



The Investigation of the Perception of the Listening Strategies and Listening Difficulties
of Undergraduate Students

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts Teaching English as an International Language

Prince of Songkla University

2012

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| ผู้เขียน | นางสาวฐิติภัสร์ วัฒนธำจารุเกียรติ |
| สาขาวิชา | การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ |
| ปีการศึกษา | 2555 |

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยเชิงสำรวจนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจการเลือกใช้กลวิธีการฟังภาษาอังกฤษและปัญหาในการฟังของนักศึกษาระดับมหาวิทยาลัย ทั้งกลุ่มที่มีความสามารถในการฟังมากกว่าและกลุ่มที่มีความสามารถในการฟังน้อยกว่า ซึ่งกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ทำการศึกษาได้แก่นักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 3 เอกวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวน 146 คน ซึ่งศึกษาในมหาวิทยาลัยรัฐบาล 4 แห่งทางภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือแบบสอบถามการเลือกใช้กลวิธีในการฟังและแบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับปัญหาการฟังภาษาอังกฤษและแบบทดสอบการฟัง ผลการวิจัยพบว่ากลุ่มตัวอย่างใช้ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์และการแปลสิ่งที่ได้ฟังเป็นภาษาที่ 1 (กลวิธีในกลุ่ม cognitive) เพื่อช่วยในการฟังบ่อยที่สุด และใช้การแสดงท่าทางตามสิ่งที่ได้ฟัง (กลวิธีในกลุ่ม memory) น้อยที่สุด นอกจากนี้ยังพบความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติของความถี่ในการใช้กลวิธีการฟัง ระหว่างกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่มีความสามารถในการฟังมากกว่าและกลุ่มที่มีความสามารถในการฟังต่ำกว่า ได้แก่ การใช้ความรู้เดิมมาช่วยในการฟัง การฟังข่าวและการฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อน อีกกลวิธีที่พบว่ามีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติระหว่างกลุ่มตัวอย่างของแต่ละมหาวิทยาลัย คือการจดบันทึกย่อและการควบคุมสภาวะอารมณ์ นอกจากนี้ปัญหาการฟังที่พบว่ามีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติในด้านความถี่ของการประสบปัญหาการฟังระหว่างกลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้ง 2 กลุ่มดังกล่าว ได้แก่ ความสามารถด้านไวยากรณ์ที่ต่ำ การไม่สามารถจับใจความสำคัญในสิ่งที่ฟังหรือทำความเข้าใจกับการฟังบรรยายในชั้นเรียนได้ และการไม่สามารถตอบโต้กลับหลังจากที่ฟังได้ทันที งานวิจัยยังพบว่าการเลือกใช้กลวิธีในการฟังและปัญหาในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มตัวอย่างมีความสัมพันธ์กันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ การนำผลการวิจัยไปประยุกต์ใช้คือ ในวิชาการฟังควรมุ่งเน้นการฟังในบริบทที่เกิดขึ้นในชีวิตจริงมากขึ้น ควรให้เน้นให้มีการใช้กลวิธีในกลุ่ม cognitive และ metacognitive มากขึ้น และควรมุ่งเน้นให้มีการสอนการใช้กลวิธีการฟังเพื่อให้ผู้เรียนสามารถนำกลวิธีไปใช้เพื่อเอาชนะปัญหาในการฟังได้

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|----------------------|--|
| Thesis Title | The Investigation of the Perception of the Listening Strategies and Listening Difficulties of Undergraduate Students |
| Author | Miss Thitipat Wattajarukiat |
| Major Program | Teaching English as an International Language |
| Academic Year | 2012 |

ABSTRACT

This survey study aimed to investigate listening strategies used and listening difficulties encountered by more and less able undergraduate students. The subjects were 146 third year students, majoring in English from 4 public universities in the South of Thailand. The research instruments were a listening strategies questionnaire, a listening difficulties questionnaire, and a listening test. The results indicated that the subjects used grammar knowledge and translated what they had heard into L1 (cognitive strategies) to help their listening most frequently, and they physically acted out what they had heard (memory strategies) least frequently. The significant differences in frequencies of strategy use (using prior knowledge, listening to the news, and practicing speaking English with friends) were found between the more and less able students. Note-taking and emotional control was found to be used with significant different frequencies across the universities. Low grammar ability, inability to catch the main idea or understand a lecture, inability to respond to what one heard were the difficulties the subjects encountered at significantly different frequencies. Significant relationships between listening difficulties and the choice of strategies of the more and less able students were also found. The implications of the study were that listening in real-life contexts should be more included in listening courses. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies were suggested to be more emphasized. Strategy training should also be focused on to help overcome the listening difficulties.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monta Chatupote, my co-advisor Dr. Panida Sukseemuang of this thesis and all of my teachers in this program, who were abundantly helpful and offered invaluable assistance, support, and guidance. Their willingness to motivate me contributed tremendously to my thesis. Deepest gratitude is also due to the members of the supervisory committee, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adisa Teo and Asst. Prof. Dr. Chonlada Laohawiriyanon for giving their precious time to consider my research instrument. Without their knowledge and assistance this study would not have been successful.

My grateful thanks are extended to Ms. Thitinant Khamyod for her help in collecting the data and handling the instruments. I am also indebted to Ms. Putthida Chomchei for her help in doing the statistical data analysis, Ms. Sammireh Nagaratnam for kindly proofreading and editing my paper and giving good suggestions, and Ms. Natrada Rungrujthanachote for offering me friendly, and helpful library service.

Special thanks also to all my graduate friends (M.A. (TEIL), regular program, year 2009), especially Ms. Thitinant Khamyod, Ms. Sirion Wichian, and Ms. Thinadda Komol for sharing the literature and invaluable assistance, and for supporting me and giving their full attention to me to solve my problems. They always helped me by exchanging ideas and creating an enjoyable studying environment. They made my life at PSU a truly memorable experience and their friendships had made a deep impression on me. My heartiest thanks go to Ms. Busarin Watjanathawornchai for supporting me in many ways and offering me a job opportunity. I wish to express my love and gratitude to my beloved family for their understanding and endless love, throughout the duration of my studies. Finally, and most important of all, I would like to thank God for the wisdom, capability and strength that he gave me to keep me believing that this challenging experience would be possible and successful. Without help of those mentioned above, I would face many difficulties while doing this study.

Thitipat Wattajarukiat

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LIST OF PAPERS

This thesis is based on the following papers, which will be referred to in the text by their roman numerals:

- I. Listening Difficulties and Strategy Use by University Students
- II. An Investigation of English Listening Strategies Used by Thai Undergraduate Students in Public Universities in the South

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ตามที่ท่านได้ส่งบทความเรื่อง An Investigation of English Listening Strategies Used by Thai Undergraduate Students เพื่อตีพิมพ์ในวารสารศิลปศาสตร์มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ ทยละเอียดทราบแล้วนั้น กองบรรณาธิการได้พิจารณาแล้วยินดีให้ท่านตีพิมพ์บทความดังกล่าวในวารสารศิลปศาสตร์ปีที่ 4 ฉบับที่ 2 ประจำเดือนกรกฎาคม - ธันวาคม 2555 ทั้งนี้ กองบรรณาธิการจะจัดส่งวารสารไปยังท่านต่อไป

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เรื่อง อนุญาตให้แนบต้นฉบับบทความวารสารวิชาการลงในวิทยานิพนธ์รูปแบบใหม่

เรียน คณบดีบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

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บรรณาธิการและกองบรรณาธิการวารสารศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ ได้พิจารณาแล้วเห็นสมควรให้นางสาวฐิติภัสร์ วัฒนาจารย์เกียรติ นักศึกษาหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ ภาควิชาภาษาและภาษาศาสตร์ คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ แนบต้นฉบับบทความวารสารวิชาการเรื่อง An Investigation of English Listening Strategies Used by Thai Undergraduate Students in Public Universities in the South ตามที่ได้พิจารณาให้ตีพิมพ์ลงวารสารศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ ปีที่ 4 ฉบับที่ 2 เดือนกรกฎาคม-ธันวาคม 2555 เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งในการจัดทำวิทยานิพนธ์รูปแบบใหม่และเป็นเกณฑ์ในการขอสำเร็จการศึกษาระดับมหาบัณฑิต

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หนังสือตอบรับผลงานทางวิชาการ
วารสารศรีนครินทรวิโรฒวิจัยและพัฒนา (สาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์)

ข้าพเจ้า ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์จินตนา พุทธเมตตา บรรณาธิการ วารสารศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
วิจัยและพัฒนา สถานที่ติดต่อ สถาบันยุทธศาสตร์ทางปัญญาและวิจัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
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ขอรับรองว่า นางสาวฐิติภัทร์ วัฒณาจารย์เกียรติ มีบทความทางวิชาการ เรื่อง “ปัญหาในการฟัง
และการใช้กลวิธีที่ช่วยในการฟังของนักศึกษาระดับมหาวิทยาลัย” ได้ผ่านเกณฑ์การประเมินคุณภาพ
ทางวิชาการจากผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิ (PeerReview) และบรรณาธิการอนุมัติให้ตีพิมพ์ลงวารสารศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
วิจัยและพัฒนา (สาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์) ปีที่ 6 ฉบับที่ 11 เดือน มกราคม-มิถุนายน พ.ศ. 2557



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ที่ ศธ 0519.38/ 127

สถาบันยุทธศาสตร์ทางปัญญาและวิจัย
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เรื่อง อนุญาตให้แนบต้นฉบับบทความวารสารวิชาการลงในวิทยานิพนธ์รูปแบบใหม่
เรียน คณบดีบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

อ้างถึงหนังสือที่ ศธ 0521.1.11/894 ลงวันที่ 17 ตุลาคม 2555 เรื่อง ขอความอนุเคราะห์จัดทำหนังสือยินยอมให้ตีพิมพ์บทความ ตามที่นางสาวฐิติภัฏร์ วัฒณาจารย์ เกียรติ นักศึกษาหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ ภาควิชาภาษา ศาสตร์ คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ ได้ทำวิทยานิพนธ์รูปแบบใหม่ตามข้อกำหนดของบัณฑิตวิทยาลัยเป็นรุ่นแรกซึ่งตามข้อกำหนดการทำวิทยานิพนธ์แบบดังกล่าวจำเป็นต้องแนบต้นฉบับของบทความที่รอการตีพิมพ์เข้าไปในเล่มวิทยานิพนธ์ ดังนั้นทางบัณฑิตวิทยาลัยได้มีข้อกำหนดว่าด้วยเรื่องให้นักศึกษาแนบหนังสือยินยอมให้เผยแพร่ผลงานตีพิมพ์ซ้ำในวิทยานิพนธ์รูปแบบใหม่

บรรณาธิการและกองบรรณาธิการวารสารศรีนครินทรวิโรฒวิจัยและพัฒนา (สาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์) ได้พิจารณาแล้วเห็นสมควรอนุญาตให้นางสาวฐิติภัฏร์ วัฒณาจารย์ เกียรติ นักศึกษาหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ ภาควิชาภาษา ศาสตร์ คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ แนบต้นฉบับบทความวารสารวิชาการ เรื่อง LISTENING DIFFICULTIES AND STRATEGY USE BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ตามที่ได้พิจารณาอนุญาตให้ตีพิมพ์ลงวารสารศรีนครินทรวิโรฒวิจัยและพัฒนา (สาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์) ปีที่ 6 ฉบับที่ 11 เดือนมกราคม-มิถุนายน 2557 เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งในการจัดทำวิทยานิพนธ์รูปแบบใหม่และเป็นเกณฑ์ขอสำเร็จการศึกษาระดับมหาบัณฑิต

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดทราบ

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

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บรรณาธิการ

วารสารศรีนครินทรวิโรฒวิจัยและพัฒนา

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, language skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—play a vital role in the development of the world as a tool for exchanging feeling, attitude, or knowledge, and interacting with others across countries and over the continents around the world. This is especially true for English which is now a world language.

Of the 4 skills, listening—the process of understanding the utterances of spoken language, and then interpreting them based on situational contexts and background knowledge—is considered to be the most crucial one for language development and for learning other fundamental language skills, especially, speaking (Nunan & Miller, 1995). The more the spoken utterances are understood and recognized, the more one can orally respond, and the communication process occurs naturally (Brown & Yule, 1983; Nunan & Miller, 1995). This can be seen in children's acquisition of their mother tongue—they listen to utterances and take them as input, which they remember before imitating, trying them out in different situations, and eventually generate their own when they are ready to do so (Bot, Rowie & Verspoor, 2005). If sufficient input is not provided through this process, the learners will not be able to speak, read, or write well.

In many countries, including Thailand, English is used as a foreign language. However, it is believed to be very necessary for the highly competitive international labor market, and most students are encouraged by their parents, school, and government policy to learn English from kindergarten through higher education. In spite of that, a substantial number of Thai and other EFL learners with low proficiency in English communication skills (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011; Kijpoonphol, 2008; Tanveer, 2007; Zughoul, 1984, cited in Khan, 2011).

Thai students' low ability in listening comprehension is possibly due to the fact that they are in a situation that does not lend itself much to language acquisition. Thailand is a monolingual country, so Thai learners have very rare opportunity to listen and speak English naturally as do native speakers of English. English language teaching in Thailand mostly focuses on written language and grammar which are very

different from natural spoken English. In listening class, the learners are mostly taught to listen to speech delivered at a lower than normal speed by non-native teachers using written language as spoken, which is unnatural and unreal. This makes it very difficult for the learners to understand what native speakers say when they speak at a normal speech rate and use natural spoken language. The features of spoken language, for example, ungrammatical and reduced forms, informal words or slangs, fillers or silent pauses, and corrections, and many other factors (e.g. vocabulary, grammar knowledge, speech rate, topic familiarity, variation of speakers' dialects or styles, message characteristics, listeners, and surrounding distraction) (Brown & Yule, 1983; Underwood, 1989) can also contribute to failure in listening comprehension making the problems more serious.

To solve the abovementioned listening problems, many researchers have proposed different approaches, techniques, or devices to help the listeners comprehend, learn, or retain new input and to be more successful in listening comprehension. They are called 'strategies' which are categorized into various taxonomies (Chamot et al., 1999, 15-17; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, 198-199; Oxford, 1990, p.18-21; Robin, 1981, p.124-126; Stern, 1992, p. 263, cited in Khan, 2010). One of the well-known taxonomies is the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) originated by Oxford (1990), which has been widely used as a research instrument to investigate language learners' strategy use (Bull & Ma, 2001; Deneme, 2008; Rahimi et al., 2004; Shakarami et al., 2011).

Though there are ways to solve listening problems suggested by many linguists as effective, it seems that Thai learners still have problems in communication. Hence, it can possibly be concluded that, apart from the listening problems themselves, Thai learners also have problems in overcoming them. Ineffective, inappropriate use, a lack of strategy use or insufficient strategy training could result in the learners, especially lower ability ones not being able to overcome their listening problems, so their listening proficiency could not develop efficiently (Ishler, 2010; Park, 2010; Shuqin & Jiangbo, 2004).

