargain in US. There are three main ideas. First, you can explore different stores to find a bargain. Second, watch for sales and look for coupons. Third, look for the goods in second-hand stores, you may get something perfect.
	2	It is talking about bargain in the biggest shops in the USA. From the author's --- he found some techniques about bargain. For example, at most time the clearing sail are at discount. We can also find bargain information in the magazines or telephone books.	The passage is about bargains and fixed price shops. We can learn three ideas from the passage. First, if we want to have a discount we can compare price in different store. Second we can watch for the sales and coupons in magazines, Sunday paper or even the telephone

Table 4.9 Examples of the Students' Written Summaries (Unit 1) (Cont.)

Examples		Control Group	Experimental Group
		Of course, there are some other techniques having been introduced by the author.	books. Third, we may buy the machandise in a second-hand store. The conclusion is we may get the merchandise which we want to have in a low price.
High Proficiency	1	I got a new job in the USA. I'm look for some places to shop around. In my country, there are a lot of stores that can be bargain, I tried to find some places to shop, however, what I heard was there weren't allowed in large store in America. Therefore, I want to make clear of the difference my American colleagues and neighbors. From whatever information I collected, something I can found about some bargaining or discount stores. There was the first time, I did bargain and shopping in the USA. From one I have learned, you can make techniques. Watch for sells, discounting price. Sometimes the sells of 30% are generally advertised, what always are used. On Sunday, usually announced. These clearly selling itself generally reordered, so the ----to new goods. Sunday newspaper, magazines and telephone book. When you want to get specific price. Illustrated an example, you can payed 80% less than they pay for. -----	The passage was about getting low price or bargaining in shopping in the USA. There are three main ideas. First, you can get a discount sales in stones by local newspaper on Sunday. Sometimes, there are some clearing sale in stores. So you can get great bargain in clearing sales because the store owner wants to change the places for new goods. Second, you can buy things through coupons and you can find it in magazines in Sunday or telephone book. The coupons may give you 40% discount anyplace, such as furniture, etc. if you get the coupons, you can save 80%. Third is in other stores and garage in newspapers or local --- The conclusion is that you can get a good bargain if you explore and find suitable ways through friends and neighbours.
	2	It is a passage title bargains or fixed price shopping. The author is used to bargaining in his home country, but he find that bargin is not allowed in US large stores. In US, sales discount is a more common way to promote sales. You can find sales information in newspapers, local books or telephone books. There are also some foreign techniques when you buy something in US stores, because the stores have technical discount ways. In US, you can also go to the garage or second-hand store to buy some cheap goods you need.	The passage is about bargains or fixed price shopping. First, bargain shopping is not found in every shop in US. Second, it can be found in some discount shops, clearance shops and you can use coupon. Third, coupon can be found in Sunday paper, magazine and television. Fourth, purchase goods for sale can be found in some nearly expiration goods. Conclusion, bargain shopping is different in from our home country.

When determining the completeness of the written summary, the author and

the rater firstly learned about how to write a summary, as mentioned in Section 3.5.5,

and the proposed summaries according to the original scripts (see Appendix) of four units. When considering the key points involved in the students' written summaries, the author ignored the categories of accuracy and coherence and focused only on whether the students had comprehended the meaning. For example, a model proposed summary of Unit 1 in which there were 6 key points, is shown as follows.

"(1) This passage is about the speaker's shopping experiences of exploring bargaining techniques when shopping in the USA. (2) At first, the author started to explore different stores to compare prices and find out some bargaining techniques. (3) Then, the speaker summarized some techniques for bargain shopping as follows. (4) Firstly, watch sales when items are offered at a discounted price. (5) Secondly, look for and use coupons. (6) Thirdly, purchases can be made very inexpensively at garage sales and second-hand stores." (See the model summaries for four other units in the appendix).

For the written summary of a low proficiency student in the control group (CGLP1, hereafter), as shown in Table 4.9, there were altogether 3 key points involved, that is (a)*"the author tell us some information about bargain in the USA"*, which is similar to *"(1) This passage is about the speaker's shopping experiences of exploring bargaining techniques when shopping in the USA."* as mentioned above; (b) *"The things can be bargained are advertised read newspaper to find this kind of information"*, which is similar to *"(4) watch sales when items are offered at a discounted price"* in that the information about discounted prices could be obtained from a newspaper according to the original listening script; and *"The author also tell us how to find bargain store."*, which has a similar meaning to *"(6)Purchases can be made very inexpensively at garage sales and second-hand stores."* Consequently, the

percentage for CGLP1 in terms of completeness is 50% (3/6×100%=50%). For the high proficiency student in the experimental group (EGHP1), there were 5 key points involved in the written summary, that is, "*The passage was about getting low price or bargaining in shopping in the USA.*", which is similar to "*(1) This passage is about the speaker's shopping experiences of exploring bargaining techniques when shopping in the USA.*"; "*There are three main ideas.*", which is similar to "*(3) Then, the speaker summarized some techniques for bargain shopping as follows.*" so that what the speaker summarized are the three main ideas of bargaining techniques; "*you can get a discount sales in stones by local newspaper on Sunday.*", which is similar to "*(4) watch sales when items are offered at a discounted price*"; "*you can buy things through coupons and you can find it in magazines in Sunday or telephone book.*", which is similar to "*(5) Secondly, look for and use coupons.*", as well as "*Third is in other stores and garage in newspapers or local*" which similar to "*(6)Thirdly, purchases can be made very inexpensively at garage sales and second-hand stores*". Thus, the percentage of completeness for this student's summary is calculated as 83.3% (5/6×100%=83.3%).

If we consider the percentage for accuracy, the number of error-free sentences required for a medium proficiency student in the control group (CGMP1) is 7 and if there are 3 error-free sentences produced in the written summary, thus the percentage of accuracy for the CGLP is 42.9% (3/7×100%=42.9%). For the written summary of the EGLP1, the percentage of error-free sentences is 55.6% (5/9×100%=55.6%), as shown in the following table.

Table 4.10 Examples of Students' Written Summaries in Terms of Accuracy

Examples	CGLP1	EGLP1
Written summary	(1)***There are many bargain shop*** in the author's hometown. (2)But bargain is not allowed in big stores of America. (3)At last the author found bargain store in the USA. (4)***Then the author tell us*** some information about bargain in the USA. (5)***The things can be bargained are advertised,*** the things can't be bargained are unadvertised. (6)***The author also tell us*** how to find bargain store. (7)For example, read newspaper to find this kind of information.	(1)This passage described ***when the authors work*** was fixed in the US. (2)He found ***barginning*** in big stores was not allowed, which was quite different from his home country. (3)And then introduce some techniques to buy discounts in the US. (3)First, watch for sales, they were always advertised. (4)Check the local papers on Sundays. (5)The ***clearen*** sales were always big ***bargins***. (6)Second, use coupons. (7)You'll find them on magazines, Sundays, and even telephone books. (8)If you find the goods in night ***brard*** and size and also within its expiration, it'll save you 40 cents. (9)On – day, it'll save you 80 cents.
Total sentences	7	9
Error-free sentences	3	5
coherence	42.9%	55.6%

Table 4.11 shows examples of the students' written summaries in terms of coherence. As mentioned in Section 3.5.5, coherence can be measured through the number of transitions and the structural functions produced in the written summary. For the high proficiency students in the control group (CGHP1), there were 2 transitions and structural functions found, while for the EGHP1, the number is 5.

Table 4.11 Examples of the Students' Written Summaries in Terms of Coherence

CGHP1	EGHP1
I got a new job in the USA. I'm look for some places to shop around. In my country, there are a lot of stores that can be bargain, I tried to find some places to shop, ***however***, what I heard was there weren't allowed in large store in America. ***Therefore***, I want to make clear of the difference my American colleagues and neighbors. From whatever information I collected, something I can found about some bargaining or discount stores. There was the first time, I did bargain and shopping in the USA. From one I have learned, you can make techniques. Watch for sells, discounting price. Sometimes the sells of 30% are generally advertised, what always are used. On Sunday, usually announced. These clearly selling itself generally reordered, so the ----to new goods. Sunday newspaper, magazines and telephone book. When you want to get specific price. Illustrated an example, you can payed 80% less than they pay for. -----	The passage was about getting low price or bargaining in shopping in the USA. There are three main ideas. ***First***, you can get a discount sales in stones by local newspaper on Sunday. Sometimes, there are some clearing sale in stores. ***So*** you can get great bargain in clearing sales because the store owner wants to change the places for new goods. ***Second***, you can buy things through coupons and you can find it in magazines in Sunday or telephone book. The coupons may give you 40% discount anyplace, such as furniture, etc. if you get the coupons, you can save 80%. ***Third*** is in other stores and garage in newspapers or local --- ***The conclusion*** is that you can get a good bargain if you explore and find suitable ways through friends and neighbours.
2*	5*

*: Numbers of transitions and structural functions found in the written summary

In summary, based on the written summaries of the four units, there were statistically significant differences between the control group and the experimental group in terms of completeness as well as accuracy. However, no statistically significant differences could be found between the two groups in terms of accuracy in the written summaries. Consequently, in response to Research Question 1: "To what extent can the pre-task planning have effects on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners?", the written summary can be regarded as evidence that the experimental students made improvements in their written summaries in terms of completeness and coherence, but not in terms of accuracy.

4.2.3 The Results of the Teacher's Logs

In the present study, the researcher and course instructor kept logs during the teaching and learning process. The results of the teacher logs were considered as the

second piece of evidence to answer Research Question 1 in qualitative perspectives. There were altogether four units involved in the learning and teaching process, the researcher participated and observed each session in the instruction period and wrote the teacher's log after each unit was taught. Table 4.12 below summarizes the teacher's logs involved in the four units.

Table 4.12 Summary of Teacher's Logs

Phase	Summary of the Teachers' Logs
Unit 1 (After Week 1)	Firstly, students knew little about doing pre-task planning activities. After the researcher's introduction, students showed interest in it and it seemed to the researcher that they were eager to begin the experiment. As this experiment was conducted in the students' free time, at first, the researcher was afraid that the students would respond to the teaching steps reluctantly. But after the researcher introduced the three steps involved in the pre-task planning to the participants and showed examples of how to do each activity in each step, the students' enthusiasm and interest were aroused. After the instructor's explanation, the students were familiar with each specific activity involved. However, as this was their first time to do these activities systematically, students felt a little uneasy even after the teacher's introduction. Another problem emerged when the students' showed different attitudes towards different steps of the pre-task planning instruction. For example, when the students were asked to do the rehearsal step, both the researcher and the teacher found that some students did not pay attention to this step and did it too fast. They wanted to focus on the listening summary as soon as possible.
Unit 2 (After Week 2)	After the study of Unit Two, students became more familiar with the pre-task planning activities. The researcher observed that even before the introduction to each step, the students had already begun with some of the activities. For example, the students were very interested in playing games and when they got the handout, they would take their first look at the pictures provided and try to discuss the questions with their friends straightaway. However, the researcher also found that although they were interested, because of their poor speaking ability as well as an insufficient knowledge of vocabulary, they spoke only a little during the discussion activity for the concept mapping step. Also, when they were playing games, they always showed great enthusiasm at first, but some of the students kept silent later in this phase. The researcher decided to add more questions in order to help the students activate their existing knowledge. The researcher found that the students would like to answer the teacher's questions rather than discuss the questions in their groups. In addition, during this phase, the researcher found that, in the rehearsal step, when they were asked to say out loud what they would like to write down, they would do it rather reluctantly and they didn't make full use of

Table 4.12 Summary of Teacher's Logs (Cont.)

Phase	Summary of the Teachers' Logs
	their time allocation. In this phase, the researcher also found that the students would write the key words down based on the format provided while they were listening to the passage and they became more skillful in writing the listening summary.
Unit 3 (After Week 3)	After Unit Three, the students continued with doing the pre-task planning activities and showed interest and enthusiasm throughout these activities. During this period, the researcher found that the students became more confident in accomplishing these activities. The researcher checked the notes taken down by the students in both groups and found that the experimental group noted down more key words as well as related information which would be useful for writing the listening summary, while the students in the control group tried unsuccessfully to write down the whole sentence while listening. But because of their aural memory, what students wrote down was less useful for writing the summary. The researcher tried to check with the students in the control group and discovered that when they did the summary writing they could not understand what they had noted down. In this phase, when checking the written summary submitted by the students, the researcher also found that they had some problems in spelling some of the words.
Unit 4 (After Week 4)	By the end of the instruction, students seemed to accomplish the pre-task planning activities more smoothly and successfully. With the help of the format of a written summary, the researcher found the students were able to grasp the key words and wrote down some useful notes. They spoke more fluently during the discussion, talked more about the background knowledge, predicted more information from the listening passages, and obtained more correct key points in the written summary they submitted. However, the researcher found some of the students were some times distracted when the listening material was a little longer. Furthermore, some students were lost as well as confused when they found the speaking speed was too fast. When asked for suggestions about the pre-task planning mode as well as further improvement of their listening comprehension, they expressed their concern at the length of the listening material as well as the speed of its delivery.

The summary of the teachers' logs in the above Table 3.15 explains that firstly,

students' were not familiar with pre-task planning activities although they showed

interest and enthusiasm at first.   From their responses to the open-ended

questionnaires as well as the interviews, the reasons could be that in their previous

learning experiences, the teachers hardly mentioned or employed pre-task planning

instruction in the EFL listening class. Therefore, doing pre-task planning in a listening class seemed new and interesting to them, as reported by one student, "English listening sounds boring to me. Previously, teachers always did the same things in the listening class, such as playing tapes for students to listen, doing listening exercises, and then checking the answers. I never thought I could have an English listening class like this one. It sounds really fantastic to me." Secondly, students became more familiar with pre-task planning activities and continued with showing interest and enthusiasm towards it. They became more confident and accomplished these activities more easily and more successfully. They enjoyed the listening class more than before and the class atmosphere was more relaxing and enjoyable. However, they still had some problems when doing listening tasks, which posed difficulties for their listening comprehension, such as spelling difficulties, poor spoken English and insufficient background knowledge, as reported in the open-ended questionnaires and interviews.

4.3 Results in Relation to Research Question 2

This section is concerned with the research findings based on the second research question as mentioned in Chapter One, namely, "What are the students' opinions towards the pre-task planning in the present study?" The results of the students' questionnaires as well as the results of the semi-structured interviews are presented in this section.

4.3.1 Results of the Student Questionnaires

Three experts were invited to validate and check the language in the questionnaires. Based on suggestions obtained from the experts, the author modified

some parts of the questions so that all the items were suitable for the present study. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficiency (α) was employed to test the internal reliability of the student questionnaire. As stated by DeVellis (2003), the reliability of a questionnaire will be acceptable if the value of Cronbach's Alpha coeffiency is at least equal to 0.70 ($\alpha \cong 0.70$). The results of the pilot study revealed that the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.803, which was higher than 0.70 ($\alpha = 0.803 > 0.70$). Thus, the reliability of the questionnaire in the present study was assured.

Twenty students involved in the experimental group were required to answer all the questions in the questionnaire after they received the instruction. The SPSS program was employed to analyze the students' responses to the opinion questionnaire, which used a 5-point Likert-scale with questions ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The following table shows the students' responses to the questionnaire in terms of percentages:

Table 4.13 Students' Responses to the Questionnaires on the Likert-scale

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The pre-task planning activities are important for EFL listening.	45%	30%	15%	5%	5%
2. I like doing pre-task planning activities before I do the listening task.	40%	45%	5%	5%	5%
3. The pre-task planning activities make the EFL listening class enjoyable.	40%	30%	20%	5%	5%
4. The pre-task planning activities help me accomplish the listening tasks easily.	20%	50%	20%	5%	5%
5. The pre-task planning activities help me improve my listening comprehension.	30%	40%	20%	5%	5%
6. I will continue with the pre-task planning activities in EFL listening class in the future.	25%	45%	15%	10%	5%
7. I think the Rehearsal step is the most important among the pre-task planning activities.	5%	5%	40%	25%	25%
8. I think the Strategic Planning step is the most important among the pre-task planning activities.	15%	5%	45%	20%	15%
9. I think the Concept Mapping step is the most important among the pre-task planning activities.	30%	40%	15%	10%	5%
10. I prefer doing the listening tasks directly rather than doing the pre-task planning activities first.	5%	15%	10%	60%	10%

Table 4.13 reveals the students' general responses to the opinion questionnaire. Firstly, the results of the students' questionnaires from Item 1 to Item 6 revealed that the students held positive attitudes towards the implementation of the pre-task planning instruction. As for item 1, the percentage of the students who agreed that the pre-task planning was important for EFL listening was 75% (or 15), among which 45% students answered that they "strongly agree". 85% (or 17) students expressed the opinion that they liked doing pre-task planning activities before they did the listening task in item 2. From item 3 to item 5, there were 70% (or 14) students who agreed that the pre-task planning made the EFL listening class enjoyable and helped

them accomplish the listening task more easily and improved their listening comprehension. Furthermore, there were 70% (or 14) students who reported that they would continue with the pre-task planning activities in the EFL listening class in the future. Additionally, for Item 10 of the students' questionnaires, 20% (or 4) of the students preferred doing the listening tasks directly to doing the pre-task planning activities first.

