



**PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH LISTENING
COMPREHENSION OF THAI NAVAL CADETS**

BY

LT. JG. KAEWKWAN IMVIDHAYA

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN CAREER ENGLISH FOR
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2020
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ENTITLED

PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF THAI NAVAL
CADETS

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Career English for International Communication

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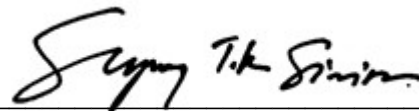
(Arthitaya Narathakoon, Ph.D.)

Member and Advisor



(Alisa Ratanapruks, Ph.D.)

Director



(Associate Professor Supong Tangkiengsirisin, Ph.D.)

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ABSTRACT

One of the problems that naval cadets usually encounter in English learning is listening. To determine the solutions, the problems that Thai naval cadets encountered in English listening comprehension were investigated in this study. A total of 89 cadets participated in this study, and the research instrument was a three-parts questionnaire: the first part sought general information; the second part was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire about listening problems, divided into four factors; the final part asked for suggestions on how to improve English listening skill. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS program and content analysis. The results indicated that overall problems concerning the four factors were at a high level. The biggest problems that the participants encountered were unfamiliar vocabulary from the content, various accents from the speakers, difficulty when listening for the first time, and exhaustion from their daily training. The instructors may apply the findings of this study to adjust their teaching strategies and find better ways to improve naval cadets' listening skill.

Keywords: Naval cadets, the American Language Course, Listening problems

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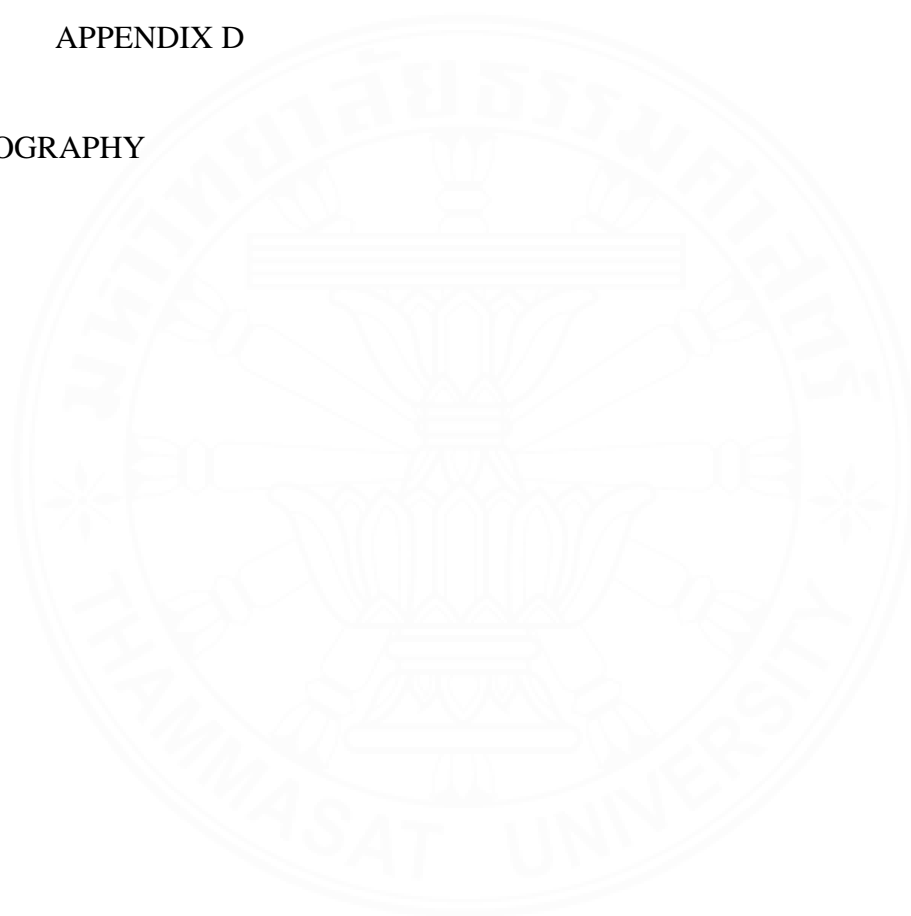
Lt. JG. Kaewkwan Imvidhaya

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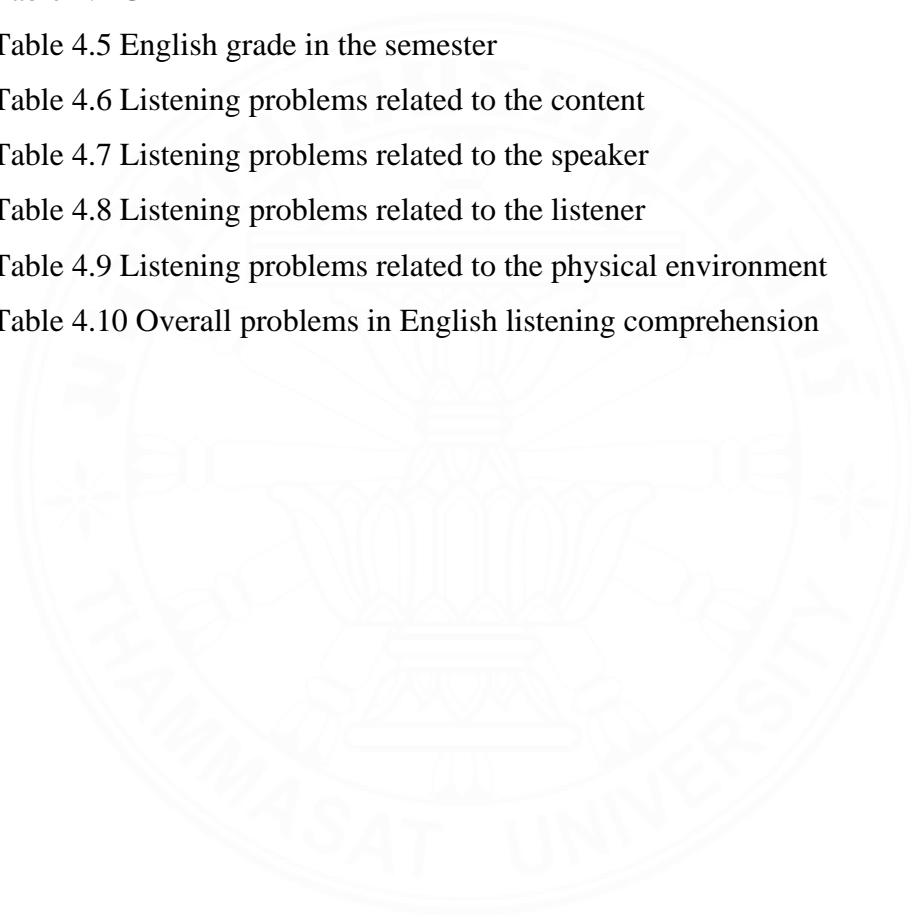
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

People use ears for receiving languages, identifying sounds, and converting them into meaning in the form of words and sentences. This method is called listening. Listening in any language requires great effort and concentration. Some people using this skill put more effort into it than others. Poor listeners often have difficulty concentrating or putting enough effort into it. Murphy and Hidebrandt (1991) give the meaning of communication as a process that involves sending and receiving both verbal and nonverbal information. It is considered complete when achieving a response from the recipient.

