



**A STUDY OF ENGLISH LISTENING PROBLEMS OF
EMPLOYEES IN A JAPANESE AUTOMOTIVE
COMPANY**

BY

MISS SRISAOVAPAK PHOONKUM

**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

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JAPANESE AUTOMOTIVE COMPANY

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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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the English listening problems faced by Thai employees when communicating with Japanese employees in a Japanese automotive company and obtain suggestions regarding ways to improve their English listening skills. The participants of this study were 100 Thai employees from various departments who used English in routine work to communicate with Japanese employees. The data collection was conducted in the form of a questionnaire, including close-ended statements and an open-ended question. The data were analyzed and described by descriptive statistics and thematic content analysis.

The findings of the study revealed that the main English listening problems of the Thai employees in the Japanese automotive company were a lack of background knowledge of the topic being discussed, incorrect pronunciation by the speaker, and the use of technical terms or unfamiliar words. Regarding listening comprehension improvement, the participants strongly agreed that watching English movies or listening to music was an effective way to improve their listening skills. They gave additional suggestions for improving listening comprehension by self-learning through the media and stories, communicating with foreigners, and doing more listening practice.

Keywords: English listening skills, listening skills improvement

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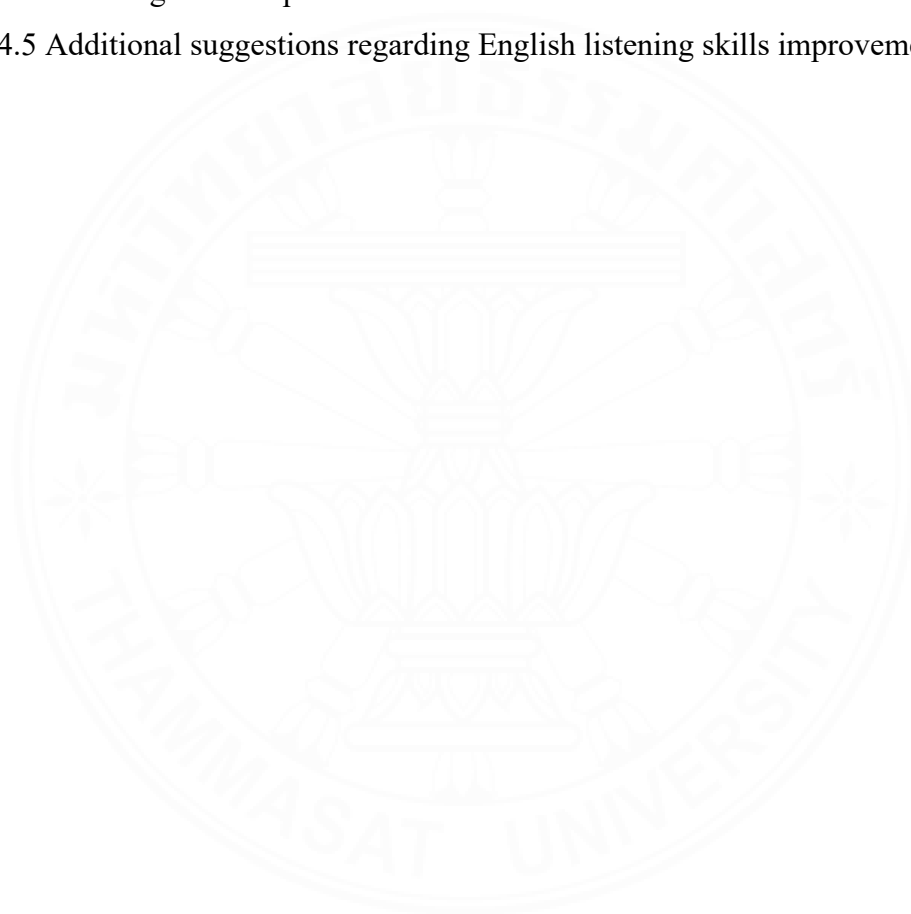
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globalization connects people around the world. It has an effect on people's lives, society, the environment, technology and especially business as many companies foresee business opportunities in international investment and expand their businesses into new international markets. As a result, there are many international joint ventures and subsidiary companies around the world. Thailand is one of promising countries that many foreign countries, especially Japan, decide to invest in since the Thai government has a policy to facilitate foreign companies and encourage investment. Thailand and Japan have a strong trade and investment relationships at the national level. According to the Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), Japan has been the largest foreign investor in Thailand for more than five decades, especially in the industrial sector where many Japanese automotive companies have selected Thailand to be their production bases.

Currently, English is used as a global language in business. In multinational companies, English plays an important role as a shared language for communication among employees who speak different languages. According to Melchers et al., (2019), English is used as a lingua franca, meaning that it is the language for communicating between speakers with different first languages. Even though English is used in order to eliminate the difficulties caused by the linguistic diversity of multilingual companies, research has demonstrated that communication problems among people from different countries and cultures are unavoidable and using English as a corporate language can also lead to language-related problems. English spoken by non-natives tends to be influenced by their mother tongues, cultures and pragmatics, and the differences in their first languages may cause problems or misunderstandings and thereby ineffective communication in the workplace.