The problems about low listening ability of Thai learners, the issues about listening difficulties the learners face and the listening strategies which can help improve the listening ability greatly aroused the interest of the researcher to study more about these issues in hope that the findings will contribute to the development of the listening course that can equip the learners with strategies to cope with the listening problems and eventually resulting in better comprehension.

2. OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to investigate listening difficulties encountered and listening strategies used by Thai undergraduate students. Specifically, this study aimed to:

- 2.1 discover strategies most and least frequently used as reported by the subjects
- 2.2 discover if there are differences in the choice of strategies among groups of students across universities and if so, how they are different
- 2.3 investigate if there are differences in listening difficulties encountered and in strategy use between more and less able students
- 2.4 explore if listening difficulties are related to the choice of strategies of more and less able students

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in the hope to show the findings which pointed to the problems the students faced and the actual strategies they reported using are expected to be informative guidelines for teachers to properly design their course syllabuses to suit the learners' needs in terms of listening tasks and strategy training. The strategies which the more able students reported using are expected to be introduced to the less able ones. As a result, the learners will be better equipped to overcome their listening difficulties; and their listening will eventually be improved. Most importantly, this investigation was carried out with the expectation that it could remind the organization responsible for developing students' listening ability to place due emphasis in the

curriculum on the importance of a listening course and strategy training that have great contribution to the learners' communication skills.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Target Population and Subjects

The subjects of the study were 146 undergraduate third year students of the 2010 academic year majoring in English at 4 government universities in Songkhla province, Thailand. They were randomly selected from section A of each university. The students in section A of each university were in general group in terms of proficiency. The reason for choosing only this section was because the largest number of students was in this section and some universities had only one section. The number of students in each university's section¹ was 43, 44, and 48, and 51 respectively.

In order to discover the differences between listening problems encountered and listening strategy used by the students with two different proficiency levels, the students were then intentionally divided into two different listening proficiency levels: higher and lower proficient students. Scores obtained from the listening test adopted from Cambridge IELTS Practice Test 7 (Cambridge, 2009) which consisted of 30 multiple choice questions and 10 gap filling questions were used to divide the students' proficiencies, with 27% technique. 39 students were in higher and 39 lower proficiency levels. However, when considering the test scores, it was found that all of the students were at beginner and low-intermediate levels of proficiency. It meant that their abilities were not distinct from each other, so the subjects of this study could not be defined as high and low proficient students as expected, instead, they were defined as more able and less able students.

4.2 Instruments

The instruments used in this study were the Listening Strategies Questionnaire and the Listening Difficulties Questionnaire. The questionnaires were developed and given to two experts on the related research issue for judgment, and then they were improved to ensure their validity. Then, they were given to a language

expert (native speaker of English) for proofreading to ensure language accuracy. After they had been revised, the second drafts of the questionnaires were translated into Thai to ensure that the students understand all of the questions before piloting them.

4.2.1 Listening Strategies Questionnaire

The items in the questionnaire were mainly adapted from SILL (Oxford, 1990). The questionnaire was used to elicit strategies the subjects perceived as using for listening both in social and academic contexts. In order to facilitate the subjects' full comprehension of the questionnaire items and to illustrate how each strategy was used, some of the contents in each item were illustrated with examples of strategy use given in Oxford (1990). There were 40 close-ended items in the questionnaire with a five-point scale from 1 to 5 which to mean: 'Never', 'Seldom', 'Sometimes', 'Usually', and 'Always' respectively. The questionnaire items were grouped together into categories—item 1-3 were memory category; item 4-17 were cognitive category; item 18-23 were compensation category; item 24-33 were metacognitive category; 34-38 were social category; and 39-40 were affective category (See appendix A).

4.2.2 Listening Difficulties Questionnaire

This was used to elicit listening problems the subjects perceived as encountering when they listen to English. The questionnaire was designed after a review of the literature about factors influencing listening comprehension (Underwood, 1989; Byram, 2004; Wilson, 2008). The questionnaire consisted of 26 close-ended with a Yes/No response (See appendix B).

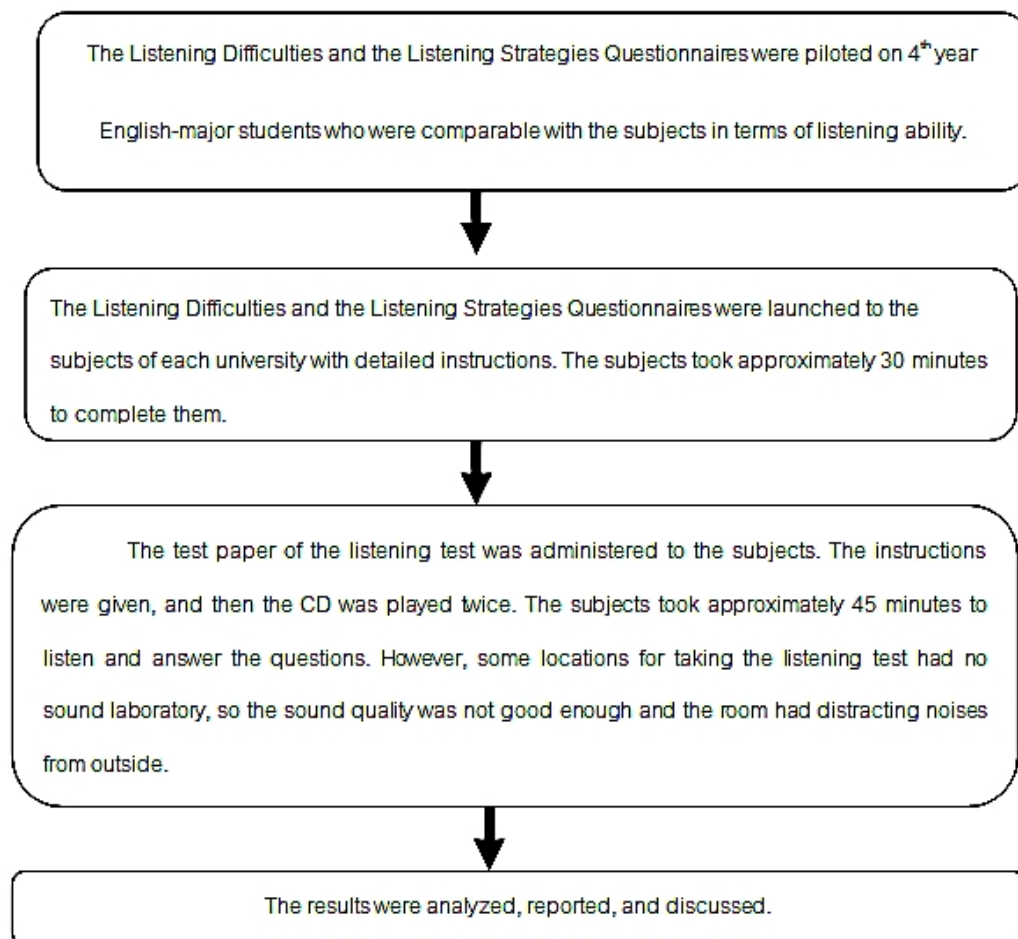
4.3 Pilot Study

A total of 46 fourth year students, majoring in English, participated in this study. They were considered a homogenous in terms of listening proficiency. They were asked to respond to the Listening Difficulties Questionnaire and the Listening Strategies Questionnaire, and then do the test. The reliability coefficient value of the Listening Difficulties Questionnaire was calculated and found to be 0.89 and it was acceptable.

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

The procedures of collecting data were presented in the flow chart below. It should be noted that the questionnaires were launched before the test in order to avoid the subjects' possible confusion that the questionnaires asking about the strategies and difficulties must be responded by basing on this test context. The study aimed to elicit the strategies use and the difficulties encountered in general contexts as perceived by them.

Figure 1 The Procedures of Collecting Data



The limitation of collecting the data was that most of the subjects completed only the specified questions in the questionnaire, and the open-ended questions asking for more details were mostly left blank. Moreover, certain number of

the subjects did not cooperate well in providing the data. For example, some students were very late and some asked to leave before the process ended.

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Descriptive Analyses (mean, SD, variance) were run to find out the mean of test scores, and the frequency of questionnaire responses.

4.5.2 t-test was run to find out significant differences in listening difficulties encountered and significant differences in strategies used between more able and less able groups.

4.5.3 One Way ANOVA was used to find differences in choice of strategies among 4 groups of students across the universities.

4.5.4 Pearson Correlation Analysis was applied to find out correlations between listening difficulties were and the choice of strategies.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate listening difficulties encountered and listening strategies used as perceived by more able (MAS) and less able students (LAS) in social and academic contexts. The findings were as follows.

Listening difficulties encountered by MAS and LAS

The overall picture showed that there were no significant differences in listening difficulties encountered by MAS and LAS, but MAS encountered most of the difficulties less frequently LAS did.

Significant differences were merely found in the difficulties in catching main ideas and low grammar competence. The results also showed that MAS more frequently employed some strategies contributing to their exposure to English that were in cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategy categories such as listening to music, listen to the news, watching movies in English, trying to use previous knowledge to help comprehension, or finding opportunities to speak English. The difficulties in catching

main ideas and low grammar competence were perceived by the subjects of this study as the key factors affecting their listening ability, especially by LAS, who faced the difficulties more frequently than MAS at significant levels. It might be inferred that MAS, who could score higher than LAS in the listening test, faced those difficulties less frequently than LAS because they employed the strategies, especially in metacognitive category which might have helped them to deal with speech rate, to be knowledgeable in various topics, and to gain background knowledge. With all these they might be able to catch the main ideas better than LAS did.

However, all of the subjects responded to the questionnaire asking about English learning background that they have never been to any foreign countries more than a month and rarely talked to somebody in English. It means that the subjects did not have much opportunity to practice communicating in English since they learn English in EFL learning environment which provide them with little exposure to English, and little chance to communicate with English native speakers or English speakers with different accents in real life situations both in social and academic contexts. This could be inferred that EFL learners' oral communication abilities (listening-speaking) might not correspond to their levels of proficiency measured by typical English exams, for example, high proficiency does not mean high ability to communicate. They might be able to read or write well, but when they have to listen and respond, they may face problems since they have the insufficient exposure to real life English and the pattern of language practice in EFL classroom does not include cultural and educational backgrounds which are important factors affecting learners' comprehension ability in listening . The lack of practice could make them unaware of some listening problems they were facing and have no idea how to solve them effectively.

For all of the difficulties the subjects perceived encountering when they listen to English, strategies could be the tools helping facilitate their listening tasks or overcome their listening difficulties. In order to find out whether the subjects used any particular strategy categories to facilitate some particular difficulties they encountered and which of strategies they perceived as being used, correlation analysis was employed.

The results revealed that not all of the 26 difficulties were significantly related to the strategies employed by the subjects. The MAS reported only strategies they did not use. Social, affective, and cognitive strategy categories were not employed to facilitate some of the difficulties, and cognitive was the category most MAS did not use. For LAS, they reported strategy categories they did and did not use to facilitate the difficulties. Metacognitive and social were the categories used most to help overcome the difficulties, while memory, affective, and compensation were not used to cope with certain difficulties. Moreover, both MAS and LAS encountered two difficulties: using linking words and using prior knowledge to help comprehend what they have heard, but the strategies they reported as not being used were different as shown in the table below.

Table 1 Significant Relationships between Listening Difficulties Encountered and Listening Strategies Used by MAS and LAS

| Listening Difficulties | MAS | | Listening Difficulties | LAS | |
|--|-----|-----------|--|-----|--------------|
| | use | not use | | use | not use |
| (1) unable to use linking words to help comprehend the listening texts | - | cognitive | (1) unable to use linking words to help comprehend the listening texts | - | memory |
| (2) unable to use prior knowledge to help comprehend the listening texts | - | cognitive | (2) unable to use prior knowledge to help comprehend the listening texts | - | affective |
| (3) being absent-minded when listening to the news | - | cognitive | (3) unable to catch the main idea | - | compensation |
| (4) delay in responding to what they have heard | - | cognitive | (4) being easily distracted by surroundings | - | compensation |

| Listening Difficulties | MAS | | Listening Difficulties | LAS | |
|---|-----|-----------|---|---|---------|
| | use | not use | | use | not use |
| (5) different accents | - | social | (5) unable to distinguish between implicit and explicit meaning | metacognitive social cognitive | - |
| (6) cultural background | - | social | (6) unable to use signal or transitional words to help comprehend the listening texts | metacognitive social | - |
| (7) no concentration to listen to a lecture | - | affective | (7) unable to use conjunctions to help comprehend the listening texts | metacognitive social compensation memory | - |

The results showed that some problems were encountered by both MAS and LAS, while some were encountered by one of the groups only. Furthermore, the strategies they used or did not use were not the same. This is probably inferred that the learners might face some listening difficulties at certain degrees, although their proficiencies are different. The level of proficiency of the learners may not be used to indicate the number of difficulties they face or the strategies they use, but the frequencies. However, the results of the significant correlations shown in the table at least reflect that the subjects were aware of some difficulties they seriously encountered even though most of them did not report what strategies they used to overcome each particular one

Strategies Used by MAS and LAS.

Further investigation into listening strategy use as perceived by all subjects in terms of frequency and choice of strategies revealed some insights into the subjects' background in English language learning.

The individual strategies most frequently used by the subjects were using grammar knowledge to help listening and translating what they heard into L1 (cognitive), while the individual strategy least frequently used was physically acting out what they heard (memory). Moreover, taking notes (cognitive) and controlling emotions (affective) to help facilitate listening tasks were used among the subjects across the universities at significant levels. The significant differences were found among the universities where most the students got high scores in the listening test. This could be implied that these two strategies might have positive effect on students' listening abilities.

Although the results of the current study agreed with Jou's (2010); Lui's (2008); and Teng's (1998) studies showing that the subjects most frequently translated what they heard into L1, they were inconsistent with results of other studies on listening strategy used by EFL learners (Anugkakul, 2011; Boonkit, 2002; Chang, 2009; Chulim, 2008; Jou, 2010; Pawapatcharaudom, 2007; Shimo; 2002) showing that guessing the meaning by using available clues or contexts were used most frequently. This showed that the subject groups were not risk-takers and relied more on grammar rules. It means that they focused more on discrete points of language which is likely to be a linguistic cue rather than a contextual one, so this probably indicate that the subjects' proficiencies are rather low. Another reason might be that they were familiar with a particular culture of learning and educational system that mostly focused on Grammar Translation Method GTM.

Physically acting out what have listened to (memory) was least frequently used by the subjects. This result is in line with Teng's (1998) study probably because physically acting out is one learning method closely related to Total Physical Response teaching method (TPR), which is not used widely in general EFL classroom, so the subject might not know that it could be used as a strategy to help listening.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the current study's results showed that the listening difficulties encountered and listening strategies used by MAS and LAS were not significantly different in terms of frequency and choice. This is in contrast with the results of other EFL studies which found significant differences between the high and low proficient learners. This probably suggests that the clear distinction between high and low levels of proficiency could result in different findings. However, the results are consistent with some EFL studies' results indicating that MAS had listening difficulties less frequently than LAS both with significant and not significant differences levels, and MAS employed strategies more frequently than LAS. This may suggest that for EFL students, proficiency level differences, learning styles, or motivation might be the influential factors affecting the frequencies and the differences in preferences for the choice of strategies (Chang, 2005, Matinez, 1996). Moreover, even though the current study found that the subjects encountered similar listening difficulties and employed similar strategies, it is still unable to assume which particular strategies the learners used to tackle the difficulties.

