CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4 the researcher discussed the findings of this study, i.e., strategies used by proficient learners (PLs) and less proficient learners (LPLs), and factors distracting and facilitating learners in their understanding of the videos. These findings are summarized in Figure 5.1. In this last chapter the researcher will discuss implications of the findings, followed by suggestions for future research and conclusion of this study.

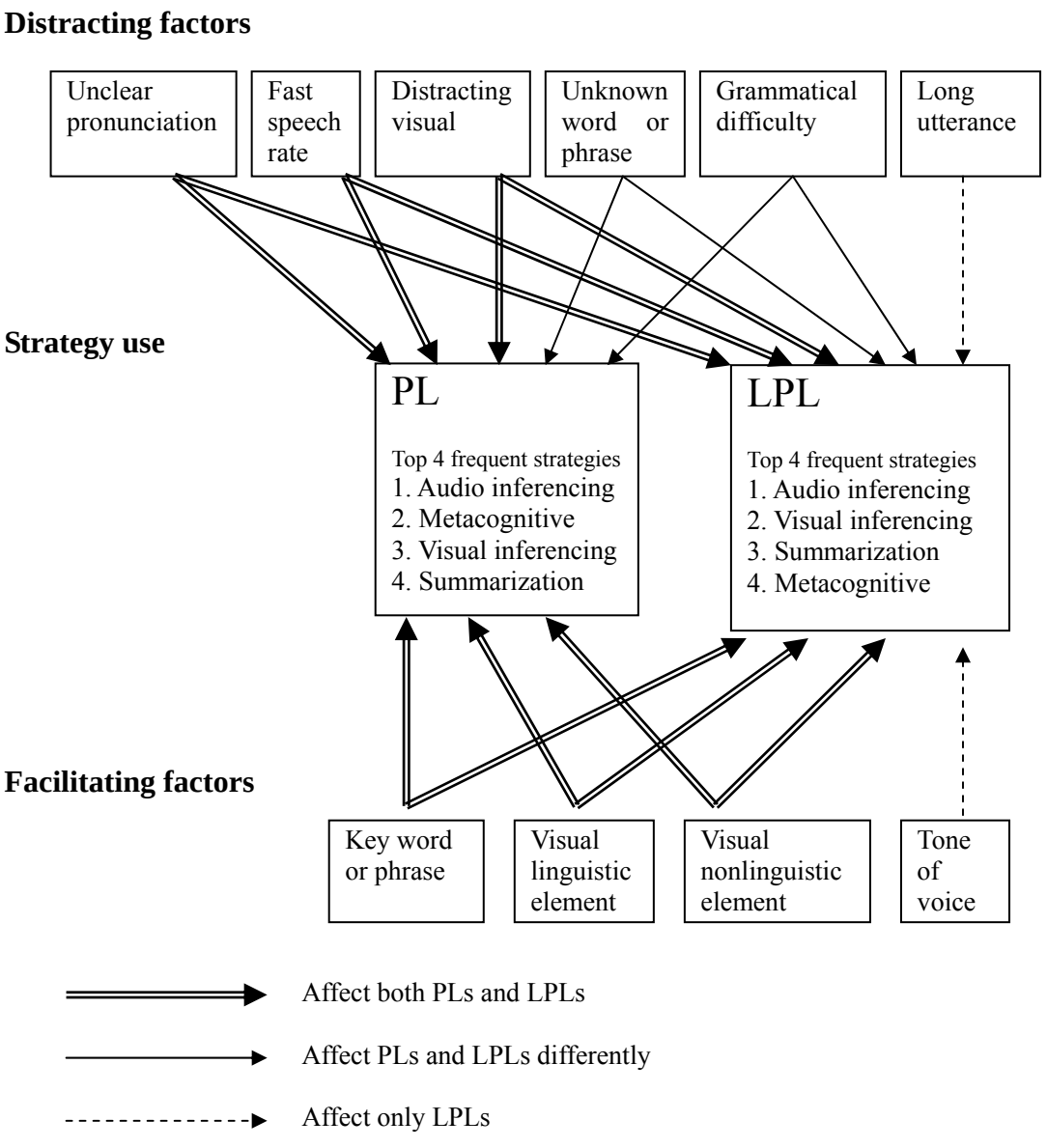

Figure 5.1
Findings of this study

Figure 5.1 shows the findings of this study, which were discussed in the previous chapter. As for strategy use, proficient learners' (PLs') higher listening proficiency allowed them to use more metacognitive strategies to review their understanding of the videos, while less proficient learners' (LPLs') lower listening proficiency caused them to use more cognitive strategies, i.e., audio inferencing, visual inferencing and summarization, in order to understand the content of the videos. As for distracting factors, three factors, i.e., unclear pronunciation, fast speech rate and distracting visual, distracted understanding of both PLs and LPLs. Long utterances had a distracting effect only on LPLs. In this study, unknown word or phrase and grammatical difficulty had different effects on both PLs and LPLs. When faced with unknown words or phrases, LPLs had difficulty recognizing words or phrases, while PLs understood the meaning or function of unknown words or phrases from the context in which they were used. As for grammatical difficulty, PLs understood the utterances that contained passive voice whilst the LPLs could not. As for facilitating factors, the researcher found that key word or phrase, and visual element helped both PLs and LPLs to understand the videos. Tone of voice was helpful for LPLs to understand the content of the videos. After summarizing the findings of this study, the researcher will discuss the implications of this study in the next section.

5.1 Implications of this study

The researcher describes the implications of this study from four perspectives, i.e., 1) theoretical implications, 2) methodological implications, 3) research implications and 4) pedagogical implications.

5.1.1 Theoretical implications

In this study the researcher developed a coding framework from Vandergrift's taxonomy (1997) in order to analyze the strategies used by the subjects. Some modifications were made to focus on video comprehension, while Vandergrift's taxonomy was developed for listening comprehension.

The researcher re-categorized Vandergrift's inferencing strategies and come up with two new inferencing strategies in order to focus on the use of visual elements in the videos: visual linguistic inferencing and visual nonlinguistic inferencing. Visual linguistic inferencing is a strategy by which learners use visual linguistic elements in videos such as headlines in newspapers and words on signboards in order to construct meaning. Visual nonlinguistic inferencing includes other types of visual elements in videos such as a character's body movements and facial expressions, as well as pictures of objects or places.

The videos used in this study had only four visual linguistic elements. The number of visual linguistic inferencing used by the subjects was also very small compared to the number of visual nonlinguistic inferencing. The ratio of visual linguistic inferencing and visual nonlinguistic inferencing was 1 to 20. (Table 4.2, page 64)

