



Thai EFL Undergraduate Students' Use of Listening Strategies and Listening Problems in Comprehending Academic Lectures

การใช้กลวิธีในการฟังและปัญหาที่เกิดจากการทำความเข้าใจการบรรยายเชิงวิชาการของนักศึกษาไทยที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

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การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อตรวจสอบการใช้กลวิธีในการฟังและปัญหาความเข้าใจการบรรยายเชิงวิชาการของนักศึกษาไทยที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ เครื่องมือหลักที่ใช้ในการวิจัยนี้ คือ แบบสอบถามการใช้กลวิธีในการฟัง ซึ่งเป็นแบบมาตรวัดของลิเคิร์ต 5 ระดับ มีจำนวน 57 ข้อ เกี่ยวกับกลวิธีในการฟังสามประเภทหลัก ได้แก่ กลวิธีด้านอภิปัญญา กลวิธีด้านการรับรู้ กับกลวิธีด้านสังคมและจิตพิสัย แบบสอบถามดังกล่าวจะต้องทำหลังฟังการบรรยายเสร็จรวมทั้งระบุปัญหาที่เกิดจากการฟังการบรรยายด้วย ผู้เข้าร่วมได้แก่ นักศึกษาชั้นปีที่สามจำนวน 30 คน ภาควิชาวิศวกรรมเคมี มหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น จังหวัดขอนแก่น ประเทศไทย ผลการวิจัยปรากฏว่า กลวิธีที่นักศึกษาใช้บ่อย คือ กลวิธีด้านการรับรู้ของการสร้างภาพในความนึกคิด การอนุมานหรือการคาดเดา ความเกี่ยวเนื่องหรือการคิดอย่างถี่ถ้วน รวมทั้งกลวิธีด้านอภิปัญญาของการตรวจสอบ ส่วนกลวิธีด้านสังคมและจิตพิสัยที่ใช้บ่อย คือ การให้กำลังใจ การตรวจสอบอารมณ์หรือการลดความวิตกกังวล และการซักถามหรือการอธิบายให้ชัดเจน นอกจากนี้ข้อมูลที่ได้จากแบบสอบถามยังปรากฏว่าปัญหาการฟังของนักศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการบรรยายเชิงวิชาการนั้น มีทั้งการขาดความสามารถในการจับประเด็นสำคัญรวมถึงคำสำคัญ ไม่สามารถตามความเร็วการบรรยายของอาจารย์ รวมทั้งไม่เข้าใจสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษของอาจารย์ ประโยชน์ที่ได้รับจากการวิจัยนี้ คือ อาจารย์สามารถนำข้อมูลที่ได้ไปฝึกหรือแนะนำนักศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการใช้กลวิธีในการฟังเพื่อช่วยให้เข้าใจและแก้ไขปัญหานั้นได้จากการฟังการบรรยายเชิงวิชาการให้มีประสิทธิภาพยิ่งขึ้น

คำสำคัญ : นักศึกษาที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ; ความเข้าใจในการฟัง ; การบรรยายเชิงวิชาการ ; กลวิธีในการฟัง ; แบบสอบถามการใช้กลวิธีในการฟัง

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine Thai EFL undergraduate students' use of listening strategies and problems in comprehending academic English lectures. The main research instrument used in this study was a listening strategies questionnaire which was a Likert 5 rating scale questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 57 items relating to three main types of listening strategies, namely metacognitive, cognitive, and socio affective. This questionnaire had to be completed by participants after listening to the lecture, including mentioning problems from their listening. The number of participants was 30 – all third-year students in the Department of Chemical Engineering, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen Province, Thailand. The results showed that the strategies that the participants frequently used were cognitive strategies of imagery, inferencing or guessing, association or elaboration, and metacognitive strategies of monitoring. For the socio-affective strategies that frequently used were encouragement, monitoring emotions or decreasing anxiety, and questioning or clarification. Furthermore, the data from the questionnaire revealed that the participants' listening problems concerning the academic lecture were the inability to comprehend the main point as well as the keyword, the inability to keep up with the lecturers' speech rate, and inability to understand the lecturers' English accent. The benefits of the obtained data from this study could be utilized by lectures to train or guide the students on employing listening strategies to effectively help perceiving and dealing with listening problems in academic lectures.