The findings of this study could have recommendations for EFL teachers and further research as follows.

6.1 The choice of the subject group should be considered more carefully in terms of proficiency level distinction in further studies which aim to find out the differences in strategy use between two different proficiency groups. The differences in proficiency levels should be clear.

6.2 Teachers should be more aware of the benefits of strategy training and include strategy instruction in their curricula. It could be very essential to provide strategy training for the subjects so that they will be aware that they will have certain difficulties when they listen, so they need to tackle them with some available strategies and use them systematically and effectively.

6.3 The teacher should expose their students to various types of texts that will help them to be better prepared for listening and train them to listen selectively for a purpose in various contexts. Moreover, teachers should focus more on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or oral-based teaching in order to motivate the students to practice communicating in English and create learning environment which contribute to the improvement of strategy use. If oral-based teaching is more emphasized on a language curriculum than text-based communication, EFL learners will be better in listening comprehension (Underwood, 1989).

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APPENDIX A

THE LISTENING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE ADAPTED FROM SILL
(R.OXFORD, 1990)

Part I Personal Background

Direction: Answer the following questions as truthfully as possible.

How long have you been studying English?

10 years more than 15 years others (please specify) _____ years

Have you ever studied in a bilingual school?

() Yes (For ___ years / ___ months) () No

Have you ever stayed in any English speaking country for more than a month?

() Yes If so, which country have you been to? (_____) () No

Do you have anyone who usually talks to you in English (e.g. friends, parents etc.)?

() Yes () No

How often do you learn English through the following sources?

TV () never () seldom () sometimes () usually () always

Radio () never () seldom () sometimes () usually () always

Internet () never () seldom () sometimes () usually () always

Part II Listening Strategies Questionnaire

Please read the following strategy items and rate each one according to the frequency with which you use it.

Assessment Scale: 1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. usually 5. always

Direction: Please \surd check only **one** of the columns next to each language issue that **best** describes your answer.

| Items No. | strategies | never | seldom | sometimes | usually | always |
|-----------|---|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | I relate new words I heard to other words I have already known, for example, I do not know the word 'billboard', but I know the meaning of 'board', so I know that the meaning might be about a label. | | | | | |
| 2 | I mentally imagine what I am listening to. | | | | | |
| 3 | I physically act out what I heard to help me remember. | | | | | |
| 4 | I practice listening English and repeating after the audio CD in order to be accustomed to original sounds of English. | | | | | |
| 5 | I practice listening English pronunciation and intonation from audio CDs. | | | | | |
| 6 | I try to listen for expressions or language patterns I know to help me get the meaning of general conversation (e.g. Would you mind...? I'm afraid that...., You can't miss it.) | | | | | |
| 7 | I try to grasp the main idea while listening (e.g. listening to a lecture or the news. | | | | | |
| 8 | I try to listen for the main idea before focusing on other small details. | | | | | |
| 9 | I use my previous knowledge of grammar to help listening. For example, when I hear "would you like to go with me?" I suddenly know this sentence is a question because it begins with a verb (would). | | | | | |
| 10 | I break down a new word, phrase, sentence or paragraph into its component parts before finding the meaning of the whole word, for example, I hear the phrase 'premeditated crime', then I break it into 3 words: crime (bad act), pre (before), meditate (think about), so I know the whole meaning, a crime which is planned in advance. | | | | | |
| 11 | I try to translate what I am listening to into Thai. | | | | | |
| 12 | I try to interpret what I am listening to in English only. | | | | | |
| 13 | I try to take notes while listening. | | | | | |
| 14 | I try to make summaries of what I am listening to. | | | | | |
| 15 | If there are some questions to answer, I will review all of them in advance in order to predict the possible answers or the points to focus on. | | | | | |
| 16 | I try to use my previous knowledge and my common sense to help interpret a spoken text. | | | | | |

| Items No. | strategies | never | seldom | sometimes | usually | always |
|-----------|---|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | I try to pronounce a word or phrase I am hearing over and over again to help me remember its meaning. | | | | | |
| 18 | I make a guess by using my linguistics knowledge: intonation, pausing between words or phrases, and stress. | | | | | |
| 19 | I make a guess at what I am listening to by using contextual clues elicited from my general knowledge. | | | | | |
| 20 | I make a guess at what I am listening to from titles or nicknames which help imply the status or relationship of the speakers (e.g. my dear, my honey (close relationship), Mr., Dr., Prof. (distant or position)) | | | | | |
| 21 | In conversation, classroom lecture, or presentation, I make a guess at what I am listening to by interpreting the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions, or gestures. | | | | | |
| 22 | I make a guess at what I am listening to by using background noise. | | | | | |
| 23 | I make a guess at what I am listening to from the text structure: titles, introductions, conclusions, transitions (e.g. first..., second..., the most important idea is..., in short...). | | | | | |
| 24 | I think in advance what I am going to listen to, and I try to predict what the speaker will say next. | | | | | |
| 25 | Before taking a classroom lecture, taking a listening exam, or listening to a presentation, I prepare myself for the listening tasks by reviewing the contents, vocabulary, or exercises. | | | | | |
| 26 | I try to pay full attention to and concentrate to what I am listening to, especially when I do not understand it. | | | | | |
| 27 | I decide in advance to selectively listen to some parts of the whole text. | | | | | |
| 28 | I think about listening purposes in advance and listen according to the purposes in order to get more comprehensive information and to use appropriate prior knowledge to help listening. (e.g. for fun (TV or movies), for answering key questions (conversation), for broadening your knowledge (the news), and for gathering details (a lecture)) | | | | | |
| 29 | I watch English TV programs. | | | | | |
| 30 | I watch English movies without subtitles. | | | | | |

| Items No. | strategies | never | seldom | sometimes | usually | always |
|-----------|---|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31 | I listen to English music. | | | | | |
| 32 | I listen to the news in English. | | | | | |
| 33 | I try to keep up with fast speech rates of the speakers until the end. | | | | | |
| 34 | In interactive listening: conversations, classroom lectures, presentations, I will ask a speaker to slow down, paraphrase, repeat, explain, or clarify what he/she has said. | | | | | |
| 35 | I seek as many opportunities as possible to practice listening such as looking for someone who can talk to me in English, going to English camp. | | | | | |
| 36 | During face to face communication, I try to notice the behavior of others such as a facial expression, mood, attitude, or tone of voice in order to better understand what people said. | | | | | |
| 37 | I practice listening or speaking in English with my friends. | | | | | |
| 38 | I try to learn more about the cultural knowledge of other countries where English is used. | | | | | |
| 39 | I try to relax myself, breathe deeply, meditate, and clear my mind while doing some listening tasks such as listening test, a lecture, or a presentation. | | | | | |
| 40 | I encourage myself before doing listening tasks (e.g. listening tests, interviews) by saying positive statements such as "I can do it." | | | | | |

APPENDIX B

THE LISTENING DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Direction: Read each of the following listening difficulty items.

Check (✓) YES if you encounter any of them. Check (✓) NO if you do not encounter any of them.

| # | Items of difficulties | Yes | No |
|---|---|-----|----|
| 1 | My grammar competency is low, so I cannot understand what I am listening. | | |
| 2 | I cannot interpret the meanings of the spoken text because I am unfamiliar with the contexts. | | |
| 3 | I cannot understand the spoken text because of fast speech rate. | | |
| 4 | I cannot grasp the main idea though I know almost every word I heard. | | |
| 5 | I cannot understand linking words in a sentence. For example 'turn off' is spoken as 'tur noff', 'Can I have a bit of egg?' is spoken as 'Ca ni ha va bi to fegg?'. These can make me misunderstand their meanings. | | |
| 6 | I cannot use conjunctions: since, for, but, so, as, although, etc. to help interpreting the meanings of a spoken text. | | |
| 7 | I cannot use signal or transitional words that indicate different ideas: "A key concept is...", "As a result...", "In conclusion..." to help interpreting the meanings of a spoken text. | | |
| 8 | I cannot understand what I am listening when there are a lot of new and unfamiliar vocabulary. | | |
| 9 | I cannot understand various accents except American or British English. | | |

| # | Items of difficulties | Yes | No |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 10 | I cannot distinguish the meanings between implicit and explicit from speakers' intonation or stress (e.g. using rising intonation for questioning, for sarcasm, for ridicule). | | |
| 11 | I do not understand the spoken text because I do not know the meaning of idioms or slangs. For example, In New York City, a lot of stores are opened 24.7 , I can take a week to send a letter by snail mail , He was warned that his job was on the line because his lack of concern for his duties. | | |
| 12 | I do not understand the meaning of a spoken text because of reduced speech | | |
| 13 | I cannot use my general background knowledge to help me to understand what I am listening to. | | |
| 14 | I cannot understand what I am listening without gestures or illustrations. | | |
| 15 | I cannot understand what I am listening for lack of cultural background knowledge. | | |
| 16 | When I listen to fast songs, I cannot interpret the meaning, though the language level is not too difficult. | | |
| 17 | I cannot understand English movies without subtitles. | | |
| 18 | My mind always wanders when I listen to the news for a long time. | | |
| 19 | In interactive listening: conversation, classroom lecture, presentation, I know almost every words I heard, but I still do not understand what the speakers are saying. | | |
| 20 | In interactive listening: conversation, classroom lecture, presentation, I take a lot of time to respond when the speakers ask me some questions. | | |

| # | Items of difficulties | Yes | No |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 21 | I cannot understand what I am listening while attending a classroom lecture. | | |
| 22 | I cannot take notes while I am listening. | | |
| 23 | I cannot read explanatory notes and look at a whiteboard while listening. | | |
| 24 | I cannot concentrate at all while listening in class during a classroom lecture. | | |
| 25 | I am easily distracted by surrounding things such as temperatures, sounds, people, and classroom atmospheres. | | |
| 26 | I always feel nervous or stress while listening anything in English. | | |

APPENDIX C

แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับปัญหาและกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ (ฉบับภาษาไทย)
(ดัดแปลงจาก Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), (R. Oxford, 1989))

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไป

คำชี้แจง กรุณาตอบคำถามต่อไปนี้ตามความเป็นจริง

1. ตั้งแต่อดีตจนถึงปัจจุบัน คุณเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมาเป็นเวลาที่ปี
() 10 ปี () มากกว่า 15 ปี () อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ (_____ปี)
2. คุณเคยเรียนในโรงเรียนระบบสองภาษาหรือไม่
() เคย (เป็นเวลา _____ปี/ _____เดือน) () ไม่เคย
3. คุณเคยอยู่ประเทศที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการสื่อสารมาเป็นเวลานานกว่าหนึ่งเดือนหรือไม่
() เคย (กรณาระบุชื่อประเทศ _____) () ไม่เคย
4. คุณมีบุคคลที่คุณพูดคุยด้วยโดยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นประจำหรือไม่ เช่น เพื่อน พ่อแม่ เป็นต้น
() มี () ไม่มี
5. คุณฟังภาษาอังกฤษจากสื่อชนิดต่างๆ นอกห้องเรียนมากน้อยเพียงใด
ทีวี มากที่สุด มาก ปานกลาง น้อย น้อยที่สุด
วิทยุ มากที่สุด มาก ปานกลาง น้อย น้อยที่สุด
อินเตอร์เน็ต มากที่สุด มาก ปานกลาง น้อย น้อยที่สุด
*หมายเหตุ สื่อทุกประเภทรวมกิจกรรมการฟังทั้งดูหนัง ฟังเพลง ดูหรือฟังข่าว

ส่วนที่ 2 แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ

คำชี้แจง อ่านกลวิธีการฟังในแต่ละข้อต่อไปนี้ แล้วประเมินถึงความถี่ของแต่ละกลวิธีที่คุณใช้ในระหว่างที่ฟังให้ตรงตามความเป็นจริง จากนั้นทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่องความถี่ดังกล่าว

ระดับความถี่ 1 = ไม่ใช้ 2 = ใช้บางครั้ง 3 = ใช้บางครั้ง 4 = ใช้บ่อย 5 = ใช้ทุกครั้ง

| ข้อ | กลวิธีในการฟัง | ไม่เคย | นานๆครั้ง | บางครั้ง | บ่อยๆ | ทุกครั้ง |
|-----|---|--------|-----------|----------|-------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | ฉันเชื่อมโยงสิ่งใหม่ที่ได้ฟังกับความรู้เดิมที่มีอยู่แล้ว เช่น คำใหม่ที่ได้ยินคือคำว่า billboard ฉันรู้ความหมายของคำว่า board อยู่แล้ว จึงเอาคำว่า bill มาเชื่อมโยงกับ board ก็สามารถเดาได้ว่าความหมายจะเกี่ยวกับเรื่องของกระดานหรือป้าย | | | | | |
| 2 | ฉันจินตนาการถึงสถานการณ์หรือวาดภาพตามไปกับสิ่งที่ฉันได้ฟัง | | | | | |
| 3 | ฉันแสดงท่าทางตามสิ่งที่ได้ฟังเพื่อช่วยในการจำ | | | | | |
| 4 | ฉันฝึกฟังภาษาอังกฤษซ้ำๆ และพูดตามในใจตามเทปเพื่อให้คุ้นเคยกับเสียงของเจ้าของภาษา | | | | | |
| 5 | ฉันฝึกฟังเสียงภาษาอังกฤษ การออกเสียงคำ (pronunciation) และการออกเสียงสูงต่ำ (intonation) ที่ใช้ฝึกฟังโดยเฉพาะจากเทปหรือซีดีพร้อม | | | | | |
| 6 | ฉันพยายามฟังสำนวนหรือรูปแบบภาษาที่ตายตัวไม่เปลี่ยนแปลง เช่น Would you mind.....?, I'm afraid that....., Yes, that's right เพื่อช่วยให้เข้าใจการฟังประโยคสนทนาทั่วไป | | | | | |
| 7 | ฉันพยายามจับใจความสำคัญ เช่น เมื่อฟังการบรรยายในชั้นเรียน การฟังข่าว | | | | | |
| 8 | ฉันพยายามฟังเพื่อหาใจความสำคัญก่อน จากนั้นจึงพยายามเก็บรายละเอียดปลีกย่อยอื่นๆ เช่น เมื่ออาจารย์ถามคำถามปลีกย่อยจากเนื้อหาทั้งหมดที่เรียนในชั้นเรียน (who, what, where, when, why) | | | | | |
| 9 | ฉันใช้ความรู้ที่มีอยู่เดิมด้านไวยากรณ์ ทั่วๆ ไป มาช่วยในการฟัง เช่น เมื่อฉันได้ยินประโยค Would you like to go with me? ฉันรู้ว่านี่คือประโยคคำถามเพราะใช้กริยาขึ้นต้นประโยค | | | | | |
| 10 | ฉันเข้าใจความหมายของสิ่งที่ฟังโดยการแยกส่วนประกอบของคำ วลีหรือประโยค เป็นความหมายย่อยๆ แล้วค่อยเอาความหมายของแต่ละส่วนมารวมกัน เช่น ฉันได้ยินคำว่า Premeditated crime ฉันจะแยกความหมายออกเป็น 3 ส่วนคือ pre- (=before), meditated (=think about) และ crime (=bad, act) แล้วรวมเป็นความหมายเดียวกันคือ an evil act that is thought about in advance. | | | | | |
| 11 | ฉันพยายามแปลความหมายของสิ่งที่ฟังเป็นภาษาไทย | | | | | |
| 12 | ฉันพยายามตีความสิ่งที่ฟังเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ | | | | | |
| 13 | ฉันจดบันทึกย่อ (Take notes) ในขณะที่ฟังการบรรยายในชั้นเรียน | | | | | |
| 14 | เมื่อฟังการบรรยายในชั้นเรียนหรือฟังข่าว ฉันพยายามสรุปหรือย่อความ | | | | | |

