Comparison of English Listening Comprehension Strategies for High-Ability and Low-Ability Learners Taking an English Proficiency Test Preparation Course at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology

Supatsorn Jindathai
English Department, College of General Education and Languages
Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology
Bangkok, Thailand
supatsorn@tni.ac.th

listening comprehension strategies (LCSs) employed by university students and to compare the LCSs of high-ability and low-ability learners at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology. The samples were 103 university students from three faculties: engineering, information technology, and business administration. They took an English Proficiency Test Preparation course in the second semester of the academic year 2018. The samples included 37 male students and 66 female counterparts, random sampling was applied. The instrument used for gathering the data was a TOEIC English proficiency test to measure the students' listening ability, and a questionnaire adapted from the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0, to investigate students' listening strategies. The quantitative data were analysed using the descriptive statistics of arithmetic means, standard deviation, and t-test. The results of the study revealed that the learners mostly employed metacognitive strategies. The strategies which high-ability learners mostly used were compensation strategies whereas low-ability counterparts highly employed metacognitive strategies. The result from t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between high-ability and low-ability leaners (p<0.05). The study could provide insight information for English lecturers in order to assist low-ability learners to learn better listening strategies and gain higher scores in taking an examination test and the TOEIC test.

Keywords—English listening strategies, English proficiency test, strategy inventory for language learning, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

In global communication, English is widely accepted as a means of an international language which allows people to connect, communicate, and transfer various fields of information, such as education, business, science and technological developments. Therefore learning English as a second or foreign language has become an essential element in academic settings and workplace environments.

Many studies have supported on the importance of listening, Gilakjani & Ahmadi [1] reported that in academic settings language learners employs listening up to 40-50%; speaking 25-30%; reading 10-16%, and writing 9%. In daily life, listening is the widely used as a method of communication, Morley [2]; Rost [3]. Grognet & Duzer [4] stated that, in the workplace, listening is used more often than speaking, reading and writing. Listening is perceived as crucial for communication at all levels in any company starting from entry level to managerial position. Problems may arise at work due to poor listening skills.

Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology (TNI) has realized the vital of effective listening abilities in the workplace environments and provided an English Proficiency Test Preparation (EPTP) course with the main objective to familiarize students with listening formats appearing in a Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). The course syllabus contained a reading and listening part but this study only highlighted the listening part.

Listening skill takes time to master and contains complicated mental processes. During a process of listening comprehension, listeners need to concentrate on input and interpret all of the involved components in their short-term memory. They make meaning of utterances spoken by using their prior background knowledge, and then maintain information in their long-term memory to understand the whole input, Brown [5], Guo & Wills [6], Underwood [7], Vandergrift [8].

Several researchers reported learners' difficulties in taking listening comprehension tests such as Chomprakai [9], Anandapong [10], Khamprated [11], Rugsakorn [12], Watthajarukiat & et al. [13]. The learners' difficulties included unable to perceive native speech speed, unfamiliar accents, linguistic features, and lack of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the ESL or EFL leaners need to develop various listening strategies in order to overcome their problems in developing listening ability. According to Oxford 1990 [14], listening strategies are considered as tools or methods that learners employ to make their listening learning become easier, and more enjoyable. They help language learners to enhance their proficiency, increase communicative competence and self-confidence. They also assist the learners in deal with difficulties happening during their listening tasks.

After revision of related studies, there were many publications and research that produced a valuable exploration in the field of listening comprehension strategies. Each researcher applied different research instruments in order to measure learners' listening ability and investigate listening strategies that the learners employed. However, measuring learners' listening competency using the TOEIC test and investigating their listening strategy use have not received much research attention to extend more fruitful information.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine and answer the following research questions:

1) Which listening comprehension strategies do university students employ when taking the TOEIC preparation test at TNI?

2) Are there any differences in listening comprehension strategy use classified according to the students' listening ability levels at TNI?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following paragraphs show information which is related to listening difficulties and listening comprehension strategies of ESL and EFL learners.