Keywords : EFL Undergraduate Students ; Listening Comprehension ; Academic Lectures ; Listening Strategies ; Listening Strategies Questionnaire

Introduction

Listening comprehension is regarded as one of the most essential skills in language learning (Brown, 1994; Morley, 2001; Rost, 2001). In the case of EFL learning, learners must use listening to learn the target language (Hwaider, 2017). Cross (1998) stated that in order to fully acquire an EFL target language, learners firstly have to master listening comprehension. Several researchers, such as Wolvin and Coakley (1979), Coakley and Wolvin (1997), and Ismail and Aziz (2020) mentioned the importance of listening comprehension skills by postulating that the skills are potentially essential for learning both EFL and all subjects of all educational levels. Moreover, listening comprehension skills are frequently applied by learners the most in classrooms to deal with academic contexts (Coakley and Wolvin, 1997; Duck and McMahan, 2017). Skills of listening comprehension are, therefore, essential for learners to employ in language learning and other academic subjects to obtain spoken input, such as explanations and instructions.

In order for EFL learners to effectively learn the target language and to attain L2 content in their other academic courses, they need to use their listening comprehension skills competently (Coakley and Wolvin, 1997). As listening comprehension is a complicated comprehension process, EFL learners must decode the spoken input into meaning by utilizing their own background knowledge and that of the EFL linguistic knowledge (Underwood, 1989). After that, they have to further employ interpretation of the oral input in order to gain comprehension (Mendelsohn, 1994). Clark and Clark (1977) indicated that when trying to comprehend an oral input, EFL learners have to make sure that they successfully understand all linguistic levels of the incoming input ranging from words, phrases, clauses, and sentences to discourses. Importantly, along with the usage of linguistic knowledge, EFL learners have to use their background knowledge to help them comprehend the oral input (Çakır, 2018).



While performing listening, EFL learners may have to deal with different problems. These problems can be reflected in three aspects: students, lecturers, and lectures. The first problem reflecting in the aspect of students is that students encounter a crucial challenge when listening to English lectures since they do not have sufficient knowledge of English vocabulary, pronunciation, as well as grammar (Meara, 1996). Regarding the lack of vocabulary knowledge, students will have trouble recognizing words phonologically if their vocabulary size is small (McCarthy, 1990). As for the lack of pronunciation knowledge, students with poor background of the English sound system are unaware of how to discriminate between the delivered sounds, whether they are in English or Thai pronunciation (Sahatsathatsana, 2017). For the lack of grammar knowledge, EFL students are seen having difficulty in comprehending a group of words in sentences (Suryanto and Sari, 2021). Thus, they have to spend more time dealing with complex sentences in the texts to understand the whole information.

The second problem reflecting through lecturers concerns their speech rate, a long speech, and an unfamiliar accent (Buck, 2001). It could be clearly seen that these problems are related to pronunciation produced by the lecturers. When the speech rate is fast, students are not able to concentrate on the lecturers' pronunciation of the delivered words (Underwood, 1989). For long spoken texts, similar to the speech rate, students lose their concentration on both the lecturers' pronunciation and the delivered information. Unfamiliar accents also cause English pronunciation to be different, thus difficult to understand. This problem, of course, happens as Thai university students are familiar with the Thai-English accent more than the British-English or American-English accent (Tassev, 2019).

The third problem in English listening is reflected through the lectures. Academic lectures sometimes hamper EFL students from conceiving listening input (Darti and Asmawati, 2017). For example, taking notes along with processing the visual information and replying to the lecturers' questions about the lectures are problems relating to academic lectures most EFL students encountered (Darti and Asmawati, 2017). Regarding Thai university students, lectures containing unfamiliar vocabulary and difficult grammar structure are considered extremely difficult for them to listen to and understand (Tejaniya, 2018).