| ข้อ | กลวิธีในการฟัง | ไม่เคย | นานๆครั้ง | บางครั้ง | บ่อยๆ | ทุกครั้ง |
|-----|--|--------|-----------|----------|-------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | หากมีการทำแบบฝึกหัดที่มีคำถามคำถาม ฉันจะอ่านคำถามไว้ล่วงหน้า ก่อนที่จะฟังเพื่อหาคำตอบ | | | | | |
| 16 | ฉันพยายามใช้ประสบการณ์หรือความรู้เดิมร่วมกับสามัญสำนึก มาช่วยในการฟัง | | | | | |
| 17 | ในขณะที่ฉันฟังฉันพยายามพูดออกเสียงคำ วลีหรือประโยคซ้ำๆ เพื่อช่วยจำ | | | | | |
| 18 | ฉันเดาความหมายจากเสียงสูงต่ำ (intonation) การเว้นวรรคระหว่างหน่วยคำหรือ วลี (pauses) หรือเสียงหนักเบาในแต่ละคำ (stress) | | | | | |
| 19 | ฉันเดาความหมายจากหัวข้อที่ฟังหรือความรู้รอบตัวที่มี เช่น วิทยาศาสตร์ ประวัติศาสตร์ คณิตศาสตร์ วรรณกรรม ฯลฯ | | | | | |
| 20 | ฉันเดาความหมายจากการใช้คำเรียกชื่อ หรือตำแหน่งที่สะท้อนถึงสถานะภาพหรือความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคม ว่ามีความใกล้ชิดกันมากน้อยเพียงใด เช่น (e.g. my dear, my honey (ใกล้ชิด), Mr., Dr., Prof. (ห่างเหิน) | | | | | |
| 21 | ฉันเดาความหมายจากเสียงประกอบ น้ำเสียงของผู้พูด สีหน้าหรือท่าทางของผู้พูด เมื่อสนทนาหรือฟังการบรรยายในชั้นเรียน | | | | | |
| 22 | ฉันเดาความหมายจากเสียงประกอบ (background noise) เมื่อฉันฟังข่าวหรือวิทยุ | | | | | |
| 23 | ฉันเดาความหมายจากโครงสร้างของเนื้อหา เช่น ส่วนนำ ส่วนเนื้อหา ส่วนสรุป คำที่ใช้เชื่อมแต่ละส่วนหรือตัวเลขที่บอกลำดับเนื้อหา (e.g. first..., second..., the most important idea is..., in short...) | | | | | |
| 24 | ฉันมักถามตัวเองล่วงหน้าว่า ฉันจะได้ฟังอะไรต่อจากนี้ และพยายามคาดเดาสิ่งที่ผู้พูดจะพูดต่อไป | | | | | |
| 25 | ก่อนที่จะฟังการบรรยายในชั้นเรียน ฉันเตรียมตัวหรือทบทวนเนื้อหาเกี่ยวกับหัวข้อที่จะฟัง เช่น ทบทวนคำศัพท์ที่อาจพบ ทำแบบฝึกหัดเกี่ยวกับการฟังในหัวข้อนั้นๆ | | | | | |
| 26 | ฉันพยายามฟังเนื้อหาทั้งหมดอย่างตั้งใจและมีสมาธิตลอดเวลา โดยเฉพาะเมื่อฉันฟังไม่รู้เรื่อง | | | | | |
| 27 | ฉันคิดล่วงหน้าว่าจะเลือกฟังข้อมูลเพียงบางส่วนเท่านั้น (เลือกฟังเฉพาะส่วนที่อยาการู้) | | | | | |

| ข้อ | กลวิธีในการฟัง | ไม่เคย | นานครั้ง | บางครั้ง | บ่อยๆ | ทุกครั้ง |
|-----|--|--------|----------|----------|-------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | ฉันนึกถึงจุดประสงค์ของการฟังไว้ล่วงหน้า และฟังไปตามจุดประสงค์ที่วางไว้ เช่น เพื่อความบันเทิง (รายการทีวีหรือภาพยนตร์) เพื่อตอบคำถามหรือโต้ตอบ (สนทนา) เพื่อทราบหรือเป็นความรู้ (ฟังข่าว) เพื่อจับบันทึกและเข้าใจเนื้อหาในชั้นเรียน เป็นต้น เพื่อที่จะได้รับข้อมูลที่มีประสิทธิภาพและนำความรู้ที่มีมาช่วยในการฟังอย่างเหมาะสม | | | | | |
| 29 | ฉันดูรายการทีวีที่เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ เช่น สารคดี รายการท่องเที่ยว เกมโชว์ สัมภาษณ์ดารานักร้อง | | | | | |
| 30 | ฉันดูภาพยนตร์ที่เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ โดยไม่มีคำบรรยายไทยประกอบ | | | | | |
| 31 | ฉันดูฟังเพลงที่เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ | | | | | |
| 32 | ฉันดูฟังข่าวที่เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ | | | | | |
| 33 | แม้ผู้พูดจะพูดเร็ว แต่ฉันจะพยายามฟังให้ทันจนจบ | | | | | |
| 34 | ในระหว่างที่สนทนา ฟังการบรรยายในชั้นเรียนหรือฟังการนำเสนอ หากฉันฟังไม่ทันหรือไม่เข้าใจในสิ่งที่ผู้พูดกำลังพูด ฉันจะขอให้เขาพูดซ้ำ พูดให้ช้าลงหรือขอให้อธิบายใหม่อีกครั้ง | | | | | |
| 35 | ฉันหาโอกาสที่จะฟังภาษาอังกฤษให้มากเท่าที่จะทำได้ เช่น มองหาคนที่จะสามารถพูดคุยโต้ตอบกับฉันเป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้เพื่อที่จะฝึกการฟังหรือไปเข้าค่ายภาษาอังกฤษ | | | | | |
| 36 | ในขณะที่ฟังในระหว่างสนทนา ฉันเรียนรู้ที่จะใส่ใจในความรู้สึกหรือพฤติกรรมที่ผู้พูดที่แสดงออกมาพร้อมกับคำพูดหรือน้ำเสียงของเขา เช่น สีหน้า อารมณ์ ทัศนคติ น้ำเสียง เพื่อเข้าใจสิ่งที่ได้ฟังให้มากขึ้น | | | | | |
| 37 | ฉันฝึกฟังหรือพูดคุยโต้ตอบโดยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อนนักศึกษาคนอื่นๆ | | | | | |
| 38 | ฉันพยายามเรียนรู้วัฒนธรรมของประเทศที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการสื่อสาร | | | | | |
| 39 | ฉันพยายามผ่อนคลายตัวเอง หายใจลึกๆ ทำสมาธิและทำสมาธิและความคิดให้ว่าง ก่อนที่จะสอบฟัง เช่น สอบฟัง ฟังบรรยายหรือฟังการนำเสนอ | | | | | |
| 40 | ก่อนจะฟัง เช่น ก่อนสอบฟัง ก่อนสอบสัมภาษณ์ ฉันให้กำลังใจตัวเองโดยการพูดในเชิงบวก เช่น ฉันต้องฟังให้รู้เรื่องให้ได้ ! | | | | | |

APPENDIX D

แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับปัญหาในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ

คำชี้แจง กรุณาอ่านข้อความแต่ละข้อ หากคุณมีปัญหากล่าวให้ทำเครื่องหมาย (✓) ในช่อง “ใช่” หรือทำเครื่องหมาย (✓) ในช่อง “ไม่ใช่” หากคุณไม่มีปัญหากล่าว

| | ปัญหาการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ | ใช่ | ไม่ใช่ |
|----|---|-----|--------|
| 1 | ความสามารถในด้านการใช้ไวยากรณ์ของฉันอยู่ในระดับต่ำ ทำให้ฉันไม่เข้าใจสิ่งที่ฟัง | | |
| 2 | ฉันไม่สามารถตีความในสิ่งที่ฟังได้ เพราะไม่คุ้นเคยกับบริบทของเรื่องที่ฟัง | | |
| 3 | ฉันฟังไม่รู้เรื่องเพราะผู้พูด พูดเร็ว | | |
| 4 | แม้ว่าฉันรู้ความหมายของสิ่งที่ฟังเกือบทุกคำพูด แต่ฉันไม่สามารถจับใจความสำคัญของเรื่องที่ฟังได้ | | |
| 5 | ฉันไม่สามารถแยกเสียงที่ได้ยินออกมาเป็นคำมีความหมายได้อย่างถูกต้องชัดเจน ฉันจึงไม่เข้าใจความหมายของสิ่งที่ฟังได้ทั้งหมด (ความไม่ชัดเจนอาจเกิดจากเสียงที่เชื่อมระหว่างคำ เช่น 'turn off' ผู้พูดอาจไม่อ่านว่า เทิร์น ออฟ แต่อาจอ่านว่า เทอร์ น็อฟ หรือประโยค 'Can I have a bit of egg?' อาจพูดว่า 'Ca ni ha va bi to fegg?'. จึงอาจทำให้ผู้ฟังตีความหมายผิดได้ | | |
| 6 | เมื่อฉันได้ยินคำสันธานต่างๆ เช่น since, for, but, so, as, although ฉันยังคงไม่เข้าใจว่าผู้พูดต้องการสื่ออะไร | | |
| 7 | เมื่อฉันได้ยินคำบอกความเชื่อมโยงของเนื้อหาเช่น "There are 3 reasons why..." or "First...Second...Third...", The basic concept here is..., Finally... "On the other hand..." ฉันยังคงไม่เข้าใจว่าผู้พูดต้องการสื่ออะไร | | |
| 8 | ฉันไม่สามารถเข้าใจประโยคหรือเนื้อหาที่ฟัง เมื่อได้ยินคำศัพท์ใหม่ๆ เป็นจำนวนมาก | | |
| 9 | ฉันไม่สามารถเข้าใจสำเนียงที่หลากหลายได้ เช่น ภาษาอังกฤษสำเนียงอินเดีย สิงคโปร์ ญี่ปุ่น ยกเว้นสำเนียงอังกฤษและอเมริกัน | | |
| 10 | ฉันไม่สามารถตีความสิ่งที่ผู้พูดต้องการจะสื่อว่าพูดทางตรงหรือทางอ้อม จากการใช้เสียงสูงต่ำ (intonation) หรือการเน้นเสียง (stress) ของเขา เช่น ใช้เสียงสูงเพื่อถาม เพื่อเสียดสี ประชดประชัน เป็นต้น | | |
| 11 | ฉันไม่เข้าใจสิ่งที่ผู้พูดพูดเพราะฉันไม่รู้ความหมายของสำนวน คำสแลง เช่น In New York City, a lot of stores are open <u>24/7</u> ; It can take a week to send a letter by <u>snail mail</u> . He was warned that his job was <u>on the line</u> because of his lack of concern for his duties. | | |

| ปัญหาการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ | | ใช่ | ไม่ใช่ |
|-----------------------|--|-----|--------|
| 12 | ฉันไม่เข้าใจสิ่งที่ผู้พูดพูดเพราะเขามักใช้คำหรือประโยคลดรูป เช่น Don't you know? เป็น "Doncha know?", Let me in เป็น "Lemme in", What are you doing? เป็น "Whatcha doin'?", How is the เป็น Howza..... เป็นต้น | | |
| 13 | ฉันไม่สามารถนำความรู้หรือประสบการณ์เดิมที่ฉันมีอยู่แล้ว มาเชื่อมโยงกับข้อมูลใหม่ๆที่ฉันได้ฟัง เพื่อมาช่วยในการตีความหมาย | | |
| 14 | ฉันไม่สามารถเข้าใจสิ่งที่ฟังทุกประเภทได้หากไม่มีท่าทางหรือภาพประกอบเป็นตัวช่วย | | |
| 15 | ฉันฟังไม่ค่อยเข้าใจเพราะไม่มีความรู้ด้านวัฒนธรรม | | |
| 16 | ฉันฟังเพลงช้าๆรู้เรื่องมากกว่าเพลงเร็วๆ แม้เพลงมีระดับภาษาที่ไม่ยากจนเกินไป | | |
| 17 | ฉันดูภาพยนตร์ภาษาอังกฤษไม่เข้าใจ หากไม่มีคำบรรยายไทยประกอบได้ภาพ | | |
| 18 | ในขณะที่ฟังข่าว เป็นเวลานานๆ ฉันมักจะใจลอยและไม่สามารถจดจ่อกับการฟังนั้นได้ | | |
| 19 | ในการสนทนา ฟังบรรยายในชั้นเรียนหรือการนำเสนอทางวิชาการ ฉันฟังรู้เรื่องทุกคำ แต่เมื่อนำคำที่ได้ฟังมารวมกันทั้งหมด ฉันไม่เข้าใจว่าผู้พูดต้องการจะสื่ออะไร | | |
| 20 | หากมีคำถามระหว่างการสนทนา ฟังบรรยายในชั้นเรียนหรือการนำเสนอทางวิชาการ ฉันใช้เวลาเพื่อทำความเข้าใจกับสิ่งที่ได้ฟังเพื่อที่จะตอบคำถามหรือได้ตอบกลับ | | |
| 21 | ฉันจับใจความในสิ่งที่ฟังระหว่างที่อาจารย์บรรยายในชั้นเรียน ได้น้อยมากหรือแทบไม่ได้เลย | | |
| 22 | ฉันฟังไม่ทันหากฉันต้องจดบันทึกย่อ (Take Notes) ไปด้วยในระหว่างที่ฟัง | | |
| 23 | ฉันไม่สามารถอ่านเนื้อหาในเอกสารประกอบการเรียนหรือมองกระดานไปพร้อมๆ กับการฟังได้ | | |
| 24 | ฉันไม่สามารถมีสมาธิจดจ่อกับการฟังการบรรยายหรือนำเสนอได้เป็นเวลานานๆ โดยไม่มีการหยุดพัก | | |
| 25 | ฉันถูกรบกวนจากสิ่งต่างๆรอบข้างได้ง่าย เช่น อุณหภูมิอากาศ เสียงต่างๆ เพื่อนบรรยายภาคในห้องเรียน เป็นต้น | | |
| 26 | ฉันมักรู้สึกกังวลหรือเครียดในขณะที่ฟังภาษาอังกฤษ | | |

AN INVESTIGATION OF ENGLISH LISTENING STRATEGIES USED BY THAI
UNDRGRADUATE STUDENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE SOUTH
การศึกษาการใช้กลยุทธ์การฟังภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาไทยในมหาวิทยาลัยรัฐบาล
ทางภาคใต้

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ABSTRACT

This survey research focused on investigating listening comprehension strategies used by undergraduate students, the differences in strategy use between more and less able ones and strategy use across universities. The subjects ($n=146$) were third-year English major students with a low Intermediate level of listening proficiency, from 4 public universities in Songkhla, Thailand. Data were collected using IELTS Practice Test 7 to measure the students' listening ability, and the Listening Comprehension Strategies Questionnaire adapted from the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990). Findings indicated that the most frequently used strategy by all subjects was using background knowledge of grammar to help in listening (*cognitive strategies*; $\bar{x} = 4.33$), while the least frequently used strategy was physically acting out what they heard to help memorize what was heard (*memory strategies*; $\bar{x} = 2.45$). On the whole, no significant differences were found in either individual strategy use or strategy category use between more and less able students ($t = 0.62$, $p > 0.05$) and among the groups of students across universities. However, in detail, significant differences were found in 3 individual strategies, namely using prior knowledge (*cognitive strategies*), listening to English news (*metacognitive strategies*) and practicing listening and speaking with friends (*social strategies*). Significant differences in individual strategy use across the universities were also found: taking notes

(*cognitive strategies*) and emotion control (*affective strategies*). Frequencies of strategy use in the more able students were higher than that in the less able ones. Implications are that more strategy training, especially cognitive and metacognitive strategies should be provided to the subjects. Exposing oneself to real language use in media and communication with friends and others should also be encouraged. Activities for training in the use of note-taking and emotion control should be included, especially for the less able ones.