Listening plays a major role in communication. People spend 40-50% of the total time communicating on listening (Mendelsohn, 1994). At the beginning stages, listening is the most difficult for language learning out of the four language skills. Teaching in foreign language classroom displays the significance of listening (Rost, 1991). Nowadays, the teaching of listening has gathered more than it did in the past. Therefore, a listening part is often included in examinations. It is acknowledged as a main part of second-language skills. Listening also reflects the assumption that instructors will not teach the skill if it is not tested.

The Royal Thai Naval Academy (RTNA) has used the American language Course (ALC) for teaching naval cadets (NCs) as the main English subject. The ALC is both a course and a placement test. It consists of a listening part and a reading part. In the classroom, NCs learn the listening part mostly through a multimedia device and the instructor teaches the subject matter to them. The listening part is a major problem for NCs. During the class, NCs cannot answer questions after listening. Most of them often show signs of no interest in the class such as sleeping and using a mobile phone. They also complain about background noise that makes them lose focus. The purpose of this research was to explore the naval cadets' problems in English listening. The results can be used to improve naval cadets' listening skill and improve their understanding in the listening part.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The researcher is an instructor at the RTNA who has been teaching NCs for two years. He has observed that most of the NCs always have difficulty when they listen to English. They do not often understand messages from both the instructor and their multimedia device. They do not have the confidence to ask their instructor due to fear of embarrassment if they say something incorrect. They point out that they cannot keep up when an instructor speaks or the recording plays too fast, as well as due to many accents, and long conversations. NCs study English for only two hours a week and cannot spend all their time on the listening part, but a reading part also has to be taught. Furthermore, their busy daily schedule results in a lack of opportunities to practice listening skill outside the classroom. Another reason that NCs find listening difficult is the daily training causes them to be exhausted and not pay attention in the classroom.

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 What are the problems of NCs in English listening comprehension?

1.3.2 What are the suggestions from NCs that would help them to improve their English listening comprehension?

1.4 Research objectives

1.4.1 To investigate the problems of NCs in English listening comprehension.

1.4.2 To determine the suggestions from NCs that would help them to improve their English listening comprehension.

1.5 Definition of terms

1.5.1 Naval cadets (NCs) refer to the first-year naval cadets studying at the Royal Thai Naval Academy (RTNA).

1.5.2 The American Language Course (ALC): The coursebook created by the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC) for foreign military and English Language Training Programs (ELTP) through which the US government gives support to other countries globally. It evaluates English proficiency with items of grammar and vocabulary through a listening part and a reading part.

1.5.3 Problems refers to the difficulties that NCs encounter during listening to English.

1.6 Scope of the study

Only the first-year NCs studying at the RTNA were focused on in this study. The first-year NCs consisted of 89 cadets, who were the participants, and this study used a questionnaire as the research instrument.

1.7 Significance of the study

After completing this research, the results will provide NCs with information about the problems they encounter and the suggestions to improve listening skill. Furthermore, the instructors can use the findings to adjust their teachings and find a better way to improve the English listening comprehension of NCs.

1.8 Organization of the study

There are five chapters in this research as shown below:

The introduction regarding the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, definition of terms, scope of the study, and significance of the study are presented in the first chapter.

The review of literature and related studies are contained in the second chapter.

The research methodology is presented in the third chapter.

The results of the study are displayed in the fourth chapter.

Finally, the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for further research are found in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An overview of the literature relating to problems in English listening comprehension is provided in this chapter. The review discusses the following four main points: (1) definition of listening comprehension, (2) significance of listening comprehension, (3) problems in listening comprehension, and (4) relevant research.

2.1 Definition of listening comprehension

A definition of listening is given by Howatt and Dakin (1974) as the ability to analyze and interpret what speakers are saying. It is related to understanding characteristics of the speaker such as grammar, vocabulary, accent, pronunciation, and meaning. A good listener should be able to perform these things concurrently.

Thomlison (1984, p.2) give an explanation of listening as “active listening, which is crucial for effective communication”. It can also be defined as “more than just hearing and to understand and interpret the meaning of a conversation”. Purdy (1997) states that the listening process and the hearing process are different. Listening is a mental act but hearing is a physical act. Also, listening has to be comprehended by the brain. Thus, listening is the perception of aural symbols. Dickson (2015) emphasizes that listening and hearing are different. Listening is a process in which the sound is received, analyzed, and decoded into meaning. However, hearing is the process in which the sound is perceived.

Rost (2002) describes the listening process as follows: firstly, the listener receives a spoken message from the speaker (receptive orientation); secondly, the meaning is constructed and revised (constructive orientation); thirdly, the speaker perceives and responds to the meaning (collaborative orientation); lastly, the meaning is created by participation, creativeness, attention, and willingness (transformative orientation). Therefore, listening is a complicated, active process in which receivers interpret from what they hear with the knowledge they have.

2.2 Significance of listening comprehension

For ESL learners, listening is considered to have a major influence on language performance whenever they communicate. Nowadays, listening is assumed as the most required skill out of four language skills (River, 1981).

In second language learning, listening is an essential element for various reasons. Firstly, listening presents understandable information for the learner, which is necessary in the learning process. Secondly, listeners need interaction with speakers to acquire understanding. Lastly, listening practice can help learners to experience new forms of language such as unfamiliar grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, listening comprehension gives opportunities for improving and achieving other language skills (Morley, 1984).

Ratanapruks's (2015) study showed that listening is the first skill to develop out of four language skills. Since children learn to listen before they can speak, read, and write. In language learning, listening is the most essential ability that needs to be taught in a classroom because learners are unable to communicate successfully without listening skill. Effective listening can lead to a better performance in other language skills. When learning a language at first, learners need to listen to words and sentences several times before remembering and pronouncing them. Listening can be beneficial for learners to improve their proficiency and language usage. Furthermore, it is considered that listening is the fundamental skill for achievement in other communication skills.