It is suggested that to deal with these problems, EFL students must possess listening strategies to help them tackle all problems (Benson, 1994; Flowerdew, 1994). Listening strategies are mental processes which are utilized to learn, perceive, and remember spoken texts. In listening, a listener uses various listening strategies to make meaning of the oral input received. In employing listening strategies, a listener is demanded to use cognitive attempts to interpret sounds and figure out the word meaning, and activate background knowledge (Helgesen, 2003). Listening strategies are also utilized to handle complex tasks, such as interpreting stress and discriminating between sounds in order to comprehend, learn, or maintain new information from the oral input in English (Oxford, 1990).

For university students of all levels, employing listening strategies is a means to lessen the listening difficulty and to understand the information they hear (Oxford, 1990). Many scholars insisted that the application of effective listening strategies is essential for university students' academic accomplishment (Benson, 1994; Flowerdew, 1994). However, there has been a claim that although students are able to utilize different listening strategies, their listening skills are not developed at the level that can efficiently extract data from oral lectures (Helgesen and Brown, 2007; Ghimire, 2019; Suwannasit, 2019). Not only are university students unable to use listening strategies well, but they are also unable to organize the learnt strategies (Sodachan and Chayanuvat, 2018).

It has been widely recognized that Thai university students encounter listening problems during their academic lectures. In order to handle the problems and successfully comprehend L2 lectures, it is suggested that students know how to appropriately use listening strategies. However, without guiding



students in strategy usage, they might not be able to effectively apply appropriate strategies to help them comprehend lectures. To successfully guide students to appropriate listening strategies, teachers must preliminarily realize students' ability to use listening strategies as well as their listening problems. Such realization will help the teachers manage listening strategy guidance for students, which, in turn, will help them improve their L2 academic listening performance. Therefore, the objective of this study was to investigate Thai undergraduate students' usage of listening strategies to understand an academic lecture conducted in English, including exploring problems they encountered while performing their academic listening tasks.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine students' listening strategy use when participating in the lecture.
2. To examine students' listening problems concerning the aspects of students, lecturers, and lectures.

Literature Review

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is regarded as an active and complex process of receiving spoken input, interpreting the input, and forming meaning (Purdy, 1997; Rost, 2002). It allows listeners to be able to decode the speakers' purposes, process linguistic forms, such as fast speech rate and fillers, deal with listening in an interaction, conceive the spoken texts without knowing all the words, and recognize different genres (Mendelsohn, 1994). Therefore, listeners are engaged in listening comprehension to construct meaning for understanding oral messages.

For EFL students, listening comprehension is an important language skill which has to be achieved first in order to learn the target language (Ziafar and Namaziandost, 2019). Rost (2002) mentioned that listening comprehension must be developed because it is crucial for L2 learning and needful for developing other language skills: speaking, writing, and reading. Listening comprehension also involves the academic success of EFL students because this skill is most frequently used by students to cope with academic contexts and further help them accomplish their listening goals (Brown, 2000; Coakley and Wolvin, 1997). The process of listening comprehension is considered to be significant for EFL students as it is used to perceive spoken texts and is firstly required to learn the target language efficiently (Ziafar and Namaziandost, 2019).

Listening Comprehension Processes

Listening comprehension could be completed in three different listening processes, namely bottom-up, top-down, and interactive processing. First is bottom-up processing which is regarded as the lower order listening processing. This type of processing takes place in listening comprehension when listeners pay attention to linguistic traits (May, 2020). This includes the listener's performance of decoding each sound and word to gain semantic meaning. In this processing, language learners strongly count on aural input in listening comprehension (Richards and Renandya, 2002). In utilizing the bottom-up processing, learners decode "sounds that hear in a linear fashion, from the smallest meaningful units (phonemes) to complete texts" (Anderson & Lynch, 1989, p. 1). In other words, the listener's brain receives data then transforms the data into sounds, linking into words, components, clauses, and grammatical connections, and finally becoming meaning for the listener. The drilling of word segmentation skills is a way that a listener forms bottom-up processing (Buck, 2001).