Key word: listening comprehension strategies

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยเชิงสำรวจนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อศึกษาการใช้กลยุทธ์ที่ช่วยในการฟังของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี ศึกษาความแตกต่างของการใช้กลยุทธ์ดังกล่าวของนักศึกษาที่มีระดับความสามารถในการฟังแตกต่างกันและความแตกต่างของการใช้กลยุทธ์การฟังของนักศึกษาในแต่ละมหาวิทยาลัย กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่สาม เอกภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวน 146 คนจากมหาวิทยาลัยรัฐบาล ในจังหวัดสงขลา 4 แห่ง ซึ่งมีความสามารถในการฟังระดับ Low Intermediate เก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้ข้อสอบ IELTS Practice Test 7 เพื่อวัดความสามารถในการฟังของนักศึกษา และใช้แบบสอบถามการใช้กลยุทธ์ในการฟังซึ่งดัดแปลงจาก SILL (Oxford, 1990) ผลการศึกษาพบว่า กลยุทธ์ที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างใช้บ่อยที่สุดคือการใช้ความรู้เดิมที่มีมาช่วยในการฟัง (กลุ่มกลยุทธ์การฟังแบบ cognitive, $\bar{x} = 4.33$) และกลยุทธ์ที่ใช้น้อยที่สุดคือแสดงท่าทางตามสิ่งที่ได้ฟังเพื่อช่วยในการฟัง (กลุ่มกลยุทธ์การฟังแบบ memory, $\bar{x} = 2.45$) แต่ไม่พบความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ($t = 0.62$, $p > 0.05$) ของการใช้กลยุทธ์ทั้งหมดระหว่างนักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถด้านการฟังมากกว่าและน้อยกว่า ทั้งแบบรายข้อ (items) และรายกลุ่ม (categories) มีกลยุทธ์เพียง 3 ข้อที่นักศึกษาใช้ต่างกันคือการใช้ความรู้เดิมที่มีอยู่ (กลุ่มกลยุทธ์การฟังแบบ cognitive) การฝึกฟังข่าวภาษาอังกฤษ (กลุ่มกลยุทธ์การฟังแบบ metacognitive) และการฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อน (กลุ่มกลยุทธ์การฟังแบบ social) และไม่พบความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญของการใช้กลยุทธ์การฟังทั้งหมดของนักศึกษาจากมหาวิทยาลัยทั้งสี่แห่ง แต่พบความแตกต่างจากการใช้กลยุทธ์ 2 ข้อคือการจดบันทึกย่อ (กลุ่มกลยุทธ์การฟังแบบ cognitive) และการควบคุมสภาวะทางอารมณ์ (กลุ่มกลยุทธ์การฟังแบบ affective) แต่อย่างไรก็ตาม กลุ่มนักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถด้านภาษามากกว่าใช้กลยุทธ์การ

ฟังดีกว่ากลุ่มที่มีความสามารถน้อยกว่า ข้อคิดที่ได้จากผลการศึกษานี้คือควรให้ความสำคัญในการสอนการใช้กลวิธีการฟังให้มากขึ้น โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในกลุ่มกลวิธีแบบ cognitive และ metacognitive รวมถึงการสนับสนุนให้ผู้เรียนเข้าถึงภาษาอังกฤษที่ใช้สื่อสารจริงในชีวิตประจำวัน และมีกิจกรรมเกี่ยวกับการฝึกจดบันทึกย่อและการฝึกควบคุมสภาวะทางอารมณ์ โดยเฉพาะในกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีความสามารถด้านการฟังน้อยกว่า

Background

English is widely accepted as an International Language for communicating among people who speak different languages all over the world. In the present situation where technology brings people close to one another, face-to-face communication becomes even more important, requiring people to interact in real time, using the skills of listening and speaking.

Oral communication directly involves both listening and speaking—people need to listen to what their interlocutors say and respond to it. If they are unable to listen effectively, their communication will break down (Anderson & Lynch, 1998). Listening skills have become an important part of second language learning for over twenty years. However, Thai students are still unsuccessful in listening comprehension when compared to students from other South-East Asian countries (Wiriyachitra, 2002, 2003). Even though listening courses are continually introduced into language curriculum, especially at the higher education level in order to develop students' listening competence, insufficient listening strategy training is still a key issue discussed in a substantial number of previous studies.

1. Listening Comprehension Process

Listening Comprehension, or speech perception, refers to active and very complicated mental processes (interactive and interpretive). It is the activity in which listeners need to concentrate on utterances spoken in a particular language, to recognize a certain amount of vocabulary and grammar structures, to separate each utterance into small meaningful units, to translate it with the help of stress and intonation

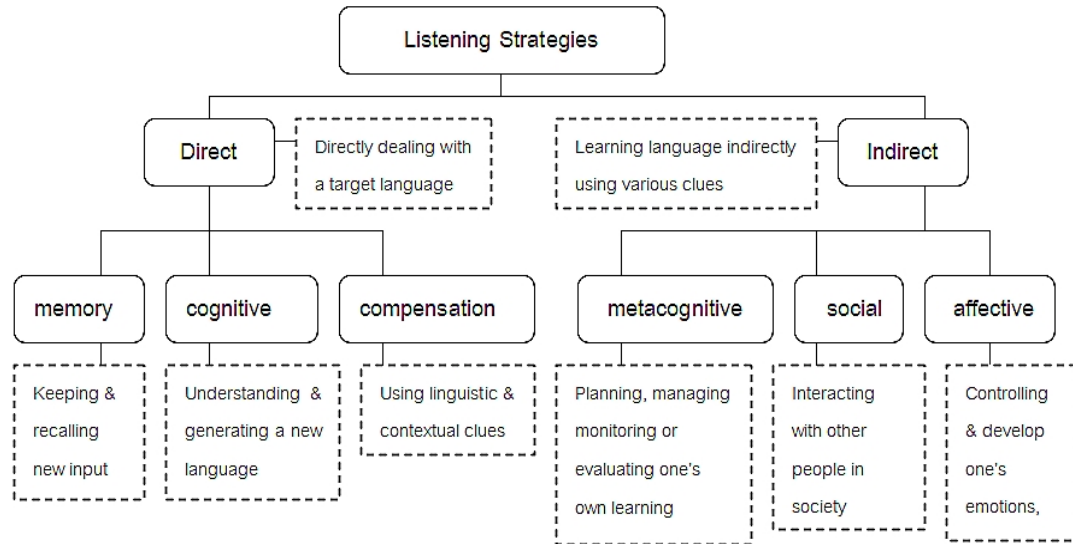
and keep all of the components in short-term memory before retrieving background knowledge or schema recorded in long-term memory to help understand the whole text in a particular context (Brown, 1994; Guo & Wills, 2009; Underwood, 1989; Vandergrift, 1999).

2. Strategies for Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension—both reciprocal and non-reciprocal is very difficult for language learners. When listening, they need to recognize what they hear and produce their own language to respond to it, but it is not possible to control the input delivered to them. Numerous features of spoken language conveyed instantaneously by the speakers such as different accents, speech rates, and the requirement of different background knowledge, can cause problems in listening. Apart from that, there are still many factors causing listening problems: listening difficulties themselves (e.g. linguistic features: phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and language variations), inappropriate learning environments (monolingual contexts, unauthentic teaching materials or tasks, lack of interaction in English, large amount of learners per class, etc.), Thai students' unfavorable learning habits (e.g. being passive, being shy to use language, not enough responsibility to learn), and insufficient strategy training, to name a few.

'Listening strategies' or tools or actions learners employ to make their L2 learning easier, enjoyable and transferable to new input (Oxford,1990), were proposed to help relieve the difficulties in listening. They are believed to be able to enhance learners' proficiency in learning other languages, and also develop their communicative competence and self-confidence. Strategies not only make the listeners better understand what they hear, but also help them deal with difficulties occurring in their listening tasks. According to Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies, the strategies used in listening can be summarized as a diagram below.

Figure 1: Strategy System Summarized from Oxford (1990)



Related Studies

1. Investigation of Listening Strategies

Since 1980, there have been a number of studies investigating listening comprehension strategies used by EFL and L2 learners to work out effective ways of facilitating listening tasks and help the learners overcome the difficulties they encounter. The result of a study conducted by Graham, Santos & Vanderplank (2008) and Holden (2004) suggests that learners understand what they hear well if they are aware of the effective ways of using strategies to deal with various tasks. Metacognitive strategies can lead to listening attainment when they work with cognitive strategies (Vandergrift, 1999).

The study investigating the listening comprehension strategies used by EFL college students in Taiwan by Teng (1998) indicated that the subjects reported using different kinds of strategies. Compensation, cognitive, metacognitive, memory, social, and affective strategies were used in respective frequencies. Details of strategy used can be seen in the table below.

Table 1: The Listening Comprehension Strategies Used by Taiwanese Students

| Category | Most frequently used | Least frequently used |
|---------------|---|--|
| memory | semantic mapping | physical responses |
| cognitive | practicing sounds and writing systems, translating and transferring | taking notes |
| compensation | Using linguistic clues and other clues | - |
| metacognitive | paying attention and delaying speech production to focus on listening | organizing and setting goals |
| affective | relaxation, taking a deep breath, and meditation | taking risk wisely |
| social | asking for clarification | cooperating with peers or experts, and developing cultural understanding |

In addition, a study on the listening strategies conducted by Seferroque & Uzakgoren (2004) demonstrated the top three general strategies used by the participants: making use of background knowledge, predicting and selecting the relevant and ignoring irrelevant messages. Using text structure and checking comprehension accuracy were the least used.

2. Listening Strategy Use of Students at Different Proficiency Levels

Studies involving listening strategies used by learners with differing proficiency have been widely conducted. Chang (2009); Shang (2008) & Teng (1998) found that the less efficient students used cognitive and memory strategies most frequently, and social strategies least frequently. The more efficient ones used strategies more often. All categories of strategies except affective strategies were employed, with more use of compensation. They also used top-down (the way to understand what is heard by mainly relying on background knowledge or common sense.) and metacognitive strategies which are closely related to the learners' listening ability. The less efficient denied employing top-down strategies, but relied on bottom-up strategies (the way to understand what is heard based on a spoken text by recognizing language

features such as combination of sounds, words or grammar.) instead (Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2008; Lui, 2008). It can be said that listening ability has an effect on the quantity and the frequency of strategy use (Chang, 1998). The results coincide with those of Tang's (2006) study, investigating listening strategies used among non-English major-postgraduates.

A study investigating the use of listening strategies by students in five Mexican universities conducted by Chulim (2008) showed that the most frequent use of strategies was focusing on specific information, while taking notes and using prior knowledge were used the least. Significant differences were not found across universities in listening strategies used, but were found across levels of English.

This study aimed to explore listening strategies used by undergraduate students at four public universities in the south of Thailand to find out differences in the choice of strategies between two different ability groups of a Low Intermediate level of listening proficiency and the strategy use of the students across the universities. The results of this study are expected to be beneficial for further research and pedagogical applications in terms of developing learners' abilities in using effective and appropriate strategies.

Definitions of Terms

1. **students with low intermediate level of listening proficiency:** the students who had test scores ranging from 0 to 21 out of 40 measured by IELTS Listening marking schemes
2. **MAS (More Able Students):** the top 27% of the total students in a sample group who had the highest listening test scores
3. **LAS (Less Able Students):** the bottom 27% of the total students in a sample group who had the lowest listening test scores
4. **individual strategies:** a single strategy item separated out from the 6 main strategy types (SILL) suggested by Oxford (1990)

5. **strategy category**: a group of strategies (SILL) categorized by Oxford (1990), including 6 main types: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social and affective

Research Questions

1. What are the 10 top and bottom individual strategies reported as being used by the subjects?
2. Are there significant differences in strategy use found between MAS and LAS?
3. Are there any differences in the choice of individual strategies among the groups of students across the universities?

Subjects

The population was 198 third-year undergraduate students, majoring in English from 4 public universities (U1, U2, U3, and U4) in Songkhla Province, Thailand. The simple random sampling method was used, and section 1 from each university was selected totaling 146 students. The students took the listening test and the results were used to divide them into higher and lower ability groups using the 27% technique. 39 students were in the higher ability groups and 39 in the lower one. However, all 146 were used in the comparison of strategies used among students from different universities.

Instruments

1. Listening test

The test was merely used to measure students' listening ability so that they could be divided into 2 different ability groups. It was taken from a listening section of Cambridge IELTS practice test 7 (Cambridge, 2009). It consisted of 40 questions.

2. Listening Strategies Questionnaire

The 40 strategy items directly related to listening skills from the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL version 7.0 for ESL/EFL learners) were used to examine the frequency of strategy use. The questionnaire (see appendix1) was composed of 2 parts: personal background information and 40 listening strategy items to rate the frequencies of strategy use with five Likert-scale responses, ranging from 1-5 (1=never, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always) (Oxford, 1990). They were divided into 6 categories: memory strategies (items 1-3), cognitive strategies (items 4-17), compensation strategies (items 18-24), metacognitive strategies (items 25-33), social strategies (items34-38), and affective strategies (items 39-40). The questionnaire was translated into Thai to ensure full comprehension of the questions, and strategy items and the accuracy of results. It was piloted with fourth year students, majoring in English to measure its reliability. The Cronbach alpha reliability test result was 0.89.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was launched before the test to ensure that the reported use of strategies was ones used in general situations, not specific only to the test context. Before completing the questionnaire, the subjects were informed of the objectives of collecting the data, the detailed description of the questionnaire, plus instructions and time requirement (30minutes).

After the questionnaire completion, the listening test was administered with a clear description and instructions. The audio CD was played twice due to the fact that most of the students were unable to catch the meanings or to answer the questions. The time limit for taking the test was approximately 30 minutes.