To sum up the results of the students' questionnaires from item 1 to item 6, Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of the percentages respectively in a different form:
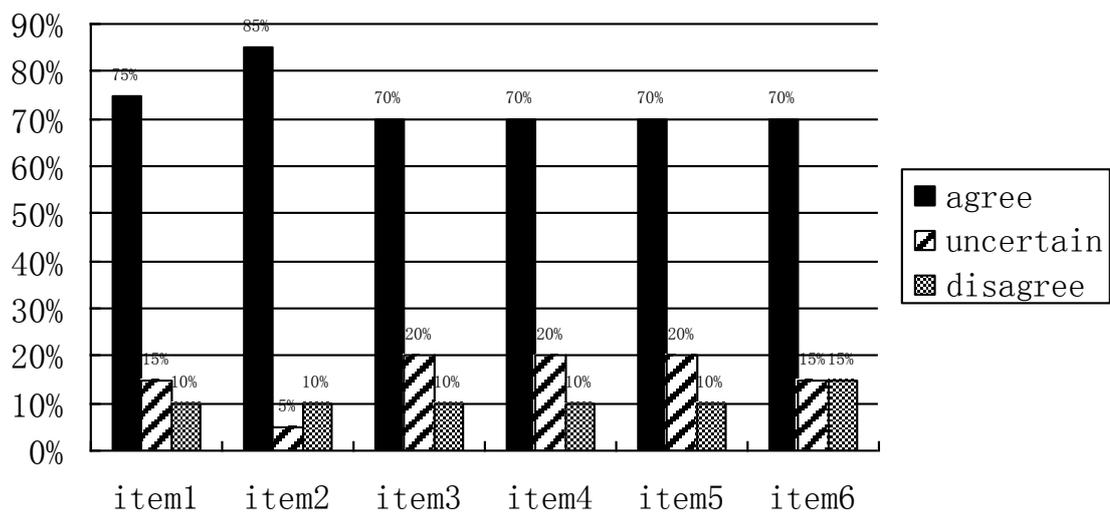
Figure 4.2 Comparison of Students Opinion Questionnaires from Item 1 to Item 6

However according to the responses for items 7 to 9, 10% (or 2) of the students reported that they thought the rehearsal step was the most important among the pre-task planning activities; 20% (or 4) students agreed that the strategic planning step was the most important; and the highest percentage of the students who considered the concept mapping step as the most important among the pre-task planning activities was 70% (or 14). In addition, a one-way analysis of the chi-square

test in the SPSS was employed to compare the frequency of the different attitudes towards each item and a probability of .05 or less is considered to be a significant difference. Table 4.8 shows the results in detail:

Table 4.14 Comparison of the Frequencies of Responses in the Students Close-ended Questionnaires Tested by Chi-Square

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Chi-Square	60.0^2	85.0^2	47.5^2	67.5^2	57.5^2	50.0^2	45.0^2	45.0^2	42.5^2	$1.025E^2$
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 4.13 reveals that the chi-square values (K^2) of 10 items were 60.0^2, 85.0^2, 47.5^2, 67.5^2, 47.5^2, 50.0^2, 45.0^2, 45.0^2, 42.5^2, 45.0^2, $1.025E^2$ and the significance of each item was 0.000, less than 0.05. This suggests that the students' opinions towards the pre-task planning in terms of 10 items are significantly different. Additionally, the students' open-ended questionnaires were used to obtain more detailed data about why the students showed different opinions and attitudes towards each of the pre-task planning activities. The following section shows the qualitative results in detail.

4.3.2 Results of the Students Open-ended Questionnaires

In response to the second research question, open-ended questionnaires were employed to provide more information based on the students' questionnaires in the present study. For Item 1 in the students' open-ended questionnaires: "What do you like the most about the activities you've done in pre-task planning? And why?", there were 70% students (or 14) who reported that they liked the brainstorming activities, including playing games, discussion, answering questions, explanations of new words as well as an introduction to the background information, which could activate their

prior knowledge of a topic and focus on the relevant content schema. These activities were a part of the Concept Mapping step of the three steps of pre-task planning as mentioned in Chapter Three. A sample of a lesson plan attached in Appendix C shows the details of the different activities relevant to each pre-task planning step. The reasons reported by those who liked the concept mapping activities most are summarized as follows. First, the introduction to background knowledge activated students' prior knowledge and provided relevant information about the listening text which could help them understand the listening materials better. Second, the activity of the introduction to new words was useful for the students and helped them to predict main idea of the listening text and thus understand more of the listening comprehension. Third, the class discussion, answering questions and playing games to some extent activated the students' interest and enthusiasm and the students were consequently helped to comprehend more of the listening passage. The following are examples of answers to Item 1 in the Open-ended Questionnaires:

S1: *"I like the activities of background information introduction most. Because the background knowledge might be useful for our thinking way and helped us understand the relevant information which at last could strengthen our understanding and memory so that we could comprehend better."* (Translated)

S5: *"I like the activity of new words introduction most because it helps me predict the main idea of the listening text as well as promote listening comprehension."* (Translated)

S10: *"I think playing games are the most interesting activity and which could help me with listening comprehension most. When playing games, the enthusiasm could be encouraged and I could guess meaning of new words and predict what would be involved in the listening text.* (Translated)

S12: *"I like the activities of playing games and class discussion most, because playing games may activate the enthusiasm and the prior knowledge as well as the*

relevant words. These activities may also be useful for me to predict the main idea of the listening text." (Translated)

However, one student reported he disliked the concept mapping activities, for example:

S5: *"I don't like playing games since it is sometimes irrelevant to the topic and always influences my listening comprehension negatively. After playing games, it always took some time to make myself concentrate on listening."* (Translated)

Additionally, 10% (or 2) students reported that they considered the rehearsal step was the most interesting and they liked it most. In the present study, the rehearsal step in the pre-task planning took the form of a class discussion, that is, to say out loud what they would like to write down for the listening task of a written summary, as mentioned in Section 3.6.2.2. For example:

S3: *"I think saying out loud what we want to write down before we write the summary is the most important activity in the pre-task planning steps. Because after we say our ideas out loud, we have a better idea how to organize what we want to write and same more time for doing the task."* (Translated)

Another four students considered strategic planning as the most important step in the pre-task planning phase. The format of a written summary was provided in the present study and was considered as the form of the strategic planning step, as mentioned in Section 3.6.2.2. The example is shown as follows:

S16: *"In my opinion, I think the provided format is the most important pre-task planning activity and I like it the most. This activity helps me write a summary faster and organize my ideas better. It also helps me to select the key points involved in the listening text."* (Translated)

In Items 2 and 3, the students were required to report what difficulties they might have when they did the pre-task planning activities as well as the listening tasks for the present study. The difficulties in doing the concept mapping activities in the pre-task planning phase reported by the students are summarized as follows. First, it is hard to remember the new words as well as to make connections with the meaning of the new words and the ones that appear in the listening passage; second, it is hard

to activate prior-knowledge in the listening text; third, there are difficulties in changing from playing games, which make it more difficult, to concentrate on the listening quickly; lastly, it is not easy to acquire difficult/technical vocabulary words through activities like playing games and discussion. As to the rehearsal step, it was reported that students found difficulty in saying out loud what they wanted to write down because of their poor ability in spoken English. In addition, the students reported that there were difficulties in obtaining the detailed meaning of the listening text when following the format of a written summary in the strategic planning step.

For Item 3, students reported difficulties in writing a summary of the listening task including: difficulties in finding logical connections in writing; difficulties in spelling words correctly; difficulties in obtaining the full meaning; difficulties in concentrating on the whole passage; poor comprehension because of slow writing speed and a fast delivery of the listening material; difficulty in understanding the structure of the listening passage; difficulty in writing because of a lack of knowledge of the appropriate vocabulary. The following table summarizes the difficulties in doing the pre-task planning activities as well as writing a summary of the listening material.

Table 4.15 Summary of Items 2 and 3 in Students' Open-ended Questionnaires

Item 2: Difficulties in doing pre-task planning activities	**Difficulties related to the step of "Concept Mapping"** ● hard to remember the new words ● difficulty in making connection with the meaning of the new words and the ones that appear in the listening passage ● hard to activate the prior-knowledge in the listening text ● difficulties in calming down from the playing game activity and concentrating on the listening quickly ● not easy to acquire high-level words through activities of playing games and discussion Example: *S10: "For me, it's difficult to remember the new words in the pre-task planning phase. And even I can remember, I could not make a connection between the meaning of the new words and the words in the listening passage."* **Difficulties related to the step of "Rehearsal"** ● difficulty in saying out what they were to write down because of their poor ability in spoken English Example: *S12: "When I was asked to say out something that I would write in the summary, I found that it hard for me to say it out fluently because my spoken English is quite poor and I prefer writing than speaking when I was in the English class."* **Difficulties related to the step of "Strategic Planning"** ● difficulties in obtaining the detailed meaning of the listening text when following the format of a written summary in the step of strategic planning Example: *S18: "The structure of a written summary was helpful for me to obtain the main idea and the key words in the listening passage. But when I wanted to get the details in the listening text, the structure is to some extent influence me in this."*
Item 3: Difficulties in writing a summary after listening	**Difficulties in Writing** ● difficulties in finding logical connection in writing ● difficulties in spelling out correct words ● poor comprehension because of slow writing speed ● difficulty in writing because of lacking related vocabulary Example: *S11: "After listening to the passage, I found my writing speed was too slow for me to write down the key words and there were difficulties in spelling the new words, and I found I always lost the logic when writing the summary."* **Difficulties in Comprehension** ● hard to obtain detailed meaning ● hard to concentrate on the whole passage ● poor comprehension because of fast speaking speed ● difficulty in obtain the structure of the listening passage Example: *S13: "When listening to the passage, I found it difficult in concentrating on the whole passage, thus I could not obtain the whole structure in writing the summary. And sometimes the speaking speed was also too fast for me to finish the task."*

For item 4, the students were required to offer suggestions on how to improve the pre-task planning phase in terms of different steps involved. 80% of students (16) submitted suggestions. These focused mostly on the step of concept mapping. About the new words introduction in the concept mapping activities, students suggested: making more sentences involving new words; adding more relevant words and expressions in the playing games phase; spending more time on new words introduction; explaining new words more specifically and in detail. Suggestions were also given in relation to pictures in the playing games phase that pictures should be more related to the listening text. Several suggestions were about the discussion involved in the concept mapping phase: first, discussion should be put after the listening not before; second, it's better to add more discussion after listening; third, discussion could be not only among students, but between teacher and students; lastly, the mother tongue could be employed in discussion activities. As to the step of rehearsal, one student reported to cancel the activity of saying out what they were to write in that it was considered unnecessary and burdensome to repeat and poor spoken English would waste time in this phase. For the step of strategic planning, two students suggested putting key words of the listening passage in the structure of a written summary provided. Other suggestions included listening to the passage before doing the pre-task planning activities as well as asking students to predict main idea of the passages before listening. The following table summarizes the suggestions.

Table 4.16 Summary of Students' Suggestions in the Open-ended Questionnaires

Suggestions on "Concept Mapping"	**Suggestions on new words introduction** ● make more sentences involving new words ● add more relevant words and expressions ● explain new words more specifically and detailedly ● spend more time on new words introduction Example: *S9: "I think I could remember better the meaning of new words involved in the listening text if more sentences were made by using these new words."* **Suggestions on playing games phase** ● pictures should be more relative to the listening text ● add more relevant words and expressions in this session Example: *S20: "For the phase of playing games, I suggested add more words and expressions relevant to the topic. And for pictures involved, it would be more helpful if they were more relative to the listening text."* **Suggestions on the activity of discussion** ● add more discussion after listening ● add more discussion between teacher and students ● employ more discussion in mother tongue Example: *S7: "I think I could remember better the meaning of new words involved in the listening text if more sentences were made by using these new words."*
Suggestions on "Rehearsal"	● cancel this step Example: *S2: "In my opinion, it's better to cancel the activity of saying out what they were to write in that it was considered unnecessary and burdensome to repeat and poor spoken English would waste time in this phase."*
Suggestions on "Strategic Planning"	● add key words in the structure Example: *S5: "The structure of a written summary was really helpful for me to do the listening task. If the key words of the listening passage would be added in the structure, it would be more useful."*
Other Suggestions	● listen to the passage before doing the pre-task planning activities ● ask students to predict main idea of the passages before listening Example: *S2: "I prefer to listen to the passage before dong pre-task planning activities in that listening first would be helpful for comprehension."*

4.3.3 Results of the Semi-structured Interviews

Based on the results of students' questionnaires, the semi-structured interviews involved in the present study served as the second evidence to answer the second research question about the students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning in English listening class. There were altogether 6 students among 20 participants in the experimental group who were randomly chosen to participate in the interviews in the present study. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the interviews were conducted in Chinese

to ensure greater accuracy of research results and the convenience of the participants. All the interview data were recoded by the system of Window Movie Maker with students' permission, then transcribed and translated into English for further analyzing. The transcribed and interview data includes students' opinion about the importance of pre-task planning in listening comprehension, students' attitudes towards pre-task planning in terms of different steps involved, problems students encountered in pre-task planning, as well as students' suggestions for pre-task planning. The following presents the results in detail.

4.3.3.1 Students' Opinions towards the Importance of Pre-task Planning activities

When asked "Do you think that pre-task planning activities is important for your listening comprehension? Why or why not?", 83% (or 5) students agreed that pre-task planning was important for their listening comprehension in the present study. Their opinions varied from one another based on their responses. According to the similarities of their responses, four main categories emerged with regard to the interview data. They are 1) pre-task planning helps them obtain background information and knowledge of listening passages; 2) pre-task planning plays an important role in activating their background knowledge; 3) pre-task planning helps them predict main idea of listening passages; and 4) pre-task planning makes them relax before listening.

Regarding the first category, students' reported that pre-task planning was important because through the pre-task planning activities, they could obtain more background information and knowledge relevant to the listening passages which helped them in listening comprehension. For example:

S4: "It's (pre-task planning) very important. I could get a lot of background information and knowledge. Thus, I could understand the listening passage better." (Transcribed and Translated)

With regard to the second category, students agreed pre-task planning because it acted as the brainstorming activities and could activate their existing background knowledge which helped them comprehend better while listening. For example,

S8: "I think it (pre-task planning) important because it could help me recall some knowledge relevant to the topic so that I could understand better in listening." (Transcribed and Translated)

For the third category, students reported that with the help of pre-task planning, they could predict main idea of listening text so that they could comprehend more and conducted better in doing the listening task involved in the present study. For example:

S11: "After that (doing pre-task planning), I could even guess the main idea of the listening text. It's easier for me do finish the listening task." (Transcribed and Translated)

For the fourth category, students stated they considered pre-task planning to be important in that they believed they could relax themselves before listening through the interesting activities involved. For example:

S14: "It's (pre-task planning) very interesting and important. I was always very nervous when I begin to listen to English. But after doing this (pre-task planning), I would always feel more relaxed before listening. It may help me with listening comprehension." (Transcribed and Translated)

4.3.3.2 Students' Opinions towards Each Step in the Pre-task Planning Activities

When asked how they thought of pre-task planning mode in terms of different steps involved in the present study, i.e., concept mapping, strategic planning

and rehearsal, among 6 interviewees, 4 showed their preference towards the step of concepts mapping and the reasons for this varied from one another. Only 2 interviewees preferred the step of strategic planning to the other two steps with various reasons. None of the students showed their positive attitudes towards the step of rehearsal and the reasons for this were reported.

Based on the similarities of students' responses, three categories were generated about the reasons why they preferred the step of concept mapping. They are: 1) background knowledge introduction is important for predicting the meaning of listening passage; 2) the explanation of new words is useful for doing listening task; and 3) playing games is important for relaxation before listening. Examples are:

S8: "As for me, I like the activity of background knowledge introduction in the first step (concept mapping) best as it's always related to the topic of each unit and which could help me predict the main idea of the listening passages." (Transcribed and Translated)

S11: "I like new word explanation best. The time of this step should be longer. Especially when writing the summary, it's really useful. It helped me with listening comprehension and I could spell the words correctly with the help of new words explanation." (Transcribed and Translated)

S14: "Playing games is very interesting and I like it very much. After playing games, I wouldn't feel nervous before listening and which could help me comprehend better. " (Transcribed and Translated)

Furthermore, there emerged two categories of reasons why two students preferred the step of strategic planning to the other two steps. They are: 1) a written summary format is useful for obtaining main idea of listening passages and 2) a written summary format is helpful for organizing and arranging key points involved when writing the summary. Examples are:

S4: "With the help of a written summary format, it's easier for me to get the

main idea of listening passages while listening. It helped me to notice the key words in the text when I was listening so that I could comprehend more during listening." (Transcribed and Translated)

S12: "Because of the format of a written summary, I could write my summary easier and more fluently. I tried to use more transitional words in wring the summary based on the format." (Transcribed and Translated)

4.3.3.3 Problems Students Encountered in Doing the Pre-task Planning Activities

When asked whether they encountered any problems when doing pre-task planning activities, the majority of the students responded that they encountered various problems in the pre-task planning phase. With regard to the interview questions, three categories of main problems students encountered derived from the interview data, which include: 1) insufficient background knowledge; 2) spelling difficulties; and 3) poor spoken English. Examples are:

S8: "When I was asked to discuss about the background knowledge about the topic, I sometimes felt that it's (background knowledge) not enough for me to discuss fluently with others and predict the main idea of listening text." (Transcribed and Translated)

S4: "As to me, when I began to write the summary after listening, based on the format of a written summary, I thought I had obtained some main ideas, however, when writing, it was still difficult for me in that I couldn't spell out some words although I had comprehended already." (Transcribed and Translated)

S11: "When I was asked to say out what I want to written in the summary, I sometimes found it difficult speaking fluently because of my poor spoken English. Sometimes, I felt that it wasted my time and it made me hard to concentrate on writing." (Transcribed and Translated)

4.3.3.4 Students' Suggestions on the Pre-task Planning Activities

The last interview question was designed to obtain the data of students' suggestions on pre-task planning mode involved in the present study. In analyzing the data, the researcher found that some new data emerged during the semi-structured interviews, compared with the responses to the open-ended questionnaires. The researcher grouped the suggestions into two main categories: 1) pre-task planning related suggestions and 2) listening material related suggestions. For the pre-task planning related suggestions, there emerged three sub-categories: 1) more time on new word explanation; and 2) new words and expressions more relevant to the topic. With regard to the listening material related suggestions, two sub-categories were generated as 1) adequate length of listening text and 2) suitable speaking speed in the listening material. Examples are:

S4: "I hope that our teacher will spend more time on new word explanation because I think vocabulary plays an important role in listening comprehension. And if I learned more new words and expressions, it could help me write the summary after listening." (Transcribed and Translated)

S11: "If our teacher can provide more new words and expressions which are more relevant to the topic, I can do it better in the games phase and discuss more fluently with my friends." (Transcribed and Translated)

S8: "If the listening text is too long, I can not concentrate on the listening all the time. I hope the listening material provided by our teacher should be at the adequate length so that we wouldn't feel it boring and concentrate on the text till the end." (Transcribed and Translated)

S4: "Sometimes I feel the speaking speed of the listening text is too fast to comprehend. I will lose my interest in going on with listening if it is in this case. I think the speaking speed in a listening text is very important for students to comprehend. Our teacher should provide more listening material in which the speaking speed is suitable for us to understand." (Transcribed and Translated)

4.4 Summary

This chapter includes a general comparison between the pretest and the posttest of the experimental group and the control group, a comparison between the experimental group and the control group within the posttest, the frequency distribution of the scores in the posttest between EG and CG, and the results of the student written summary, students' questionnaires, students open-ended questionnaires, students interviews and teacher logs. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed in this chapter. The quantitative data were analyzed through paired samples *t*-test, effect size calculator, distribution percentage as well as chi-square. The qualitative data of written summary were also analyzed quantitatively. Responses of students' open-ended questionnaires, students' interviews and teacher logs were analyzed qualitatively. The next chapter will discuss the results and research findings in details.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the research findings reported in Chapter Four and the conclusion of the study. The discussion in this chapter is organized according to the research questions mentioned in Chapter One. This chapter presents the interpretation of the results of the teaching effects after implementing the pre-task planning activities and the students' opinions towards the pre-task planning activities. The conclusion of the study is presented at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate the effects of the pre-task planning activities on Chinese university students' listening comprehension and the students' opinions of the pre-task planning activities. Based on the research purposes, two research questions have been asked and the discussion in this chapter offers explanations in relation to the two research questions, namely, "To what extent can the pre-task planning activities have effects on the listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners?" and "What are students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning activities?".