In spoken communication, a variety of accents, pronunciation, and English proficiency levels are possible factors that may cause misunderstandings, particularly

in listening. Listening is considered the most significant skill for effective communication between employees. Being able to listening effectively, employees gain various benefits such as increasing productivity and strengthening relationships between colleagues. In Japanese automotive companies in Thailand, English is commonly used as the medium of communication. Since Thai and Japanese are non-native speakers, English listening comprehension problems between employees with different first languages are bound to occur. However, while there have been several studies that investigated English communication between Thai and Japanese employees, they did not focus on listening problems. Therefore, this study explored English listening problems faced by Thai employees when communicating with Japanese employees. Since effective communication skill of staff at every level is an essential part of business achievement, the aim of this study was to investigate English listening problems between Thai and Japanese employees in a Japanese automotive company in order to improve communication for the smooth and successful operation in business.

1.2 Research questions

- 1.2.1 What are the English listening problems faced by Thai employees when communicating with Japanese employees at a Japanese automotive company?
- 1.2.2 What are Thai employees' suggestions for improving English listening comprehension?

1.3 Research objectives

- 1.3.1 To investigate English listening comprehension problems faced by Thai employees when communicating with Japanese employees at a Japanese automotive company.
- 1.3.2 To explore Thai employees' suggestions for improving English listening comprehension.

1.4 Scope of the study

The study was limited to investigating the English listening problems faced by Thai employees when communicating with Japanese employees in a Japanese automotive company in Thailand and to exploring their views on improving English listening comprehension. The study focused on 100 Thai employees from various departments in a company where English is used in routine work to communicate with Japanese employees.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study focused on the English listening problems of Thai employees in a Japanese company. Employees working in international companies may use the results of this study to become aware of possible listening problems that commonly occur in multinational workplaces and to enhance their understanding when communicating in English. Moreover, the findings of this study can be beneficial for human resource departments in international companies in terms of helping them to understand the listening problems that employees may encounter and arrange English training courses to create more effective communication in their companies.

1.6 Organization of the study

This study of English listening problems of Thai employees in Japanese automotive company is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Review of related literature

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Results of the study

Chapter 5: Conclusion, discussion, and recommendations for further studies

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

English is used as a medium for communication in business globally. In a multinational company, which consists of employees who come from different countries and speak different languages, English plays an essential role in communication. However, employees who use English as a second language tend to face communication problems. This study investigated the English listening problems between Thai and Japanese employees in a Japanese automotive company. This chapter reviews the main theories, concepts and previous studies that are related to the research study. The chapter covers five main areas: (1) the importance of English in workplace; (2) the concept of communication; (3) language barriers; (4) English communication problems in listening and (5) previous related studies.

2.1 Importance of English in the workplace

The development of globalization is the main reason why English is the current lingua franca, which means that it is used within groups who are not part of the local language community. English is used in various functions such as international diplomacy, international organizations, research publications, business negotiations and chatting with foreigners because it is widely known (Melchers et al., 2019). Moreover, English is commonly used as a medium of international communication by speakers of the local language in foreign-language situations, in communication within international organizations, or in business. Knowledge of English is becoming a presupposed skill in educated people and increasingly has lingua franca functions in education, business and everyday life (Graddol, 2006).

Currently, several international organizations use a single corporate language because it can facilitate employees. Using a single language in documents, meeting materials, and email can reduce work for employees such as translating documents into many different languages, so they have more time to handle other work. Communicating in a single language also enables better collaboration among colleagues across borders. English is normally selected as the medium for

communication among people, both within and outside a company. In 2016, Cambridge English Language Assessment conducted a survey of the importance of English in the workplace with over 5,300 employers in 38 countries or territories. The survey revealed that English language skills were deemed as important for over 95% of employers in many countries and territories where English is not an official language. The results highlighted that English is increasingly important for businesses in native and non-native English-speaking countries. There are a number of reasons why English language skill is valuable in the international workplace at both the organizational and personal levels.

First, using English in a company can help it succeed. In the age of globalization, being proficient in English is vital part of success due to the high competitiveness in the global market, since English is commonly used in international business and trade and can help the company overcome language barriers. Employees' English skill can provide more opportunities for the company in international markets. Without English, the company's growth opportunities might be restricted to the domestic market where their own language is used. The Japan Times (2015) reported that Honda Motor Co., a Japanese carmaker, decided to use English as its official corporate language for international communications because they recognized the future of Honda's operations as more fully international. Therefore, adopting English in the company is a key factor to improve competitiveness in global business that requires quick decision-making, rapid responses and real-time communication. Furthermore, Neeley (2012) suggests that companies should consider English as a corporate standard due to competitive pressure, the globalization of tasks and resources, mergers and acquisitions (M&As) integration across national boundaries. In a multinational company, if employees use multiple languages, communication cannot be done effectively. Companies may face challenges such as losing sales, difficult merger integrations, and decreased productivity. These difficulties can be lessened by adopting English in the companies. Many multinational companies have realized the importance of English and an increasing number of companies — such as Airbus, Nokia, Samsung, Microsoft Beijing — are using English as their corporate language (Neeley, 2012).