Second is top-down processing which emphasizes the listener's reconstruction of meaning by using the sounds as clues. In this top-down processing, listeners use their prior schemata or background knowledge to predict the meaning of what may be spoken by the speaker. In listening comprehension, listeners use background knowledge to deal with listening input to compensate for the lack of language knowledge (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Prior knowledge and anticipations of the upcoming oral message are drawn upon by listeners in top-down processing, and after that, they imply what the actual meaning behind the speaker's utterance should be (Carrell et al., 1988).

Third is interactive processing which involves utilizing a combination of both bottom-up and top-down processing (Peterson, 2001). This third processing derives from many scholars' belief that using either bottom-up or top-down processing is not effective enough to reach full accomplishment. Listeners thus need to apply both processing to carry out the linguistic knowledge and the prior knowledge for comprehending the oral text (Rumelhart, 1975). The skills from both bottom-up and top-down processing are able to complement each other while listening. For example, if listeners lack background knowledge (top-down processing) about the spoken texts, they may turn to their knowledge of the language system (bottom-up processing) to help them perceive the texts instead. This shows that the usage of both bottom-up and top-down processing is important for listeners to understand oral input as they need to simultaneously apply the two processes through all levels of listening (Park, 2004).

In summary, EFL listening comprehension literature elaborates three different listening processes of bottom-up, top-down, and interactive processing. Each listening process has the unique advantage that helps EFL listeners to comprehend EFL listening input. Bottom-up processing allows listeners to focus on linguistic features to understand oral messages (May, 2020), while top-down processing allows listeners to apply their background knowledge to predict the meaning of the spoken input (Richards and Renandya, 2002). A current claim, however, signifies the importance of employing both bottom-up and top-down processing simultaneously in a form of interactive processing in order to activate their linguistic knowledge as well as prior knowledge for understanding spoken messages (Rumelhart, 1975). When these listening processes are ineffective, listeners need to apply listening strategies to help them perceive the oral texts (Bao and Guan, 2019).

Listening Strategies

Listening strategies can be described as language learning techniques employed to help listeners make sense of the target language's oral information (Oxford, 1990). Moreover, listening strategies are regarded as tools that can be used in the listening comprehension process to help listeners understand listening input. The usage of listening strategies is crucial for listeners to interpret and comprehend any received information from oral communication (Namaziandost et al., 2019). They are utilized to manage information in order to improve listening comprehension or retain information.

Listening strategies can be divided into three categories of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Firstly, metacognitive strategies are management techniques which learners use in order to be in charge of their own learning (Rubin, 1987). These strategies are also seen as general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, and guide their learning (Brown et al., 1983) by engaging in the three processes of planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Oxford, 2002). Planning refers to setting a learning goal, making a plan to accomplish that goal, and thinking of the results (Beyer, 1987; Lenz et al., 1988). Monitoring refers to the process of keeping track of how the learning task is progressing (Frey and Fisher, 2011). Evaluation refers to the process when learners assess the outcome of the learning task and their performance in completing that task. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stated that



metacognitive strategies are performed when learners are paying conscious attention to a spoken text, and monitoring and assessing their perception of the text. That is to say, metacognitive strategy usage concerns the learners' awareness of how they study (Hacker et al., 2009). Furthermore, it concerns assessing their learning goals, creating strategies to fulfil their goals, and then carrying out those strategies.

