Autobiographical Memory in Social Anxiety: Analyses of Memory Narratives and Vividness

Chi-Wen Liang,[1] Wen-Yau Hsu,[1,2] Fu-Chien Hung,[3] and Wei-Ting Wang[1]

[1] Department of Psychology, National Chengchi University

[2] Research Center for Mind, Brain and Learning, National Chengchi University

[3] Department of Psychology, Chung Yuan Christian University

The present study aimed to investigate the memory narratives and vividness of autobiographical memory in individuals with high and low social anxiety, and determine whether high socially anxious individuals exhibit an autobiographical memory bias. Furthermore, the effects of state anxiety on memory bias were also examined. Thirty-two high socially anxious and thirty-two low socially anxious individuals participated in this study. The participants were asked to recall one anxiety-provoking social situation and one neutral situation. They were requested to form an imagery of the event and write a detailed description of it. They then rated memory vividness for each event. The results demonstrated that the high social anxiety group retrieved a higher proportion of self-related information than did the low social anxiety group when recalling an anxiety-provoking event. Furthermore, the high social anxiety group tended to rate the vividness of self-related information higher than environmental information for the anxiety-provoking event, compared with the low social anxiety group. The present study found no effect of state anxiety on memory bias.

Keywords: *autobiographical memory, imagery, memory vividness, social anxiety*