Additionally, proficiency in English will enhance employees' skill-set. English can help employees expand their abilities to communicate and enhance employees' skill-set, enabling them to perform better. The study of Perinpasingam (2015) indicated that having a good proficiency in the English language is a required skill-set of Malaysian architect trainees since it can assist them to write reports, give confident presentations, avoid miscommunication, better handle their customers, qualify for more job opportunities, socialize with others and make more friends. If the employees are equipped with this skill-set, their profile will be more attractive.

Lastly, being proficient in English can enhance career advancement. Bloch (1995, as cited in Ojanperä, 2014) points out that language skills can contribute to career enhancement since they create career opportunities by enabling recruitment, getting promotions, and receiving new work tasks or overseas assignments. In international companies, employees who can speak English fluently can negotiate higher salaries and receive more job opportunities. Since they are able to effectively communicate, negotiate, and share thoughts and ideas in English, it will make their skill-set and performance more attractive than other employees who cannot speak English. Ojanperä (2014) studied the effects of using English in business communication in Japanese-based multinational corporations and found that English language skills offer benefits and bring challenges that affect job performance. With good English skills, employees can effectively communicate with foreigners, perform new tasks, receive overseas assignments and have a greater chance of being promoted.

2.2 The concept of communication

People engage in communication in every minute of life and use it to build relationships with people, both in professional and private life (Pearson et al., 2011). The concept of communication has been explored in many studies. Many scholars have given definitions of communication and demonstrated the process of communication. According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (6th ed., 2007), communicate is a term derived from the Latin language "communicare," which means "to impart, share; make common." Hamilton and Kroll (2018) define communication as the process wherein people share thoughts, ideas and feelings with each other in

commonly understandable ways. Communication involves interactions between senders and receivers, which consist of two or more people. Communication can be verbal and nonverbal, which means that information, ideas and feelings can be shared through speech writing, behavior, body language, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact (Suwanpakdee, 2012). To clearly understand a message, people need to use all of their senses for message interpretation (Hybels & Weaver, 2007). Effective communication happens when the sender successfully delivers the intended message and the receiver clearly understands it.

In an organization, the ability to communicate effectively is a required skill for employees. A survey of corporate recruiters in 2014 by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) showed that regarding the skill-set needed to perform a job, employers viewed that communication skills (oral and written) were as twice as important as managerial skills (Bruggeman & Sparkman-Renze, 2014). Effective communication among employees is an essential factor for achievement in an organization since it strengthens working relationships of employees at all levels of an organization, creates a pleasant working environment, improves teamwork, and improves decision-making and problem solving. Therefore, employees at every level should communicate effectively to ensure a smooth and successful operation in business.

2.3 Language barriers

Language is considered as the most important tool for communication since it is a medium to make people understand each other. By contrast, it causes difficulties in situations where people do not understand others' languages. A language barrier refers to the inability to communicate using language (Friedman, 2018). Even though a sender and receiver speak the same language, language barriers can occur. Language is one of barriers in communication which causes misunderstandings and misinterpretations between people. It may cause ineffective communication in the workplace and has an effect on a company's performance.

In an English-as-a-lingua franca situation in which speakers from different backgrounds and different first languages have to communicate in English, they may

face problems caused by language barriers since their use of English is likely to be influenced by their first language (L1), such as their language background, accents and dialects (Witchaiyutphonng, 2011). Furthermore, Luankanokrat (2011) states that language barriers can also stem from incorrect pronunciation. Besides, code-mixing and loan words are found among lingua franca speakers because some words have different meanings and connotations in different countries and cultures. This may cause misunderstanding in communication between people from different nations.

Therefore, speakers should be aware of this issue and try to overcome this barrier for effective communication in the workplace.

2.4 English communication problems in listening

Listening plays an essential role in communication in personal and professional life. People learn and acquire language and information through listening when they interact in spoken communication. Listening is defined as the process of receiving, interpreting meaning from and responding to spoken and non-verbal messages (Brownell, 2002). For Solak (2016), listening is an active and interactional process in which the listener receives sounds of speech and tries to understand the intended message of the speech. The ultimate goal of listening is comprehension (Rost, 2002). O'Malley et al. (1989) states that listening comprehension is an active process in which the listener constructs meaning by inferring clues from contextual information and from existing knowledge. According to Howatt and Dakin (1994), listening is the ability to understand what others are saying, and involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation; grammar and vocabulary; and comprehension of meaning. From the definitions above, it can be summarized that listening is the ability to receive, interpret, and comprehend messages using the background knowledge and linguistic knowledge of the listener.

Most people seem to overlook listening skill and consider it as an unimportant skill. In fact, people spend 40-50% of total communication time listening (Mendelsohn, 1994), meaning that listening is one of the keys to effective communication. If listeners lack of effective listening skill, messages can be easily misunderstood.

In the workplace, the ability to listen effectively is a required skill for employees at every level, from managerial to operational levels. Successful listening in the workplace provides listeners with information or ideas and results in better performance. At the managerial level, supervisors need to listen to their subordinates' feedback or opinions to improve the company's performance and motivate employees. At the operational level, employees need to carefully listen to their supervisors' instructions and assignments in order to understand supervisors' expectations. Employees also need to listen to their colleagues' opinions and ideas in order to work smoothly and successfully. Poor listening may lead to misunderstandings, errors, ineffective decisions, and poor delivery of services. Cooper (1997) states that approximately 60% of worker errors are caused by poor listening skills, such as serving the wrong food order and delivering a parcel to the wrong address.