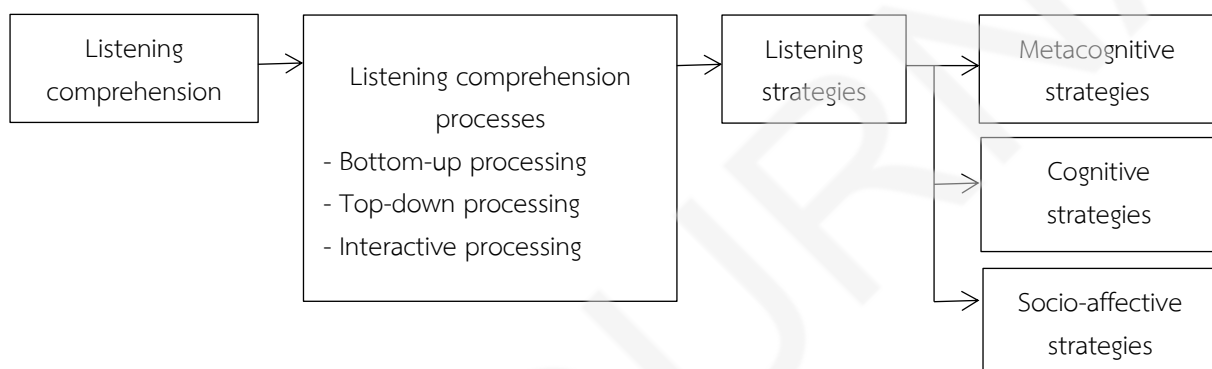
Secondly, cognitive strategies are problem-solving techniques used for coping with learning tasks and gaining skill knowledge (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983). Cognitive strategies involve processing, comprehending, and storing input in the working memory or long-term memory for recovering later (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). They also concern recalling new information (Pressley and Woloshyn, 1995). Since cognitive strategies are regarded as problem-solving techniques, they are used to deal with listening tasks by considering how to encode, retain, and retrieve information from the spoken text. For example, learners use memorization techniques to encode the received information into a form that can be retained in their long-term memory to retrieve it in the future (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Cognitive strategies are composed of different sub-techniques, such as inferencing, imagery, and translating. In inferencing, learners apply known information from the text to guess the rest of the information. Regarding imagery, learners utilize visual images to help them perceive the new spoken information. As for translating, learners employ words from their native language to comprehend the second language (Oxford, 1990).

Thirdly, socio-affective strategies are techniques utilized by listeners to cooperate with others, to prove perception, and to lessen anxiety (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Cooperative learning and asking for clarification are the common activities found when learners use their socio-affective strategies (Peterson, 2001). That is to say, socio-affective strategies are carried out through "cooperation" and "questioning for clarification" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Cooperation refers to the act of working with someone else, other than the speaker, in order to gather information, examine a learning task, solve a problem, form a language activity, or receive feedback on written/oral performance (Oxford, 1990). Questioning for clarification refers to the act of asking for explanation, confirmation, or repetition of the language/task (Robiansyah and Rochmahwati, 2020). Such an act also includes the request for paraphrasing and posing questions for answers. Socio-affective strategies also include checking learners' own attitudes towards learning (Oxford, 1990), such as using specific techniques to lower anxiety.

Listening strategies can be employed in EFL class to improve learning. For example, EFL learners can apply metacognitive strategies to make a plan on how they will learn the upcoming lecture (Oxford, 1990). They can use cognitive strategies to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word by considering the context of a text (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Furthermore, they can apply socio-affective strategies to ask the teacher to repeat the information or give examples. In the context of EFL class, listening strategies can be considered as techniques in supporting learners' listening comprehension. EFL learners of different proficiency levels are suggested to utilize different metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies to comprehend EFL oral input (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Ellis, 1994). However, EFL learners, by themselves, might not be able to use appropriate listening strategies to successfully complete the EFL oral comprehension. It is the teachers' job to guide their students on how to use listening strategies for an effective listening task. To provide the best guidance for students, it is necessary for teachers to know their students' current usage of listening strategies in their EFL listening comprehension and listening difficulty they have.

Conceptual Framework

Listening comprehension is a complicated process which allows learners to perceive spoken input (Mendelsohn, 1994). It comprises three listening processes: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive (May, 2020). When learners are unable to utilize listening processes efficiently, they can employ listening strategies to improve their understanding of the spoken input (Bao and Guan, 2019). Listening strategies are language learning techniques used to enhance learners' listening comprehension (Oxford, 1990) by engaging in three main strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Metacognitive strategies are essential for learners by controlling their own learning (Rubin, 1987). Cognitive strategies can be utilized to interpret the second language (Oxford, 1990). Socio-affective strategies are applied in learning to ask others for help and to decrease anxiety. These three main types of listening strategies are introduced to learners in order to help them develop their learning in class. In this context, strategies can be used as techniques to improve learners' understanding of the lecture.