A. Learners'Difficulties in Listening

Rugsakorn [12] examined 93 university students who took a TOEIC preparation course. Pre-test and Post-test questionnaires were distributed to find out listening problems in taking a TOEIC listening test. The students reported that they had difficulties in perceiving quick speaking speed, unfamiliar voices, and lack of vocabulary knowledge. According to Chomprakai [9], Anandapong [10], Khamprated [11], and Watthajarukiat & et al. [13], the students reported other problems and their low listening ability which were similar to Rugsakorn's findings, these were they were not able to identify different regional accents, failure in obtaining main ideas which speakers were conveying messages because of fast speech rate, and low grammar knowledge.

B. Learner's Listening Comprehension Strategies

Since 1990, there have been several studies investigated listening comprehension strategies employed by ESL & EFL learners to find out how these learners utilised listening strategies to improve listening ability and overcome their difficulties in listening comprehension.

Teng [15] examined listening strategies of Taiwanese EFL college students and reported using of different types of strategies employed by the subjects. The most frequently used strategies were compensation strategies, using linguistic clues and other clues; cognitive strategies, practicing sounds and writing systems; metacognitive strategies, paying attention and delaying speech production to focus on listening; memory strategies, applying semantic mapping; social strategies, asking for clarification; and affective strategies, relaxing, taking a deep breath, and meditation.

Watthajarukiat & et al. [16] investigated listening strategies employed by 146 English major undergraduate students. Research instrument was a listening test in Cambridge IELTS practice test to measure students' listening ability and a listening strategy questionnaire adapted Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (1990). The findings showed that the students mostly utilised cognitive strategies, using background knowledge of grammar to help in listening; on the other hand, the least strategy use was memory strategies, physical acting out what they hear to help memorising.

Jindathai [17] examined listening strategies among the first-year undergraduate students. The samples included 438 non-English major students taking ENL-101: English Communication I as a compulsory subject. The instrument was a questionnaire adapted from Oxford's SILL version 7.0 (Oxford, 1990). The result revealed that the most frequent strategy use was compensation strategies, guessing unknown words; metacognitive strategies, thinking about progress in developing listening ability; memory strategies, linking a new word with mental picture in order to remember; cognitive strategies, listening to English songs; affective strategies, encouraging themselves when taking a listening test. The least strategy use was social strategies, studying foreign culture in order to improve listening ability.

Namaziandost & et al.[18] investigated listening strategies used by EFL learners. The sample was 60 Iranian EFL learners in a private language institute in Iran. The instrument included Listening Strategies Use Questionnaire created to distinguish listening strategies, Noroozi & et al. [19]. The findings showed that the Iranian learners highly employed metacognitive strategies, followed by socio-affective strategies, and cognitive strategies.

Over the past two decades, many publications and researchers reported significant differences between high and low ability learners, Vandergrift [20], Watthajarukiat & et al. [16], Piamsai [21], Prachanant & et al. [22].

Vandergrift [20] applied a think aloud technique and quantitative data to examine listening strategy use of high school French students. The findings revealed that there were a significant difference in utilising listening strategies between skilled students and less-skilled counterparts. The skilled students significantly employed metacognitive strategies, such as monitoring listening comprehension, asking questions, and applying translation for unfamiliar words more often than their unskilled counterparts.

Watthajarukiat & et al. [16] investigated the differences in strategy use according to the students' proficient levels of skilled and unskilled learners. A listening strategy questionnaire adapted Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (1990) was applied as a research instrument in order to gather students' listening strategy use. The study found no significant differences between skilled learners and their unskilled counterparts. However, the group of researchers significantly found three individual strategy categories, that were cognitive strategies, using prior knowledge; metacognitive strategies, listening to English news; social strategies, practicing listening and with friends.

Piamsai [21] compared listening strategies of proficient and non-proficient learners. There were 65 third-year university commerce and accountancy students. Instruments included the strategy questionnaire adapted from Oxford's (1990) and listening tasks. The samples were divided into two groups according to their listening ability. Means, standard deviation, t-test, and think-aloud technique were used to analyze the data. The findings showed a statistically significant difference between proficient learners and non-proficient counterparts. The proficient learners reported more employing of cognitive strategies than their counterparts, such as trying to find opportunity to listen to the radio, watch English TV program or watch English soundtrack movies, practicing real-life listening excerpts, e.g. weather forecasts. Regarding affective strategies, this study found a significant difference, the low proficient group encourage themselves through compliments or gifts when they had high scores. The strategies which they utilized compensation strategies when listening to excerpts was capturing key words that contained a main idea, linking information to their background knowledge, and using their imagination while listening.