2.3 Problems in listening comprehension

There are obstacles that many people encounter in listening comprehension. These may lead to a poor result, not only in terms of efficiency in listening; but also other skills in communication. Yagang (1993) describes four factors that are the sources of listening problems: the content, the speaker, the listener, and the physical environment. Other listening obstacles are a lack of interest, embarrassment, and cultural differences.

2.3.1 The content

Goh (1998) states that the common problems that learners encounter in listening are not remembering the words, not understanding the message, and quickly forgetting

what was heard. Long content creates a barrier for learners to interpret the meaning as it contains both subject clauses and subordinate clauses (Vogely, 1998).

The origin of listening problems may be the content itself. Unfamiliar vocabulary, slang and idiomatic expressions, difficult grammar, and disorganized texts may affect the learners' performance (Hasan, 2000).

2.3.2 The speaker

Ur (1984) indicates that most EFL learners may face difficulty in comprehending other accents if they have gotten used to the accent of their teacher. Learners who have experience in various accents may be able to comprehend better than those who have heard a few accents. Yagang (1993) agrees that learners find it difficult to understand other accent speakers if they are accustomed to the accent of their teacher who has a standard accent.

Hasan's (2000) study showed that hesitation and pausing in speech cause difficulty for learners. Also, he emphasizes other reasons that cause listening problems such as a fast rate of speech, various accents, and the speaker pronouncing words unclearly.

2.3.3 The Listener

Underwood (1989) found that listening problems have various causes. Firstly, the delivery speed of speakers cannot be controlled by listeners. Secondly, listeners cannot always ask speakers to repeat a message. In the classroom, the instructor can find it difficult to evaluate the understanding of the students of each part they have listened to, even though they can repeat it. Lastly, listeners do not have sufficient knowledge about vocabulary. Different education and personal backgrounds such as culture and traditions also create an obstacle in listening comprehension.

Problems in listeners may be based on what they have learned in the past. Guo and Wills (2005) point out that language knowledge is the beginning of learning English. It will possibly have a great effect in listening comprehension if the background knowledge of listener is insufficient. Guo and Wills also mention that psychological states have an effect on the listener such as motivation, boredom, shyness, and fatigue.

2.3.4 The physical environment

Disturbances in surroundings such as background noise from a low-quality device or environment can make the listener lose focus on the listening content. Hamilton and Parker (1997) state that it is impossible to eliminate all physical barriers. When encountering these barriers, listeners have to maintain focus. This is essential for effective listening, although it may take our entire focus on the message we are supposed to receive.

To sum up, the problems in English listening have four major causes: the content, the speaker, the listener, and the physical environment. Learners encounter barriers to listening comprehension caused by these factors. Consequently, it is important to determine which problems affect the listening of naval cadets.

2.4 Relevant research

The relevant studies concerning problems in English listening comprehension which can provide a guideline for this study are as follows:

Kijpoonpol (2008) examined problems in listening comprehension of students at Ramkhamhaeng University. The participants were 130 law students. The research instruments were a questionnaire and an interview in this study. He found out that the problems that most students encountered were a fast speech rate, various accents, slang and idioms, and redundancy. Furthermore, the findings from interviews presented that background knowledge was essential in listening.

Promhiran (2008) explored the comprehension problems in English listening at Satit Kaset International Program. In this study, sixteen Thai teachers were the participants, and a questionnaire was the instrument. The results presented that the problems in listening that Thai teachers encountered were unfamiliar vocabulary, difficult grammar, speaking too fast and unclearly, various accents, and exterior noise. The methods to improve listening comprehension were requesting the speaker to speak more slowly and clearly, gaining experience with various accents, learning new grammar and new words, and encouraging themselves when using English.

Anandapong (2011) conducted research on problems and proficiency in English listening at Bangkok University. In this research, 30 fourth-year business students were the participants, and the tool was a questionnaire. The findings showed that four factors

affect the students' listening: slang, using idiomatic expressions, listening to long texts, and unfamiliar words. Students suggested that they need more practice in order to improve their listening.

Pawongpon (2012) investigated the listening problems at international conferences. The participants were 20 Directorate of Joint Communication (DJC) military officers attending conferences. The research instrument used was a set of questionnaires. The results showed that officers encountered obstacles such as unfamiliar technical words, various accents from native and non-native speakers, exterior noises, and the inability to respond after listening to questions. They suggested that the DJC provide a listening course with more practice and native speakers as the instructors.

Kianeiam (2013) studied the listening problems at the Language Institute at Thammasat University. The tool in this study was a questionnaire, and the participants were 58 first-year students studying in the Master of Arts Program in English for Careers (MEC). The findings showed that most students had difficulty listening to native-speaking instructors. They recommended more listening time with native speakers and listening through media for new vocabulary.

In conclusion, the results in the above mentioned studies showed that most participants had problems with the speaker's rate of speaking, various accents, unclear pronunciation, exterior noise, and unfamiliar words. This study will focus on investigating the problems in English listening comprehension of Thai naval cadets.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used to investigate the problems in English listening comprehension is described in this chapter. The chapter contains five sections: context of the study, participants, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Context of the study

The Royal Thai Naval Academy (RTNA) has used the American Language Course (ALC) as the sole English subject for teaching naval cadets (NCs). It is a comprehensive, multilevel language program designed for English teaching. The ALC was developed by the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC) under supervision of the United States Air Force (USAF). The course not only focuses on general English topics; but also military topics emphasizing the technical terms that military personnel will encounter in their career fields. The material in the ALC is taught through all four language skills. The coursebook used in teaching NCs starts from level 13 for the first-year class. The required class is two hours per week. Instructors in the Humanities Department are responsible for teaching the ALC to naval cadets. The instructors consist of four academic staff who are Thai naval officers including the researcher and two part-time instructors who are non-native speakers from the Philippines.

The NCs are cadets who need to graduate from the Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School (AFAPS) including the Naval Rating School (NRS) before studying at the RTNA. There are 389 cadets in the academy in five years: 89 cadets in the first-year, 80 cadets in the second-year, 77 cadets in the third-year, 72 cadets in the fourth-year, and 68 cadets in the fifth year. In each year class, cadets consist of those from the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) and those the Thai Marine Police (TMP). The first-year and second-year NCs are divided into three classes and study in a standard engineering. For the third-year, fourth-year, and fifth-year, the NCs are divided into classes according to each field of study: electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, hydrographic engineering, and management.

3.2 Participants

The first-year NCs consisting of 89 cadets were the participants in this research. The reason to select the first-year NCs was the researcher has been teaching English to these cadets. Therefore, the researcher has noticed problems when NCs participate in a listening part.