Hypotheses:

H₁ : Students frequently use listening strategies of metacognitive the most compared to cognitive and socio-affective strategies when attending the lecture.

H₂ : Students' listening problems in class are importantly related to the aspect of students rather than lecturers and lectures.

Research Methodology

This section presents important information about participants of the study, the research instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Participants

Participants in this study were 30 third-year students majoring in Chemical Engineering at Khon Kaen University as a regular program in which most subjects are taught in Thai. However, they could select some subjects which are taught in English. The participants were regarded as low-intermediate students because their test scores involving other subjects of Chemical Engineering in English were at the lower average level. Generally, they have difficulty listening to lectures in English, and they have insufficient knowledge of listening strategy usage. They attended this study during the first semester of the academic year 2020, which was conducted in the Faculty of Engineering. All the participants took part in an academic lecture on the topic 'Water electrolysis to electricity.' The whole lecture, taking 80 minutes, was in English delivered by a Thai lecturer who could speak English fluently.



The Research Instrument

This study employed a listening strategies questionnaire as the main research instrument to elicit quantitative data from the 30 participants. The listening strategies questionnaire was employed to gather information on participants' listening strategy usage while listening to an academic lecture. This questionnaire was adapted through the combination of both O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) listening strategies and Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire. It included 57 five-point Likert scale items relating to listening strategies. These 57 items were used to provide information on the frequencies of listening strategy application by participants concerning three main types of listening strategies, namely metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. Each item was ranged from (1) 'never' to (5) 'always'. In this questionnaire, the participants also needed to indicate their problems when listening to the lecture. For the validity of the questionnaire, three experts in Applied Linguistics were invited to prove its content validity (Shrotryia and Dhanda, 2019).

Data Collection

Firstly, the participants ($n = 30$) were given the information of the objective that this study was to investigate their listening strategy use and problems in comprehending the lecture before the class started. Then, they were introduced to listening strategies by learning about the three main types of listening strategies: metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. When the class began, they listened to a lecture in English by their teacher. Next, they were asked to complete a listening strategies questionnaire after the lecture ended. In this part, they had to choose how frequently ('never' to 'always') they applied each specified listening strategy when taking part in the lecture, including pointing out any problems they encountered. Finally, the values of \bar{X} and S.D. of the 57 five-point Likert scale items in the listening strategies questionnaire were measured.

Data Analysis

This study employed X-bar (or the sample mean) with the listening strategies questionnaire to obtain the mean of the participants' usage of different listening strategies of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. The mean scores were separated into five levels as follows: a mean score of 1.00-1.80 indicates *never*; 1.81-2.60 indicates *sometimes*; 2.61-3.40 indicates *average*; 3.41-4.20 indicates *often*; and 4.21-5.00 indicates *very often*. The standard deviation (or S.D.) was also utilized to find the range of variation of actual values through the difference between the values in the questionnaire and the mean. Values of the standard deviation should be low to show that each participant's use of various listening strategies was closely linked with the mean of the whole class (Rumsey, 2005). In the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, the participants' problems during listening to the lecture were analyzed. The problems were classified into three groups – students, lecturers, and lectures – to discover the participants' listening problems in different groups and point out their major problems.