Prachanant & et.al [22] studied listening strategies of Lao EFL college students and compared the students' strategies with different level of listening ability. There were 71 third-year English major participants enrolling in English listening and speaking course. The samples were divided into two groups according to their Grade Point Average (GPA) of the English course. A strategy questionnaire was adapted from Gu's instrument [23] which contained three strategy categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social affective strategies. The findings showed Lao college students utilised listening strategies at a high level both in overall and each strategy category. They reported highly use of cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, and social-affective strategies. In addition, the study found a statistically significant difference between the students with different levels of listening ability.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Population and samples

The total number of population of this study was 140 second-year, third-year, and fourth-year university students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology (TNI) in the second semester of the academic year 2018. They took ENL-412: the English Proficient Test Preparation (EPTP) course as their elective subject. The samples of this study consisted of 103 learners who were selected by applying a simple random technique using Krejcie and Morgan's random sample table. These learners were divided into two groups according to their listening ability, high-ability learners and low-ability counterparts by using scores in the listening part of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC).

B. Research instrumentation

Research instrument of this study consisted of a listening comprehension test appeared in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and a questionnaire.

1) Listening comprehension test: Longman's listening comprehension test [24] appeared in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). The test contains four parts: photographs (10 points), question-response (40 points), conversations (30 points), and talks (30 points), and total scores were 100 points. This test was used to measure learners' listening abilities

2) Questionnaire: This research used a questionnaire adapted from Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.00 [14] and contained two parts. The first parts contained open-ended questions which was about personal information. The final part was closed-end questions containing 37 questions. Each question was measured in a five-point Likert scale which participants were asked to indicate their levels of listening strategies which learners might employ. The pilot test of the adapted questionnaire indicatd the Cronbach alpha coefficient at 0.92.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The Longman's English listening comprehension test and the adapted Rebecca's SILL in Thai version were distributed to the participants taking ENL-412 during their regular class. The participants were given time to complete the test and questionnaire and finally returned for analysis.

IV. RESULTS

Research Question One: Which listening comprehension strategies do university students employ when taking the TOEIC preparation test at TNI?

TABLE I: FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH LISTENIG STRATEGY USE REPORTED BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AT TNI (N=103)

Listening Strategies	Mean	S.D.	Frequency of strategy use
1. Memory strategies	3.43	0.68	Moderate
2. Cognitive strategies	3.51	0.59	High
3. Compensation strategies	3.75	0.72	High
4. Metacognitive strategies	3.76	0.70	High
5. Affective strategies	3.51	0.77	High
6. Social strategies	3.39	0.89	Moderate
Overall	3.55	0.55	High

Table I shows overall listening strategies of TNI students were at a high level. The most frequently used strategies was metacognitive, compensation, cognitive, and affective strategies respectively. The least strategy use was social, and memory strategies.

In the following table, table II, reveals the top three most frequent strategy use employed by TNI students.

TABLE II: THREE MOST FREQUENT LISTENING STRATEGY USED BY TNI STUDENTS (N=103)

Listening Strategies	Mean	S.D.
Memory strategies		
- I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of word to help me remember the word.	3.84	0.90
- I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.76	0.85
- I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	3.68	0.92
Cognitive strategies		
- I listen to English language songs in order to relax and increase listening ability.	4.17	0.89
- I watch English language TV shows, and search the Internet to increase listening ability.	4.16	0.84
- I read a set of questions in the test in advance so I can answer them quickly.	3.81	0.96
Compensation strategies		
- I make guesses to understand unfamiliar english words.	3.90	0.91
- I connect background knowledge to help my understanding.	3.89	0.90
- I use grammartical structures to make guesses on unknown words.	3.46	1.00
Metacognitive strategies		
- I think about progress in developing listening ability.	4.23	0.83
- I try to find as many ways as I can in order to increase listening ability	3.91	0.86
- I always try to find out how to be a better learner in listening	3.82	0.89

Listening Strategies	Mean	S.D.
Affective strategies		
- I encourage myself when taking a listening test.	3.94	0.93
- I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of taking a listening test.	3.90	0.87
- I feel stressful when taking a listening test.	3.45	1.19
Social strategies		
- I practise listening English with other students regularly.	3.76	1.13
- I try to learn about busiess vocabulary and its formality to help improving listening ability	3.38	1.03
- I ask for advise from teachers or foreign friends in order to practise listening	3.05	1.16

Research Question Two: Are there any differences in listening comprehension strategy use classified according to the students' listening ability levels at TNI?