The first part of this chapter offers theoretical explanations for the results of the teaching effects as a result of pre-task planning, with reference to the first research question. The following section includes a summary of the findings of the first research question, a discussion of the results of the teaching effects, as found in the

results of the listening comprehension tests, the written summary, and the teachers' logs. Different kinds of factors leading to the listening comprehension improvements of the students after the pre-task planning instruction are also discussed in the first part of this chapter. Possible factors for the improvements in students' listening comprehension after the pre-task planning activities include a discussion of the effects of the respective steps involved in the teaching method, namely, concept mapping, strategic planning, and rehearsal. The second part offers the explanations for the results of the students' opinions towards the pre-task planning activities based on the second research question. This part includes discussions of the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires, and the semi-structured interviews. A summary of the research findings with reference to the second research question is illustrated at the beginning of this part. The overall attitudes towards the pre-task planning activities are discussed next in this part; then there is a discussion of the different attitudes towards each step involved in the pre-task planning activities. In addition, an interpretation of the research findings in the present study is provided lastly from the perspective of learning theories, namely, the constructivist learning theory and the second language acquisition learning theory. A summary of the two parts is given at the end of this chapter.

5.2 Discussion of Findings with Reference to Research Question 1

This section is concerned with a discussion of the research findings based on the first research question, i.e., an interpretation of the teaching effects after the pre-task planning instruction. It contains a summary of the research findings of the first question and an explanation for the teaching effects of the pre-task planning activities

on students' EFL listening comprehension including a discussion of each step in the pre-task planning activities, namely, concept mapping, strategic planning, and rehearsal.

5.2.1 The Summary of Findings with Reference to Research Question 1

As noted in the first part of Chapter 4, in response to the first research question, the analysis of the teaching effects in general is considered as evidence to the answer, which is reflected by the results from the listening comprehension tests, the written summary and the results from the teachers' logs.

A general comparison between the pretest and the posttest of the experimental group and the control group suggests that the pretest and the posttest for both groups are significantly different. However, the effect size of the experimental group is larger than that of the control group. Moreover, the comparison of the posttest between the experimental group and the control group is made in terms of mean scores of the listening comprehension test, the effect size, and the distribution of scores in response to the first research question. Thus, in response to Research Question 1, the above results prove quantitatively that there was a difference between the two kinds of instruction and that the instruction in the experimental group was more effective than that in the control group. In other words, the pre-task planning activities seemed to be an effective way of teaching the Chinese EFL learners how to improve their listening comprehension.

In line with the previous data analysis, the student written summary is also considered as the evidence to answer the first research question. Three categories involved in the written summary were measured through percentages and the *t*-test. The results showed that students in the experimental group obtained a higher

percentage than those in the control group from Unit 1 to Unit 4 and there were statistically significant differences between the two groups on completeness. In terms of accuracy, only for Unit 3, EG students acquired a higher percentage of error-free sentences than CG students (85.3% > 84.5%); for Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 4, CG students obtained a higher percentage (83.1% < 83.4%; 80.3% < 81.3%; 79.2% < 80.4%), and there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups (0.416 > 0.05). As for coherence, students in the experimental group used a larger number of transitions and functional structures in their written summaries than those in the control group for the four units (1880>1160; 1902>1224; 1960>1164; 1804>1106), in addition, a significant difference between the two groups was found in terms of coherence (0.00<0.05). Moreover, data from the teachers' logs also indicated that students' improved after the pre-task planning instruction. As mentioned in Chapter Four, from the teachers' log, the researcher found that students became more and more familiar with doing the pre-task planning activities and continued to show their interest and enthusiasm towards it. They became more confident and accomplished these activities more easily as well as more successfully. They enjoyed the listening class more than before and the class atmosphere was more relaxing and enjoyable.

5.2.2 Effects of the Pre-task Planning Activities

One of the research purposes of the present study was to examine the effects of the pre-task planning activities on Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension. Based on this research purpose, the first research question is concerned with the issue of whether the pre-task planning activities are suitable for enhancing listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners. As noted in the summary of the findings,

the present study proves that there is a good effect of the pre-task planning activities on students' listening comprehension after instruction. It indicates that this teaching method is suitable for improving listening comprehension. The effects of the pre-task planning instruction activities are discussed as follows.

5.2.2.1 Discussion of the Concept Mapping Step

As summarized in Figure 5.1, the activities involved in the concept mapping step included setting the context, generating interest, activating existing knowledge, building prior knowledge and activating vocabulary. Consequently, five factors for improvements in students' listening comprehension were found according to the effects of the different activities.

Firstly, the activities of setting the context provide students with a clear idea about how to do the writing a summary task of. In the present study, setting the context means that the researcher and instructor explained the related topic to the students and introducing the listening tasks of writing a summary. Because of these activities of setting the context, students primarily have a brief idea about their purpose in listening, who is speaking in the dialogue, where and why they are speaking; these ideas help the students to comprehend the related listening materials.

Secondly, generating students' interest is considered to be one of the factors in the students' improvement in listening comprehension. As Devine (1982) concludes:

> *"Motivating our students is a key task for us. If they are to do a listening about sports, looking at some dramatic pictures of sports players or events will raise their interest or remind them of why they like sports. Personalization activities are very important here. A pair-work Discussion about the sports they play or watch, and why, will bring them into the topic, and make them more willing to listen (p.96)."*

In the present study, the researcher and instructor provided students with pictures related to each topic, asking students to discuss the pictures in pairs. It was the first time that the students had an EFL listening class in this way. Previously, students were told to listen to the materials and complete the exercises after listening. Based on the data from the teachers' logs, the open-ended questionnaire as well as the semi-structured interviews, students were found to show great interest toward the pre-task planning instruction.

Thirdly, activating existing knowledge was found to be helpful for students to understand information related to each topic. Students may have limited general knowledge about a topic. Providing knowledge input will build their confidence for dealing with the listening activity. In the present study, students were encouraged to ask the question: "What do I already know about this topic?" From this, teachers and students can determine what information they need in order to get the most from the message. Instead of listening to a text aimlessly, the students in the present study are asked some questions beforehand to help them focus their attention on some particular aspects. As mentioned in a sample of the lesson plan in Unit One (see Appendix C), the researcher and instructor ask questions related to the topic of "shopping", such as "Do you like shopping?; Why or why not?; How often do you go shopping?; How often do you go shopping for the following items and where do you buy them: clothing, gifts for friends and family, music, DVD movies, or electronics?; What do you like shopping for?; What are the things that you do not like about shopping?" and so on. In this way, students' existing knowledge is activated to help them understand the listening materials related to the topic.

Fourthly, building prior knowledge can provide students with the appropriate background information which can help them comprehend the related listening

materials. The brainstorming activities help students to build their prior knowledge. The brainstorming activities in the study included the step that asked the students to work in groups and discuss problems they faced concerning each topic, and find out how to solve these problems. In the study, the researcher also prepared the related knowledge for the students, including information about the speaker, the topic and the ideas in the listening materials. The instructor asked students to read the background information in the handouts and introduces more relevant information; the students listened to the two dialogues and answered the questions raised by the teacher which provided them with a greater understanding. This approach activated students' prior knowledge and enabled learners to make inferences and form expectations about each topic of the listening materials.

Lastly, activating vocabulary not only helps students have a clear idea about what they should focus on during the while-listening period but also removes the difficulties they might with some of the difficult vocabulary. Moreover, through this activity, the students' anxiety levels are lowered and the input level is increased. The introduction to the vocabulary is a fundamental step before listening to a text on an unfamiliar topic and in unfamiliar language. Sui & Wang (2005) also noticed the importance of introducing vocabulary before listening. As previously mentioned, the students may have difficulty understanding the meaning of listening material if the vocabulary is not introduced beforehand. In the present study, the researcher lists some words for the students to look up before listening and to remember their meaning, or she provides the students with some sentences consisting of new words to help them learn the meaning of the words in the context to strengthen their memory. Afterwards, students are asked to finish the section on "vocabulary practice" as

provided in the handouts. Thus, the step of activating students' vocabulary was found to pave the way for better comprehension.

In conclusion, the different activities involved in the concept mapping step helped students improve after the pre-task planning instruction.

5.2.2.2 Discussion of the Strategic Planning Step

As reviewed in Chapter One, Ellis (2009) states that pre-task planning can be further divided into rehearsal (planning takes the form of an opportunity to perform the complete task once before performing it a second time) or strategic planning (planning what content to express and what language to use but without an opportunity to rehearse the complete task). In the present study, the strategic planning involved in the pre-task planning instruction refers to providing a format of how to write a summary after listening, for example, This passage is about ( ); There are (how many) main ideas; First, ( ); Second, ( ); Third, ( ); The conclusion is ( ) (Melvin's 2006). As stated by Ellis (2003), providing a model in the pre-task phase means asking the students to observe a model of how the task can be performed without requiring them to undertake a trial performance of the task (Ellis, 2003).

As mentioned in Chapter Four, results from the written summary show that according to the comparison between EG and CG for the three categories of measurement, there were differences between the two groups during the instructional period. In terms of completeness, students in the experimental group obtained a higher percentage than those in the control group from Unit 1 to Unit 4 (74.3% > 55.2%; 77.6% > 58.5%; 81.3% > 67.4%; 78.4% > 65.7%) and there were statistically significant differences between the two groups (0.002< 0.05). According to results for coherence, students in the experimental group employed a larger number of

transitions and functional structures in the written summary than those in the control group for the four units (1880>1160; 1902>1224; 1960>1164; 1804>1106), in addition, a significant difference between the two groups was also found in terms of coherence (0.00<0.05).   In terms of accuracy, EG students obtained a higher percentage of error-free sentences than CG students (85.3% > 84.5%), but only for Unit 3; for Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 4, CG students obtained a higher percentage (83.1% < 83.4%; 80.3% < 81.3%; 79.2% < 80.4%), and there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups (0.416 > 0.05).   Consequently, findings from the written summary indicate that there was a good effect on students' listening comprehension in terms of completeness as well as coherence, but no improvements could be found in terms of accuracy following the pre-task planning instruction.

Based on the above findings, two factors can be attributed to the effect of strategic planning on students' listening comprehension: 1) a written summary format is useful for obtaining the main ideas of the listening passages; 2) a written summary format is also helpful for organizing and arranging the key points when writing the summary. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the completeness of a written summary is measured by the percentage of key points found and the coherence of a written summary is measured by the total number of transitions and functions used in the task, such as, *first, second, next, then, afterwards, after that, in addition to, also, furthermore, finally, at last, in the end, as a conclusion, on the whole, in a word, to sum up, last but not least, as a result, so,* and so on. Thus, the strategy of listening for the main idea could be developed and encouraged through the format of a written summary, for example, "This passage is about ( ); There are (how many) main ideas"

of the format makes students focus more on listening for main ideas. Moreover, transitional words as "first", "second" are provided in the format and they help students use more transitions and functions in the written summary. However, perhaps because there was too much focus on the main ideas as well as transitions and functions, no improvements could be found in the experimental group in terms of accuracy compared with the control group.

5.2.2.3 Discussion of Rehearsal Step

As stated by Bygate (2001) and Gass et al. (1999), performance of a task at one time can be seen as providing planning for performance of the same task a second time. In Kawauchi's (2005) study, three types of planning activity in terms of rehearsal are investigated: 1) the learners are asked to write out what they want to say in the task; 2) the learners are told to say aloud what they want to say in the task; and 3) the learners are provided with a model passage to read. In the present study, activities in the rehearsal step refer to asking students to say aloud what they want to write in the summary after listening.

As reviewed in Chapter Two, three studies by Bygate (1996), Gass et al. (1999) and Bygate (2001) have examined two principal questions: Does repeating a task have any effect on performance of the same task? And "Does repeating the same task have any effect on performance of a new task? All three studies produced evidence to show that rehearsal of a task has a beneficial effect on learners' subsequent performance of the same task. However, both Bygate and Gass et al.'s studies found there was no transference of the rehearsal effect to a different task, even when this was the same type as the original task. In the study, the particular effect of rehearsal on students' listening comprehension was not tested, but the focus was on

the effects of the pre-task planning, including all three steps together. However, data from the teachers' logs showed that students were reluctant to respond in the rehearsal step, for example, "When the time for rehearsal came, only two or three students actually said aloud what they wanted to write in the summary. Most of the students did not make use of the time for rehearsal. Some rushed to write the summary immediately after listening without having any discussion with their partners. Some were heard to be speaking in Chinese. Some students were even found to be chatting during the time for rehearsal." Data from the semi-structured interview also provided evidence of students' reluctance in doing the rehearsal step. As reported by one student, "I don't think it is necessary to carry out this step (rehearsal) in class. It seems to me that to say aloud what I want to write is a waste of time".

To sum up the above discussion as well as the possible effects of the discussion of the pre-task planning activities from the perspective of learning theories, a few of the factors that could help students improve their performance in the listening comprehension after instruction can be summarized as follows. First, constructivist and SLA learning theories provide the researcher and instructor with guidelines in designing the pre-task planning instruction. Second, supplementary teaching materials are helpful for enhancing the students listening comprehension. Third, the pre-task planning instruction method was useful for the students in the present study. Lastly, students showed great interest in the EFL listening class during the pre-task planning instruction and their listening comprehension was consequently improved.

5.3 Discussion of the Findings with reference to Research Question 2

This section is concerned with the research findings based on the second research question, namely, an analyses of students' opinions of the pre-task planning activities. A summary of the research findings relating to the second research question is illustrated firstly in this section. Based on the summary of these research findings, the following sections offer an explanation for the overall opinions of the pre-task planning activities, the students' attitudes towards respective steps of the pre-task planning activities, including the steps for concept mapping, strategic planning and rehearsal.

5.3.1 The Summary of Findings with reference to Research Question 2

As noted in the second part of Chapter 4, in response to the second research question, the analysis of students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning activities is considered as evidence, which is reflected by the results from the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews.

Firstly, the results of the students' questionnaire from item 1 to item 6 revealed that the students held positive opinions on the implementation of the pre-task planning activities. As to item 1, the percentage of students who agreed that the pre-task planning activities were important for EFL listening was 75% (or 15), among which 45% of the students recorded an attitude of "strongly agree". 85% (or 17) students expressed the opinion that they liked doing pre-task planning activities before they did the listening task in item 2. From item 3 to item 5, there were 70% (or 14) students who agreed that the pre-task planning activities made the EFL listening class enjoyable and helped them accomplish the listening task easily and also improved

their listening comprehension. Furthermore, there were 70% (or 14) students who reported that they would continue with the pre-task planning activities in the EFL listening class in the future. Additionally, for Item 10 of the students' opinion questionnaires, 20% (or 4) of the students preferred doing the listening tasks directly to doing the pre-task planning activities first.

In addition, the results of the students' opinion questionnaires from item 7 to item 9 and results from the students' open-ended questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews revealed that students had different opinions of each step of the pre-task planning activities. In terms of the concept mapping, as tested by the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews, 69% students held positive opinions, 21% students held indecisive attitudes and 10% students had negative attitudes. In terms of the strategic planning, 21% students had positive attitudes, 52% students held indecisive opinions and 27% students held negative opinions. In terms of the rehearsal step, there were only 7% students who held positive opinions, 49% students who had indecisive opinions and 44% students who held negative opinions of the rehearsal step.