Results and Discussion

This section presents data collected in the questionnaire to indicate participants' listening strategy usage when attending the lecture and the problems they encountered while listening. The collected data involved the values of \bar{X} and S.D. of the three highest rated listening strategies measured from the five-point Likert scale items of the questionnaire. The listening strategies which were considered frequently utilized by the participants from their responses in the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Frequently-Used Listening Strategies

Listening Strategies	Types	Strategies	\bar{X}	S.D.
Metacognitive strategies	Monitoring	1. While listening, I try to keep up with the speed.	4.30	0.48
		2. While listening, I will check what part of the content I don't understand.	4.10	0.57
		3. While listening, I am actively thinking about important information.	3.90	0.57
Cognitive strategies	Imagery	1. While listening, I form pictures mentally to help me comprehend texts.	4.50	0.85
	Inferencing/ Guessing	2. I use the context of a text to help me guess the meaning of words I do not know.	4.30	0.67
	Association/ Elaboration	3. I use my background knowledge to help me understand unfamiliar ideas in a text.	4.10	0.74
Socio-affective strategies	Encouragement	1. I encourage myself through positive self-talk.	3.90	0.57
		1. I encourage myself to concentrate on listening English even when I can't hear clearly.	3.90	0.32
	Monitoring emotions/Lowering anxiety	2. When I don't understand something, I try not to worry so much about it.	3.70	0.48
	Questioning/ Clarification	3. When I encounter unclear texts, I will discuss them with my classmates to clarify comprehension.	3.60	1.07
Total			4.03	0.63

According to Table 1, the total values of \bar{X} and S.D. of the highly-used strategies were 4.03 and 0.63 respectively. The most frequently-utilized listening strategies were “24. While listening, I form pictures mentally to help me comprehend texts,” followed by “25. I use the context of a text to help me guess the meaning of words I do not know,” and “8. While listening, I try to keep up with the speed” respectively. Regarding metacognitive strategies, the three most frequently-applied strategies were “8. While listening, I try to keep up with the speed,” followed by “11. While listening, I will check what part of the content I don't understand,” and “7. While listening, I am actively thinking about the important information” respectively. The participants *very often* and *often* used these metacognitive strategies because the mean scores were between two levels of 4.21-5.00 and 3.41-4.20.

As for cognitive strategies, the three highest rated listening strategies were “24. While listening, I form pictures mentally to help me comprehend texts,” followed by “25. I use the context of a text to help me guess the meaning of words I do not know,” and “17. I use my background knowledge to help me understand unfamiliar ideas in a text” respectively. The participants *very often* and *often* utilized these



cognitive strategies as they were in two levels of 4.21-5.00 and 3.41-4.20. For socio-affective strategies, the most frequently-employed listening strategies were both “48. I encourage myself through positive self-talk,” and “50. I encourage myself to concentrate on listening English even when I can’t hear clearly.” The second rate was “52. When I don’t understand something, I try not to worry so much about it,” and the third rate was “57. When I encounter unclear texts, I will discuss with my classmates to clarify comprehension” respectively. The participants *often* applied these socio-affective strategies because they were between the mean score of 3.41-4.20. The results of Table 1 indicate that the participants frequently utilized cognitive strategies when listening to the lecture, followed by the usage of metacognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies respectively.

The questionnaire also contained open-ended questions for which each participant could reveal his/her listening problems from attending the lecture. These problems can be related to three aspects, namely, students, lecturers, and academic lectures as shown in Table 2. The table also shows percentages which reflect the number of participants from a total of 30 who encountered those problems.

Table 2 Listening Problems from the Lecture

Problems	1	2	3
Students	The inability to catch the main point(s) or/and the keyword(s).	The inability to focus on the lecture when having to listen and take notes at the same time.	
%	43.3	26.7	
Lecturers	The lecturer’s speech rate is fast.	The lecturer’s English accent is difficult to understand.	The lecturer’s unclear articulated words cause listening difficulty.
%	53.3	20	20
Academic Lectures	The lecture that has unknown words is difficult to listen to.		
%	36.7		

Table 2 reveals that the participants’ listening problems about the aspect of students were their inability to catch the main point(s) or/and the keyword(s), and their inability to focus on the lecture while listening and taking notes at the same time. Their listening problems regarding the aspect of lecturers were the difficulty of keeping up with the lecturer’s speech rate, including understanding the lecturer’s English accent and unclear articulated words. As for the participants’ listening problems in the aspect of academic lectures, they had difficulty comprehending the lecture with unknown words, such as technical terms and jargon. From the information, the participants’ major listening problems involve the lecturer’s speech rate (53.3%), their inability to catch the main points or/and the keywords (43.3%), and the lecture containing unknown words (36.7%). The results of Table 2 indicate that the participants’ major listening problems in class importantly concern both aspects of students and lecturers.