TABLE III: COMPARISON OF LISTENING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TNI STUDENTS CLASSIFIED BY PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Listening strategies	High-Ability Learners (n=20)		Low-Ability Learners (n=28)		t-value	p-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Memory Strategies	3.39	0.54	3.17	0.64	1.278	0.208
Cognitive Strategies	3.62	0.61	3.12	0.53	3.064	0.004*
Compensation Strategies	3.97	0.59	3.32	0.69	3.392	0.001*
Metacognitive Strategies	3.87	0.77	3.41	0.71	2.153	0.037*
Affective Strategies	3.17	0.91	3.29	0.75	-0.483	0.632
Social Strategies	3.30	0.98	2.99	0.79	1.222	0.228
Overall	3.56	0.56	3.21	0.51	2.244	0.030*

*statistical significant difference at 0.05 level

Table III shows an overall statistically significant difference of listening strategies employed by TNI students. When considering each strategy category, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and metacognitive strategies indicated statistically significant difference at 0.05 level. On the other hand, there was no significant difference is memory strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

In the following table, table IV, reveals the top three most frequent strategy use employed by TNI high-ability students.

TABLE IV: THREE MOST FREQUENT LISTENIG STRATEGIES USED BY TNI HIGH-ABILITY STUDENTS (N=20)

Listening Strategies	Mean	S.D.
Memory strategies		
- I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	4.15	0.88
- I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	4.05	0.76
- I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of word to help remembering the word.	4.05	0.94
Cognitive strategies		
- I listen to English songs in order to relax and increase listening ability.	4.50	1.10
- I watch English language TV shows, and search the Internet to increase listening ability.	4.35	0.81
- I use the English words I know in different ways.	4.20	0.83
Compensation strategies		0.68
- I connect my background knowledge and a topic I'm listening to help understanding.	4.40	0.85
- I make guesses to understand unfamiliar English words.	4.10	0.88

Listening Strategies	Mean	S.D.
- I use grammatical structures to make guesses of unknown words.	3.40	
Metacognitive strategies		
- I think about my progress in developing listening ability.	4.50	0.69
- I try to find as many way as I can to increase listening ability.	3.95	1.15
- I try to find out how to be a better learner.	3.90	0.91
Affective strategies		
- I encourage myself when taking a listening test.	4.10	0.91
- I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in listening.	3.10	1.62
- I feel stressful when taking a listening test.	2.50	1.19
Social strategies		
- I practise listening English with other students regularly.	3.95	1.47
- I try to learn about busiess vocabulary and formality to help improving listening ability.	3.25	1.02
- I ask for advise from teachers or foreign friends to practise listening.	2.70	1.38

Table V reveals the top three most frequent strategy use employed by TNI low-ability students.

TABLE V: THREE MOST FREQUENT LISTEING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TNI LOW-ABILITY STUDENTS (N=28)

Listening Strategies	Mean	S.D.
Memory strategies		
- I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of word to help remembering the word.	3.32	0.77
- I write new words in a note book to help remembering the words.	3.32	1.44
- I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.29	0.66
Cognitive strategies		
- I listen to English songs in order to relax and increase listening ability.	3.75	0.75
- I watch English language TV shows, and search the Internet to increase listening ability.	3.57	0.74
- I use the English words I know in different ways.	3.21	0.83
Compensation strategies		
- I make guesses to understand unfamiliar English words.	3.43	0.79
- I connect my background knowledge and a topic to help understanding.	3.29	0.85
- I use grammatical structures to make guesses of unknown words.	3.25	0.89
Metacognitive strategies		
- I think about my progress in developing listening ability.	3.75	0.97
- I try to find as many way as I can to increase listening ability.	3.64	0.68
- I have clear goals in improving listening skill.	3.50	0.92
Affective strategies		
- I feel stressful when taking a listening test.	3.61	1.13
- I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of taking a listening test.	3.46	0.84
- I encourage myself when taking a listening test.	3.46	0.96
Social strategies		
- I practise listening English with other students.	3.32	0.90
- I try to learn English about busines vocabulary and formality to help improving listening ability.	2.89	0.88
- I ask for advice from teachers and foreign frieto practise listening.	2.75	1.04