Many researchers have studied the causes of listening problems for second language (L2) listeners, which can be categorized as follows.

2.4.1 The speaker

2.4.1.1 Speed of delivery

Speed of speech is one of the factors that causes difficulty for L2 listeners because they cannot control speakers' speed (Brown, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Underwood, 1989). Rajab et al. (2016) also posit that a major listening problem that foreign language learners encounter is speech rate. Their research revealed that the respondents faced comprehension difficulties when a speaker spoke rapidly without pausing long enough to allow them digest and comprehend what they have heard. In addition, Graham (2006) found that learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) failed to identify and recognize words and messages because of rapid speed, resulting in less successful listening. To sum up, when information is delivered quickly, the listener may not have sufficient time to decode the message and cannot construct the meaning of the information. They might miss some parts or the entire message. Consequently, they cannot understand the message.

2.4.1.2 Pronunciation of speakers

The pronunciation of speakers can create listening difficulties. There is a body of research indicating that L2 listening difficulties might be related to phonological problems. Sutrisno (2018) found that problems in the speech perception of EFL learners may be associated with phonetic and phonological factors. His findings indicated that learners who were unable to perceive speech phonologically would face difficulty understanding English speech sounds, preventing them from decoding the message. The ability to perceive speech sounds can affect the process of understanding a spoken text in English. Furthermore, in international contexts where non-native English speakers interact, L2 speakers may have different pronunciation due to differences in their L1 phonetic systems, and pronunciation errors made by L2 speakers may occur as a result of the phonetic system of their native languages (Swan & Smith, 1987). They may mispronounce an English word and the listeners cannot understand the message that speakers convey. For example, Japanese people may face difficulty pronouncing English vowels that do not exist in the Japanese vowel system (Vance, 1987). It is difficult for some Japanese people to pronounce the consonant sounds /θ/ and /ð/, so they often pronounce /t/ and /d/, or even /s/ and /z/ sound instead. For example, the words “thank” and “think” might be pronounced as “zank” and “sink” respectively. Such mispronunciation may cause difficulties for listeners, hindering their understanding word meanings.

2.4.1.3 Accent of speakers

The accent of speakers is another listening barrier faced by non-native speakers. Different groups of language users have their own unique accents which are often influenced by their mother tongue. It is possible for listeners to face difficulties when they listen to speakers with unfamiliar accents. Buck (2001) indicated that when listeners hear an unfamiliar accent such as an Indian accent for the first time, their listening comprehension process might be affected. Consequently, listeners may be unable to understand the whole message.

2.4.2 The listener

2.4.2.1 Listeners' inability to repeat the message

Underwood (1989) states that the inability to repeat a message is a barrier to listening for L2. In some situations, listeners do not have the chance to request the speakers to repeat the message. Sometimes, the speaker may be able to repeat what they said one time, but not more than that. For example, when a speaker gives a presentation in a meeting, the listeners cannot interrupt and ask them to repeat what they said. They need to wait until the end of the meeting, so they may be unable to extract the main idea or may misunderstand the message that the speakers want to convey.

2.4.2.2 Limited vocabulary knowledge

Limited vocabulary knowledge is also a listening difficulty which interferes with the comprehension of messages (Goh, 1999; Hasan, 2000; Underwood, 1989). Rubin and Thompson (1994) indicated that listeners tend to shift their concentration when encountering unfamiliar words or technical terms in a conversation to guessing a word's meaning. As a result, they may miss the next part of the message and be unable to understand the whole conversation. Moreover, homophones — words that have a similar pronunciation but different meanings — can also cause misunderstandings and confusion for L2 listeners (Adha & Astri, 2020). The listeners may fail to distinguish homophones because of their inadequate vocabulary knowledge (Solati, 2014). For instance, the words “right” and “write” are pronounced the same but have different meanings. Right means correct whereas write means an action to form letters or words. If listeners hear one of these words without talking into account the overall context of a message, they may misunderstand and be confused. Therefore, if the listeners have limited vocabulary, they may not understand the meaning.

2.4.3 The context

2.4.3.1 Lack of contextual and background knowledge

Background knowledge about a topic can influence listening comprehension. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) point out that a breakdown in communication may occur if L2 listeners' lack prior knowledge regarding a certain topic or context, preventing them from interpreting and comprehending the message (Underwood, 1987). Huang et al. (2015) suggest that background knowledge facilitates listening comprehension. If listeners have prior knowledge and understanding of a topic, they can use that knowledge to predict the content of a message and make reasonable guesses about its meaning. Their research revealed that some participants with business background knowledge had higher scores on business-related listening topics than those without similar background knowledge in L2. To illustrate this point in a business context, if employees do not have background knowledge or information about the topic of a meeting, they may not understand what is being discussed and may be unable to contribute their ideas. The meeting may thus be unproductive and may not reach a conclusion.