3.3 Research instrument

In order to answer the research questions, a questionnaire was used as the instrument in this study, which had a purpose of exploring the problems in English listening comprehension of NCs. The questionnaire was based on the previous studies of Promhiran (2008) and Pawongpon (2012). The problem parts were revised in this questionnaire because it related to the problems mentioned in the previous chapter. For a better understanding and to avoid misinterpretation by the participants, there was a Thai version of the questionnaire which had three parts as follows:

Part 1: Background information

The general background of participants such as age, educational background, branch, grade point average (GPA), and English grade in this semester were collected in the first part using closed-ended questions.

Part 2: Problems in English listening comprehension

A survey using close-ended statements about the problems in English listening comprehension was classified into four sections in this part: problems relating to the content, the speaker, the listener, and the physical environment. A five-point Likert scale was used to evaluate their responses as shown below:

5	=	Strongly agree
4	=	Agree
3	=	Moderate
2	=	Disagree
1	=	Strongly disagree

Part 3: Suggestions

The participants were asked to provide further suggestions about how they want to improve English listening skill in the final part.

3.4 Data collection

Before proceeding, permission was needed from the commander of the RTNA and the commander of the Royal Naval Cadet Regiment. When permission was granted, the researcher asked the participants to sign the consent forms before distributing and asking them to complete the questionnaires in the classroom at the end of the period. Since there were three classrooms, the researcher spent three days to obtain the data from each class according to the consented date and class schedule on April 19-21, 2021. The participants' identities and personal data were not shared with any third party.

3.5 Data analysis

After receiving the questionnaires from participants, the data in each part were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program as follows:

In part 1, the data on the background information of the participants were analyzed using percentage and frequency.

In part 2, the information on listening problems is displayed in the form of tables with descriptions using standard deviation (*SD*) and mean (*M*). The mean (*M*) was interpreted into levels as shown below:

4.50 - 5.00	=	Very high
3.50 - 4.49	=	High
2.50 - 3.49	=	Moderate
1.50 - 2.49	=	Low
1.00 - 1.49	=	Very low

In part 3, the suggestions from participants were analyzed using content analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS/FINDINGS

After the questionnaires were returned by the respondents, the data were analyzed and the results of the study are presented in this chapter, which is divided into three parts:

- 4.1 Background information
- 4.2 Problems in English listening comprehension
- 4.3 Suggestions on how to improve English listening comprehension

4.1 Background information

In the first part of the questionnaire, general information about participants consisting of age, educational background, branch, GPA, and English grade in this semester were analyzed in the form of frequency and percentage. The results for each question are presented in the table as follows:

Table 4.1 Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18	7	7.9
19	26	29.2
20	50	56.2
21	4	4.5
22	1	1.1
23	1	1.1
Total	89	100

Table 4.1 shows that more than half of the respondents or 50 NCs (56.2%) were 20 years old; 26 NCs (29.2%) were 19 years old; 7 NCs (7.9%) were 18 years old; 4 NCs (4.5%) were 21 years old. Only 2 NCs were 22 (1.1%) and 23 (1.1%) years old respectively.

Table 4.2 Educational background

Educational background	Frequency	Percentage
Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School (AFAPS)	86	96.6
Naval Rating School (NRS)	3	3.4
Total	89	100

Table 4.2 reveals that most of the respondents or 86 NCs (96.6%) graduated from the AFAPS, and only 3 NCs (3.4%) graduated from the NRS.

Table 4.3 Branch

Branch	Frequency	Percentage
Royal Thai Navy (RTN)	81	91.0
Thai Marine Police (TMP)	8	9.0
Total	89	100

Table 4.3 displays that most of the respondents or 81 NCs (91.0%) were from the RTN, while the rest (9.0%) were from the TMP.

Table 4.4 GPA

GPA	Frequency	Percentage
Below 2.00	2	2.2
2.00 – 2.50	8	9.0
2.51 – 3.00	28	31.5
3.01 – 3.50	38	42.7
3.51 – 4.00	13	14.6
Total	89	100

In Table 4.4, 38 NCs (42.7%) had a GPA of 3.01 – 3.50; 28 NCs (31.5%) had a GPA of 2.51 – 3.00; 13 NCs (14.6%) had a GPA of 3.51 – 4.00; 8 NCs (9.0%) had a GPA of 2.00 – 2.50; only 2 NCs (2.2%) had a GPA below 2.00.

Table 4.5 English grade in the semester

English grade	Frequency	Percentage
A	23	25.8
B+	21	23.6
B	18	20.2
C+	11	12.4
C	4	4.5
D+	7	7.9
D	5	5.6
F	0	0.0
Total	89	100

According to Table 4.5, 23 NCs (25.8%) got an 'A' in English; 21 NCs (23.6%) got a 'B+' in English; 18 NCs (20.2%) got a 'B' in English; 11 NCs (12.4%) got a 'C+' in English; 4 NCs (4.5%) got a 'C' in English; 7 NCs (7.9%) got a 'D+' in English and 5 NCs (5.6%) got a 'D' in English.

4.2 Problems in English listening comprehension

In the second part of the questionnaire, there were four listening problems: the content, the speaker, the listener, and the physical environment. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses. The data were analyzed using standard deviation (*SD*) and mean (*M*). The means (*M*) of opinion levels were interpreted as shown below:

4.50 - 5.00	=	Very high
3.50 - 4.49	=	High
2.50 - 3.49	=	Moderate
1.50 - 2.49	=	Low
1.00 - 1.49	=	Very low

The results from each factor are presented in the table as follows:

Table 4.6 Listening problems related to the content

I have problems in English listening when...	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Level
1. The content has unfamiliar vocabulary.	4.26	0.68	High
2. The content has technical terms.	4.24	0.74	High
3. The content has slang and idiomatic expressions.	4.19	0.80	High
4. The content has difficult grammatical structures.	4.09	0.79	High
5. The content has a long text.	4.05	0.80	High
6. The content has disorganized texts.	4.03	0.86	High
7. The content has unfamiliar situations.	4.05	0.85	High
Average	4.13	0.79	High

From Table 4.6, the respondents rated the listening problems related to the content at a high level according to the average mean ($M = 4.13$). The highest rated problem was the content has unfamiliar vocabulary ($M = 4.26$). The second highest was the content has technical terms ($M = 4.24$), followed by the third highest, which was the content has slang and idiomatic expressions ($M = 4.19$). The content has a long text and the content has unfamiliar situations had equal means ($M = 4.05$). The lowest rated problem was the content has disorganized texts ($M = 4.03$).