Playing the listening text twice led to several positive effects on the test-takers. Numerous studies supported that listening to texts twice was advantageous—making difficult and authentic texts much easier to understand, especially for lower-ability test takers, helping fill comprehension gaps in a crowded room, coping with bad sound quality, disturbing noises, etc. (Lidget Green, Inc., 2012). This can make up for the chances in real life communication to ask for repetitions or repairs.

Findings and Discussion

RQ1: What are the top and the bottom 10 strategies reported as being used by the students?

Based on the mean scores of the frequency of each strategy item used by the subjects, the top 10 strategies used are presented in the table below.

Table 2: 10 Strategies Most Frequently Employed

| # | n | Strategies | \bar{x} | SD |
|----|----|---|-----------|------|
| 9 | 78 | I use my previous knowledge of grammar to help listening. (cognitive) | 4.33 | 0.73 |
| 11 | 78 | I try to translate what I am listening to into Thai. (cognitive) | 4.08 | 0.75 |
| 26 | 78 | In interactive listening: conversation, classroom lecture, presentation, I make a guess at what I am listening to by interpreting the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions or gestures. (compensation) | 3.97 | 0.92 |
| 21 | 78 | In interactive listening: conversation, classroom lecture, presentation, I make a guess at what I am listening to by interpreting the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions or gestures. (compensation) | 3.92 | 0.70 |
| 39 | 78 | I try to relax myself, breathe deeply, meditate, and clear my mind while listening. (affective) | 3.88 | 0.82 |
| 40 | 78 | I encourage myself before doing listening tasks. (affective) | 3.88 | 0.97 |
| 7 | 78 | I try to grasp the main idea while listening. (cognitive) | 3.86 | 0.85 |
| 16 | 78 | I try to use my previous knowledge and my common sense to help interpreting a spoken text. (cognitive) | 3.83 | 0.84 |
| 8 | 78 | I try to listen for the main idea before focusing on other small details. (cognitive) | 3.82 | 0.70 |
| 31 | 78 | I listen to various kinds of music. (metacognitive) | 3.81 | 0.67 |

The findings pointed out that the four strategy categories frequently applied by all students were respectively cognitive strategies (using grammar, translating into L1, grasping the main idea and retrieving prior knowledge), metacognitive strategies (paying attention to the input, listening to music in English), affective (relaxing and encouraging themselves), and compensation strategies (guessing the meaning from tone of voices, facial expressions or gestures. The results

corresponded with Teng's (1998) and Tang's (2006) studies, reporting that cognitive strategies were used most frequently (e.g. translating and transferring the spoken messages into L1), followed by metacognitive, affective and social strategies, while physical responses which belonged to the memory strategy category were seldom used.

It can be implied that the students considered grammar as the most essential component to comprehend the new language, so they mostly relied on using grammar or knowledge of structures to help in listening. Moreover, the results showed that translating what was heard into L1 was second most frequently used. This may be possible that the subjects were familiar with learning a language through the emphasis on grammatical rules and translation, so they might automatically use grammar, and knowledge of structures to translate what they hear back into their first language in order to get the meaning. This may suggest that grammar translation approach still play an important role in teaching and learning. However, using grammar to help comprehend the listening test may not be bad as Fang (2008) suggests that grammatical knowledge is very crucial to enhance listening ability since it helps listeners better remember utterances and recognize the connections between words which are finally combined into meaningful structures. Yet, Seferroque & Uzakgoren's (2004) findings showed that text structures were rarely used among listeners, while background knowledge was frequently used as one of top 3 strategies. On the other hand, the 10 strategies least used by the subjects are shown in the table below.

Table 3: 10 Strategies Least Frequently Employed

| # | n | Strategies | \bar{x} | SD |
|----|----|--|-----------|------|
| 3 | 78 | I physically act out what I hear to help me remember. (memory strategy) | 2.45 | 1.00 |
| 10 | 78 | I break down a new word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph into its component parts before finding the meaning of the whole word. (cognitive strategy) | 2.60 | 0.98 |
| 5 | 78 | I practice listening to English pronunciation and intonation from audio CDs. (cognitive strategy) | 2.62 | 0.89 |
| 25 | 78 | Before taking a classroom lecture, taking a listening exam, or listening to a presentation, I prepare myself for the listening tasks by reviewing the contents, vocabulary, or exercises. (metacognitive strategy) | 2.64 | 0.93 |

| # | n | Strategies | \bar{x} | SD |
|----|----|--|-----------|------|
| 27 | 78 | I decide in advance to selectively listen to some parts of the whole text. (metacognitive strategy) | 2.65 | 1.00 |
| 32 | 78 | I listen to the news in English. (metacognitive strategy) | 2.70 | 0.73 |
| 14 | 78 | I try to make summaries of what I am listening. (cognitive strategy) | 2.90 | 0.89 |
| 30 | 78 | I watch English movie without subtitles. (metacognitive strategy) | 2.91 | 0.74 |
| 12 | 78 | I try to interpret what I am listening to in English only. (cognitive strategy) | 2.97 | 0.89 |
| 22 | 78 | I make a guess at what I am listening to by using background noise. (compensation strategy) | 3.05 | 0.99 |

The findings indicated that of the ten strategy items, (#3) physically acting out what one hears to help one remember (memory strategy) was used least by the subjects. This might be possible that the students were more familiar with grammar-translation method than total physical response method (TPR) which focuses on kinesthetic motion or carrying out physical activities rather than listening to a lecture, so they may not know how to use it.

In categories, metacognitive strategies were found to be the least frequently used as follows; (#25) preparing themselves by reviewing contents relevant to the listening tasks (\bar{x} =2.64, SD=0.93), (#27) deciding in advance to listen selectively to some parts of the whole text (\bar{x} =2.65, SD=1.00), (#32) listening to the news (\bar{x} =2.70, SD=0.73) or (#30) watching English movies without subtitles (\bar{x} =2.91, SD=0.74). This reflected that the students not only had insufficient preparation for listening tasks, but also inadequate listening practice and insufficient exposure to English outside of class. This result contrasted with the research findings by Lui (2008) and Graham Santos & Vanderplank (2008). This was probably because the subjects in this study were in the low intermediate level. Hence, they should be provided with better strategy instruction opportunities since it is believed that metacognitive strategies have highly positive influence on listening competence (Holden, 2004; Vandergrift, 1999).

RQ2: Are there significant differences in strategy use found between MAS and LAS?

The overall mean scores of frequencies in listening strategy category use among MAS ($\bar{x} = 3.45$, $SD = 0.53$) were higher than those of LAS ($\bar{x} = 3.36$, $SD = 0.56$), but not at a significant level ($t = 0.62$, $p > 0.05$). As shown in table 4, MAS used memory, compensation, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies more frequently than LAS, but cognitive strategies were used by LAS slightly more frequently. The findings agree with Teng, (1998), and Chang, (2007, 2009) who suggested that differences of listening abilities at certain levels can lead to differences in frequency and quantity of listening strategy use. In other words, not using strategies as frequently and effectively as they should might cause differences in students' listening ability levels. According to Teng's and Chang's study and the results of the current study showing that MAS employed most of the strategies more frequently than LAS did might suggest that learners' listening ability could be improved if they tried to use strategies as frequently as possible, and learn how to utilize them most effectively instead of using large quantities of them, but the use was not appropriate to particular listening tasks.

Table 4: Mean Scores of Frequencies in the Use of Listening Strategy Categories.

| LS | MAS | | LAS | | t | Sig. |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | \bar{x} | SD | \bar{x} | SD | | |
| MEMORY | 3.24 | 0.61 | 3.07 | 0.62 | 1.22 | 0.23 |
| COGNITIVE | 3.43 | 0.34 | 3.44 | 0.39 | -0.14 | 0.89 |
| COMPENSATION | 3.44 | 0.48 | 3.39 | 0.51 | 0.42 | 0.67 |
| METACOGNITIVE | 3.23 | 0.31 | 3.14 | 0.51 | 0.93 | 0.36 |
| SOCIAL | 3.41 | 0.62 | 3.34 | 0.58 | 0.85 | 0.65 |
| AFFECTIVE | 3.96 | 0.82 | 3.81 | 0.77 | 0.45 | 0.40 |
| Total | 3.45 | 0.53 | 3.36 | 0.56 | 0.62 | 0.53 |

On the other hand, significant differences were found in the 3 strategies which MAS reported employing more frequently than LAS did: using background knowledge and common sense to interpret the meaning ($t = 2.40$, $p < 0.05$), listening to

news in English ($t = 2.03$, $p < 0.05$), and practicing English listening and speaking with friends ($t = 2.11$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 5: Significant Differences in Listening Strategy Use between MAS and LAS

| Item | Strategies | MAS | | LAS | | <i>t</i> | Sig. |
|------|---|-----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | \bar{x} | SD | | |
| 16 | I try to use my previous knowledge and my common sense to help interpreting a spoken text. (cognitive strategy) | 4.05 | 0.70 | 3.61 | 0.92 | 2.40 | 0.02 |
| 32 | I listen to news in English. (metacognitive strategy) | 2.87 | 0.67 | 2.54 | 0.76 | 2.03 | 0.05 |
| 37 | I practice listening and speaking in English with my friends. (social strategy) | 3.38 | 0.81 | 2.97 | 0.90 | 2.11 | 0.04 |

Based on the results, it could be considered that MAS made more effort to retrieve their previous knowledge and used common sense to facilitate listening (top-down strategies), and had more integrative motivation to listen to news in English and to practice interactive listening with their friends. This can be the reason why MAS had better listening ability than LAS. Those strategies probably made significant contributions to learners' listening abilities.

RQ3: Are there any differences in choice of strategies among the groups of students across the universities?

One-Way ANOVA analysis results showed no significant differences in the overall frequency of strategy use both in separate items and in categories across the groups of students from each university, but significant differences were found in two strategies: strategy 13, taking notes while listening to help comprehension (cognitive strategy) ($F(3,141) = 4.986$, $p = .00$) and strategy 39, taking a deep breath, relaxing and meditation (affective strategy) ($F(3,142) = 3.432$, $p = .02$) as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Listening Strategy Use across the Groups of Students from the Four Universities

| Strategies | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|--------|
| Taking note while listening | Between Groups | 12.31 | 3 | 4.104 | 4.986 | 0.00** |
| | Within Groups | 116.06 | 141 | 0.823 | | |
| | Total | 128.37 | 144 | | | |
| Trying to relax myself, breath deeply, meditate, and clear my mind while listening | Between Groups | 8.12 | 3 | 2.705 | 3.432 | 0.02* |
| | Within Groups | 111.95 | 142 | 0.788 | | |
| | Total | 120.06 | 145 | | | |

** The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The results also showed 2 pairs of significant differences in using strategy 13 across the universities: U2 vs. U1 ($p < 0.05$) and U2 vs. U3 ($p < 0.05$). One pair was found in using strategy 39: U1 vs. U3 ($p < 0.05$). Strategy 13 was employed by U2 students the most ($\bar{x} = 4.15$), followed by those in U3 ($\bar{x} = 3.55$), and U1 ($\bar{x} = 3.38$) respectively. Strategy 39 was used by U1 students ($\bar{x} = 4.05$) more than ones in U3 ($\bar{x} = 3.63$) as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Multiple Comparisons (Scheffé) for Listening Strategy Use across the Groups of Students from the Four Universities

| Strategies | Universities | | \bar{x} | SD | Sig. |
|---|--------------|----|-----------|------|------|
| (13) Taking note while listening | U1 | U2 | -0.76 | 0.24 | 0.02 |
| | U3 | U2 | -0.60 | 0.19 | 0.02 |
| (39) Trying to relax, breath deeply, meditate, and clear mind while listening | U1 | U3 | 0.71 | 0.24 | 0.03 |

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Only 3 groups of students showed significant differences in the use of strategies. The students from U4 who were considered having the lowest proficiency did

not report using any particular strategies, so significant differences did not result within this group.

The results reflected that taking notes and lowering anxiety probably had positive effects on listening comprehension. This can be supported by the listening test scores. The highest mean scores were obtained by U1 students ($\bar{x} = 16.90$), followed by those from U2 ($\bar{x} = 15.60$), U3 ($\bar{x} = 12.66$) and U4 ($\bar{x} = 9.88$) respectively. This means that the students who got high-range scores might gain benefit from taking notes and also lowering anxiety to help comprehend listening input.

Although the U2 students who got lower test scores than those in U1 reported using strategy 13—taking notes most frequently, the mean scores of strategy 39—trying to lower anxiety, were found to be higher among U1 students. This is possible that when U1 students took notes and tried to lower their anxiety at the same time, they could comprehend more. This is in concordance with Boch & Piolat (2005) and Neville (2006) whose study on note-taking strategies stated that note-taking helps learners recall and concentrate on what they have learnt, understand the piece of information they receive and keep particular information longer. Lowering anxiety, on the other hand, could mean low affective filter (Burden, 2006) and hence making the way for more efficient listening.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine the use of listening strategies among different ability groups of Thai undergraduate students in terms of frequency and types of strategies used. The findings indicated that cognitive strategy category and using grammatical knowledge to help listening were used most frequently, while metacognitive strategy category and physically acting out what was heard were used the least. The results also revealed no significant differences in the overall individual strategies and the strategy categories employed between MAS and LAS, but significant differences were found in three individual strategies. There were also no significant differences in using strategies found used across the universities, except for taking notes while listening and

trying to lower anxiety. However, the mean scores of frequencies in using strategy categories among MAS were higher than LAS.

The findings are expected to be beneficial for teachers to help students become aware of the significance of listening and benefits of using the right strategies with the right tasks. They can also serve as guidelines for teacher who would like to provide strategy training in English listening instruction, especially for college students who need sufficient language skills for both purposes: social and academic. Based on the results obtained from the study, it is recommended that cognitive (e.g. using grammar or prior knowledge, and summarizing) and metacognitive (e.g. practicing intonation and pronunciation, practicing listening to news, and reviewing in advance) strategy training should be underlined since they have great influence on listening comprehension. Moreover, taking notes while listening and lowering anxiety that were indicated to be beneficial for the students in comprehending listening texts should also be emphasized.

As can be seen, many strategies seemed to contribute to the listening comprehension. Some strategies can be effectively used in a specific context. For example, taking notes or summarizing may not be effectively used in real time communication (social contexts), but may work well in the academic ones. Hence, strategy training should include various strategies that can be put into use at proper time, and make listening as easy as possible for the students, especially those in lower ability level.

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LISTENING DIFFICULTIES AND STRATEGY USE BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ปัญหาการฟังและการใช้กลยุทธ์ที่ช่วยในการฟังของนักศึกษาระดับมหาวิทยาลัย

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this survey research were to investigate the differences in listening difficulties occurring to students with more and less listening ability and to find out the relationships between listening difficulties and their choices of listening strategies. The subjects were 78 third-year undergraduate students, majoring in English from 4 public universities in Songkhla province, Thailand. The population of 143 was divided into 2 proficiency groups of 39 each: more and less able levels, using the 27% technique. The instruments included the Questionnaire on Listening Difficulties and Strategies and IELTS Practice Listening Test (Cambridge, 2009) which were given to divide the groups of subjects. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, percentage, *t*-test and the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed no significant differences in listening difficulties between students with more and less ability in listening ($t = -1.02$, $p > 0.05$), but showed significant negative and positive correlations between some of the listening difficulties and choice of strategies of the groups of subjects respectively.