Moreover, as summarized in Chapter Four, the results from the students' open-ended questionnaires revealed students' difficulties when doing the pre-task planning activities as well as doing the listening tasks involved in the present study. In addition, students' suggestions towards the pre-task planning activities were also reflected by the open-ended questionnaires. Furthermore, regarding the interview questions, three categories of problems students encountered emerged from the interview data, which included: 1) insufficient background knowledge; 2) spelling difficulties; 3) poor spoken English. Based on the results from the semi-structured interviews, the

suggestions towards the pre-task planning activities were grouped into two main categories: 1) pre-task planning related suggestions and 2) listening material related suggestions. For the pre-task planning activities related suggestions, there emerged two sub-categories: 1) more time on explanations of new words and 2) new words and expressions more relevant to the topic. With regard to the listening material related suggestions, two sub-categories which were established included 1) appropriate length of listening text and 2) suitable speaking speed in the listening material.

5.3.2 Discussion of Overall Opinions

This section describes students' overall opinions of the pre-task planning activities based on data from students' opinion questionnaires, the open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews.

As mentioned in 4.3 of the present study, the findings from students' opinion questionnaires revealed that the students held positive opinions towards the implementation of the pre-task planning activities. As to item 1, the percentage of students who agreed that the pre-task planning activities are important for EFL listening was 75% (or 15), of whom 45% students held the opinion of "strongly agree". 85% (or 17) students expressed the opinion that they liked doing the pre-task planning activities before they did the listening task in item 2. From item 3 to item 5, there were 70% (or 14) students who agreed that the pre-task planning activities make the EFL listening class enjoyable and helped them accomplish the listening task easily and it improved their listening comprehension. Furthermore, there were 70% (or 14) students who reported that they would continue with the pre-task planning activities in the EFL listening class in the future. Additionally, for Item 10 of the students' opinion questionnaires, 20% (or 4) of the students preferred doing the listening tasks directly

to doing the pre-task planning activities first. Furthermore, the qualitative data from students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interview confirmed the results from the Likert-scale opinion questionnaires. The categories of students' attitudes towards the pre-task planning activities can be classified into positive opinions, indecisive opinions and negative opinions. Table 5.1 shows the different categories of opinions based on the results from students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews.

Table 5.1 Categories of Students' Opinions from Questionnaires and Interviews

Positive Opinions
S4: *"It's (pre-task planning) very important. I could get a lot of background information and knowledge. Thus, I could understand the listening passage better."*   S8: *"I think it (pre-task planning) important because it could help me recall some knowledge relevant to the topic so that I could understand better in listening."*   S11: *"After that (doing pre-task planning), I could even guess the main idea of the listening text. It's easier for me do finish the listening task."*   S14: *"It's (pre-task planning) very interesting and important. I was always very nervous when I began to listen to English. But after doing this (pre-task planning), I would always feel more relaxed before listening. It may help me with listening comprehension."*
Indecisive Opinions
S18: *"The structure of a written summary was helpful for me to obtain the main idea and the key words in the listening passage. But when I wanted to get the details in the listening text, the structure is to some extent influence me in this."*   S11: *"After listening to the passage, I found my writing speed was too slow for me to write down the key words and there were difficulties in spelling the new words, and I found I always lost the thread of the argument when writing the summary."*   S12 *"For me, it's difficult to remember the new words in the pre-task planning phase. And even if I can remember, I can not make a connection between the meaning of the new words and the words in the listening passage."*   S9: *"I think I could remember the meaning of the new words better in the listening text if more sentences using these new words were given us for practice ."*
Negative Opinions
S5: *"I don't like playing games since it is sometimes irrelevant to the topic and always influences my listening comprehension negatively. After playing games, it always took some time to make myself concentrate on listening."*   S2: *"In my opinion, it's better to cancel the activity of saying out loud what we have to write because it is unnecessary and tedious to repeat in poor spoken English which only wastes time in this phase."*   S2: *"I prefer to listen to the passage before doing the pre-task planning activities because listening first would be more useful for comprehension."*

The reasons for the students' overall opinions towards the pre-task planning activities can be explained as follows. First, the explanation for the students' positive opinions towards the pre-task planning activities is that it is the first time for the students to have been taught in an EFL listening class in this way and they showed great interest in the pre-task planning activities. The traditional teaching method for teaching EFL listening is to play tapes for students to listen to, and to do listening exercises, and then to check the answers which not only make students get into ineffective listening habits, but also increases students' level of anxiety and results is limited . The students' indecisive opinions of the pre-task planning can be interpreted as giving them a clearer idea of the general questions rather than the detailed ones. When asked about their attitudes towards the pre-task planning they answered affirmatively. However, when asked about their attitudes towards the different steps included in the pre-task planning, they seemed confused to some extent about what activities were involved in each step of the pre-task planning. Possible factors for the negative opinions towards the pre-task planning activities may be interpreted as: first, studying after the normal class time was not popular and accepted by all the participants involved in the present study; second, the problems and difficulties which emerged during the activities for the respective steps in the pre-task planning may have affected the students' interest in studying. The following sections illustrate the students' opinions of the different steps in the pre-task planning activities.

5.3.3 Discussion of Students' Opinions of Each Step

This section is concerned with a discussion of the students' different opinions of each step of the pre-task planning activities. The summary of the opinions of each step in terms of categories (positive opinions, indecisive opinions, negative opinions)

is illustrated first; then a discussion follows of the positive opinions in terms of the different steps, secondly, a discussion of the indecisive opinions of the different steps follows and, finally, a discussion of the negative opinions of the different steps.

5.3.3.1 Summary of Students' Opinions of Each Step

Based on the summary of findings with regard to the second research question, the following table shows a summary of the students' opinions of the different steps in terms of positive opinions, indecisive opinions and negative opinions.

Table 5.2 Summary of Students' Opinions towards Each Step

Steps		Instruments	Categories		
			Positive Opinions	**Indecisive Opinions**	**Negative Opinions**
Concept Mapping	*MP=69%	Closed-ended questionnaires	**70% (N=20)**	**15% (N=20)**	**15% (N=20)**
	**MI=21%	Open-ended Questionnaires	**70% (N=20)**	**15% (N=20)**	**15% (N=20)**
	***MN=10%	Semi-structured Interviews	**67% (N=6)**	**33% (N=6)**	**0% (N=6)**
Strategic Planning	*MP=21%	Closed-ended questionnaires	**20% (N=20)**	**45% (N=20)**	**35% (N=20)**
	**MI=52%	Open-ended Questionnaires	**10% (N=20)**	**45% (N=20)**	**45% (N=20)**
	***MN=27%	Semi-structured Interviews	**33% (N=6)**	**67% (N=6)**	**0% (N=6)**
Rehearsal	*MP=7%	Closed-ended questionnaires	**10% (N=20)**	**40% (N=20)**	**50% (N=20)**
	**MI=49%	Open-ended Questionnaires	**10%(N=20)**	**40% (N=20)**	**50% (N=20)**
	***MN=44%	Semi-structured Interviews	**0% (N=6)**	**67% (N=6)**	**33% (N=6)**

*MP=medium percentage for Positive Opinions; **MI=medium percentage for Indecisive Opinions; ***MN=medium percentage for Negative Opinions

From the above table, in terms of concept mapping, as investigated by students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews, 69% of the students held positive opinions, 21% of the

students held indecisive opinions and 10% of the students had negative opinions. In terms of the strategic planning, 21% of the students had positive opinions, 52% of the students held indecisive opinions and 27% of the students held negative opinions. In terms of the rehearsal step, there were only 7% students who held positive opinions, 49% of the students who had indecisive opinions and 44% of the students who held negative opinions towards the rehearsal step. The following section aims to discuss the different opinions of each step respectively.

5.3.3.2 Discussion of Positive Opinions towards Each Step

Based on the above summary of students' opinions of each step, the following Figure 5.1 illustrates students' positive opinions of each step according to the results from the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews.
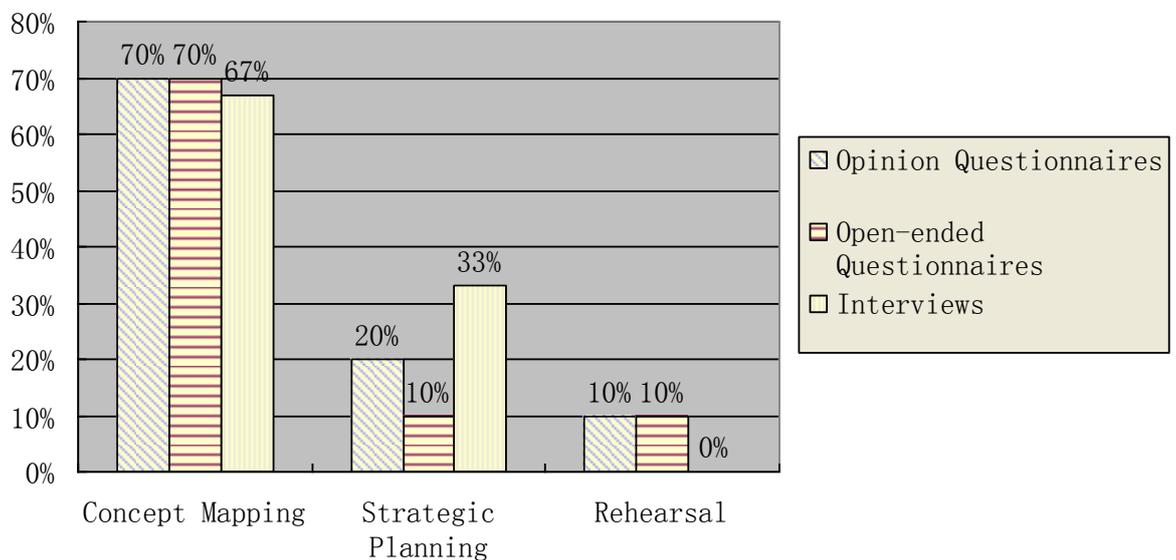

Figure 5.1 Students' Positive Opinions of Each Step

The above figure shows that most students (70%, 70%, and 67%) held positive opinions of the concept mapping step, as tested by the students' opinion

questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured

interviews; the least number of students in the present study held positive opinions of

the rehearsal step. Examples of students' positive opinions of the different steps are

illustrated below.

Table 5.3 Examples of Positive Opinions towards Each Step

Steps		Examples
Concept Mapping	Closed-ended questionnaires **70%** **(N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **70%** **(N=20)**	S1: *"I like the activities of background information introduction most. Because the background knowledge might help our thinking and help us understand the relevant information which could strengthen our understanding and memory so that we could comprehend better."* (Translated) S5: *"I like the activity of introducing the new words most because it helps me predict the main idea of the listening text as well as improves my listening comprehension."* (Translated)
	Semi-structured Interviews **67%** **(N=6)**	S8: *"As for me, I like the activity of introducing background knowledge in the first step (concept mapping) best because it's always related to the topic of each unit and it can help me predict the main idea of the listening passages."* (Transcribed and Translated) S11: *"I like the explanation of the new word best. The time allowed for this step should be longer. Especially when writing the summary, it's really useful. It helped me with the listening comprehension and I could spell the words correctly with the help of the explanation of the new words."* (Transcribed and Translated)
Strategic Planning	Closed-ended questionnaires **20%** **(N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **10%** **(N=20)**	S16: *"In my opinion, I think the format provided is the most important pre-task planning activity and I like it the most. This activity helped me write a summary faster and organize my ideas better. It also helped me to select the key points in the listening text."* (Translated)
	Semi-	S4: *"With the help of the written summary format, it's*

Table 5.3 Examples of Positive Opinions towards Each Step (Cont.)

Steps		Examples
	structured Interviews **33% (N=6)**	*easier for me to get the main idea of the listening passages while listening. It helped me to notice the key words in the text when I was listening so that I understood more during the listening." (Transcribed and Translated)* *S12: "Because of the format of the written summary, I was able to write my summary more easily and more fluently. I tried to use more transitional words in writing the summary based on the format." (Transcribed and Translated)*
Rehearsal	Closed-ended questionnaires **10% (N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **10%(N= 20)**	S3: *"I think saying out loud what we want to write down before we write the summary is the most important activity in the pre-task planning steps. Because after we have said out loud, we have a better idea of how to organize what we want to write and save more time in doing the task."* (Translated)
	Semi-structured Interviews **0% (N=6)**	

Factors leading to positive opinions towards the concept mapping step were found in 5.2.2.1, i.e., "Discussion of the Concept Mapping Step". Other factors can be illustrated as follows. First, compared with the step of strategic planning and the rehearsal step, the concept mapping step contains the most activities during the process of the pre-task planning instruction, namely, activities of setting the context, generating interest, activating existing knowledge and writing a summary. Second, students' are more familiar with the activities involved in the concept mapping step. Some examples were found in the semi-structured interviews, "S3: I have tried these activities before in the listening classroom, but I didn't know we could describe these

activities as concept mapping"; "I haven't practiced these activities together in the listening class. Sometimes we try some of the activities, for example, practicing new words before listening". Third, some students felt confused about what each step of the pre-task planning instruction referred to. Some students reported that they had no clear idea about what activities were involved in each step; some students even considered the concept mapping step as the pre-task planning instruction. Thus they showed positive opinions of the concept mapping only because they wanted to show positive opinions of the pre-task planning activities in general.

5.3.3.3 Discussion of Indecisive Opinions of Each Step

Based on the summary of students' opinions of each step in Table 5.2, the following Figure 5.2 illustrates the students' indecisive opinions of each step according to the results from the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews.
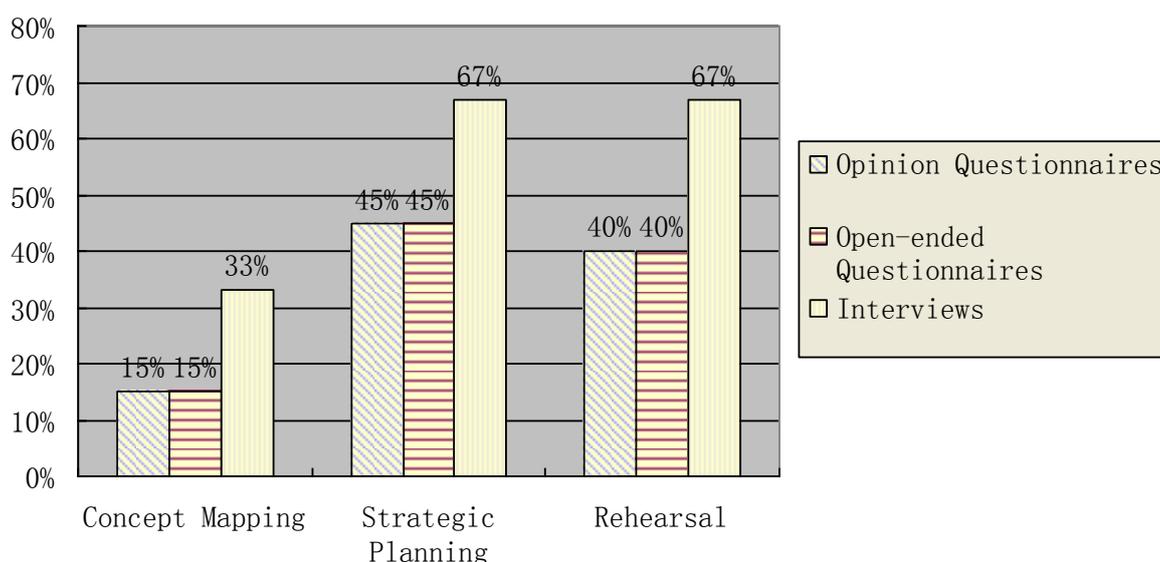

Figure 5.2 Students' Indecisive Opinions of Each Step

The above figure shows that most of the students (45%, 45%, and 67%) held indecisive opinions of the strategic planning step, as reported in the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews; there are also similar percentages of students who held indecisive opinions towards the rehearsal step (40%, 40%, and 67%); the least number of the students in the present study held indecisive opinions of the concept mapping step. Examples of students' indecisive opinions of the different steps are illustrated in the following Table 5.4 .

Table 5.4 Examples of Indecisive Opinions of Each Step

Steps		Examples
Concept Mapping	Closed-ended questionnaires **15%** **(N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **15%** **(N=20)**	S2: *"For me, I don't like all the activities in the concept mapping step. For example, I don't like the vocabulary practice activity, because even I can finish the exercise after the introduction of the new words, I still feel puzzled while I'm listening. I cannot remember the meaning of the new words. But as for playing games, I like it very much. It's very interesting.* (Translated)
	Semi-structured Interviews **33% (N=6)**	S8: *"I think there are too many activities in the concept mapping step. Some of these activities are not necessary. I think the teacher's introduction to the background knowledge is enough for me to know the background information. There's no need to read the materials in the handout. It's a waste of time. And it's irrelevant to the listening material we are going to listen to. But, anyway, I like the playing games activity. It's interesting. There's also a problem in that it always took some time to make myself concentrate on the listening after the games.* (Transcribed and Translated)
Strategic Planning	Closed-ended questionnaires **45%** **(N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **45%** **(N=20)**	S16: *"I don't know which part I like best. For me, the format of the written summary is helpful; but I think that most students know how to write a summary already. It's not necessary to provide this."* (Translated) S11: *"I think it's better to add more information to the format of a written summary. Different formats could be used for different units."* (Translated)

Table 5.4 Examples of Indecisive Opinions of Each Step (Cont.)