Table 4.7 Listening problems related to the speaker

I have problems in English listening when...	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Level
1. The speaker speaks a natural speech which is full of hesitations and pauses.	4.03	0.82	High
2. The speaker speaks too fast.	4.17	0.80	High
3. Speakers speak with various accents.	4.18	0.78	High
4. The speaker speaks with incorrect grammar.	4.00	0.90	High
5. The speaker pronounces words unclearly.	4.07	0.89	High
6. The speaker stresses words incorrectly.	4.08	0.87	High
7. The speaker uses reduced forms.	4.01	0.85	High
8. The speaker doesn't use body language.	4.00	0.94	High
Average	4.07	0.86	High

The average level shown in Table 4.7 was at a high level according to the average mean ($M = 4.07$). The highest rated listening problem related to the speaker was the speakers speaking with various accents ($M = 4.18$), followed by the speaker speaks too fast ($M = 4.17$) as the second highest and the speaker stresses words incorrectly ($M = 4.08$) for the third. The two lowest rated problems with equal means ($M = 4.00$) were the speaker speaking with incorrect grammar and the speaker not using body language.

Table 4.8 Listening problems related to the listener

I have problems in English listening when...	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Level
1. I have difficulty understanding when listening for the first time.	4.19	0.80	High
2. I have difficulty answering after listening.	4.15	0.83	High
3. I lack background knowledge in vocabulary.	4.09	0.81	High
4. I lack background knowledge in grammar.	4.08	0.80	High
5. I concentrate on finding the main points.	4.12	0.82	High
6. I lack practice.	4.14	0.76	High
7. I lack interest.	4.14	0.84	High
8. I lack self-confidence.	4.11	0.87	High
9. I get nervous when I cannot keep up with listening.	4.17	0.83	High
10. I get embarrassed when asking to listen again.	4.03	0.96	High
Average	4.12	0.83	High

According to Table 4.8, the average level of listening problems related to the listener was at a high level ($M = 4.12$). The highest rated problem was the listener has difficulty understanding when listening for the first time ($M = 4.19$), followed by the listener is nervous when they cannot keep up with listening as the second highest ($M = 4.17$). The listener has difficulty answering after listening was rated as the third highest problem ($M = 4.15$). The two problems with equal means ($M = 4.14$) were the listener lacks practice and the listener lacks interest. The lowest rated problem was the listener getting embarrassed when asking to listen again ($M = 4.03$).

Table 4.9 Listening problems related to the physical environment

I have problems in English listening when...	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Level
1. Exterior noises (boats, sky-trains)	3.98	0.90	High
2. Classroom condition	3.84	0.98	High
3. Poor quality devices	3.74	1.03	High
4. Lack of visual clues	3.71	0.99	High
5. Exhausted from daily training	4.20	0.86	High
Average	3.89	0.95	High

The average level displayed in Table 4.9 shows that the respondents rated a high level for listening problems related to the physical environment ($M = 3.89$). Exhaustion from daily training was rated as the highest rated problem ($M = 4.20$), followed by exterior noises (boats, sky-trains) as the second highest ($M = 3.98$). Classroom condition was the third highest rated problem ($M = 3.84$) and the lowest was a lack of visual clues ($M = 3.71$).

Table 4.10 Overall problems in English listening comprehension

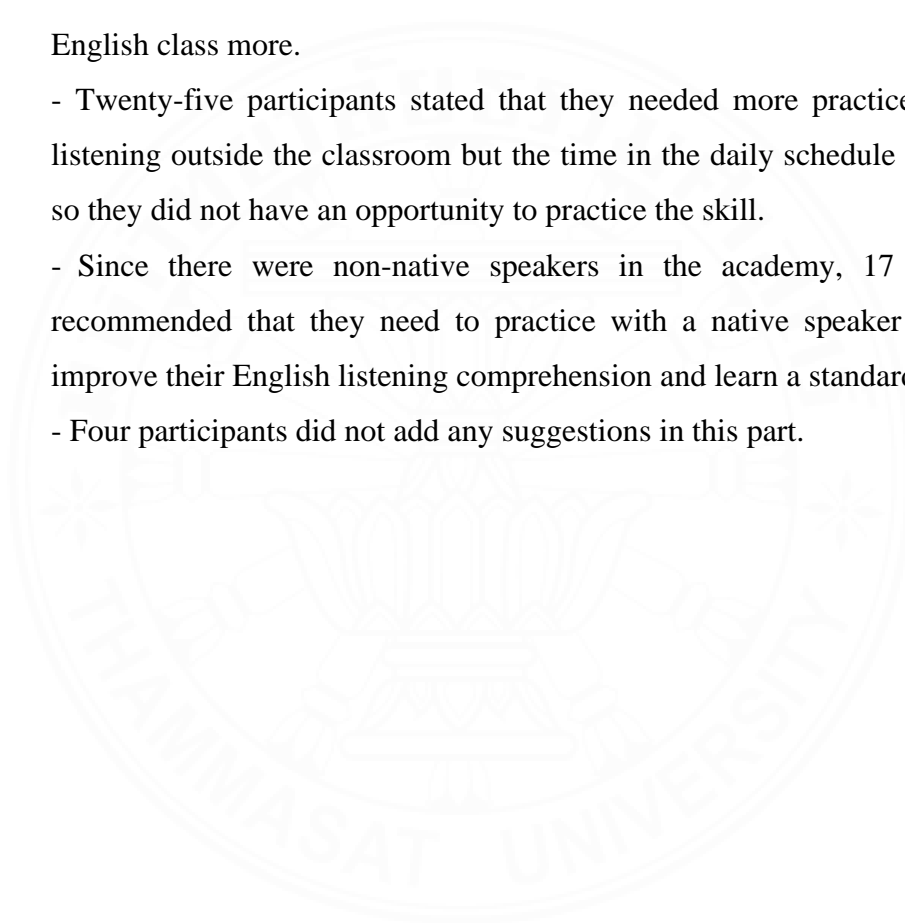
Problems in English listening related to...	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Level
1. The content	4.13	0.79	High
2. The speaker	4.07	0.86	High
3. The listener	4.12	0.83	High
4. The physical environment	3.89	0.95	High
Average	4.05	0.86	High

Table 4.10 presents a high level of overall problems related to the four factors that were interpreted from the average mean ($M = 4.05$). The factors ranked from the highest mean to the lowest mean were the content ($M = 4.13$), the speaker ($M = 4.12$), the speaker ($M = 4.07$), and the physical environment ($M = 3.89$).

4.3 Suggestions on how to improve English listening comprehension

In this part, the participants were asked to provide recommendations regarding how they want to improve their English listening skill. The suggestions are presented as follows:

- Forty-three participants suggested that the instructor should provide listening activities such as playing games, watching movies, and listening to music. They mentioned that such activities would make them not lack interest and enjoy the English class more.
- Twenty-five participants stated that they needed more practice in English listening outside the classroom but the time in the daily schedule was limited, so they did not have an opportunity to practice the skill.
- Since there were non-native speakers in the academy, 17 participants recommended that they need to practice with a native speaker in order to improve their English listening comprehension and learn a standard accent.
- Four participants did not add any suggestions in this part.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study and the findings regarding problems in English listening comprehension of Thai naval cadets (NCs) are summarized in this chapter. In addition, the discussion, conclusion, implications, and recommendations for further research are presented in the chapter.