According to the results of the study, the participants had listening problems although they applied listening strategies during the lecture delivered in English, showing that they had difficulty perceiving the target language and that their listening strategy usage was inefficient. This conformed to the studies of Helgesen and Brown (2007); Ghimire (2019); Suwannasit (2019), who mentioned that students are able to



employ different strategies, but their listening skills are not developed in the level that can efficiently extract data from oral lectures. Moreover, they cannot listen to the target language as well as use listening strategies effectively.

Conclusion

It could be seen from the analyzed data that students used various listening strategies while attending the lecture, but they still encountered many problems from the lecture. This study found that the most frequently-used metacognitive strategy for helping the students understand the lecture was “8. While listening, I try to keep up with the speed,” while the most frequently-used cognitive strategy was “24. While listening, I form pictures mentally to help me comprehend texts,” and the most frequently-used socio-affective strategies were both “48. I encourage myself through positive self-talk,” and “50. I encourage myself to concentrate on listening English even when I can’t hear clearly.” However, most of the students indicated that their listening problems from the lecture concerned the lecturer’s fast speech rate and their own incompetency to catch main points as well as keywords.

Contributions

Regarding the students’ frequently-employed strategies and their listening problems in the lecture, teachers can apply the results of this study to develop suitable training for students. The training can instruct students to know appropriate listening strategies to help them manage different strategies, to monitor their own listening strategies, and to effectively adjust the strategies when necessary. This is a way to help them enhance their EFL academic listening performance.

Suggestions

As this study emphasized EFL students’ listening strategy usage and listening problems in lectures, the suggestions are that students have to know various strategies which can be applied to help them overcome their problems and enhance their listening comprehension. In order to encourage students to utilize listening strategies, a listening strategy instruction should be included in their studies. This allows students to have more time in developing their listening strategy use and to come up with their own suitable strategies. As the students are able to effectively employ proper listening strategies, they will know what strategies should be applied in the lecture to improve their understanding. Additionally, lecturers should support students’ utilization of listening strategies by creating lessons about it. In the lessons, lecturers need to teach their students the right way of employing listening strategies to deal with lectures. This can be done by guiding or demonstrating how to use appropriate strategies and stimulate the students to apply them in lectures. Another suggestion is about creating activities which integrate listening strategies in class to make students practice their listening strategy use. For example, the activity can be conducted before beginning the lecture by introducing the frequently-utilized listening strategies of this study to students and inspiring them to practice employing those strategies during the lecture. In this context, strategies can be employed as beneficial techniques for students’ academic achievement.

Limitations

According to limitations of the study, the number of participants may not be adequate to gain the complete listening strategy usage as well as listening problems of Thai EFL students. In order to acquire intense information, future studies may increase the number of participants by including 40 to 50 students or even a higher number for better and more reliable results. Furthermore, this study applied the listening strategies questionnaire comprising 57 five-point Likert scale items concerning various metacognitive,



cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. As these listening strategies were adapted from O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) study and Oxford's (1990) study, there may be other important strategies not added in the questionnaire. Future studies can add more strategies adapted from other studies into the questionnaire to cover wider areas of listening strategies and to obtain new information of EFL students' listening strategy use. Another limitation of this study is employing the listening strategies questionnaire as the main research instrument to collect data. Although the questionnaire can report the students' listening strategy usage and listening problems, other research instruments may be applied in order to acquire profound information. Future studies may include interviews to ask students how they utilize listening strategies. In addition, these studies may include tests to find out whether students' listening strategy use is effective or not.

This study yielded a good picture of the students' strategy usage and the problems they still encountered. It is hoped that this information can facilitate teachers' future design of the listening strategy model that could be used to give students' guidance to the effective use of listening strategies.

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