Steps		Examples
	Semi-structured Interviews **67% (N=6)**	*S5: "With the help of a written summary format, it's easier for me to get the main idea of the listening passages while listening. It helped me to recognize the key words in the text when I was listening so that I was able to understand more during the listening but sometimes it didn't help because there wasn't any information about the listening materials." (Transcribed and Translated)* *S10: "For me, it's no different with or without the format of the written summary. I already know how to write a summary. But it can still help me because I can focus on picking up the key points while listening. (Transcribed and Translated)*
Rehearsal	Closed-ended questionnaires **40% (N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **40%(N=20)**	*S3: "Sometimes I don't know what activities are involved in the rehearsal step. I don't know whether I like it or not. To me, even without this step, I would say it to myself before I write the summary. It helps me with writing the summary, but it does not help me to understand better.* (Translated)
	Semi-structured Interviews **67 (N=6)**	*S10: "For the rehearsal step, I really don't know whether I like it or not. It's hard to say. On the one hand, it can help me write the summary; on the other hand, it is done after listening and so it doesn't help me to understand the listening materials." (Transcribed and Translated)*

Factors for most students holding indecisive opinions towards the strategic planning step and the rehearsal step could be interpreted as follows. First, some students have no idea about what activities are involved in these two steps, as shown in the examples in the above table. Second, the rehearsal step to some extent helps them in accomplishing the listening task of writing a summary; but it cannot help students with listening comprehension during the process of listening. Third, for the strategic planning step, e.g. providing the format of the written summary, students consider it useful for them to arrange the structure of a summary and find the key points in the listening material. However, students prefer to add more information to the format and suggest different formats for different units, so only providing the format cannot help students improve their written summary in terms of accuracy.

Fourth, some students already know how to write a summary and some students have already acquired such listening strategies; therefore, provided activities do not stimulate their interest during the learning process.

5.3.3.4 Discussion of Negative Opinions of Each Step

Based on the summary of students' opinions of each step in Table 5.2, the following Figure 5.3 illustrates students' negative opinions of each step according to the results from the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews.
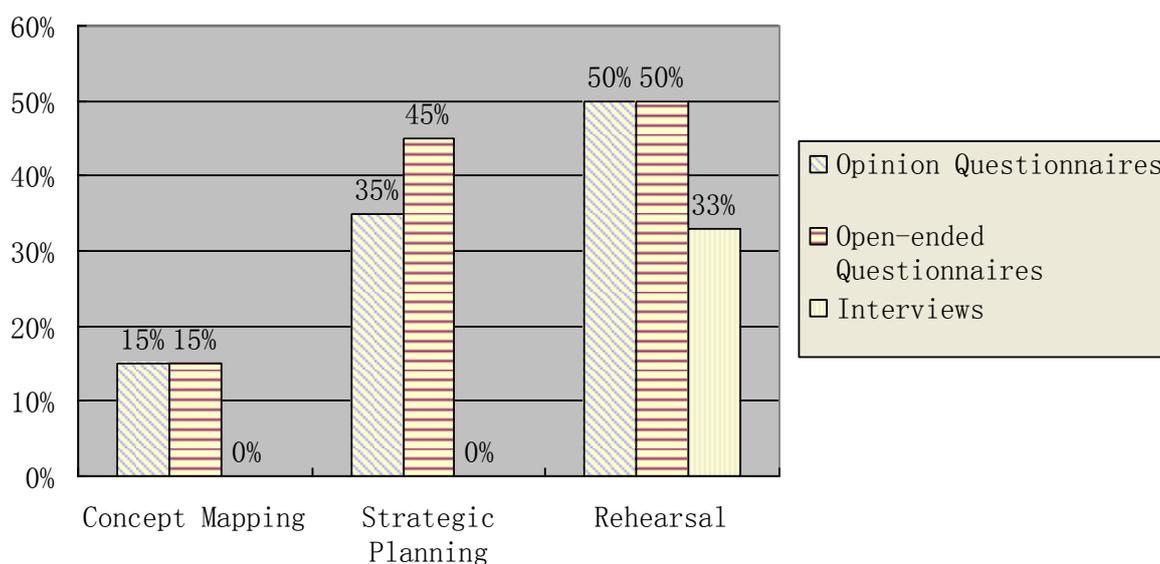
Figure 5.3: Students' Negative Opinions of Each Step

The above figure shows that most students (50%, 50%, and 33%) hold the negative Opinions of the rehearsal step, as reported in the students' opinion questionnaires, the students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the semi-structured interviews; the smallest number of students in the present study held negative opinions of the concept mapping step. Examples of students' negative opinions of the different steps are illustrated in the following Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Examples of Negative Opinions of Each Step

Steps		Examples
Concept Mapping	Closed-ended questionnaires **15%** **(N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **15%** **(N=20)**	S1: *"I think there are too many activities involved in the concept mapping. Some of the activities are not necessary at all. For myself, I don't like playing games because the pictures provided are sometimes irrelevant to the listening materials. In my opinion, it is necessary to delete some activities in this step and for us to have more time tolisten to the passages."* (Translated)
	Semi-structured Interviews **0% (N=6)**	
Strategic Planning	Closed-ended questionnaires **35%** **(N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **45%** **(N=20)**	S16: *"I already know how to write a summary. It's not necessary to keep this step. "* (Translated) S4: *"I don't like the strategic planning step. It cannot help me understand the listening material. Sometimes if I focus too much on the format, I cannot understand the listening materials properly."* (Translated)
	Semi-structured Interviews **0% (N=6)**	
Rehearsal	Closed-ended questionnaires **50%** **(N=20)**	
	Open-ended Questionnaires **50%(N=20)**	S3: *"I don't like the rehearsal step at all. It's not necessary. Even without this step, I always plan in my mind before writing it down on paper. I don't like to tell others what to write."* (Translated) S4: *"For me, I only want to finish the summary as soon as possible. I think that speaking out loud before writing is to waste time. It cannot help me improve my listening comprehension."* (Translated)
	Semi-structured Interviews **33% (N=6)**	S6: *"In my opinion, it is better to cancel the rehearsal step. It's a waste of time. I like to chat with others to kill the time for rehearsal."* (Transcribed and Translated) S4: *"I don't like rehearsal. I prefer to prepare a draft before I write something down rather than say aloud what I want to write."* (Transcribed and Translated)

The factors which account for most of the students' negative opinions of the rehearsal step can be found in 5.2.2.3, i.e., "Discussion of the Rehearsal step". Other

factors are illustrated as follows. First, some students have no idea about what activities are involved in the rehearsal step. Compared with the concept mapping step and the strategic planning step, students are less familiar with the rehearsal step. Second, some students like to finish the listening task as soon as possible. They prefer to prepare a written draft before writing their summary down on paper rather than to say aloud what they want to write. Third, Chinese students are to some extent reluctant to share opinions with others. They prefer to achieve final results of learning rather than enjoying the process of learning.

To sum up, the above section discusses the students' overall opinions towards the pre-task planning activities as well as the positive, medium and negative attitudes towards the different steps involved in the instruction. The interpretation of the overall opinions as well as the respective attitudes towards each step is also illustrated in this section.

5.4 Discussion of the Findings from the Perspective of Learning Theories

As noted in Chapter Two, the underlying principles reviewed in the present study consist of the constructivist learning theory and the second language acquisition learning theory. Factors leading to the improvements in students' listening comprehension after the pre-task planning activities will be discussed initially from the perspective of the learning theories involved in the present study.

5.4.1 The Learning Theory of Constructivism

Two factors for the improvements in students' listening comprehension after the pre-task planning activities can be explained from the perspective of the constructivist learning theory. Firstly, constructivism gives effective teaching support

by providing EFL learners with linguistic knowledge, skills and experience and by improving students' listening comprehension. Of the four aspects of language learning, listening initiates the interactive activity necessary for the learner to respond to an interlocutor. Oxford (1993) maintains that listening is one of the most important language skills; it can be viewed as a fundamental contributor to developing skills and competencies. In the acquisition of a second language, "listening comprehension ability plays a crucial role" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Feyten, 1991) as it helps provide the necessary platform on which learning a foreign language is built. Constructivism implies that effective language learning is built on the total language environment, including peer learners, teachers, parents and others in the language surroundings. It argues that EFL learners' engagement in purposeful and interactive activities can help them construct new knowledge from what they already have in mind or from a real life situation. Planning is part of the subject matter for purposeful action. With a grounding in the constructivist perspective, the present study employs pre-task planning activities, namely, three steps of concept mapping, strategic planning and rehearsal. As noted in Chapter Two, for the concept mapping, another form of pre-task planning, (Carrell et,al., 1992) state that the instruction for concept mapping usually includes a brainstorming session where students are encouraged to activate their prior knowledge of a topic and focus on the relevant content schema. Consequently, students are engaged in the process of active learning and their listening comprehension can be improved as a result of the concept mapping step in the pre-task planning activities.

Secondly, the characteristics of the constructivist learning theory have offered an interpretation of the improvements in students' listening comprehension after the pre-task

planning activities. Murphy (1997) presented a synthesis and summary of characteristics of constructivist learning and teaching, which have been listed by the researcher as follows. Teachers serve the role of guides, monitors, coaches, tutors, and facilitators; Activities, opportunities, tools, and environments are provided to encourage metacognition, self-analysis, self-regulation, self-reflection, and self-awareness; The students play the central role in mediating and controlling learning; Learning situations, environments, skills, content, and tasks are relevant, realistic, authentic and represent the natural complexities of the "real world"; Knowledge construction and not reproduction is emphasized; This construction takes place in individual contexts and through social negotiation, collaboration, and experience; The learner's previous knowledge constructions, beliefs, and attitudes are considered in the knowledge construction process; Problem-solving, higher-order thinking skills, and deep understanding are emphasized; Errors provide the opportunity for insight into students previous knowledge constructions; Exploration is a favored approach in order to encourage students to seek knowledge independently and to manage the pursuit of their goals; Learners are provided with the opportunity for apprenticeship learning in which there is an increasing complexity of tasks, skills, and knowledge acquisition; Collaborative and cooperative learning are favored in order to expose the learner to alternative viewpoints; Scaffolding is facilitated to help students perform just beyond the limits of their ability; Assessment is authentic and interwoven with teaching.

Based on the characteristics of constructivist learning theory mentioned above, the researcher applies the theory to the EFL listening class. In the present study, the researcher developed teaching materials that were suitable for the students' levels and ability and motivated them to use the language as much as possible. As noted in

Chapter Three, the teaching material employed in this study was the text book provided by the English Department at the college and the supplementary materials designed by the researcher. The supplementary instructional material included four parts: playing games; background knowledge; vocabulary practice; and a comprehension task. As mentioned in "A sample of Instructional materials for Participants in the Experimental Group" (see Appendix B), there are also supplementary web-based listening materials. In the section of "playing games", the author prepared pictures related to each topic and added different questions for group discussion. In addition, the author selected related background information to stimulate students' prior knowledge and improve their listening comprehension. The section of "vocabulary practice" was also helpful for the students to understand the listening material. The design of the "comprehension task" also helped students focus more on the meaning of the listening material than the detailed language forms.

Briefly, the above discussion illustrates that constructivism can provide the researcher with guidelines in the design of the pre-task planning activities and by applying constructivist learning theory to the process of teaching EFL listening the students' listening comprehension improved.

5.4.2 Discussion regarding SLA Learning Theories

According to Rost (2002), the Second Language Acquisition learning theories provide principles for the teaching of listening in EFL. The influences of the teaching of listening principles that are derived directly from second language learning research can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, according to the affective factors involved in learning theories, by taking into account learners' interests and attitudes about listening, the instructor can

better select input or point learners to the best resources and opportunities for appropriate input. In this study, the researcher selected four topics for the listening materials according to the student's preferences as well as familiarity. Altogether ten topics were prepared for the students to choose from and four of them were chosen to be topics for the teaching materials, namely, Shopping, Hobbies, Culture, and Interrelationships. The value of selecting topics according to students' interests is also demonstrated by Day and Yamanaka (1998). The students were asked to identify the types of topics that they found most interesting, useful for their English studies and relevant to their needs. The selected materials for listening were then developed. Because of the self-selected topics, the students' interest and motivation increased and they consequently showed positive attitudes towards this method of instruction. This is demonstrated by the data from the teachers' logs: "It seemed to the researcher and the instructor that the students felt excited when they were asked to select four topics for themselves out of the ten. During the study, it was found that they really showed an interest in the four topics of their choice."

Secondly, it is related to Input Hypothesis in the second language acquisition learning theory. A definite effect of this teaching approach to listening was the improvement of students' listening comprehension after the pre-task planning activities. As noted in Chapter Two, based on the Input Hypothesis, instruction should aim to provide comprehensible input, i.e., input at a "i+1" level. The "+1" in this case means slightly above the learner's current level of competence in terms of vocabulary, syntax, discourse features, length and complexity. Comprehensible input may be aural or written, or both. As noted by Day and Yamanaka (1998), the selection and use of input is also crucial for teaching listening. In order to make them slightly above the

existing knowledge, a careful selection or adaptation can be helpful. Adaptation can be done through adapting or adding to existing input material in order to make it more suitable to their level of learners' proficiency.

In addition to the self-selected materials, there were also supplementary prepared by the researcher. The supplementary materials (see Appendix B) consisted of four sections: a. "playing games" (including pictures and questions for group discussion), b. "background knowledge" (including cultural information relevant to the topic), c. "vocabulary practice" (including exercises for practices to reinforce vocabulary learning), and d. "comprehension task" (including guided questions for practicing writing a description and the format for a written summary). These supplementary materials specifically designed for the students in this study were recommended by Rost (1999). In his study of materials design, Rost also added recorded topical interviews to increase students' motivation and course relevance. As s result, students rated the course more highly than a control group who did not use the additional material.

Thirdly, the integration between bottom-up and top-down processes during the pre-task planning teaching method could be another factor that led to students' listening comprehension improvement. The bottom-up processing refers that the listener attends to acoustic-phonological information by decoding words and other constituent structures in the stream of speech. The top-down processing refers that the listener processes language in meaningful chunks by utilizing schemata and contextual information. As reviewed in Chapter Two, based on bottom-up approaches and top-down approaches, Vandergrift (2007) investigates an integrated model for teaching L2 listening, i.e., the integration of bottom-up and top-down. In the process

of implementing the pre-task planning activities, by taking both bottom-up and top-down approaches into consideration, the researcher developed three steps together involved in the pre-task planning activities, which also integrated a model for the teaching of EFL listening.

In sum, the pre-task planning activities consist of three steps, namely, concept mapping, strategic planning and rehearsal, as summarized in the following figure:
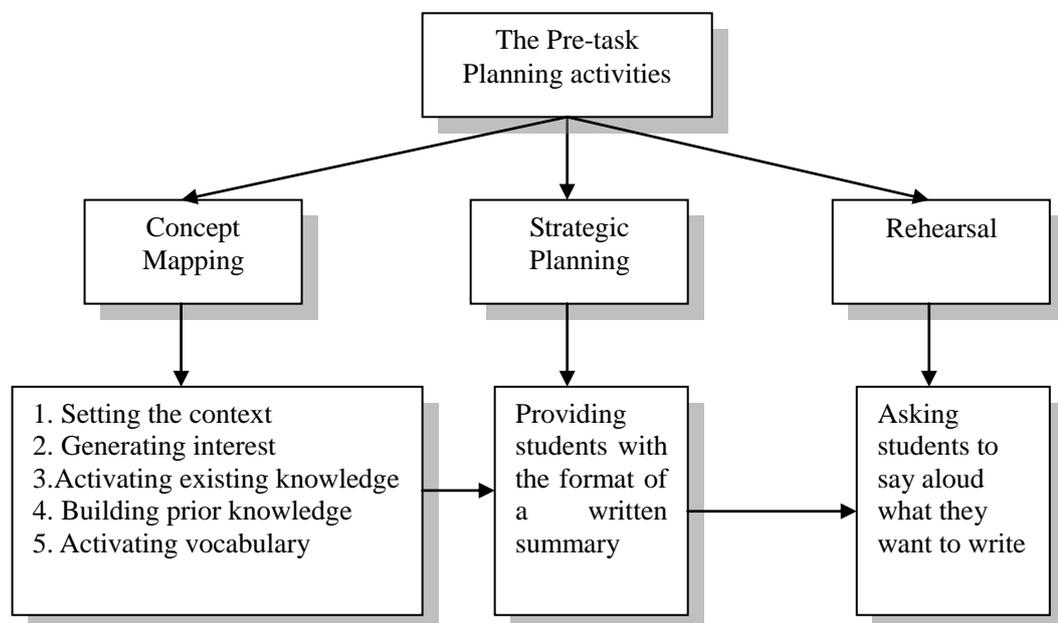
Figure 5.4 Summary of the Pre-task Planning Mode

From the above figure, the integration of bottom-up and top-down teaching method could be seen in the activities involved in the concept mapping step and those in the step of strategic planning. For example, in the step of concept mapping, students were required to practice the related vocabularies which revealed the process of bottom-down approach. Meanwhile, students were required to prepare the related

background information of the listening materials and construct the overview of all the passages before listening which revealed the process of top-down approach. This integration of bottom-up and top down provides teaching support the process of pre-task planning instruction and it could be regarded as one of the factors which accounts for the improvements in students' listening comprehension, according to the students' opinion questionnaires as well as the interviews.

Fourthly, learning strategies have been studied extensively, both in general education and in second language education (cf Cohen, 1998; Oxford and Leaver, 1996; Oxford, 2001). Consistent use of learning strategies helps students learn more efficiently. Language learning strategies can enable students to handle tasks that may be more difficult than their current processing might allow. This stretch of their capacity can be instructive to learners and may motivate them to learn more. Oxford (2001) summarizes strategies used in EFL listening as grouping, associating, elaborating, using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords, representing sounds in memory, structured reviewing, using physical response or sensation, using mechanical techniques, repeating, recognizing and using formulas and patterns, listening for the main idea, using resources for receiving messages, reasoning deductively, translating, transferring, taking notes, and so on.