Key words: Listening Difficulties, Listening Strategies

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยเชิงสำรวจนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อหาความแตกต่างของปัญหาในการฟังที่เกิดขึ้นระหว่างนักเรียนที่มีความสามารถในการฟังสูงกว่าและนักเรียนที่มีความสามารถในการฟังต่ำกว่า และเพื่อหาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัญหาในการฟังและกลยุทธ์ที่ช่วยในการฟัง กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้คือ นักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 3 เอกภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัยรัฐบาล 4 แห่งในจังหวัดสงขลา โดยคัดเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างจากนักศึกษาจำนวน 143 คนและนำมาแบ่งออกเป็น 2 กลุ่ม กลุ่มละ 39 คนตามระดับความสามารถ โดยใช้เทคนิค 27% เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการศึกษาค้นคว้าได้แก่แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับปัญหาในการฟังและแบบวัดกลยุทธ์ที่ช่วยการฟัง (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning) ซึ่งดัดแปลงจากต้นฉบับของ Rebecca Oxford (1990) และแบบทดสอบ

การฟังจากหนังสือ IELTS Practice Listening Test เพื่อใช้ในการแบ่งกลุ่มความสามารถของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง แล้วนำข้อมูลที่ได้มาประมวลผลโดยการหาค่าเฉลี่ย ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ค่าร้อยละ ความแตกต่างของค่าเฉลี่ย (*t*-test) และค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์แบบเพียร์สัน (the Pearson Correlation Coefficient) ผลการวิจัยพบว่าปัญหาในการฟังของกลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้ง 2 กลุ่มไม่แตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ แต่พบความสัมพันธ์กันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญระหว่างปัญหาการฟังบางประการกับการเลือกใช้กลวิธีที่ช่วยในการฟังของกลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้งสองกลุ่ม

คำสำคัญ: ปัญหาในการฟัง, กลวิธีที่ช่วยในการฟัง

Introduction

In the past, listening comprehension was disregarded as it was considered to be a passive skill. In fact, it is an active skill because we cannot talk without listening first—communication will not occur if we only speak, but never listen (Wilson, 2008). Since the 1970s, listening has been emphasized more and given priority as a fundamental language skill in learning and teaching (Osada, 2004). The term 'listening' refers to the activity of comprehending spoken speech. It involves active, complex, and perceptive processes consisting of many sub-skills: perception, language and pragmatic skills. The listeners need to recognize speech sounds, word meanings, structures, stress and intonation patterns, and then decode the sound waves into understandable meanings using linguistic and background knowledge or schema, and finally interpret and construct the meaning of spoken messages heard from the speakers into a meaningful message in order to respond (Underwood, 1989; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; White, 1998; Byram, 2004).

Thailand is one country where English has been taught as a foreign language starting from kindergarten and continuing to university level. Nevertheless, Thai students still have insufficient English competence, especially in listening and speaking (Wiryachitra, 2006; Katsos, 2011; Punthumasen, 2007). Listening seems to be regarded as the most difficult skill even for native speakers (White, 1998), so it is very common for EFL or L2 listeners, including Thai learners to experience listening difficulties which are caused by both language-related factors and external factors that have been discussed by many researchers e.g. Anderson & Lynch, 1998; Brown, 1994;

Mckay, 2002; Underwood, 1989, Buck, 2001; Osuka, 2007 and also ways to solve them. It is well-known that listening strategies can be highly effective in solving the listening problems, especially when they are used appropriately (Vosniadou, 2001). Therefore, it is possible that the language learners who are unable to use strategies properly to overcome their limited ability in listening could finally have low level of listening proficiency.

The study thus aimed to investigate listening difficulties encountered by undergraduate students with different listening ability levels and to find out whether the listening difficulties significantly correlate with the students' choice of strategies. It was hoped that the findings could encourage teachers to help students improve their listening comprehension ability by providing more strategy training and conducting more class activities for develop their listening skills.

Listening Processes

Listening involves complex mental processes. It involves parsing, memory and cognition processes. "All listening activity simultaneously happens in the mind from recognition of individual phonemes to recognition of patterns of intonation. Listeners guess, predict, infer, criticize and, above all, interpret using prediction based on knowledge of the speaker, the context and how language works" (Wilson, 2008, p.21-22). There are two distinct processes involved in listening comprehension. They are the sub-processes of the cognition process called top-down and bottom-up processes. The bottom-up process occurs when listeners use linguistic knowledge—splitting the sounds heard into small parts—phonemes or syllables—to help interpret the meaning of the whole oral message. The top-down process occurs when listeners use prior knowledge such as topic knowledge, listening contexts, or socio-cultural knowledge stored in long-term memory to help comprehend what they hear. If the learners are able to simultaneously combine these two processes together, an interactive process is developed, and then listening comprehension can be completed (Brown, 1994; Wilson, 2008). Subsequently, such processes are developed into major parts of cognitive

strategies that help listeners relieve listening difficulties and facilitate the interpretation of spoken texts.

Listening Difficulties

The natural spoken language is what listeners experience when communicating. It is different from the written one in terms of language features (Richards, 2008). Moreover, spoken language always happens in real time. The listeners cannot control the rate of the speakers' speech and cannot predict what they will hear in advance. They need to interpret the meaning of the speech immediately, and so most of them have problems with a fast speech rate which usually results in unclear pronunciation. Listening taught in class is quite different from real life listening (Rixon, 1986 cited in Abedin, Majlish & Akter, 2009), so this can lead to listening problems. The key language and language related factors having an effect on listening comprehension mainly are vocabulary and grammar rules, speech rate, and topic familiarity.

Vocabulary and grammar knowledge are important elements of language learning. Vocabulary is used to convey meaning, and grammar structures contribute to better understanding of the group of words in sentences. However, both of them make listening more difficult at the same time. Ghrib-Maamouri's study (2004) revealed that more than 50% of the subjects reported having difficulty with grammatical problems. In addition, Kijpoonphol's (2008) study found that vocabulary, idioms, slangs and reduced words can become barriers in listening comprehension. This coincides with Goh's study (1999, cited in Tian, 2002) which aimed to investigate listening problems of ESL college students in Singapore and found that a large amount of unfamiliar vocabulary had much influence on the listening ability of high and low proficiency students in terms of comprehension blocks. This is in line with Othman's (2005) study which found that the learners could not answer a question once they heard it, because they tried to struggle with new words, so the process of interpreting the meaning stopped instantly.

Speech rate can affect the ability to catch the meaning of the spoken text because it is very difficult to understand speech within a very short time (Green, 2004) and L2 listeners need to focus consciously on listening input in a target language by thinking fast to cope with the fast rate of natural speech in order to interpret the meaning (Buck, 2001).

The research conducted by Goh (2000), on language learners' listening comprehension problems, found that two-thirds of the subjects quickly forgot what had been said to them, although they tended to catch the meaning of words, so this could make them completely lose the comprehension of listening texts, including the main idea.

Retrieving knowledge about the topic is a conscious process which can be gradually developed into an automatic one when the texts are interpreted fast enough. If the listeners are familiar with the tasks or the listening input, they will take less time to understand it and will respond to the questions or the input faster. Thus, the closer the listeners come to the automatic state, the more comprehension can be obtained and the more responses can be elicited. Conversely, if the automatic state cannot be reached—if there is failure to get the overall meaning within a certain amount of time, listeners' responses will be delayed (Buck, 2001).

Other language and language related factors can be generally classified into five major types: *linguistic features* (e.g. flexible informal and reduced forms, incomplete sentences, simple conjunctions, liaison, elision, blending, assimilation, dialects, idioms, slang, fillers, pauses, hesitations, phonological modification and colloquial words), *message characteristics* (e.g. academic or non-academic, explicit or implicit, difficulty levels, types of input), *speakers* (e.g. pronunciation, accent, intonation, redundant utterances, pace, volume, pauses), *listeners* (e.g. proficiency level, educational and cultural background, prior knowledge, concentration, anxiety, boredom, tiredness, illness), and *environment* (e.g. physical setting, noise, background noise) (Underwood, 1989). These can all contribute to problem in listening.

Some other failures affecting the listening comprehension are external to the communication. As Thailand is a monolingual country where English is not used in everyday life, most Thai students lack exposure to English spoken by native speakers (Kongsom, 2009; Wiryachitra, n.d.). This is an important external factor causing Thai students to lack listening skills. Another important factor can be the backwash effect from the university entrance examination. Since listening is not included in the entrance examination, this skill is rarely seriously taught, particularly in primary and secondary school levels (Matsumoto, 2008).

Listening Difficulties and Listening Strategies

Undeniably, research on listening difficulties often goes along with an investigation of approaches to solve the problems—listening strategies. Bonet (2001, p.4) stated that, in fact, most people are not good listeners. “We listen at about 25% of our potential, which means we ignore, forget, distort, or misunderstand 75% of what we hear.” This phenomenon may partly arise from the mentioned factors that can directly affect listeners’ comprehension and finally lead to listening problems. One way to help EFL learners to overcome the listening problems and better understand the meaning of aural texts when they carry out listening comprehension tasks is strategy training. Thus, there are a large number of studies exploring the strategy use among listeners of foreign languages in order to find the best way to develop learners’ listening competence (e.g. Oxford, 1989; Wilson, 2008; Teng, 1998; Lemmar, 2009; Vandergriff, 1999, Field, 1998; Boonkit, 2009).

The term ‘strategy’ as defined by Oxford (1990), is tools or actions learners employ to make their L2 learning easier, enjoyable and transferable to new inputs. It can enhance students’ proficiency in learning other languages, and also develop their communicative competence and self-confidence. Listening strategies can be classified by the ways the listener processes the input. One of the most widely used taxonomies was suggested by Oxford (1990), in which strategies are divided into two main types—direct and indirect strategies, each of which is subdivided into three categories.

Direct strategies include *memory strategies* which are used for storing information: creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, employing action, etc., *cognitive strategies* which are used in obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using the language learning or solving problems that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of spoken texts and *compensation strategies* which help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication—guessing from linguistic and context clues.

Indirect strategies include *metacognitive strategies* which are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning: planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and reviewing in advance, *social strategies* which involve learning by interaction with others in order to seek opportunities to expose to and practice the target language: joining language activities with native speakers or language experts or performing language activities with others, and *affective strategies* which are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements: lowering of anxiety, encouraging oneself and positive self-talk.

Goh's (1999, cited in Tian, 2002) study about the factors that influence listening comprehension found that students mostly think that message characteristics—linguistic features and content obstruct their listening comprehension, but that metacognitive strategies can perhaps help them to learn better. This coincides with a study conducted by Holden (2004), who stated that applying metacognitive strategies to understand listening texts can lead to effective listening. Yuan-lian (2002, cited in Zhang, 2007) also claimed that cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies can raise students' awareness in using strategies and abilities to perform listening tasks. This result contrasts with Jou's (2010) study on listening strategy use by technological university students which revealed that the listening problems found among the subjects were concentration, accents, stress and speech rate, and the cause was lack of listening practice. The subjects reported using metacognitive, cognitive, socio-affective strategies to solve the problems, but most students could not use strategies appropriately and they needed more strategy training.

A study of listening comprehension strategies of 51 Taiwanese freshmen conducted by Teng (1998) found that of the six strategy categories, more proficient learners used compensation strategies the most, while cognitive strategies were used the most by less proficient learners, and social and affective strategies were used the least. It was also found that planning strategies for language tasks (metacognitive) were the least used among the subjects. Teng assumed that learners' proficiency had effects on the amount of strategy use. Apart from that, an investigation of listening strategy use conducted by Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, (2008) stated that the appropriateness of using strategies should be considered rather than merely focusing on what strategies the listeners use. The more appropriate strategies the listeners use for each listening task, the higher comprehension they can achieve.

Purposes of the study

The purposes of this study were to investigate listening difficulties encountered by two groups of students (Students with more and less listening ability) and to find out relationships between the listening difficulties and their strategies use.

Research Questions

1. Are there differences in listening difficulties that students with more and less ability in listening encounter? If so, how are they different?
2. Are listening difficulty types related to the choice of strategies of students with more and less ability in listening?

Technical Terms

Listening Strategies refers to techniques or approaches to facilitate listening comprehension of listeners in order to enhance their listening ability; or "ways in which listeners (particularly L2 listeners) compensate for gaps in their understanding" (Field, 2008, p. 9). The strategies studied in this research are based on Oxford's taxonomy.

Students with More Listening Ability (SMLA): those whose listening test scores are in the top 27% of the total number of subjects ($n = 39$).

Students with Less Listening Ability (SLLA): those whose listening test scores are in the bottom 27% of the total number of subjects ($n = 39$).

Subjects

The population of the study was 198 third-year university students from four public universities in Songkhla province, Thailand. The students from Section One from each university were chosen with a total of 143 students. Their listening proficiency levels were between beginner and lower intermediate, based on the results of the listening section of Cambridge IELTS Practice test 7. They were divided equally into more ($n = 39$) and less ($n = 39$) able levels using the 27% technique, so the selected subjects were 78 (72 females and 6 males).

Instruments

A Listening Difficulties and Listening Strategies Questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed to elicit the listening difficulties and strategies the subjects use in various listening situations. It consisted of 3 parts: the subjects' general information and English learning background, a 26-item list of listening problems with Yes/ No responses, and a 40-item list of listening strategies with five Likert-scaled responses for each strategy item ranging from 1 to 5 (never, seldom, sometimes, usually, always). The strategy items were adapted from SILL version 7.0 developed by Oxford, (1989). The questionnaire was translated into Thai and back-translated to English before piloting and administering to prevent language confusion and to ensure conceptual equivalence.

A Listening Test

40 items of the listening section adopted from Cambridge IELTS Practice Test 7 (Cambridge, 2009) were used as a listening test to assess students' ability levels and to separate them into more and less listening ability groups. This Practice Test was

used since it is parallel with the real IELTS test as a reliable means of assessing the language ability of candidates. According to the U.S. copyright law (Library of Congress Copyright Office, 2012, p.19), it was stated that “a fair use of a copy righted work for research purpose is not an infringement of copyright,” so the test was legally adopted from the original source.

However, in this study, the spoken texts were played twice in order to encourage the subjects to respond to the test and the results can be used to identify their ability levels. This is due to the fact that the subjects could not answer the questions after the first listening and the study was set out to measure their ability in listening for real life communication purpose which is more interactive and adjustable than listening for achieving the required level of proficiency. Jones (2011) who did research on the question of how many times the audio recording should be played in a listening comprehension test stated that when listening in real life situations, test takers could certainly ask for repetition when they encountered interpretation problems, especially when the listening input was beyond their ability levels. Listening in a real life situation was different from listening in a test; more cognitive load was required in the test situation since the test takers had to perform various listening tasks and tried to give the answers on the test paper simultaneously as the audio continues to play. Other conditions occurring in the test situation could be sound quality, or interfering background noise, so the audio could be played twice or more. Hence, this study allowed the subjects to listen to the texts twice.