2.4.3.2 Lack of cultural knowledge

Listeners' lack of cultural knowledge is another factor that causes listening problems. In multinational companies, which consist of employees from many countries and cultures, intercultural communication is often found. It occurs when a member of one culture conveys a message to another member of another culture (Samovar et al., 1962) and involves interactions between people who have different cultural perceptions and symbol systems. These differences have an influence on the communication and interpretation of verbal and nonverbal signs (Thill & Bovée, 2013). Culture plays an essential role in intercultural communication since it influences people's beliefs, values, behaviors, ways of thinking and the interpretation of messages from others (Krizan et al., 2007). Consequently, it tends to cause difficulties for listeners since they are unable to understand the cultures, beliefs, and values of speakers from other countries. Misinterpretation of messages and

misunderstandings in communication may occur as a result of cultural differences. Scollon and Scollon (1995) also states that

When communicating with people who are very different from us, it is very difficult to know how to draw inferences about what they mean, and so it is impossible to depend on shared knowledge and background in our interpretation. (p. 22)

In intercultural communication, the misunderstandings may be caused by this lack of shared knowledge between participants in communication.

2.5 Previous related studies

Many researchers have conducted the studies to investigate the English listening problems of non-native listeners occurring in workplaces in the various fields and contexts. The findings of previous related studies indicated that the factors related to speakers and listeners can cause listening difficulty.

The studies of Fahmongkolchai (2011) and Ongsara (2018) identified unfamiliar accents of speakers as the main problem affecting English listening comprehension. Using a questionnaire, Fahmongkolchai (2011) investigated the needs and problems in English listening and speaking skills of 118 bank tellers from 48 branches of CIMB Thai Bank Public Company Limited when communicating with foreign customers. The results of this study showed that the participants needed to use English, both listening and speaking skill, during their work, especially for communicating with foreign customers when providing currency exchange services. When delivering such services, misunderstandings occurred because of the tellers' lack of English competency, particularly in listening, because the unfamiliar accents of foreign customers caused difficulties in understanding the message. In terms of speaking, the major problem that the tellers encountered was choosing appropriate vocabulary. Due to their limited vocabulary knowledge, the tellers were unable to construct sentences, and the foreign customers could not comprehend the messages.

Similarly, Ongsara (2018) also found unfamiliar foreign accents to be the primary listening problem of 40 staff in a multinational automotive company in Bangkok. The objectives of the study were to investigate the significant

communication problems between Thai staff and non-Thai staff who worked in and outside the company and their needs with regard to improving English communication. The research revealed that the most frequent listening problems encountered by non-Thai staff were that they did not understand technical terms and unfamiliar words. The most frequent listening problem with people outside of the company was that they were not familiar with foreign accents. The most significant speaking problem with non-Thai staff was that they could not pronounce words or phrases correctly. The most frequent speaking problem with people outside of the company was that they could not order their sentences correctly. Regarding the needs of English listening skills, they needed to improve their vocabulary. For speaking skill, they needed to enhance their grammar.

Besides the unfamiliar accents of speakers, Ongsara (2018), Julamonthol (2015), and Tansirisuk (2019) discovered that limited vocabulary knowledge of listeners was a problem in English listening. For example, in Ongsara's (2018) study, the most frequent listening problem encountered by non-Thai staff was that they did not understand technical terms or unfamiliar words.

In a similar vein, Julamonthol (2015) investigated the English listening comprehension problems of 132 employees in a Thai-Swedish automotive company in Thailand who encountered listening comprehension problems. The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire in Thai, which consisted of closed-ended statements using a Likert scale and open-ended questions. The results of the study showed that unknown English slang and idioms, speed of speaking, and limited vocabulary knowledge were the main listening problems. The participants' suggestion for improving listening comprehension was to practice with native speakers. The results resonate with those of Tansirisuk (2019), who studied the English communication problems arising between 30 customer service staff and foreign customers at a call center in Bangkok. The findings of study collected through a questionnaire indicated that the most frequent English communication problems with foreign customers were related to listening, which were mainly caused by unknown English slang and idioms. Their strategy used to solve the problems was asking foreign customers to speak more slowly.

After reviewing these studies which explored the English listening problems of participants who used English as a second language for professional purposes, it became clear that the main listening problems many employees faced were unfamiliar words or idioms and unfamiliar accents. These listening problems are considered an obstacle to effective communication for non-native listeners. Poor listening skills may affect communication in the workplace, whereas effective listening is essential for advancement as well as business achievement.

Although previous studies have explored the English listening problems of non-native English listeners, only a few studies have investigated the listening problems that Thai employees faced when communicating with Japanese employees. Therefore, the present study intended to investigate the English listening problems of Thai and Japanese employees at a Japanese automotive company and their suggestions for improving listening comprehension for effective communication in the company.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The major objective of this research was to investigate the English listening problems of employees in a Japanese automotive company and their suggestions for improving their English listening skills for successful operations in business. A questionnaire was used for data collection, which included close-ended statements and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants in order to explore the English listening problems faced when communicating with Japanese employees in the company and their suggestions for improving their English listening comprehension.