In this study, the researcher designed the pre-task planning activities and employed learning strategies during the process of teaching EFL listening. For example, as summarized in Figure 5.1, the activities involved in the concept mapping step focused on the strategy of elaborating; while activities in the step of strategic planning (during this step students are provided with the format of a written summary) focused on the strategy of listening for the main idea.

There are two reasons why the present study employs these two strategies during the process of the pre-task planning activities. First, most EFL students have some background knowledge (i.e., students' knowledge of topics and literary styles) but they usually do not draw on the knowledge that they already have or their understanding of the world to support their attempts to make sense of what they hear or to fill in missing information. Hence, it was necessary to explicitly train them to use an elaboration strategy in order to make students think about their prior knowledge from outside the listening text to help fill in the missing information (Chamot, 1995; Vandergrift, 1997). Second, some L2 students tend to focus on what they do not understand rather than what they only partially understand. They do not know to which part they need to pay attention or what the gist of the listening text is, so they then try to listen to every single word. Therefore, it is necessary to employ a strategy in listening for the main idea of a listening text. The students need to have some idea of the overall meaning of what they have heard before they can fully understand the detailed meaning (Richard, 1983; Grenfell and Harris, 1999).

To sum up the above discussion, the factors which account for improvements in the students' listening comprehension after the instruction can be explained through SLA perspectives. The discussion illustrates that students' listening comprehension can be enhanced by taking SLA principles concerning affective factors, comprehensible input, integration between bottom-up and top-down and learning strategies for EFL listening into while designing the pre-task planning activities.

5.5 Implications, Limitations and Suggestions of the Study

The pedagogical implications, the limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research are given in the following sections.

5.5.1 Pedagogical Implications

The present study aims at investigating the effects of pre-task planning activities on Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension. The research findings summarized at the beginning of this chapter reveal that positive effects can be achieved through the comprehensive and systematic pre-task planning activities employed in the study and the implications for pedagogy can be done in accordance with the following aspects.

First, the pre-task planning activities could be adopted in the teaching of EFL listening in a Chinese context. Based on the guidelines of the constructivist and the SLA learning theories, the researcher developed a comprehensive and systematic pre-task planning activities and it is hoped that it will serve to help Chinese EFL instructors with the development of their curriculum design.

Second, the teacher's analysis of students' listening summary, developed by the researcher in this study, was an effective tool for assessing listening comprehension. The teacher's analysis of students' written summary after listening can provide Chinese EFL teachers who teach listening with a useful instrument to assess students' listening comprehension. Previous research provides different instruments to access students' listening comprehension, such as multiple-choice questions, dictation, writing a summary after listening, and so on. Compared with how to mark multiple-choice questions as well as dictation, it is lacking criteria when scoring students' written summary after listening. The researcher in this study

provides the detailed criteria for scoring students' listening summary as shown in the teacher's analysis of students' written summary in this study.

Third, among the three steps of the pre-task planning activities, the concept mapping step was well-received by the Chinese EFL learners. In the process of teaching EFL listening, teachers need to pay attention to differences between the three steps in the pre-task planning activities and try to focus on the different steps in order to meet the students' needs and interests.

Lastly, supplementing teaching materials can lead to a good teaching effect. The supplementary teaching materials can make active contributions to the learning process. In the present study, useful implications can be found from supplementing materials which include making instructional goals explicit to the learner, giving learners a degree of choice according to their interests and familiarity and giving learners opportunities to bring their own background knowledge and experience into the classroom.

5.5.2 Limitations of the Study

Although the research findings in the present study reveal a good effect of the pre-task planning activities on Chinese EFL learners' listening comprehension, due to the restrictions of the research situation, there were some limitations to the study which are described below.

First, the present study was conducted with a small number of participants. As mentioned in Chapter One, the participants involved in the present study were volunteers from the two classes in the English Department of Nanjing College for Population Program Management. There were only two classes in the English Department and there were 38 students in each class. Thus, due to this restriction,

only 40 students volunteered for the present study. Generalization may not be appropriate.

Second, because the present study was conducted in after-class time, some participants were to some extent reluctant to finish the proposed activities during the experiment. Consequently, the effects of the pre-task planning activities may have been hindered and students' opinions of the pre-task planning activities might have been affected by this situation.

Lastly, the instruments of the written summary and the listening comprehension test may have to some extent limited the validity of the results. In addition, since there was only one passage included in the listening comprehension test for students to do the writing summary, the effects of the pre-task planning activities on the listening comprehension test may have been limited.

5.5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Some suggestions should be taken into consideration for further research due to the limitations of the present study. First, a larger number of participants may be considered in further studies. Second, as EFL listening is a compulsory course for the first-year and second-year English majors in Chinese universities, it would be better to use the regular class time to conduct experiments for further studies. Third, it would be possible to select first-year students or non-English majors for further studies. In the present study, because the participants were all second-year English majors, they already had some experience of listening and they had also already acquired certain EFL listening strategies. This may have resulted in some external effects during the experiment. Lastly, more experts should be invited to develop instruments to assess students' listening comprehension so that validity can be assured

in any further studies. In addition, more emphasis could be given to help students' with their listening comprehension in terms of accuracy when writing the summary and more passages could be added to the listening comprehension test as well as more test types included in the LCT in order to validate the effects of instruction in any further studies.

Some other suggestion should also be taken into consideration for further studies according to the pedagogical implications. First, the pre-task planning activities could also be implemented to EFL speaking, writing as well as reading, in addition to listening in the further research. According to the research results, implementing the pre-task planning activities into EFL listening was proved to be effective for listening comprehension of Chinese EFL learners. Consequently, further studies could be conducted by employing the instruction with pre-task planning activities. Second, in terms of accessing listening comprehension of EFL learners, teacher's analysis of students' written summary after listening was recommended in any further research. Compared with multiple choice questions, dictation, the test type of writing a summary after listening is more acceptable for testing students' listening comprehension. It is necessary for instructors and researchers to work out how to analyze students' written summary as well as the criteria for scoring it. Third, based on the research results from students' open-ended questionnaires as well as the interviews, the step of rehearsal was less acceptable compared with the other two steps of the concept mapping as well as the strategic planning. As a result, for the further studies, the activities involved in the step of rehearsal could be deleted and other activities could also be employed to the instruction of pre-task planning mode in order to gain better teaching effects.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the research findings with reference to the two research questions. Firstly, a discussion of the effects of the pre-task planning activities on students' listening comprehension is provided and it contains a discussion of the effects of each step involved in the pre-task planning activities. The following section then discusses the students' overall opinions towards the pre-task planning activities as well as the positive, indecisive and negative opinions of the different steps involved in the pre-task planning activities. An explanation of the overall opinions and the respective opinions towards each step is also displayed in this section. From the perspective of learning theories, namely, consideration of the possible factors for improvements after the pre-task planning activities are also discussed in this section. Last but not least, the pedagogical implications, the limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research are also given at the end of this chapter.

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APPENDIX A

Background Information Survey

个人信息调查问卷

Name/姓名   Age/年龄

Gender/性别   Class/班级

Score of National Matriculation English Examination /高考英语成绩

1. How long have you learned English before you enter this university?
   进大学之前你学了多长时间英语？

2. Have you ever received English listening training during your English study/English class before you enter this university? If yes, how long?进大学之前受过英语听力训练吗？如果是，多长时间？

3. Have you ever been to English-speaking countries? If yes, where ? How long ?到过英语国家吗？若是，到过哪里？多长时间？

4. Have you ever had the opportunity to use English for communicative purposes outside the classroom? If yes, how often?课后有机会用英语进行交流吗？若有，多久一次？

APPENDIX B

ASample of Instructional Materials

Part I Handout (parts of the tape scripts)

for Instructor

Unit 1 Shopping

Dialogue 1

Store Clerk: Hi. How can I help you?

Customer: Yes, I'd like to return this sweater for a refund. I bought it a week ago.

Store Clerk: Well, first of all, what seems to be the problem?

Customer: Well, isn't it obvious by just looking at it? The first time I washed and dried it, the thing shrank at least five sizes. It wouldn't even fit an emaciated snake.

Store Clerk: Uh, I see what you mean, but did you follow the washing instructions? I think it says here . . . yeah . . . right here on the label to hand wash it and then to dry it on low heat.

Customer: How was I supposed to know that? The label is written in Chinese! And something else: The stitching is coming undone and the color faded from a nice dark blue to a seaweed green. What kind of merchandise are you trying to sell here anyway?

Store Clerk:Listen, sir. We take a lot of pride in our clothing. What I can do is allow you to exchange the sweater for another one.

Customer: I don't want to exchange it for anything! I just want my money back!

Dialogue 2

Jack: So, Rose, we're talking about shopping. Is there anything you don't like about shopping?

Rose: Yes, I don't like shopping when there are crowds of people. Usually when the sales are on, it can be a good time to shop but it also draws a lot of people and everybody's pushing and trying to get the clothes they want that are on special. Yeah, I don't like that.

Jack: Right. Right. Actually, the thing I really don't like about shopping is having - or clothes shopping - is having to try on clothes. You know, like, you go and you find your size and then you put it on and then it doesn't fit, then you have to try it on again and it's just, it takes forever. And you look at the numbers and it's so hard to find the number that fits you.

Rose: Yeah, it seems every year the numbers are changing sizes. You wear a size ten and then the next year it's not that size so. Yeah. That can be a real problem, too.

Jack: It drives me nuts. Now in Australia, when you go shopping in the store, do you normally get a lot of personal customer service?

Rose: Yes. Yes. They tend to come up to you as soon as you come into the store, and if you say you're browsing then they leave you alone but it can be really good, the shops I shop at. They do help you with the fitting sizes and when you're in the change rooms, you can just say, "No, I need a new size" and they will go and get it for you. So yeah, it's really good service.

Jack: Yeah, in the States I think the service is really good as well, but what's really annoying is that now they always want to have you join some club or some membership.

Rose: The points cards.

Jack: Yeah, so you just want to buy your shirt and they ask you, "Would you like a credit card?" or "Would you like a discount card or membership?" I can't stand it.

Rose: Yeah, I know. I think I have so many cards in my wallet, and they're like, "Oh, are you a member?" and I pull out all my cards and I'm not a member so they join me up.

Jack: Right. Right. Usually these days I just say no, but it's just so annoying.

Rose: Yeah, it can be. Yes.

Listening Passage

Bargains or Fixed Price Shopping?

Once I have settled in my new job and new place I started looking for good places to shop around. In my home country, there was lot of bargaining in almost every store. However, I heard that in the US bargaining is not allowed in large stores. Therefore, I started to explore different stores to compare prices. I spoke to some American colleagues and neighbours about the different shopping avenues. From whatever information I collected I could find out that some of the best buys could be made at the bargain or discount stores. That was the first time I came to know about the bargain shopping in the US.

From whatI have learnt, you could make use of the following techniques for bargain shopping. Watch for sales. This is when items are offered at a discounted price. The sale might be a set a percentage discount. Sales are generally advertised. Be sure to always check the local paper issued on Sunday; usually all the sales for the week will be announced. Many stores will also have clearance sales. Items on clearance generally will not be reordered, so the store needs to make room for new goods. Often these sales are unadvertised. Great bargains can be found at clearance sales!

Look for and use coupons. These can be found in the Sunday paper, in magazines, sometimes in the telephone book. A coupon is a little slip of paper allowing you to get a small discount when you buy the specific item described. The coupon will say "Save 40 cents on any Pledge," for example. That means that if you present the coupon at the time of purchase, and if you bought the correct brand and size, and if the expiration date has not passed, you will pay 40 cents less for that can of Pledge furniture polish. If the store is having a "double coupon day," the coupon is worth twice as much (you would pay 80 cents less for a can of pledge).

Purchases can be made very inexpensively at garage sales and second-hand stores. Used items in good condition often can be found for a low price. Also, check newspapers and local bulletin boards for listings of used goods for sale.

Part II (A) Handout for Participants (for theControl Group)

This part is adapted from the text book (Book 1, P. 53), Section One.

Unit One: Shopping

Section One:Tactics for Listening

Part 1: Phonetics

Exercise: Complete the following short dialogue as you listen to the tape. Pay special attention to the weak forms, link-ups and contractions.
Cheryl: Diane!
Diane: Cheryl! I thought you were (1) Los Angeles.
Cheryl: I was, but (2) back. I just (3) take the big city.
Diane: So, (4) you doing now?
Cheryl: Well, I'm (5) school. I'm going to (6) teacher.
Diane: Really? That sounds great. I always thought (7) be a good teacher.
Cheryl: I hope so. Listen, (8) have time for coffee? We can (9) the old days.
Diane: Sure. (10) go to Jake's.
Cheryl: That sounds good.

Part 2 Listening and Note-Taking
Exercise A: Listen to the conversation and take notes.

Exercise B: Write down the car number of the following people.
1. Liz   2. Delia:
3. Richard: 4. Marie:
5. Michael: 6. Damien:
7. Rosie: 8. Trevor:

Section Two Listening Comprehension

Comprehension Tasks

1. Write a summary of the listening passage.

2. Discuss the following questions with your friends and write a description of your opinion, reaction, or impression. Consider the following questions:
   (1) What is interesting about this passage?
   (2) What is something new that you learned?
   (3) How does it affect or compare to your life?
   (4) Do you agree or disagree?

(5) What is good or bad about it? . . .

(6) What is an advantage or disadvantage?

(7) What is it similar to or different from?

(8) What do you predict will happen?

(9) How do you feel about it (happy, sad, shocked, etc.)?

(10) What more would you like to know about this topic? . . .

You do not need to answer all these questions. You can add your own ideas, too! Write at least [50]words.Try to give details, reasons, and examples.

Part II (B) Handout for Participants (fortheExperiment Group)

Unit 1:Shopping

1) Play a game: Where do you buy them?

Picture 1　　　　Picture 2　　Picture 3　　Picture 4
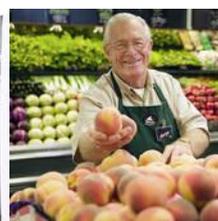
Picture 5　　　　　　　　　　Picture 6

Picture 7　　　　　　　　Picture 8

Discuss with your partner about the following pictures

1. Show some pictures of different merchandise and ask your partner what store/shop he/she can buy the merchandise in the pictures.

2. While discussing, make simple comment on each shop/store, for example:

Ienjoy shopping in the clothing shop because it's fashionable.

Iprefer to shopping in a book store because it is interesting and you can get relaxed while reading.

2) Background Knowledge

A discount store is a type of department stores, which sells products at prices lower than thoseasked by department stores and other traditional retail outlets. Most discount department stores offer a wide assortment of goods; others specialize in such merchandise as jewelry, electronic equipment, or electrical appliances. Discount stores are more popular in the United States than other countries. Following World War II, a number of retail establishments in the U.S. began to pursue a high-volume, low-profit-margin strategy designed to attract price-conscious consumers. Currently Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the world, operates more than 1,300 discount stores in the U.S.

During the period from the 1950s to the late 1980s, discount stores were more popular than the average supermarket or department store. There were hundreds of discount stores in operation, with their most successful period occurring during the mid-1960s in the U.S. with discount store chains such as Kmart, Ames.

Many of the major discounters now operate "supercenters", which add a full-service grocery store to the traditional format. The Meijer chain in the Midwest consists entirely of supercenters, while Wal-Mart and Target have focused on the format as of the 1990s as a key to their continued growth. Although discount stores and department stores have different retailing goals and different markets, a recent development in retailing is the "discount department store", such as Sears Essentials, which is a combination of the Kmart and Sears formats, following the companies' merger as Sears Holdings Corporation.

3) Vocabulary Practice

Match the words in Column A with their explanation in Column B

Column A	Column B
1. bargain	a. the act of reducing the selling price of merchandise
2. discount	b. buy
3. purchase	c. call to public attention
4. advertise	d. a little slip of paper allowing you to get a small discount
5. coupon	e. an advantageous purchase

4) Comprehension Tasks

1. Discuss with you friends and write a summary or description of the listening passage.

For a summary, use this format:

"This passage was about (   ). There are (three) main ideas. First, (   ).Second, ( ).Third, (   ).--- The conclusion is (   ). "

2. Discuss the following questions with your friends and write a description of your opinion, reaction, or impression. Consider the following questions:
   (1) What is interesting about this passage?
   (2) What is something new that you learned?

(3) How does it affect or compare to your life?

(4) Do you agree or disagree?

    (5) What is good or bad about it? . . .

    (6) What is an advantage or disadvantage?

    (7) What is it similar to or different from?

    (8) What do you predict will happen?

    (9) How do you feel about it (happy, sad, shocked, etc.)?

    (10) What more would you like to know about this topic? . . .