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Discussion of Finding 1

The findings revealed that TNI students highly used all types of listening comprehension strategies in overall. The most highly utilised strategies were metacognitive strategies (thinking about progress in developing listening ability), followed by compensation strategies (making guesses to understand unfamiliar words), cognitive strategies (listening to English songs in order to relax and increase listening ability), affective strategies (encouraging when taking a listening test), and memory strategies (connecting sound and an image of a picture to help remembering a new word). Social strategies were the least strategy use (practicing listening with other friends). This findings contradict with Watthajarukiat & et al. [16], Jindathai [17], and Piamsai [21]. This may be due to the fact that the objectives of each designed course syllabus in each research study had different purposes in developing learners' listening ability. As mentioned earlier, this EPTP course mainly aimed for increasing familiarity of TOEIC listening formats and developing learners' listening ability which leads to gaining better listening test scores. However, this findings concur with Vandergrift's [20] and Prachanant's & et al. [22] study which reported a high use of metacognitive strategies such as monitoring, identifying, and planning. This can be implied that TNI students clearly identify their purposes while studying and performing the EPTP listening tasks, these were obtaining improvements in listening ability and thus gaining higher scores in the examinations. In addition, they might seek out opportunity to practice outside the classroom such as listening to English music, watching English TV programs, and searching the Internet in order to gain an exposure to the real world.

With regard to the least strategy use, that was the social strategies including practicing listening with friends and self-studying business vocabulary and its relevant contexts. These results are in line with Jindathai's [17] study which revealed the same kind of strategies category but in different sub-strategy. It may be explained that the students who enrolled in different courses may differently respond to the assigned listening tasks and variously gain improvement of listening ability according to the designed lesson plans.

Discussion of Finding 2

The findings of this study indicated that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level between high-ability students and their low-ability counterparts in overall. This is in line with Vandergrift [20], Watthajarukiat & et al. [16], and Piamsai [21], who reported that the high-ability learners utilised listening comprehension strategies more significantly often than their counterparts.

In terms of the strategy category, each of these above findings showed variation of results. Vandergrift [20] found that the skilled students significantly employed metacognitive strategies, such as monitoring listening comprehension and asking questions more often than their unskilled counterparts. Watthajarukiat & et al. [16] revealed significant differences between high and low ability participants in three strategy categories as follows: 1) employing previous knowledge to assist an aural input (cognitive strategies), 2) regular listening to news reports produced by native speakers (metacognitive strategies), and 3) practicing listening with their friends (social strategies). With regard to the study of Piamsai [21] who reported that the proficient learners sought more exposure to

an authentically aural input such as watch English TV programs, watch English soundtrack movies, and practicing listening to weather forecasts. However, the results of this research study found that the high-ability learners significantly employed three strategy categories of compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, and cognitive strategies more often than their low-ability counterparts. The differences in learners' strategy use in each of the above findings [20], [16], and [21] could be due to different target samples, methods of gathering information, and the main objectives of the lesson plans involved.

In consideration of each strategy use in this results, firstly the compensation strategy category, the high-ability learners connected previous knowledge with linguistic clues consisting of grammar, and linked their existing vocabulary to promote their listening comprehension. On the other hand, their lower ability counterparts made guesses to understand unfamiliar English words. It is not surprised to learn about the distinguish utilisation of the compensation strategies between these two groups of learners. This may be due to grammar competence, and a bulk of vocabulary knowledge. This can be explained in the following.

1) Grammar knowledge is contributed to having better understanding of the groups of words, or phrases in sentences in order to overcome listening difficulties both in daily life and business contexts. Consequently, the high-ability learners may percieve better existing grammatical structures than their lower-ability counterparts. Therefore, it is not surprised to learn that they reported less grammatical problems, gained higher marks in listening tests, and obviously had more competence of listening ability [13].