This chapter provides the details of the methodology and data collection process for analyzing the research questions. It consists of four main sections: (1) information of the participants and criteria for selection; (2) describing the research instrument used for data collection; (3) the procedures carried out in this research and (4) discussing the methods used for data analysis

3.1 Participants

The participants in the study were Thai employees who worked at operational levels in all departments in a Japanese automotive company located in Bangkok. All the participants had graduated with a bachelor's degree. The participants used English in routine work to communicate with Japanese employees in company, the parent company and foreign customers. The number of participants in this study was calculated based on Taro Yamane's formula. From the calculation, the minimum number of participants required for a population of 134 should be 100 at a confidence level at 95%. Therefore, the participants in this study were 100 Thai employees.

3.2 Instrument

The research instrument used for data collection in this study was a set of questionnaires in English. Since all participants used English at work, they were able to understand the simple English used in the questionnaire. The questionnaire focused

on English listening problems that Thai employees encountered when communicating with Japanese employees at a Japanese automotive company and suggestions for improving their English listening skill in order to solve communication problems. The questionnaire was informed by the studies of Julamonthol (2015) and Ulum (2015), who studied English listening comprehension problems faced by non-native employees and university students respectively.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts as follows.

Part 1: Demographic data

The participants were required to provide demographic information including gender, age, educational background, department, their Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) score and years of experience.

Part 2: Self-assessment of English listening problems

This part contained 14 items using a five-point Likert scale to measure the frequency of the listening problems the participants encountered when communicating in English. The participants were asked to respond to statements using a five-point Likert scale as follows:

1	=	Never
2	=	Rarely
3	=	Sometimes
4	=	Often
5	=	Always

Part 3: Listening skill improvement

This part contained 10 items using a five-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement with various ways for English listening improvement. The participants were asked to respond to statements using a five-point Likert scale as follows:

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

Part 4: Additional suggestions

This part was an open-ended question to obtain employees' additional suggestions for ways to improve English listening skill in the workplace. The participants were asked to write any additional recommendations regarding improvement of their English listening skills.

3.3 Data collection

The researcher conducted a pilot test by distributing the questionnaires to ten Thai employees who were working at the Japanese automotive company and had a similar TOEIC score range to the main participants of the study. After piloting the questionnaire, the researcher revised some unclear instructions and questions and distributed it to the participants. The questionnaires were distributed to 100 participants by hand and collected during March 15-26, 2021. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the instructions and the confidentiality of their personal information. The completed questionnaires were collected by March 26, 2021, and the data were analyzed and described by descriptive statistics and thematic content analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

The data collected from participants were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and described by descriptive statistics including frequency, mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). In the part 1, the participants' demographic information was analyzed for frequency distribution and percentage. In the part 2, the data were collected through a Likert scale and analyzed for frequency distribution, mean (*M*), and standard deviation (*SD*). The mean score results were interpreted according to the following criteria:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mean Range} &= \frac{\text{Maximum score} - \text{Minimum score}}{\text{Range}} \\ &= \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.8 \end{aligned}$$

All scores were interpreted for the mean (M) by the interval scales of 0.8. The average mean scores were interpreted through a scale with the following ranges:

Mean Score Range	Frequency of Problem
4.21 - 5.00	Always
3.41 - 4.20	Often
2.61 - 3.40	Sometimes
1.81 - 2.60	Rarely
1.00 - 1.80	Never

In the part 3, the data were collected through a Likert scale and analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, mean (M), and standard deviation (SD). The average mean scores were interpreted as follows:

Mean Score Range	Level of Agreement
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly agree
3.41 - 4.20	Agree
2.61 - 3.40	Neutral
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly disagree

The last part was an open-ended question asking for participants' suggestions for improving English listening skill in the workplace. The researcher analyzed the findings using thematic content analysis. The results were coded by grouping repeated words or phrases to identify the themes and frequency.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS/FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the study conducted with 100 Thai employees at a Japanese automotive company to explore their English listening problems when communicating with Japanese employees in the company and their suggestions for improving English listening comprehension.

The results are divided into four parts: (1) demographic information; (2) self-assessment of English listening comprehension problems; (3) suggestions for listening skills improvement and (4) additional recommendations.

4.1 Demographic information

The first part presents participants' demographic information.

From the total number of participants of 100, the majority of the participants were female (67%), and 33% of the participants were male. In terms of age, the average age of participants was 32 years old. More than half of them were in the age group between 30-39 years old at 53%, followed by the age group between 24-29 years old at 36%, and above 40 years old at 11% respectively.

Regarding educational level, almost one-third of the participants (61%) had graduated with a bachelor's degree, and the rest of them (39%) had graduated with a master's degree. For their TOEIC score, which is an international standardized test for assessing English language proficiency for professional purposes, the total score ranges from 10-990 points. From the study's results, the largest group of participants had a TOEIC score in the range of 750-845 (30%) which indicates an advanced level of proficiency. The second largest group (26%) were those who had a score of 650-745, which means an upper-intermediate level of proficiency, and a score of 850-990, which means an international professional proficiency level; only 16% of participants had a score of 500-645, which means a basic level of proficiency.

The sales department is the department where most of the participants came from (43%) whereas 19% and 13% of participants were in the administration department and the parts departments respectively. These were followed by 10% of

participants who worked in the business planning department and the service department, whereas those in the product planning department were the minority of (5%). In terms of working experience, a total of 36% of participants had been working between 4-6 years, followed by 7-9 years at 32%. A total of 20% had been working more than 10 years while 12% of them had been working between 1-3 years.