You do not need to answer all these questions. You can add your own ideas, too! Write at least [50]words.Try to give details, reasons, and examples. ***Use signal words such as these: however, in contrast, on the contrary, on the other hand, moreover, furthermore, in addition, for example, in general, specifically, similarly, therefore, in conclusion.***

APPENDIX C

A Sample of Lesson Plan

For the Control Group

UnitOne :Shopping

Time: 100 minutes

Objectives: To comprehend the listening material provided;

To learn the vocabulary involved in the unit;

To acquire the useful expressions related to the topic

Materials:

1) A cassette of listening materials

2) Handout for the participants in the control group

3) Text Book of "A Listening Course" by Shi Xinyuan (2001)

Teaching Procedures:

Listening Procedures	Activities
Before Listening	Step 1: Students listen to the cassette including Part 1 of Section One and finish the exercise of Part 1
	Step 2: Students listen to the cassette including Part 2 of Section One and finish Exercise A and Exercise B of Part 2
	Step 3: Teacher checks the answers to the exercises with the students
While Listening	Step 1: Students listen to the passage and finish the comprehension exercises in the text book.
	Step 2: Teacher checks the answers to the comprehension exercises with the students
	Step 3: Students listening to the passage again and take the necessary notes down for the comprehension tasks.
After Listening	Step 1: Students do Comprehension Task 1
	Step 2: Students do Comprehension Task 2

Lesson Plan

For the Experiment Group

UnitOne :   Shopping

Time: 100 minutes

Objectives: To comprehend the listening material provided;

To learn the vocabulary involved in the unit;

To acquire the useful expressions related to the topic

Materials:

1) A cassette of listening materials

2) Handout for the participants in the experimental group

TeachingProcedures:

Listening Procedures	Pre-task Planning Steps	Activities
Before Listening	Concept Mapping	Step 1, Setting the context: Teacher explains the related topic and introduces the listening tasks of writing a summary as well as a description
		Step 2, Generating interest: Students look at the pictures provided in the handouts and play games of "Where to buy", under the teacher's guide
		Step 3, Activating existing knowledge: Teacher asks questions related to the topic as "Do you like shopping? Why or why not? How often do you go shopping? How often do you go shopping for the following items and where do you buy them: clothing, gifts for friends and family, music, DVD movies, electronics? What do you like shopping for? What are things that you do not like about shopping?", etc.
		Step 4, Building prior knowledge: Teacher asks students to read the background knowledge provided in the handouts for the experimental

		group;Teacher introduces more relevant information if necessary; Students are encouraged to introduce more background knowledge, either retelling what they read in the handout or introducing more background knowledge they have already known;Students listen to the two dialogues and answer the questions raised by the teacher for more understanding
		Step 5, Activating vocabulary/language: Teacher encourages students to recall the vocabularies related to the topic; Teacher prepares the new words in the listening materials for the students to practice;Teacher asks students to predict the new words; teacher explainsthe new words and students do the "vocabulary practice" provided in the handouts
While Listening	Strategic Planning	Step 1: Teacher provides the format of a written summary: "This passage was about ( ). There are (three) main ideas. First, ( ). Second, ( ). Third, ( ). --- The conclusion is ( ). "
		Step 2: Teacher explains the format of the written summary to the students.
		Step 3: Teacher asks the students to listen to the listening materials and prepare for the comprehension tasks.
After Listening	Rehearsal	Step 1: Teacher explains the step of rehearsal.
		Step 2: Teacher asks students to say out what they want to write in the summary by doing the pair work.
		Step 3: Students listen to the materials again and do theComprehension Tasks.

APPENDIX D

Students' Questionnaires 学生问卷调查

Directions: The questionnaires include two parts: Students' Opinion Questionnaires and Open-ended Questionnaires. They are designed to obtain information about your opinions towards the use of pre-task planning in EFL listening. For Part 1, please read each question item carefully and mark（√）the response which best expresses your opinions. For Part 2, please write down your answers to the questions.
说明：此问卷包括两部分：意见调查量表问卷以及开放式问题问卷。设计此问卷目的在于收集您对任务前准备在英语听力中的运用的意见。对于第一部分，请仔细阅读相关条目，在最能够表达您意见的位置打勾(√)。对于第二部分，请在空白处填写答案。

Part 1: Opinion Questionnaires 意见调查量表问卷

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The pre-task planning activities are important for EFL listening.任务前设计对英语听力很重要					
2. I like doing pre-task planning activities before I do the listening task. 我喜欢在听力任务前的任务前设计					
3. The pre-task planning activities make the EFL listening class enjoyable.任务前设计使得听力课变得生动					
4. The pre-task planning activities help me accomplish the listening tasks easily.任务前设计有助于我完成听力任务					
5. The pre-task planning activities help me improve my listening comprehension.任务前设计有助于提高我的听力理解					
6. I will continue with the pre-task planning mode activities in EFL listening class in the future.今后我将继续在听力课中做任务前设计。					
7. I think the step of Rehearsal is the most important among the pre-task planning activities.我认为任务前设计中的预演步骤最重要					
8. I think the step of Strategic Planning					

is the most important among the pre-task planning activities.我认为任务前设计中的策略设计最重要	
9. I think the step of Concept Mapping is the most important among the pre-task planning activities.我认为任务前设计中的概念图步骤最重要	
10. I prefer to doing the listening tasks directly rather than doing the pre-task planning activities firstly.我情愿直接做听力任务而不是先做任务前设计	1

Part 2: Open-ended Questionnaires 开放式问题问卷

1. Please answer the following questions. 请回答下面的问题。

Do you like the pre-task planning activities in the present study?, if yes, what do you like/dislike the most about the activities you've done in the pre-task planning? And why?"你喜欢在听力课中运用任务前准备吗？如果是，你最喜欢/最不喜欢其中哪一个步骤？为什么？

2. Do you have any difficulties in doing pre-task planning activities? If yes, what are they?你在完成任务前准备过程中遇到过困难吗？如果有，请问是哪些困难？

3. Do you have any difficulties in doing the listening task of writing a summary? If yes, what are they?你在写听力摘要时遇到困难吗？如果有，请问是哪些？

4. Do you have any suggestions about pre-task planning activities? If yes, what are they?你对于任务前准备教学有建议吗？如果有，请问是哪些？

Thanks for your cooperation!
谢谢合作!

APPENDIX E

Guided Questions for the Semi-structured Interview

1. Do you think that pre-task planning activities are important for your listening comprehension? Why or why not? 你认为任务前准备对于英语听力理解重要吗？为什么重要/不重要？

2. How do you think of the different steps in the pre-task planning activities? 你是怎么看待任务前准备过程中的不同步骤的？

3. Do you have any problems in doing pre-task planning activities? If yes, what are they?你在完成任务前准备过程中有困难吗？如果有，是哪些？

4. Do you have any suggestions about pre-task planning activities? If yes, what are they?你对于任务前准备在英语听力教学中些好的建议吗？如果有，分别是什么？

APPENDIX F

Samples of theStudents' Written Summary of Four Units

Unit 1 Shopping

Examples		Control Group	Experimental Group
Low Proficiency	1	There are many bargain shop in the author's hometown. But bargain is not allowed in big stores of America. At last the author found bargain store in the USA. Then the author tell us some information about bargain in the USA. The things can be bargained are advertised, the things can't be bargained are unadvertised. The author also tell us how to find bargain store. For example, read newspaper to find this kind of information.	This passage described when the authors work was fixed in the US. He found barginning in big stores was not allowed, which was quite different from his home country. And then introduce some techniques to buy discounts in the US. First, watch fro sales, they were always advertised. Check the local papers on Sundays. The clearen sales were always big bargins. Second, use coupons. You'll find them on magazines, Sundays, and even telophonebooks. If you find the goods in night brard and size and also within its expiration. It'll save you 40 cents. On –day, it'll save you 80 cents.
	2	Budgets shopping is necessary to people. There are different shopping element in the shopping, usually all the sale is the way of seller use. A low price can attact the customer, at the same time, the seller will not suffer losses, on the contrary, for sale can bring great benefit.	A man just move to a new place in US. Through the help of his neighbor and collegues, he got some ways to purchase in bargain stores. First, he could look for the same goods in different stores and then compared their prices so that he could get someone cheaper. Second, he could get the coupons in Sunday newspaper, and other magazines then using the coupons to shop. Third, when finding something good, he could go to the second-hand store to look for some good news. By all those means, he will get a good habbit in life and save a lot of money.
Medium Proficiency	1	Bargain can been seen everywhere in my own country but is not allowed in the US large stores. So I collected some information to support what I knew the first time of bargain in US. Firstly is watching for sales which will be announced by shops for week. Secondly is to use coupons found in magazines or telephones books describing specific items helps you have a discount.	This passage was about how purchase a bargain in US. There are three main ideas. First, you can explore different stores to find a bargain. Second, watch for sales and look for coupons. Third, look for the goods in second-hand stores, you may get something perfect.

	2	It is talking about bargain in the biggest shops in the USA. From the author's --- he found some techniques about bargain. For example, at most time the clearing sail are at discount. We can also find bargain information in the magazines or telephone books. Of course, there are some other techniques having been introduced by the author.	The passage is about bargains and fixed price shops. We can learn three ideas from the passage. First, if we want to have a discount we can compare price in different store. Second we can watch fro the sales and coupons in magazines, Sunday paper or even the telephone books. Third, we may buy the machandise in a second-hand store. The conclusion is we may get the merchandise which we want to have in a low price.
High Proficiency	1	I got a new job in the USA. I'm look for some places to shop around. In my country, there are a lot of stores that can be bargain, I tried to find some places to shop, however, what I heard was there weren't allowed in large store in America. Therefore, I want to make clear of the difference my American colleagues and neighbors. From whatever information I collected, something I can found about some bargaining or discount stores. There was the first time, I did bargain and shopping in the USA. From one I have learned, you can make techniques. Watch for sells, discounting price. Sometimes the sells of 30% are generally advertised, what always are used. On Sunday, usually announced. These clearly selling itself generally reordered, so the ----to new goods. Sunday newspaper, magazines and telephone book. When you want to get specific price. Illustrated an example, you can payed 80% less than they pay for. -----	The passage was about getting low price or bargaining in shopping in the USA. There are three main ideas. First, you can get a discount sales in stones by local newspaper on Sunday. Sometimes, there are some clearing sale in stores. So you can get great bargain in clearing sales because the store owner wants to change the places for new goods. Second, you can buy things through coupons and you can find it in magazines in Sunday or telephone book. The coupons may give you 40% discount anyplace, such as furniture, etc. if you get the coupons, you can save 80%. Third is in other stores and garage in newspapers or local --- The conclusion is that you can get a good bargain if you explore and find suitable ways through friends and neighbours.
	2	It is a passage title bargains or fixed price shopping. The author is used to bargaining in his home country, but he find that bargin is not allowed in US large stores. In US, sales discount is a more common way to promote sales. You can find sales information in newspapers, local books or telephone books. There are also some foreign techniques when you buy something in US stores, because the stores have techniqual discount ways. In US, you can also go to the garage or second-hand store to buy some cheap goods you need.	The passage is about bargains or fixed price shopping. First, bargain shopping is not found in every shop in US. Second, it can be found in some discount shops, clearance shops and you can use coupon. Third, coupon can be found in Sunday paper, magazine and television. Fourth, purchase goods for sale can be found in some nearly expiration goods. Conclusion, bargain shopping is different in from our home country.

Unit 2 Hobbies and Interest

Examples		Control Group	Experimental Group
Low Proficiency	1	When I start running 7 years ago, Irunned 8 miles before I stopped breathly, --- miles than I --- 3 cups of miles. Without stopping, soon I got to the top of the hill, though it's hard to get my breath ack, Irunned comfortably. Ifeeledit's start to change my unfix. By taking exercise, if just calmed me down. And then, I saw many other runnors. Now there are many more. These people are running. --- in the last two years running become the biggest sport event. In 1982, Irelised that if I --- it, I would be rich. ---	This passage is about the speaker's experience of running. From many stops with breathless and aching reaction to his joining in Marathon. He makes great efforts.
	2	I started running 7 years ago and improve it by practicing. I found that if I train for it, it will in my reach.	This passage is about the author's experiences in running. He tells us his development in running sports.
Medium Proficiency	1	It is talking about the author's experience about running. He started running 7 years ago. In the old days, there were not so many runners. But now we can see many runners, including the young, old men and women. In the last two years, there was a London marathon competition. The author started his first Marathon running in 1982. it took 4 hours for him to finish 26.2 miles running.	This passage was about running. There are two main ideas. Firs, I started running as an exercise. Second, later, I took part in marathon and finally won it. The conclusion is sports in good for health.
	2	I started running 7 years ago. I take exercise and take part into activities. After a week I can run a quarter of a mile without stopping. I've never dreamd to participate marathon. In 1922, Irealized if I take more exercise, it would be within my reach. At last, I finished 26.2 miles in just 4 hours. It was the first time ofr me to stop for a breath after a quarter of mile.	The passage is about a man's running career. First, he ran miles and breathless aching, so he hogged some miles. Second, he ran out his energy and felt deaprately unfit. Third, he calmed to himself and adjust his breath. Fourth, the sports event were held, he ran----
High Proficiency	1	When starting running, the author can only run 1/4 mile. After a few weeks' exercise, he can manage a half. And at last, he can manage the whole way comfortably. Through this activity, he learned to deeply relax himself and calm down himself. He found that all kinds of people took this kind of activity. He thought that through exercise, he can manage this kind of activity, such as marathon.	The passage was about my running career. First, 1 years ago, I started running, then I feel aching, then I slow down and jog. Second, I feel desperately and breatheless, I stopped. Third, I clam down when I saw a few other runners. And I continue running. Forth, in the last 2 years, in 1982, in London, I ram the Marathon, with four hour's time, I achieve. The conclusion is that my running career with the achievement was over.

| | 2 | 7 years ago I can only run for a quarter of mile. Now I can run to next quarter of mile without stopping to the top parliament hill. I get up to hill comfortably, and stop to give breath back. I start running not because I'm unfit but the deep relax by exercise. In early days, there are few running but now there are many more because of the nature sports races. About 15 thousand aged from 8-85 attend the race each year on Sunday time. In the last 2 years, London marathon is held as the biggest event. In 1982, after 6 months training, my dream of attending the race has come true. I finished 26.2 miles in 4 hours. In every quarter of a mile I stopped for breath. | The passage is about a man's running career. First, he could only run a quarter of miles then felt breathless and aching. Alternate every one quarter of miles. Several weeks later, he could run to half the hill. Then, he could get up the hill comfortably. He started run because he was fat. He was in deep relaxion when doing exercise. At the beginning there were only few other sports men. Then there were a lot besides some macho and sports freak. At then, London marathon was very popular and held every Sunday. In 1982, afer six months training, I ran the marathon successful. The whole length was 26.2 miles. The conclusion is that my running career with the achievement was over. |

Unit 3 Arts and Culture

Examples		Control Group	Experimental Group
Low Proficiency	1	When people change place, there always be a culture shock. The feeling of culture shock generally sets in the first new weeks after coming a new place. A new place make new friends, learn about the new culture, force the food and language. Just give yourself some time to adapt this situation, and you fell better, try out objectively and don't worry make a mistake, usually the people will help you.	The passage is about culture shock. First, it tell us when we get to a new place we will suffer the culture shock inevitably. Second it tells us how to get over the culture shock. The author gives us some suggestions.
	2	Culture shock may include social customs, anetity and sickness. Here are some suggestions for your positive thinking. Don't expect your job perfect. You may feel annoyed so long and so hard for your trip.	This passage is about the phenomenon of culture shock, and the author tells some different ways to get over them. First, accept their differences. Second, have a open mind. Third, join in lots of activities.
Medium Proficiency	1	It is talking about culture shock. Many people go to the USA for different purpose. However, they all face the problem of culture shock. It makes them stressful and anxiety. They need to make friends and they can help them to learn the culture. The food and language are totally new to them. They will feel homesick. But there are something they can do. First, do not expect doing everything perfectly the first time. Second, learn from the roommates. They can help them a lot. Third, be willing to	This passage is mainly about the culture shock. First, getting over culture shock, such as food, language, communication styles. Second, it depend on yourself. Third, don't think American culture is worse or better. Experiencing different culture can be positive. The conclusion is culture shock is a normal part in different countries.

		2	try new things. Fourth, don't worry about make a mistake.	
		2	Every year, several thousands people go the America for different reason. Some of them may fell sickness because culture shock. Cultural shock is a natural feeling you will fell in a new environment. You can fell cultural shock in food, language and so on. How to deal with it depends on yourself. There are some suggestion. Don't expect do everything perfect at the first time, no matter how good you can speak the native language and matter how many information you've prepared. You should give yourself some time. You should quit the custome in your country and don't feel the US as a matter of worse. You should try and learn new things. Final the difference between your country and USA know and remember the reason that cause these differences. You can do as the native people. Thus you may do well.	This passage was about how to get over the culture shock. First, don't expect everything perfect the first time. You should learn to keep your open mind, try to understand new ideas, manners and so on. Second, you should understand your stereotype may be accurate, other culture also not be false. Culture shock is just different. Third, the reaction to culture is emotional to you, not logical. Experience of shock is positive, to by you and not go helping by yourself. Fourth, don't worry about making mistakes. Adjust to. Conclusion is that adjustment to culture shock needs preparation by most.
High Proficiency	1		Each year, several thousand people visit America for work, studies, business, pleasure and many other reasons. Everyone will experience a period of time of cultural shock when you make friends and learn their culture and customs. The term cultural shock is used to describe the anxiety produced in a new environment which can compare to homesickness. The food and language are totally difficult. It's you who decide whether you will feel better. There are some suggestions. Don't expect to do things perfectly for the first time. No matter how well you speak English, you have to prepare for a long time to adjust to the new culture. Don't think US culture better or worse, it's just different. This period is positive because you can learn a lot and look a way through it. Don't worry about making mistakes, try out a few thing. If you don't know what to do in a format setting, active participation in conversation is important.	The passage is about culture shock when people go abroad for businesses, studying, conferences ect. They have to adjust to the new environment by making new friends, knowing social customs. All that may be stressful to you that you meet everyday, food, language, etc., are totally new. If you have culture shock, the passage said, it depends on you to get over it. Don't expect everything perfect firstly. You have a process of adjustment from annoying to comfort. Two, have a open mind. Try to accept new ideas, manners, and communication styles, etc. not always do the things as you used to do. It's aemotional, not rational problem. You can get help from the natures who will be willing to help you, and you should follow their lead. Don't worry about making mistakes. Try to experiment new things of different culture.
		2	Culture shock is the anxiety when people come to new environment. It's the normal part of adjustament. It's you to decide how to face culture shock. There are three main point. First, don't expect to do perfect for the first time. Second, form an	The passage was about culture shocks. And the passage also give some suggestion when we suffer the couture shocks. First, we should do not expect to do things perfectly at the first time. Second,

		idea of new things quickly. Third, participate. Don't worry about making mistakes.	you should have a open mind which will help you to go over the culture shocks thire, the activities are necessary. We should participate the activities and make conversations with others. The conclusion is we will go over the culture shocks and adapt to the new environment very well.