2) Possessing a large amount of vocabulary, idioms, and slangs may assist the high-ability learners to overcome difficulties in answering questions or be confident to do listening tests with unfamiliar topics whereas the low-ability counterparts are lacks of existing lexical knowledge in every aspect of background information. Consequently they applied different strategy use to overcome their listening difficulties.

Next significant differences of strategy use between the two groups with different listening competence was in the category of metacognitive strategies. The learners indicated the same utilisation of the three sub-category of this strategy use, these are identifying the aims of the language tasks, self-managing to seek methods in order to improve listening competence, and seeking and creating opportunities to expose and practice English with an authentically aural input. This type of strategy group was indirectly support listening competency and accommodate listener to gain higher listening competence [21]. The possibility which the learners applied this strategy category may be because of motivation and opportunity to expose to the target language.

1) Skilled learners possess a higher level of motivation and a better attitude in learning the target languages than unskilled counterparts. There have been many research and publications revealed about this matter, Kitcharoonchai & Kitcharoonchai [25], Kyriacou & Zhu [26], and Shaaban & Ghaith [27]. Therefore, it can be implied that the metacognitive strategies accommodate both groups of learners to become better learners [14]. Obviously the better competent groups reported more often seek out an exposure to English listening environments because of their higher motivation and better attitude in learning the target language. For these

reasons, it can be concluded that the skilled learners have a high level of motivation in seeking more opportunity to acquire English listening materials outside the classroom. On the other hand, the unskilled counterparts also did with a lower level of motivation and a lower level of attitude.

2) The topic of an exposure to the target language has been revealed in several studies. According to Tricomi's [28], and Rubega's [29] studies, a type of acquisition and a kind of learning situation played an important factor in exposing to the target language. Additionally, Briere's [30] revealed that the amount of spending time had a positive effect in learning the language. Therefore, it may be explained that the skilled learners are able to acquire both language learning and language acquisition. Furthermore, they also sought an opportunity to use various types of listening materials and spent a lot of time in exposure to the listening materials both inside the classroom and outside the classroom.

Finally, the high-ability students reported a significant use of the three sub-category of cognitive strategies more often than their low-ability learners. These were listening to English songs, watching English TV programs, and putting a lot of efforts to put newly learnt English words in various situation. The cognitive strategies refer to regular practising, and effectively practice listening for the main ideas and the details of conveyed messages. Obviously, the high-ability learners continually and regularly practised listening to authentic listening materials more frequently than their low-ability peers. This could be due to the fact that they had a higher level of motivation and a better type of attitude in improving their aural ability [25], [26], and [27].

Pedagogical implications

This study has confirmed the significant differences of listening comprehension strategies between the high-ability learners and their low-ability peers. The skilled learners regularly and highy applied a variety of listening strategies to overcome their aural problems. For examples, they frequently sought out opportunities to practise during their free time to improve their listening ability such as listening to English songs, watching English language programs, or English sound track movies. However, lecturers should provide more formal types of listening materials such as authentic English listening materials e.g. excerpted weather news or business conversations to expand the amount of lexical knowledge and familiarise with business and academic contexts which normally appear in TOEIC or IELTS tests respectively.

Additionally, lecturers should increase an awareness to the group of high-ability students (and also the lower ability peers) in terms of phonetic systems, e.g. homonymy and linking sounds since these do not exist in Thai phonetic systems.

As for the low-ability learners who usually spent less time in practicing listening outside the classroom; therefore, lecturers should present them with relaxing and joyful listening tasks to motivate them. Furthermore, more formal types of listening material inside the classroom should be provided as well. For instance, a conversation in a hotel, a restaurant, a grocery, or an excerpt of business discussion. In addition, a proper use of listening strategies should be trained during a regular teaching time.

There is one more implication which should be mentioned in a group of students with low listening ability that is they should increase an awareness in focusing or concentrating and paying attention to main messages and ignoring other distracted conversation when engaging in any listening tasks.

This is a vital aspect in order to overcome the problems of speech rate.

The above mentioned implications could provide valuable suggestions for lecturers in order to assist learners to be more effective listeners and gain a satisfied level of test scores and become successful learners in the academic settings and workplace environments.

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