5.1 Summary of the study

The main points of this research including the objectives of the study, subjects, materials, and procedures are concluded in this section.

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

This research had the purpose of investigating the problems of NCs in English listening comprehension and gathering suggestions on what would help them to improve their listening skill.

5.1.2 Subjects, materials, and procedures

Subjects: The first-year NCs consisting of 89 cadets studying at the Royal Thai Naval Academy (RTNA) were the participants in this research.

Materials: In this research, the instrument was a questionnaire composed of close-ended statements using a five-point Likert scale to measure their responses. The questionnaire had three parts: the background information of the participants, problems in English listening comprehension, and suggestions from the participants about how to improve their English listening skill.

Procedures: After a permission was granted, the participants received and completed the Thai version questionnaires before sending them back to the researcher. The SPSS program was used to analyze the data and the results are presented in the form of frequency, percentage, deviation (*SD*), and mean (*M*).

5.2 Summary of the findings

The results of this research are concluded as follows:

5.2.1 Background information

The participants in this research were aged from 18 to 23 years old. Most of them were 20 years old (56.2%). The participants mainly graduated from the AFAPS (96.6%) and were from the RTN (91%). The largest group had a GPA of 3.01 – 3.50 (42.7%) and got an ‘A’ in English (25.8%).

5.2.2 Problems in English listening comprehension

5.2.2.1 The content

According to the findings, the content caused listening problems at a high level. The problem with the highest rank was unfamiliar vocabulary, followed by technical terms, slang and idiomatic expressions, difficult grammatical structures, a long text and unfamiliar situations which shared a same rank, while disorganized texts was ranked as the lowest problem.

5.2.2.2 The speaker

The speaker was one of the factors that caused listening problems at a high level. The respondents stated that they encountered difficulty when speakers speak with various accents, speak too fast, stress words incorrectly, have unclear pronunciation, speak with hesitations and pauses, and use reduced forms. In addition, the speaker not using body language and speaking with incorrect grammar were the problems with the same rank.

5.2.2.3 The listener

In this category, the respondents rated the problems related to the listener at a high level. They indicated that they had difficulty understanding when listening for the first time as the highest rank problem, followed by feeling nervous when they cannot keep up with listening, having difficulty answering after listening, lack of practice and a lack of interest, focusing on the main points, lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary knowledge, and lack of grammatical knowledge. Furthermore, the respondents felt embarrassed when asking to listen again.

5.2.2.4 The physical environment

The problems concerning the physical environment were at a high level. The respondents agreed that exhaustion from the daily training was the biggest cause of their listening problems. Moreover, exterior noises, classroom conditions, poor quality devices, and lack of visual clues also affected their listening comprehension.

5.2.3 Suggestions on improving English listening comprehension

Most of the respondents felt that learning English in the classroom was boring and uninteresting. They stated that they did not have time to practice listening outside the classroom due to their daily schedule. They suggested that the instructor should provide some interesting activities such as watching movies, listening to music, and playing games in English. They stated that such activities would create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. Furthermore, the respondents suggested that the academy should employ a native speaker in order to help the NCs practice listening to a standard accent.

5.3 Discussion

The results are discussed as follows:

5.3.1 Opinions on English listening comprehension problems

According to the overall findings, the respondents had listening problems at a high level. The problems concerned the content, the speaker, the listener, and the physical environment.

5.3.1.1 The content

The problems caused by the content were at a high level. The respondents agreed that unfamiliar vocabulary, technical terms, and slang and idiomatic expressions had the biggest effect on their listening comprehension. The findings support Hasan's (2000) study, which showed that the cause of listening problems was the content itself. He indicated that unfamiliar vocabulary and difficult grammatical structures created obstacles for learners as well as they cannot understand content containing slang and idioms. Learners may lose their focus on listening when encountering unfamiliar situations and feel confused if they listen to disorganized texts. The respondents also presented that listening to a long text was difficult as they were unable to interpret the total meaning. This relates to Vogely's (1998) study, which found that longer content with subject clauses and subordinate clauses may create a barrier for learners in listening comprehension.

5.3.1.2 The speaker

The speaker was one of the factors that caused listening problems at a high level. The respondents had difficulty listening when speakers with various accents, spoke too

fast, and stressed words incorrectly. The findings are similar to the study of Ur (1984) and Yagang (1993), which showed that learners find it difficult if they are familiar with only a few accents. The respondents indicated that unclear pronunciation; and speaking with hesitations and pauses would make them confused; this conforms to Hasan (2000), who found that the reasons for listening problems were hesitation and pausing in the speech and unclear pronunciation by the speaker. The respondents did not understand when the speaker used reduced words and spoke with incorrect grammar. Moreover, they could not guess the meaning if the speaker did not use body language.

5.3.1.3 The listener

Listening problems related to the listener were rated a high level by the respondents. The three main problems were having difficulty listening for the first time, feeling nervous when they cannot keep up with listening, and having difficulty answering after listening. They did not have an opportunity to practice outside the classroom and felt uninterested in listening. Concentrating on finding the main points made them lose focus on other listening parts. The respondents lost their self-confidence when they did not have enough background knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, they did not ask to listen again due to their embarrassments. These findings are compatible with Guo and Wills's (2005) study, which showed that insufficient background knowledge of the listener can have a great effect on listening comprehension. They also found that psychological states reduce efficiency in listening such as motivation, boredom, and shyness.

5.3.1.4 The physical environment

For these high-level problems, exhaustion from their daily training was the highest rated problem for the respondents. They pointed out that when they had training; they had difficulty stopping themselves from falling asleep. The other problems that had an impact on listening comprehension were the classroom condition, low-quality devices, and a lack of visual clues. Some equipment was outdated or still undergoing repair. They also stated that exterior noises from boats and sky-trains interfered with their listening, and it took some time before those noises stopped. The findings are in accord with Hamilton and Parker's (1997) study, which showed that numerous physical barriers from surroundings are almost unavoidable; these factors

can distract the attention of listeners and may affect their listening comprehension. A lot of effort would be required for listeners to achieve effective listening.