Unit 4 Interpersonal Relationships

Examples		Control Group	Experimental Group
Low Proficiency	1	Listening is important. People communicate withtelephone. When we speak, we should know----how many methods-----	Speech is a main way to communication. Communication is a two-way process. Listening is very important, too.
	2	Communication is tow sides. Listening is important. Speech is communicate. There members of families we want to speak. Speech is in our daily life.	This passage is about communication. First, communication is medium part of reactions with one to another. Second, people communicate through telephone, teleprint and business letter for direct communication. Second you should know with whom, what to communicate in private or personal. Third, listening is an important method to convey and receive the information between listener and speaker.
Medium Proficiency	1	We hear a lot about communication these days. Just how important a part does speech play in this matter of communication? Speech is man's the method he uses more than any other. There are the members of our family, friends, clients, shop assistants. The oral conversation is often advantage because it is easier to convey the message.	This passage is about communication. It exists in our daily life. Who we communicate with, what we speak, how many methods we use in communication should be considered.While speaking, we also should consider time, manners or any other.
	2	We hear a lot about communication these days. Speech is man's most direct form of communication. There are the members of our family, friends, colleagues, employers, and the people you may never meet but you communicate over the telephone. It is important to remember that communication is a two-way process. The oral conversation is often efficient because it is easier to decide at once whether the message has been understood and accepted.	This passage was about communication. It showed us some methods which we may use to communicate in daily life. The ways of communication includes direct and indirect method. And the speaker and listener can influent each other. It also described some information are necessary when we want to make a communication with someone. The understanding of the information may influent the efficiency of communication. A clear speech is very important if we cannot listen clearly it may lead some misunderstandings.
High	1	The main methods of	This passage is mainly about

Proficiency		communication in business. The ways of communication includes direct and indirect method. And the speaker and listener can influent each other. It also described some information are necessary when we want to make a communication with someone. The understanding of the information may influent the efficiency of communication.	communication. First, there are several ways to communicative. Second, speech is a essential way. Third, communication is two sides. The conclusion is communication unavoidable in daily life.
	2	Speech is man's most direct form of communication. There are the members of our family, friends, colleagues, and the people you may never meet and so on. In order to make a successful communication, it is necessary to know whom and what he wants to communicate. The choice of which method to use depends on several factors. listening is an important method to convey and receive the information between listener and speaker. The essential quality in good communication is clear speech.	This passage is about communication. Speech is the major form of communication. There are many ways to communicate with each other, such as telephone, teleprinter and business letter. Choosing the communicating method depends on three factors, time, length and private or personal. Telephone is more personal while letter is customary. Besides, communication is a two-way process. Listening is also very important. Speech is the most direct way to convey meaning, because you can get the reaction immediately. Good listeners can help them communicate and the listeners' eagerness will make speaker speak more.

APPENDIX G

Listening Comprehension Test (LCT)

Part 1 Multiple-Choice Questions(30 points)

In Sections A, B, C you will hear everything once only. Listen carefully and then answer the questions that follow. Mark the correct answer to each question on your ANSWER SHEET.
Section A Conversations
In this section you will hear several conversations. Listen to the conversations carefully and then answer the questions that follow.
Questions 1 to 4 are based on the following conversation. At the end of the conversation, you will be given 15 seconds to answer the questions. Now listen to the conversation.

1. Why did the man ask the woman about the lecture?
A. His lecture notes weren't very good.
B. He didn't understand the lecture.
C. He couldn't attend the lecture.
D. His research was on the same topic as the lecture.

2. What was the topic of the professor's lecture?
A. Survival strategies for extreme Antarctic cold.
B. Why inactive volcanoes become active.
C. The principal causes of global warming.
D. The effects of volcanoes on the Antarctic ice sheet.

3. What information confused the man?
A. That a snow cover can cause ice to melt.
B. How heat can prevent ice from melting.
C. How water flows into the ocean.
D. Why volcanoes have a slippery surface.

4. According to the woman, what protects the interior ice from the warmth of the ocean?
A. Melting ice.
B. Snowfall.
C. Glaciers which serve as barriers.
D. Variations in temperature in Antarctica.

Questions 5 to 7 are based on the following conversation. At the end of the conversation, you will be given 15 seconds to answer the questions. Now listen to the conversation.

5. What is the main subject of the conversation?
A. How to increase one's speed in a bicycle race.
B. Major Canadian bicycle races.
C. The contribution of cycling to health.
D. An annual cycling event.

6. According to the woman, what is different every year?
A. The length of the course.
B. The route the cyclists take.
C. The number of participants.
D. The month in which the tour is held.

7. What does the woman imply about the participants?
A. They are not competing with each other.
B. They have to pay a high fee.
C. They tend to be beginning cyclists.
D. Most of them fail to finish the route.

Questions 8 to 10 are based on the following conversation. At the end of the conversation, you will be given 15 seconds to answer the questions. Now listen to the conversation.

8. What does the man want to do this summer?
A. Go to summer school.
B. Take a vacation.
C. Stay at home.
D. Earn some money.

9. What did the Dodd's do when they went away last summer?
A. They hired someone to stay in their home.
B. They left their pets with neighbors.
C. They rented their house to a student.
D. They asked their gardener to watch their home.

10. What is one responsibility the house sitter probably wouldn't have?
A. Walking the dog.
B. Cutting the grass.
C. Watching the children.
D. Feeding the fish.

Section B Passages

In this section you will hear several passages. Listen to the passages carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

Questions 11 to 14 are based on the following passage. At the end of the passage, you will be given 15 seconds to answer the questions. Now listen to the passage.

11. What does the professor mainly discuss?
A. Reasons for increased productivity.
B. How wristwatches are manufactured?
C. The industrialization of the United States.
D. The development of individual timepieces.

12. What was true of watches before the 1850's?
A. They were common in the United States, but not in Europe.
B. Only a few people had them.
C. People considered them essential.
D. They were not very accurate.

13. According to the speaker, why did some people wear watches in the 1800's?
A. They were a sign of wealth.
B. It was important to be on time.
C. It was fashionable to wear them.
D. They were inexpensive.

14. What effect did industrialization have on watchmaking?
A. Watches were of higher quality than ever before.
B. More clocks were manufactured than watches.
C. The availability of watches increased.
D. Watches became less important because factories had clocks.

Questions 15 to 17 are based on the following passage. At the end of the passage, you will be given 15 seconds to answer the questions. Now listen to the passage.

15. What is the talk mainly about?
A. The difficulty of breeding electric fish.
B. The medical importance of electric fish.
C. How certain fish use electricity.
D. How fish navigate.

16. What does the knife fish use electricity for?

A. To destroy tree roots.

B. To digest its food.

C. To protect its territory.

D. To find its way.

17. Why does the speaker suggest putting on headphones?

A. To hear a translation of her talk.

B. To hear signals produced by electric fish.

C. To hear sounds used to train electric fish.

D. To hear a tape about electric fish.

Questions 18 to 20 are based on the following passage. At the end of the passage, you will be given 15 seconds to answer the questions. Now listen to the passage.

18. What does the speaker mainly discuss?

A. The origins and characteristics of modem dance.

B. The influence of modem dance on ballet.

C. Pioneer modem dancers.

D. The training of modem dance choreographers.

19. Why were ballet performances unpopular in the United States in the early 1990's?

A. They were created in Europe.

B. They were conventional.

C. The theaters were crowded.

D. The tickets were overpriced.

20. What is a distinguishing feature of modern dance performances?

A. Lightness of movement.

B. Elaborate scenery.

C. Free expression.

D. Rigid choreography.

Section C News Broadcast

In this section you will hear several conversations. Listen to the conversations carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

Questions 21 and 22 are based on the following news. At the end of the news item, you will be given 10 seconds to answer the question. Now listen to the news.

21. Some Haitians are on strike in order to _____.
    A. get proper medical treatment   B. ask for their political rights
    C. protest against the U. S. decision   D. demand food supply aid from the USA

22. The strikers are denied entry into the U. S. because _____.
       A. AIDS virus has been found among them.
       B. they can not get political asylum in the U. S.
       C. the U. S. government has refused to take them.
       D. they don't accept proper medical treatment

Question 23 is based on the following news. At the end of the news item, you will be given 5 seconds to answer the question. Now listen to the news.

23. The U. S. auto makers decided to stop their action because _____.
       A. Japanese auto makers promised to stop dumping cars in the U. S.
       B. the government promised to solve the U. S.-Japan trade imbalance.
       C. threeU. S. companies have ended the U. S.-Japan trade imbalance.
       D. Japan agreed to sell cars at the agreed prices inside the U. S.

Questions 24 and 25 are based on the following news. At the end of the news item, you will be given 10 seconds to answer the question. Now listen to the news.

24. Where did the storms first strike?
    A. The eastern U. S.   B. The Gulf of Mexico
    C. The Canadian border   D. Some areas in Cuba
25. The storms have resulted in the following EXCEPT _____.
    A. death and damage   B. disruption of air services
    C. destruction of crops   D. relocation of people

Question 26 is based on the following news. At the end of the news item, you will be given 5 seconds to answer the question. Now listen to the news.

26. According to the news, France was strongly criticized for _____.
    A. conduction five nuclear tests on Wednesday
    B. carrying out a series of nuclear tests in the Pacific
    C. getting disappointing results in the nuclear program
    D. refusing to sign a global treaty banning nuclear test

Question 27 is based on the following news. At the end of the news item, you will be given 5 seconds to answer the question. Now listen to the news

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27. The news item is mainly about _____.
    A. air traffic problems   B. safety improvement
    C. the number of flights   D. flight training courses

Questions 28 to 30 are based on the following news. At the end of the news item, you will be given 15 seconds to answer the question. Now listen to the news.

28. How much has Shell invested in China so far?
    A. 1.6 billion USD   B. 1.6 million USD
    C. 5 billion USD   D. 5 million USD

29. According to Shell, what will happen around the year 2020?
    A. the energy resource supply of China will double.
    B. The energy resource supply of China will be down.
    C. China will borrow more foreign capital.
    D. The total investment of Shell in China will reach USD 10 billion.

30. What does Shell plan to do?
    A. Shell plans to cooperate with PetroChina in Nanhai Petroleum Chemical project.
    B. Shell plans to cooperate with PetroChina in the north-east gas transmission project.
    C. Shell plans to cooperate with China National Offshore Oil in Nanhai Petroleum.
    D. Shell plans to cooperate with PetroChina in the west-east gas transmission project.

Part 2 Summary Writing (30 points)

In this part, you will hear a passage twice. Listen carefully and then write a summary on your ANSWER SHEET.

APPENDIX H

TheListening Script of theWritten Summary in the LCT

Online Shopping

1. Online shopping is a multi billion business and is constantly growing. Many individuals favour this kind of shopping because of ease. For shoppers who work for lengthy hours, it would be hard to visit a store during standard trade hours. Online retailers allow orders twenty four hours a day and shoppers can easily shop from their place of convenience and whenever they have free moment available.

2. By online shopping, products from around the world can be purchased, by comparing details and price of the items. An item which is a regional specialty can be bought online without going in person to that location. In most occasions, the prices are cheaper online than in the high street stores. Online shoppers can send gifts to family members or friends as a surprise. It also saves the time of buying the gifts in high street, packing it carefully and shipping the gift.

3. While there are numerous advantages of online shopping there are some hassles and fear regarding them. Identity theft is the most key worry for those who fear about online shopping. But threat of identity theft with online shopping through a secure website is comparatively little. Most highly regarded online retailers will give a secure website for shoppers. If the client is unsure about the security there is always a choice of calling customer service to leave the order. One more worry is about dealing with returns. Some time the shopper will be financially liable for the cost of shipping the product back to the online vendor. This can be expensive if the product is oversize.

4. Another problem of online shopping is encountering misleading product information or shopper buying a wrong item. The simplest solution is to contact the customer service to verify whether or not the product for sale will suit your needs. Carefully read the fine print before you make a purchase. Another problem with online shopping is slow internet connection or a web site loading very slowly. Most of the reputable online retailers have dedicated servers with less than ten second loading time.

5. But the above problems are almost fully avoided if you shop in reputed online retailers. These retailers have secure web sites and concern about identity theft is almost nil. In addition they have dedicated servers and make every effort to load the web pages within ten seconds. In addition the prices are much cheaper, as they sell products directly from the warehouses. Online shopping in reputable sites will not only safe and secure, they also give the pleasure of high street shopping at your home comfort. (438 words)

APPENDIX I

Criteria for Assessing theParticipants' Written Summary in the LCT

The criteria for assessingthe participants' written summary in the listening comprehension test.Part 1 includes the scales criteria for the written summary in the LCT in terms of three categories of completeness, accuracy and coherence in general. Part 2 is about the scales criteria for the written summary in the LCT in terms of Completeness. Part 3 showsthe scales criteria for the written summary in the LCT in terms of Accuracy and Coherence.Part 4 is about the key points included in the written summary in the LCT.

Part 1:The Scales Criteria for the Written Summary in the LCTin General

Scale	Criteria for Three Categories in the Written Summary		
	Completeness	Accuracy	Coherence
5	Completely appropriate	Completely appropriate	Completely appropriate
4	Mostly appropriate	Mostly appropriate	Mostly appropriate
3	Generally appropriate	Generally appropriate	Generally appropriate
2	Not very appropriate but acceptable	Not very appropriate but acceptable	Not very appropriate but acceptable
1	Not appropriate and not acceptable	Not appropriate and not acceptable	Not appropriate and not acceptable
O	The mean score of the above three items		

O = Overall Score

Part 2:The Scales Criteria for the Written Summary in the LCT in Terms of Completeness

Scales	Criteria for Completeness in the Six Aspects					
	The passage is about ( )	There are 4 main ideas				The conclusion is ( )
		First ( )	Second ( )	Third ( )	Fourth ( )	
5	Totally complete, 5 key points included	Totally complete, 5 key points	Totally complete, 5 key points	Totally complete, 5 key points	Totally complete, 5 key points	Totally complete, 5 key points

		included	included	included	included	included
4	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included	Mostly complete, 4 key points included
3	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included	Generally complete, 3 key points included
2	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included	Not very complete, 2 key points included
1	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included	Not complete, 1 (0) key point included

Part 3:The Scales Criteria for the Written Summary in the LCT in Terms of Accuracy and Coherence

Scale	Criteria	Explanations	
		Accuracy	Coherence
5	Completely appropriate	Completely appropriate clauses and verb forms without grammatical mistakes	Completely appropriate transitions and function structures without any mistakes
4	Mostly appropriate	mostly appropriate clauses and verb forms, no or at most one grammatical mistake	Mostly appropriate transitions and function structures, no or at most one mistake
3	Generally appropriate	Generally appropriate clauses and verb forms, one grammatical mistake	Generally appropriate transitions and function structures, one mistake
2	Not very appropriate but acceptable	Not very appropriate clauses and verb forms, two or three grammatical mistakes	Not very appropriate transitions and function structures, two or three mistakes
1	Not appropriate and not acceptable	Not appropriate clauses and verb forms, more than three grammatical mistakes	Not appropriate transitions and function structures, more than three mistakes

Part 4: Key points included in Each Item of the Written Summary

Items / Aspects in the Summary		Key Points Included
This passage is about (the advantages and disadvantages/problems of online shopping and how to deal with the online shopping problems)		1.advantages; 2.disadvantages/problems; 3.online shopping; 4.deal with;5.online shopping problems
There are four ideas.	First, (Online retailers allow orders twenty four hours a day and shoppers can easily shop from their place of convenience and whenever they have free moment available.)	1.online retailers allow orders ; 2.twenty four hours a day ; 3.shoppers can easily shop ; 4. place of convenience;5.whenever they have free moment available
	Second, (By online shopping, shoppers can purchase products from around the world by comparing details and price of the items.)	1.online shopping, shoppers; 2.purchase products; 3.from around the world; 4.comparing details;5.price of the items
	Third, (Identity theft and dealing with return are the main worries for online shoppers.)	1.identity theft; 2.dealing with; 3.return; 4.main worries; 5.for online shoppers
	Fourth, (Other problems of online shopping include Encountering misleading product information and internet connection.)	1.other problems; 2.online shopping; 3.include; 4.Encountering misleading product information; 5. internet connection.
The conclusion is (The online shopping problems are almost fully avoided if you shop in reputed online retailers because online shopping in reputable sites will not only safe and secure, they also give the pleasure of high street shopping at your home comfort.)		1.online shopping problems; 2.almost fully avoided;3.shop in reputed online retailers;4.safe and secure, 5.give the pleasure of high street shopping at your home comfort.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Xiaolei Ding was born in August, 1976. She is a lecturer in the English Department of NanjingCollege for Population Program Management, Jiangsu Province, China. She obtained her master's degree in English Language Study from Guizhou University, Guizhou Province, China in 2004. In 2007, she enrolled in the Ph.D. Program of English Language Studies in theSchool of English, Institute of Social Technology, Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand. Her academic interests includes second language acquisition, English language teaching and learning, and EFL listening.