Visual nonlinguistic inferencing was extensively used by all the subjects in this study, especially by LPLs. It is evident that visual nonlinguistic inferencing helped LPLs more to compensate their lack of language proficiency and to understand the content of the videos.

5.1.2 Methodological implications

The researcher used three sets of data in this study: think aloud protocols, interviews and verbal summaries. The researcher could obtain useful data from the think aloud protocols and the interviews as expected. However, the verbal summaries as a method did not provide much useful data.

Thus, think aloud protocols are a better source in answering research questions because the subjects elaborated in detail their thinking processes. In think aloud protocols the researcher could base on the reports of the subjects moment by moment of an event of the story, and then see what problems the subjects faced and what elements helped their understanding of the videos. In order to familiarize the subjects to this task, the researcher conducted a training session with a reading material, advertisements and an animation. This session was useful and helpful for the subjects to rehearse verbalizing their thinking processes in think aloud protocols.

Using the interview protocol, the researcher asked questions about the difficulties the subjects encountered while watching the videos. The subjects provided their answers of what elements distracted their understanding and how they overcame the difficulties in understanding the content of the videos.

The verbal summary protocol was not as helpful as the researcher expected. The researcher expected to observe some differences in understanding of the videos between PLs and LPLs. However, the summary did not yield much difference between the two groups. It did not provide many clues that could help the researcher to identify

elements that helped the subjects in their understanding of the videos. It was difficult to detect which element helped the subject from the verbal summaries. During verbal summarization, the subjects had to remember what they had understood while watching a lot of sub-scenes. While constructing a summary, all the subjects reported what they had understood by removing problematic information. Their summaries, although some were simple and the others were in detail, reported the content correctly. Therefore, the data seem to suggest that think aloud protocols and interviews would yield significant and useful data compared to verbal summaries.

5.1.3 Research implications

The materials in this study are limited to only an animation and a drama, although other video materials were available for language education, such as documentaries and news programs. Animations and dramas included a lot of visual nonlinguistic elements. Visual nonlinguistic element included a wide range of visual input; for example, the character's body movements and facial expressions, the place in which characters talk, the objects a character interacts with, and various special effects such as focusing on someone or something to attract viewers' attention, and changing background color into darker shades to emphasize the character's sad feeling. On the other hand, visual linguistic elements, e.g., letters or headlines in news, were not used much in animations and dramas. Further studies could concentrate on the content which looks into different genres of videos such as news, documentary programs and advertisements.