5.3.2 Suggestions for improving English listening comprehension

The respondents were asked to give some recommendations regarding how to improve their listening skill. They suggested that the instructor should provide some interesting activities concerning English listening such as watching movies, listening to music, and playing games. Such activities could create a pleasant atmosphere for learning and they would not feel bored. Reeve and Williamson (1987) determined that using music in English teaching can motivate students to improve listening skill since it is amusing and helps reduce anxiety. Wood (1995) contends that movies are used extensively for language teaching because they can be accessed conveniently and learners find it enjoyable to watch movies. But as for not having time to practice listening outside the classroom, the instructor recommended that the respondents could practice listening to short topics such as news and short stories since their schedule was tight and the amount of time spent on listening to a long text was long. In addition, the respondents wanted to study and practice listening with a native speaker in order to learn a standard accent if the academy could provide them because the respondents have watched movies and listened to music, which feature a standard accent. Therefore, they were accustomed to the accent, and a native speaker would be a better option for practicing and improving English listening comprehension.

5.4 Conclusion

This research investigated the problems in English listening comprehension of Thai naval cadets. The results based on the discussion presented that the first-year NCs encountered listening problems regarding four factors: firstly, the NCs stated that listening problems related to the content mostly came from unfamiliar vocabulary, technical terms, and slang and idiomatic expressions; secondly, listening problems related to the speaker were that the NCs had difficulty when the speakers spoke with various accents. They also could not keep up with if the speaker spoke too fast and stressed words incorrectly; thirdly, the top three problems related to the listener were the NCs had difficulty when listening for the first time. They felt nervous when could not keep up with listening and had difficulty answering after listening; lastly, the main

obstacles in listening related to the physical environment that the NCs encountered were feeling exhausted from a daily training. They also lost their concentration in listening when hearing external noises such as boats and sky-trains.

The NCs' primary suggestion for improving their English listening comprehension was providing some interesting activities concerning English listening such as watching movies, listening to music, and playing games. They also wanted more time to practice listening besides learning in the class. Furthermore, the NCs would like to practice listening with a native speaker.

5.5 Implications

The four factors that caused listening problems were all at a high level. These problems have to be corrected in order to improve the English listening comprehension of NCs. According to the findings in this study, the instructors should adjust their teaching strategies such as giving clear definitions of unfamiliar vocabulary including technical terms in the field and slang and idiomatic expressions, speak slower, and stressing words more incorrectly. The instructors should encourage their cadets in the class when it comes to the listening part. Despite feeling exhausted from training, NCs can refresh themselves before attending the class by washing their faces and stretching. Furthermore, the respondents suggested providing some interesting activities related to English listening and practicing with a native speaker. The Humanities Department should include these activities in the curriculum. As for requiring a native speaker, the department should inform superior officers about the importance of employing a native speaker as an instructor, as this can be beneficial for NCs.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

The recommendations are made for further research based on the findings and conclusion of this study as follows.

5.5.1 This study did not divide the participants into groups based on their English proficiency levels. Participants in further studies should be divided into high-level and low-level groups in order to determine the differences in English listening comprehension between high-level and low-level learners.

5.5.2 The participants in this study were only the first-year NCs who studying standard engineering. Further studies should focus on the third-year, fourth-year, and fifth-year cadets in order to study the problems in listening from each year and field of study.

5.5.3 Further research should be conducted to investigate the problems in English listening comprehension of naval officers at the RTNA.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH
PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF
THAI NAVAL CADETS

The aim of this study is to investigate the problems and determine the suggestions in English listening comprehension of Thai naval cadets. This questionnaire is a part of a research paper as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Arts in Career English for International Communication, Language Institute, Thammasat University. Your information will not be shared with any third party and used only for research purpose. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Part 1: Background Information

Instructions: Please mark \checkmark in [] which best suits you, or writes your answer in the provided space.

1. Age: _____ years old

2. Educational background

[] AFAPS [] AFAPS (Naval Rating School)

3. Branch

[] RTN [] TMP

4. Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)

[] Below 2.00 [] 2.00 – 2.50 [] 2.51 – 3.00

[] 3.01 – 3.50 [] 3.51 – 4.00

5. English grade in this semester

[] A [] B+ [] B [] C+ [] C

[] D+ [] D [] F

Part 2: Problems in English listening comprehension

Instructions: Please mark \surd in the column which best suits you.

2.1 Listening problems related to the content

I have problems in English listening when...	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Moderate 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
1. The content has unfamiliar vocabulary.					
2. The content has technical terms.					
3. The content has slang and idiomatic expressions.					
4. The content has difficult grammatical structures.					
5. The content has a long text.					
6. The content has disorganized texts.					
7. The content has unfamiliar situations.					

2.2 Listening problems related to the speaker

I have problems in English listening when...	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Moderate 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
1. The speaker speaks a natural speech which is full of hesitations and pauses.					
2. The speaker speaks too fast.					

3. Speakers speak with various accents.					
4. The speaker speaks with incorrect grammar.					
5. The speaker pronounces words unclearly.					
6. The speaker stresses words incorrectly.					
7. The speaker uses reduced forms.					
8. The speaker doesn't use body language.					

2.3 Listening problems related to the listener

I have problems in English listening when...	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Moderate 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
1. I have difficulty understanding when listening for the first time.					
2. I have difficulty answering after listening.					
3. I lack background knowledge in vocabulary.					
4. I lack background knowledge in grammar.					
5. I concentrate on finding the main points.					
6. I lack practice.					
7. I lack interest.					

8. I lack self-confidence.					
9. I get nervous when I cannot keep up with listening.					
10. I get embarrassed when asking to listen again.					

2.4 Listening problems related to the physical environment

I have problems in English listening when...	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Moderate 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
1. Exterior noises (boats, sky-trains)					
2. Classroom condition					
3. Poor quality devices					
4. Lack of visual clues					
5. Exhausted from daily training					

Part 3: Suggestions

Instructions: Please provide some recommendations regarding how to improve your English listening comprehension skill.

APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRE IN THAI

แบบสอบถาม

ปัญหาความเข้าใจในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนนายเรือไทย

วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้คือ เพื่อสำรวจปัญหาและหาข้อเสนอแนะด้านความเข้าใจในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนนายเรือไทย แบบสอบถามฉบับนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานวิจัยค้นคว้าอิสระในระดับปริญญาโท สาขาภาษาอังกฤษเชิงอาชีพเพื่อการศึกษานานาชาติ สถาบันภาษามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ ข้อมูลของท่านจะไม่ถูกเผยแพร่และใช้ในสำหรับการวิจัยเท่านั้น ขอขอบคุณอย่างสูงสำหรับความร่วมมือของท่าน

ส่วนที่ 1: ข้อมูลทั่วไป

คำชี้แจง: กรุณาเติมเครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่อง [] หรือเขียนคำตอบที่เหมาะสมที่สุดสำหรับท่าน

1. อายุ: _____ ปี

2. การศึกษา

[] รร.ตท.

[] รร.ตท. (รร.ชุมพล ฯ)

3. เหล่า

[] ทร.

[] ตรน.