Data Collection

First, the questionnaire was piloted with forty 4th year students comparable to the subject group in terms of listening proficiency. The reliability coefficient value was found to be 0.89. The questionnaire was then administered to the subjects before the listening test. The time requirement was 30 minutes. This was to avoid confusion among the subjects so that they would not misunderstand that they must report only the strategy used for taking the listening test. Finally, the test was launched with the following procedure. First to motivate the students to do their best, full

details of the test were given, especially the test instructions, and the purpose of the administration before starting the test. After that the audio CD was played through a portable CD player in a lecture room once, and then again after it was found out that the students could not catch the meaning of what they hear. Altogether 45 minutes were allowed in completing the test.

Data Analysis

Scoring was done by giving one point for each correct answer – the total was 40 marks. Then, the scores were sorted in a descending order; and the 27% technique was used to assign students into more and less able groups.

Descriptive analyses: mean value, standard deviation, and percentage were used to calculate the frequency of strategy use and listening difficulties.

T-test was used to find differences in listening problems and strategy use between the two proficiency levels.

The Pearson Correlation analysis was used to show whether there were significant relationships between listening problems and choices of strategies.

Research Findings

RQ 1: Are there differences in listening difficulties that SMLA and SLLA encounter? If so, how are they different?

The total listening problem items included in the questionnaire were twenty six. In the overall picture, the *t*-test results indicated that there were no significant differences in listening problems encountered by SMLA and SLLA ($t = -1.02$, $p > 0.05$). However, it can be seen that SLLA ($M = 0.57$) encountered problems more frequently than SMLA ($M = 0.53$) did.

Investigating the use of individual strategies, the results showed significant differences in the following strategies as follows.

1.1) SMLA encountered these 4 problems (1, 29, 20, and 21) significantly less frequently than SLLA at .00-.01 levels. Table1 shows the details.

Table 1 High and Low Proficiency Students' Four Listening Problems with Significant Differences

| Listening Problems | H (n=39) | | L (n=39) | | t | p |
|---|----------|------|----------|------|-------|--------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | |
| (1) My grammar competency is low, so I cannot understand what I am listening to. | 0.31 | 0.47 | 0.64 | 0.49 | -3.09 | 0.00** |
| (19) In interactive listening: conversation, classroom lecture, presentation, I know almost every word I heard, but I still do not understand what the speakers are saying. | 0.18 | 0.39 | 0.49 | 0.51 | -3.01 | 0.00** |
| (20) In interactive listening: conversation, classroom lecture, presentation, I take a lot of time to respond when the speakers ask me some questions. | 0.46 | 0.51 | 0.74 | 0.44 | -2.62 | 0.01** |
| (21) I cannot understand a classroom lecture. | 0.10 | 0.31 | 0.33 | 0.48 | -2.54 | 0.01** |

Significance: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

1.2) There were three problems that the SMLA encountered more frequently than the SLLA, but not at a significant level: *P8*, new vocabulary (SMLA, $M=0.95$; SLLA, $M=0.92$), *P11*, idioms or slangs (SMLA, $M=0.85$; SLLA, $M=0.79$) and *P12*, reduced words (SMLA, $M=0.77$; SLLA, $M=0.69$). The inability to understand a listening text with new words was also reported to be the top ranked problem by both groups.

RQ 2: *Are listening difficulty types related to the choice of strategies of SMLA and SLLA?*

In order to discover the relationship between listening problems and choices of strategies used by SLLA and SMLA, Pearson Correlation Analysis was employed. The results indicated that some listening difficulty types related to some choice of strategies of SLLA and SMLA.

On the whole, the findings showed significant positive and negative relationships between some listening problems and some choice of strategies among SLLA and SMLA as shown in Table 2 below.

Table2 Correlation between Listening Difficulties (LD) and Choice of Strategies (LS)
Used by SLLA and SMLA

| LD \ LS | SLLA | | | | | | LD \ LS | SMLA | | |
|---------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| | MEMO | COG | COM | META | SOCIAL | AFF | | COG | SOCIAL | AFF |
| P5 | -0.31* | 0.00 | 0.06 | -0.08 | -0.07 | -0.20 | P5 | -0.43** | -0.04 | 0.09 |
| P6 | 0.32* | 0.39 | 0.38* | 0.45** | 0.34* | 0.17 | P9 | -0.30 | -0.40** | -0.14 |
| P7 | 0.03 | 0.28 | 0.21 | 0.45** | 0.37* | 0.20 | P13 | -0.32* | 0.00 | -0.09 |
| P10 | 0.10 | 0.37* | 0.05 | 0.43** | 0.47** | 0.18 | P15 | 0.16 | -0.35* | 0.26 |
| P13 | -0.23 | -0.14 | -0.01 | 0.03 | -0.05 | -0.32* | P18 | -0.39** | -0.23 | -0.27 |
| P19 | 0.03 | -0.17 | -0.34* | 0.07 | -0.06 | 0.01 | P20 | -0.41** | -0.04 | -0.05 |
| P25 | 0.10 | 0.26 | 0.32* | 0.19 | 0.21 | -0.10 | P24 | 0.00 | -0.06 | -0.36* |

Significance: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

P5 *Inability to understand linking words in a sentence*

P6 *Inability to use conjunctions to help interpreting the meanings of a spoken text*

P7 *Inability to use signal or transitional words that indicate different ideas*

P9 *Inability to understand various accents except American or British English*

P10 *Inability to distinguish the meanings between implicit and explicit from speakers' intonation or stress*

P13 *Inability to use general background knowledge to help understand listening input*

P15 *Lack of cultural background knowledge*

P18 *The mind always wanders while listening to the news for a long time*

P19 *Inability to catch the main ideas in interactive listening: conversation, classroom lecture, presentation*

P20 *Takes a lot of time to respond when the speakers ask some questions in interactive listening: conversation,*

P24 *Inability to concentrate at all while listening in class during a classroom lecture*

P25 *Easily distracted by surroundings for example temperature, sounds, people, and classroom atmospheres*

Among SLLA, 6 strategy categories significantly correlated with some of the 7 problems (P5, P6, P7, P10, P13, P19, and P25). 3 strategy groups—*memory, compensation, affective strategies* negatively correlated with 3 problems: *memory & P5* ($p < 0.05$); *compensation & P19* ($p < 0.05$); *affective & P13* ($p < 0.05$). 5 strategy groups—*memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social strategies* positively correlated with 4 problems: *memory & P6* ($p < 0.05$); *cognitive & P10* ($p < 0.05$); *compensation & P6, P25* ($p < 0.05$); *metacognitive & P6, P7, P10* ($p < 0.01$); *social & P6* ($p < 0.05$), *P7* ($p < 0.05$), *P10* ($p < 0.01$). That is to say *memory, compensation, and affective strategies* would not be selected to help comprehend the listening tasks if

SLLA encountered *P5*, *P13*, and *P19*. Conversely, six strategy groups except *affective strategies* were chosen to alleviate difficulties when SLLA faced *P6*, *P7*, *P10*, and *P25*.

Among SMLA, 3 strategy categories—*cognitive*, *social*, and *affective strategies* negatively correlated with some of the 7 problems (*P5*, *P9*, *P13*, *P15*, *P18*, *P20*, and *P24*). *Cognitive strategies* negatively correlated with *P5* ($p < 0.01$), *P13* ($p < 0.05$), *P18* ($p < 0.01$), *P20* ($p < 0.01$). *Social strategies* negatively correlated with *P9* ($p < 0.01$), *P15* ($p < 0.05$). *Affective strategies* negatively correlated with *P24* ($p < 0.05$). This means that *Memory strategies* was not reported as having been used by students who could not use linking words to interpret the meanings, but were used to facilitate the problem of using conjunctions as a clue. *Compensation strategies* were not used when they were faced with the problem of identifying the main idea; instead they used them when they encountered difficulties of surrounding distractions and different accents. *Affective strategies* were not employed to solve the problems of using background knowledge to help comprehension. *Cognitive strategies* were used when SLLA were unable to distinguish between literal and inferred meanings. *Metacognitive* and *social strategies* were employed to solve the same problems: inability to use conjunctions, signal, or transitional words to interpret the meanings and problems of distinguishing between direct and inferred meanings.

Discussion

The results indicated that in the overall picture, no significant differences in listening problems between SMLA and SLLA were found. Nonetheless, the significant differences at 0.01 levels were found in the problems which SLLA reported confronting more frequently than SMLA: low grammar competence (problem 1), inability to catch the main idea in academic and general contexts and understand lectures (problem 19, 21), and the delay in responding to questions (problem 20). It means that SMLA might have been able to deal with those listening difficulties better than SLLA did. This can be explained as follows:

1) Grammar knowledge is considered to be a key component to help listeners be more proficient in listening. Even though both SMLA and SLLA realized that they have low ability in grammar, the test and the questionnaire results showed that SMLA could do the listening test better and reported having fewer problems with grammar than SLLA did. Hence, it may be concluded that grammar knowledge can contribute to better comprehending listening texts and has an influence on L2 listening competence. The result is consistent with the studies conducted by Liao, 2007; and Savage, 2010.

2) The ability to catch the main idea and understand lectures could be affected by speech rate. It might be assumed that SMLA might have dealt with the fast speech rate better than SLLA did since SMLA could get better scores than SLLA in the listening test, so the ability to deal with fast speech rate of SMLA might also have helped them to be able to catch the main idea better than SLLA did. Moreover, the possible reason why SMLA could catch the main idea better than SLLA could be the fact that SMLA probably performed some activities which could enhance their ability to listen to rapid speech more frequently than SLLA. This can be supported by mean scores obtained from the questionnaire investigating the frequency of listening strategy use among the subjects. The results showed that SMLA employed the following strategies more frequently than SLLA: trying to grasp the main idea while listening, trying to pay full attention and concentrating to what they were listening to, watching English TV programs and movies, listening to songs and news in English, and seeking opportunities to practice listening (SMLA, M=3.66; SLLA, M=3.49).

3) The delay in interpretation and response to questions can have occurred when the students were not familiar with the listening tasks or the types of input. Often listeners have to unavoidably listen to something without a good knowledge of it, such as making conversation with people from different cultures or background knowledge, listening to a presentation or attending a lecture on a very new topic. It is possible that subjects might face all of the above situations. According to the personal information from the questionnaire asking about the students' language exposure, it was

found that nobody has been to an English-speaking country for more than a month and very few of them had someone to talk to in English. Further information obtained from informal interviews with lecturers teaching at those universities revealed that the following opinions:—

“I think most students acquired insufficient language exposure because they have very few opportunities in listening, especially listening outside the classroom and talking with native speakers. The students lacked not only listening practice even in an English class itself, but also a variation of listening input.”

This could have limited students' new conceptual frameworks which can be applied to listening practice in various tasks. Therefore, it is impossible for the subjects, especially to have interpreted the meaning fast enough to become automatic. Instead, a delay in catching the key ideas, understanding lectures, and responding to questions occurred (Buck, 2001).

Results also showed three problems which were encountered by SMLA more frequently than SLLA, but not at a significant level: a large amount of new vocabulary, idioms or slangs and reduced words. An explanation of this can be given based on the answers the subjects gave in the test. It demonstrated that SMLA realized that vocabulary is important in order to understand spoken texts since they were likely to make an attempt to answer all questions. For example, the answers given by SMLA often had spelling mistakes, but the sound of the misspelled words were quite similar to the correct one—the word 'cheese' was often replaced by 'shees', 'chees' or 'cheeze'. This meant that SMLA were able to recognize the meaning and pronunciation of the word, though they misspelled them. This probably stimulated SMLA to continually pay attention to struggle with those words by linking the pronunciation with the words they were familiar with, though the interpretation of some other parts of the text might have been missed. This corresponds with Othman, (2005) who suggested that new words can be another key factor to interrupt an interpretation process of spoken discourse. In contrast, the test results revealed that when SLLA could not give the correct answer, most of them would either write some known words or leave them unanswered. It was

possible that they may not know the meanings or even the pronunciation of the words they heard. Hence, they refused to focus on those words and were not aware of how vocabulary could affect their test scores.

The results also revealed that there were significant correlations between some of the listening difficulties and choice of strategies. 12 of 26 difficulties significantly correlated with some of the six groups of strategies.

Among SMLA, 3 strategies—*cognitive, social, and affective* were reported as not being used in solving some of 7 problems with respective frequencies.

Cognitive strategies would not be chosen to facilitate the difficulties so that they were unable to use linking words and general background knowledge to help comprehension, were unable to concentrate when listening to the news, and were unable to respond to the questions when listening in interactive contexts. The possible reason for this can be explained based on the findings of the strategies used by SMLA. It showed that the strategies SMLA hardly used were in the cognitive category: practicing listening to intonation, pronunciation, and the news. This shows that SMLA might have intended to avoid using some specific strategies, especially in cognitive categories. This finding can imply that SMLA might not have been competent enough to use cognitive strategies in appropriate and effective ways due to a lack of strategy practice. However, no strategies were reported used to solve any particular problems since there were no significant positive correlations shown, only negative ones. The explanation for this is that, based on the test scores, SMLA had higher ability and could deal with the problems better than SLLA did, but they also reported having problems. So it could not be said that SMLA did not use any strategies, but they might not have been aware that they did so. That is probably because they used them almost automatically. Due to the fact that there were no significant correlations between difficulties and strategy use reported by SMLA, specific amount of strategies they used could not be firmly determined. This result, therefore, seems to be inconsistent with Teng's (1998) study which indicated that more proficient learners use greater amount of strategies than the less proficient ones do.

Among SLLA, 3 strategies—*memory, compensation and affective* were reported as not being used to solve one of the 3 problems. 5 of 6 strategies except *affective strategies* were used to solve 5 problems. *Metacognitive* and *social strategies* were the most frequently used.

It was apparent that SLLA used *metacognitive* and *social strategies* to deal with different kinds of difficulties. *Social strategies* (e.g. asking for clarification, learning other different cultures, considering others' feelings or behavior through their tone of voice), not only helped listeners understanding the meaning of the spoken texts in various social contexts, especially in face-to face interaction, but also helped the learners be exposed to native speakers. The strategies which are categorized as indirect approach could contribute to self-confidence, learning motivation, and skill improvement (Goh, 1999, cited in Tian, 2002; Goh & Yusnita, 2006; Holden, 2004; Yuanlian 2002, cited in Zhang, 2007).

However, it is surprising that SLLA reported employing a wide variety of strategies, while SMLA did not report any. It is probable that SMLA were more accustomed with the input and could do better in listening, so they might have had fewer difficulties than SLLA did in terms of frequencies. This made them rely on strategies less than SLLA did. Similarly, SLLA used many strategies, probably because they encountered more difficulties than SMLA did.

All of the results point to the conclusion that all of the subjects might not only have unawareness of what strategies they had used, but also unawareness of how to use the strategies in the right way. However, "an awareness and deployment of effective listening comprehension strategies can help students capitalize on the language input they are receiving" (Vandergrift, 1999, p.170). Unawareness of using the strategies can be a significant sign of inadequate or lack of strategy training and practicing listening skills. It can be suggested that the students should be exposed more to listening activities and practice how to apply strategies effectively. This can be supported by the previous studies suggesting that listeners should learn how to apply strategies appropriate for each listening task (Jou's, 2010; Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2008).

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