Audio input in animations and dramas has more emotional elements compared to documentaries or news programs. In animations and dramas, characters reveal a lot of their emotions such as anger, excitement and depression when they speak. In some cases these help learners to understand the content of videos. In other cases these elements

cause difficulties for learners to catch the words or phrases due to the modification of sound caused by emotional speeches. On the other hand, in documentaries or news programs narrators focus on conveying information rather than expressing speakers' emotions. Further studies could be designed to investigate the influence of emotion in speeches on learners' listening comprehension.

These differences in visual and audio elements bring about different impact on learners' processes of video comprehension. The result of this study is not generalizable to other types of videos such as documentaries or news programs. Further research will be needed to clarify the difference in the thinking process while watching different types of videos and the elements which aid learners' comprehension.

5.1.4 Pedagogical implications

In the discussion on distracting factors (Research Question 2) and facilitating factors (Research Question 3), the researcher found three general factors that affect the subjects' understanding of the videos. The factors are 1) linguistic knowledge, 2) audio factors and 3) visual factors.

Linguistic knowledge includes two distracting factors, i.e., unknown word or phrase, and grammatical difficulty, and one facilitating factor, i.e., key word or phrase. A wide range of vocabulary helps learners to understand the videos. The researcher found from the analyses of Research Question 2 that both PLs and LPLs had difficulties in perceiving the words or phrases. LPLs tried to repeat the word correctly, while PLs used the information in the rest of the utterance and could infer the meaning or function of the words or phrases. Instructions for less proficient learners should consider influence of vocabulary on their listening comprehension.

Authentic materials such as animations and dramas contain a lot of unfamiliar words for learners. It is a time-consuming task to pick out all the unfamiliar words from the videos and make a long list. The long list may discourage learners to study with authentic videos. Therefore, instructors should consider the size of vocabulary needed to comprehend video content while selecting video clips for teaching purposes.

The researcher also found that key words played an important role for the subjects to understand the content of the videos. Therefore, key words and phrases are the most important things to learn in order to understand the videos. The vocabulary list must contain these words and phrases. Instructors should ensure the key words and phrases are explained well prior to listening activities.

As for grammatical difficulty, two elements were discussed in Chapter 4 (4.2.1.2 refer to pages 84-87). They are the passive voice and omission of elements such as subject or object in a sentence.

In authentic materials like animations and dramas, it is very difficult to catch all the content words and functional elements in utterances, due to various audio factors such as fast speech rate and unclear pronunciation. In the scenes, it was also difficult to listen to what functional elements accompanied the subject or object in the sentence. Therefore, preparing a document which shows the structure of the utterance in a written format will help learners to recognize various elements which made the utterance difficult to understand; for example, the missing words, the word order and the use of functional elements.

Audio factors include three distracting factors, long utterance, fast speech rate and unclear pronunciation, and one facilitating factor, tone of voice. In this research the researcher found that long utterances caused LPLs difficulties in understanding videos because they had no opportunity to guess the missing part during the pause or by using responses of the other characters. Therefore, teachers can choose videos which contain

less number of long utterances for LPLs to understand the content.

Fast speech rates caused both PLs and LPLs difficulties in understanding videos because the vast amount of incoming information prevented the subjects from constructing meaning. Therefore, a teacher can choose videos that has speech rate which is appropriate for their learners.

Long utterance and fast speech rate caused the subjects to experience overload in their thinking processes. The subjects were occupied in perceiving various incoming input, which made it difficult for them to understand and interpret the content of the videos.

To improve the capacity of processing language, Kadota (2007) suggested 'shadowing', which repeats audio text, e.g., the tape, without pauses. As learners need more cognitive resources in perceiving incoming sounds, they can use less cognitive resources to understand the content. He suggested that 'shadowing' puts extra cognitive load and helps to automate sound perception. This practice appears to work in the comprehension of video materials.

The researcher also found that unclear pronunciation was a distracting element in understanding the videos. Unclear pronunciation is usually produced when the characters spoke in anger, excitement or depression. It has to be pointed out that these tones of voice which showed anger or depression did help the subjects to understand the characters' emotions. In the example in Chapter 4 (4.2.2.2 refer to pages 90-92), the character hardly moved his or her lips and the utterance became very unclear. In this case even PLs had difficulty in perceiving the utterance. If possible, teachers should give some written material of the utterance and let learners pronounce the utterance and imitate the character's tone of voice. This can help learners to understand how the voice is modified with various emotions.