4.2 Self-assessment of English listening problems

This part reports the findings concerning the participants' self-assessment of their English listening problems. The participants were requested to respond to statements indicating listening problems in three main areas: problems related to the speakers, problems related to the listeners, and problems related to the context. The questionnaire consisted of 14 items in each section. The data were described by descriptive statistics including mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). Each range below indicates the participants' level of frequency of listening problems they faced. The average mean scores were interpreted through a scale with the following ranges:

Mean Score Range	Level of Problem
4.21 - 5.00	Always
3.41 - 4.20	Often
2.61 - 3.40	Sometimes
1.81 - 2.60	Rarely
1.00 - 1.80	Never

Table 4.1 Listening problems related to the speakers

Statement: Listening problems related to the speakers	Mean	SD	Level
I find it difficult to understand when speakers speak too fast.	3.19	0.97	Sometimes
I find it difficult to understand Japanese or foreign speakers' pronunciation.	3.42	0.88	Often
I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	3.50	0.87	Often
I find it difficult to understand when the speaker's pronunciation is wrong.	3.52	0.89	Often

Statement: Listening problems related to the speakers	Mean	SD	Level
I find it difficult to understand Japanese or unfamiliar accents of speakers.	3.51	0.92	Often
Total	3.43	0.91	Often

The overall results in Table 4.1 showed that the participant often faced listening problems related to the speakers with an average mean of 3.43. Incorrect pronunciation by speakers was rated as the most frequently found problem with the highest mean of 3.52. This was followed by Japanese or unfamiliar accent with the mean of 3.51, and the speakers' unclear pronunciation with the mean of 3.50. The least frequently found problem was speakers' fast delivery speed with the mean score of 3.91.

Table 4.2 Listening problems related to the listeners

Statement: Listening problems related to the listeners	Mean	SD	Level
I find it difficult to understand the message when listening only once.	2.74	0.81	Sometimes
I find it difficult to concentrate on listening.	2.50	0.83	Rarely
I find it difficult to understand technical terms or unfamiliar words in a conversation.	3.36	0.86	Often
I find it difficult to understand slang, idioms or phrasal verbs in a conversation.	3.32	0.87	Often
I find it difficult to understand a message with a complex grammatical structure.	3.05	0.93	Sometimes
I find it difficult to extract the key words or main idea of a conversation	2.63	0.85	Sometimes
Total	2.93	0.86	Sometimes

Table 4.2 indicates that the participants sometimes faced listening problems related to the listeners with an average mean score of 2.93. The participants rated unknown technical terms or unfamiliar words as the most frequent problem with the highest mean of 3.36, while slang, idioms or phrasal verbs, and complex grammatical structure were rated with slightly lower means of 3.32, and 3.05, respectively. On the other hand, concentration on listening was rated as the least frequently found problem with the mean score of 2.50.

Table 4.3 Listening problems related to the context

Statement: Listening problems related to the context	Mean	SD	Level
I find it difficult to understand conversations when I lack background knowledge.	3.70	0.78	Often
I find it difficult to understand unfamiliar topics.	3.66	0.84	Often
I find it difficult to understand conversations when I don't understand the cultural context.	3.50	0.86	Often
Total	3.62	0.83	Often

As shown in table 4.3, the overall mean score of 3.62 illustrates that the participants often faced listening problems related to the context. The highest mean was for lack of background knowledge ($M = 3.70$). By contrast, the lowest problem level was lack of cultural knowledge ($M = 3.50$).

4.3 Listening skills improvement

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of 10 items to explore the participants' views on what they need to do to improve English listening skills. All scores were interpreted for the mean (M) by the interval scale of 0.8, and the mean score were divided into five levels with the following ranges. Each range indicates the participants' level of agreement regarding how they would like to improve their listening skills.

Mean Score Range	Level of Agreement
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly agree
3.41 - 4.20	Agree
2.61 - 3.40	Neutral
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly disagree

Table 4.4 Listening skills improvement

Statement: Listening skills improvement	Mean	SD	Level
I need to learn about pronunciation.	3.43	1.02	Agree
I need to understand Japanese or foreign accents.	3.49	0.98	Agree
I need to practice my listening skills by talking with my Japanese or foreign colleagues.	3.74	1.01	Agree
I need to practice my listening skills with native speakers.	4.13	0.94	Agree
I need to improve my listening skills by watching English movies or listening to music.	4.22	0.97	Strongly agree
I need to increase my grammar knowledge.	4.07	0.90	Agree
I need to increase my English vocabulary and knowledge by reading English books or English websites.	4.20	0.84	Agree
I need to improve my English listening proficiency by attending English training courses.	3.62	1.12	Agree
I need to improve my English knowledge related to my work by attending business English training courses.	3.70	1.05	Agree
I need to concentrate on the messages from speakers while I am listening.	4.10	0.75	Agree
Total	3.87	0.96	Agree

Table 4.4 illustrates the participants' views on improving English listening skills. The overall findings indicated that the participants agreed that they needed to improve their listening skill with an average mean score of 3.87. Most participants strongly agreed that they need to improve listening skill by watching English movies or listening to music ($M = 4.22$). The second highest mean score was that the participants need to increase English vocabulary and knowledge by reading English books or English websites ($M = 4.20$). Moreover, they agreed that practicing listening with native speakers can improve their listening skills ($M = 4.13$). In contrast, the lowest mean score was learning about pronunciation ($M = 3.43$).