4. เกรดเฉลี่ย (GPA)

[] ต่ำกว่า 2.00

[] 2.00 – 2.50

[] 2.51 – 3.00

[] 3.01 – 3.50

[] 3.51 – 4.00

5. เกรดภาษาอังกฤษเทอมนี้

[] A [] B+ [] B [] C+ [] C

[] D+ [] D [] F

ส่วนที่ 2: ปัญหาในความเข้าใจการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ

คำชี้แจง: กรุณาเติมเครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่องตารางที่เหมาะสมที่สุดสำหรับท่าน

2.1 ปัญหาที่เกี่ยวกับเนื้อหา

ข้าพเจ้าประสบปัญหาการฟังภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อ...	เห็นด้วยที่สุด 5	เห็นด้วย 4	ไม่แน่ใจ 3	ไม่เห็นด้วย 2	ไม่เห็นด้วยที่สุด 1
1. เนื้อหามีคำศัพท์ที่ไม่คุ้นเคย					
2. เนื้อหามีคำศัพท์ทางเทคนิค					
3. เนื้อหามีคำแสลงและสำนวนภาษา					
4. เนื้อหามีโครงสร้างไวยากรณ์ซับซ้อน					
5. เนื้อหามีความยาวเกินไป					
6. เนื้อหาไม่เป็นลำดับขั้นตอน					
7. เนื้อหาเกี่ยวกับสถานการณ์ไม่คุ้นเคย					

2.2 ปัญหาที่เกี่ยวกับผู้พูด

ข้าพเจ้าประสบปัญหาการฟังภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อ...	เห็นด้วยที่สุด 5	เห็นด้วย 4	ไม่แน่ใจ 3	ไม่เห็นด้วย 2	ไม่เห็นด้วยที่สุด 1
1. ผู้พูดมีความลังเล และมีการหยุดระหว่างพูด					
2. ผู้พูดพูดเร็วเกินไป					

3. ผู้พูดพูดหลายสำเนียง					
4. ผู้พูดพูดหลักไวยากรณ์ไม่ถูกต้อง					
5. ผู้พูดออกเสียงไม่ชัดเจน					
6. ผู้พูดเน้นเสียงไม่ถูกต้อง					
7. ผู้พูดใช้คำย่อ					
8. ผู้พูดไม่ใช้ภาษาท่าทาง					

2.3 ปัญหาที่เกี่ยวกับผู้ฟัง

ข้าพเจ้าประสบปัญหาการฟัง ภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อ...	เห็นด้วย ที่สุด 5	เห็นด้วย 4	ไม่แน่ใจ 3	ไม่เห็น ด้วย 2	ไม่เห็น ด้วยที่สุด 1
1. ข้าพเจ้ามีความยากลำบากที่จะ เข้าใจในการฟังครั้งแรก					
2. ข้าพเจ้ามีความยากลำบากในการ ตอบคำถามหลังจากฟัง					
3. ข้าพเจ้าไม่มีความรู้พื้นฐานด้าน คำศัพท์					
4. ข้าพเจ้าไม่มีความรู้พื้นฐานด้าน ไวยากรณ์					
5. ข้าพเจ้าเจาะจงที่จะหาใจความ หลัก					
6. ข้าพเจ้าขาดการฝึกซ้อม					
7. ข้าพเจ้าไม่มีความสนใจ					
8. ข้าพเจ้าไม่มีความมั่นใจ					
9. ข้าพเจ้ากังวลเมื่อฟังไม่ทัน					
10. ข้าพเจ้าอายเมื่อจะขอฟังอีกรอบ					

2.4 ปัญหาที่เกี่ยวกับสภาพแวดล้อม

ข้าพเจ้าประสบปัญหาการฟัง ภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อ...	เห็นด้วย ที่สุด 5	เห็นด้วย 4	ไม่แน่ใจ 3	ไม่เห็น ด้วย 2	ไม่เห็น ด้วยที่สุด 1
1. เสียงรบกวนภายนอก (เรื่อ, รถไฟฟ้า)					
2. สภาพห้องเรียน					
3. อุปกรณ์คุณภาพไม่ดี					
4. ขาดสื่อที่ช่วยในการฟัง					
5. ความเหนื่อยล้าจากการฝึกในแต่ละ วัน					

ส่วนที่ 3: ข้อเสนอแนะ

คำชี้แจง: กรุณาเขียนข้อเสนอแนะที่เกี่ยวข้องกับวิธีการที่จะพัฒนาทักษะความเข้าใจในการฟัง

ภาษาอังกฤษของท่าน

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM IN ENGLISH

Topic: Problems in English listening comprehension of Thai naval cadets

Date ____ / ____ / ____

1. I have been informed of the objectives and the procedures in this research by the researcher. Also, I have acknowledged that this research participation will not affect any score or grade of 0502 English Listening & Speaking II course.
2. My information will be not shared with any third party and will be presented only in the form of the results.
3. I have read and understood the mentioned messages above. I am willing to sign this consent form voluntarily.

Signature.....

(.....)

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM IN THAI

ใบยินยอมเข้าร่วมการวิจัย

หัวข้องานวิจัย: ปัญหาความเข้าใจในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนนายเรือไทย

วันที่ให้การยินยอม ____ / ____ / ____

1. ข้าพเจ้าได้รับการอธิบายจากผู้วิจัยถึงวัตถุประสงค์และวิธีการของงานวิจัยแล้ว และทราบว่า การเข้าร่วมการวิจัยนี้จะไม่ผลต่อคะแนนหรือเกรดของรายวิชา 0502 การฟัง - การพูด ภาษาอังกฤษ 2
2. ข้อมูลของข้าพเจ้าจะไม่ถูกเผยแพร่ และจะเปิดเผยได้เฉพาะในรูปแบบที่เป็นสรุปผลการวิจัย
3. ข้าพเจ้าได้อ่านและเข้าใจข้อความข้างต้นแล้ว และยินดีลงนามในใบยินยอมนี้ด้วยความเต็มใจ

ลงนาม.....ผู้ยินยอม

(.....)

BIOGRAPHY

Name	LT. JG. Kaewkwan Imvidhaya
Date of Birth	June 17, 1993
Educational Attainment	2017: Bachelor of engineering, Royal Thai Naval Academy
Work Position	English instructor Humanities Department, Royal Thai Naval Academy
Work Experiences	Present: Instructor, Royal Thai Naval Academy 2020: Logistic Officer H.T.M.S. Tapi, 1 st Frigate Squadron, Royal Thai Fleet 2019: Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer H.T.M.S. Tapi, 1 st Frigate Squadron, Royal Thai Fleet 2018: Communication Officer H.T.M.S. Pinklao, 1 st Frigate Squadron, Royal Thai Fleet