In the analyses of facilitating factors in the videos, tone of voice together with visual elements help learners, especially LPLs, to understand the conversation in the videos. It is evident that videos which contain these elements are easier for learners to comprehend the content.

In the analyses of data to address Research Question 1, the researcher found that the subjects used a lot of visual inferencing strategies to understand the content of the videos. In this process, the subjects used visual elements in the videos to construct meanings and/or make predictions. They made a lot of predictions based on visual elements. They often misunderstood the content and made wrong predictions. However, making a prediction enables the subjects to concentrate on information they need to confirm their prediction and to listen to the relevant information.

Therefore, teachers should include classroom activities such as watching video without audio input and then ask the students to guess the content based only on visual input, pausing the video and guessing the following scene in order to improve the ability to make predictions.

It is evident that visual factors helped the subjects to understand the content of the videos more effectively. The subjects in this study benefited a lot from visual nonlinguistic elements such as facial expressions, body movements, objects, places, flashbacks. In the analyses of data to answer Research Question 1, the researcher pointed out that Nodame Cantabile scene 1 contained less visual elements and the subjects used less visual inferencing strategies to understand the content of the scene resulting in the subjects encountering a lot of difficulties in understanding the videos. Gruba (2007) pointed out that as learners watched the same video several times, aural input took a more important role. Their attention shifted from visual input to aural input.

Therefore, a teacher can choose a video which contains a lot of visual elements in order to help learners to understand the content of a video. That may facilitate the learners to concentrate on the aural input in the videos and study expressions better.

5.2 Suggestions for further research

The aim of this study is to investigate learners' thinking processes while watching videos, i.e., learners' strategy use, distracting and facilitating factors in videos, in order to help teachers to select appropriate videos and design effective materials and activities. As for designing materials and activities, the researcher has given some suggestions in section 5.1.4, Pedagogical implication.

To help teachers to choose appropriate videos, further studies are needed. In this study the researcher has divided the distracting and facilitating factors of the videos into three categories, i.e., linguistic, audio and visual. Further studies will be needed to examine how each factor can be used to determine the appropriate video materials.

In this study the researcher examined the thinking processes of intermediate and advanced learners of Japanese language by using two kinds of video materials, i.e., an animation and a drama. However, this study has its limitations, i.e., the subjects' proficiency level and the genre of videos. Thus, the result of this study cannot be generalized into other contexts. Further studies will be needed to examine the thinking processes of elementary level learners. This will help to reveal the differences in strategy use among elementary, intermediate and advanced learners. It will also reveal the different distracting or facilitating factors and their effect on these learners' understanding of videos.

An animation and a drama were used to examine the subjects' thinking processes in this study. These videos contained a lot of body movements and tone of voice which showed characters' emotions, but they contained less visual linguistic elements such as signboards and headlines. On the other hand, documentaries and news programs contain a lot of visual linguistic elements, but they contain less body movement and tone of voice. These differences seem to affect learners' strategy use. Further studies will be needed to examine the effect of different genres of videos, such as documentaries and news programs. Studies on learners of elementary level and videos of different genres would reveal the different strategy use among learners of different proficiency levels and the factors affecting these learners' understanding of videos.

5.3 Conclusion

This study has provided some evidence that the subjects of this study used visual elements in understanding content of the videos. Regardless of the subjects' proficiency level, they used visual inferencing strategy and understood the video content when they could not understand the conversation among characters and vocabularies they used. Yet the researcher found one scene in which the subjects did not use much visual inferencing strategy. Visual elements in that scene appeared not to help the subjects to understand the content of the scene. From the analyses of distracting factors and facilitating factors, there were both occasions where visual elements helped the subjects' understanding and they led to misunderstanding. In this study, the research was conducted by using an animation and a drama. These materials contained different types of visual elements from those in documentaries or news programs. Further studies will be needed to examine the effects of visual elements in different genres on understanding content of videos.

Animations and dramas contain stories in which characters show emotions. The characters' emotions are expressed in their tone of voice in conversation, which helped the subjects' understanding of the videos. Therefore, instructors should select videos based on the objectives of their course. If the course objectives are to use character's gestures or facial expressions in order to understand content of videos, these factors must be contained in the videos which are used in class. If the course objective is to listen to the character's conversation, then videos which do not have much facilitating and distracting visual elements are appropriate.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will encourage other researchers to carry out a research in the area of video comprehension. It is also expected that a better understanding of learners' video comprehension will make it possible for language teachers to use various video materials effectively in their classroom and aid learners' language learning processes.