4.4 Additional suggestions

The last part of the questionnaire was an open-ended question asking the participants to provide additional recommendations for improving English listening skills. A total of 71 out of the 100 participants (71%) provided suggestions in this part. The suggestions are summarized and categorized into seven main points as follows.

Table 4.5 Additional suggestions regarding English listening skills improvement

Suggestions	Percentage (%)
Self-learning	51.39
Communicating with foreigners	16.67
Practicing	13.89
Using English in daily life or at work	5.56
Attending English training courses	5.56
Living or gaining experience abroad	4.17
Others	2.78
Total	100

Table 4.5 illustrates additional recommendations for improving English listening skills. Of the 71 participants who gave the suggestions in this part, over half (51.39%) suggested that autonomous learning through media, such as movies, podcasts, English video clips, English news, English music, books, and applications,

is the best way to improve their English listening skills as this would increase their familiarity with English pronunciation and help them learn new words or grammar. Some participants suggested that

“Listening to YouTube or VDO clips in English can improve listening skills. If I don't understand some words or sentences, I will repeat the clips and turn on the subtitles to understand those words.”

“Listening and getting the main message, learning new words every day from news, games, movies, etc.”

“Watching movies or listening to music and learning how native speakers pronounce or use grammar. It can improve your English skill.”

Nearly one-fifth of participants (16.67%) suggested that communicating with foreigners can improve their listening skills. In their view, “talking with foreign friends frequently” or “communicating with Japanese colleagues” can be an effective way to improve their listening skills.

Additionally, 13.89% of participants recommended that practicing listening is an effective way to improve their English listening skills. Some participants suggested that “brushing up on listening, speaking, and writing every day” and “practicing as much as you can” can develop their listening skills.

Furthermore, a small number of participants suggested that using English in daily life or at work, gaining experience abroad and enrolling in English courses could enhance their listening abilities since this would give them exposure to the English language.

4.5 Summary

The results in this chapter indicated that the main English listening problems faced by Thai employees in Japanese automotive company when communicating with Japanese company were a lack of background knowledge, speakers' incorrect pronunciation, and technical terms or unfamiliar words. They also suggested that watching English movies, listening to music and autonomous learning were the most effective ways to improve listening skills. The next chapter, therefore, moves on to summarize and discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes and discusses the findings of the research. The two research questions are also discussed based on the findings presented in chapter 4. This chapter consists of five parts: (1) summary of the study; (2) summary of the findings; (3) the discussion of the results; (4) the conclusion, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of the study

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

The objective of this study was to investigate English listening comprehension problems faced by Thai employees when communicating with Japanese employees at a Japanese automotive company and to explore their suggestions for improving their English listening comprehension.

5.1.2 Participants, materials, and procedures

The participants of this study were 100 Thai employees in a Japanese automotive company located in Bangkok. The participants used English in routine work to communicate with Japanese employees in the company, the parent company, and foreign customers.

The material used to collect the data in this study was a set of questionnaires in English, including both close-ended statements and an open-ended question. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: (1) demographic information of the participants; (2) self-assessment of English listening problems, (3) listening skills improvement, and (4) additional suggestions to improve English listening skills.

The questionnaires in English were distributed to 100 participants and collected during March 15 - 26, 2021. The researcher analyzed the data using Microsoft Excel. The findings in parts 1, 2 and 3 were described in the form of descriptive statistics for frequency distribution, mean (M), and standard deviation

(*SD*). For the last part, which was an open-ended question, the researcher analyzed the findings using thematic content analysis. The findings were coded by collecting repeated words or phrases in the same group to identify the themes and frequency.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Demographic information of the participants

The participants of this study were 100 Thai employees, with 67% of them being female. The majority of the participants were in the age group between 30-39 years old. The largest number of participants worked in the sales department and 61% of the participants had a bachelor's degree. Most of the participants had working experience of 4-6 years (36%). In addition, the largest group of participants had a TOEIC score of 750-845 (30%), which indicates an advanced level of English proficiency for the workplace.

5.2.2 English listening problems

The findings on English listening problems are divided into three main areas: (1) problems related to the speakers, (2) problems related to the listeners, and (3) problems related to the context.

5.2.2.1 The problems related to the speakers

The participants often faced the problems related to the speakers. The most frequent listening problem that the participant encountered was the speakers' incorrect pronunciation, whereas a fast speaking speed was rated as the least frequent listening problem.

5.2.2.2 The problems related to the listeners

The participants sometimes faced problems related to the listeners. The most frequent listening problem that the participants faced was technical terms or unfamiliar words. On the contrary, the least frequent listening problem that the participants faced was concentration when listening.

5.2.2.3 The problems related to the context

The participants often faced problems related to the context. Lack of background knowledge was the most frequent listening problem, whereas the least frequent listening problem was a lack of understanding of cultural context.

5.2.3 English listening skills improvement

Regarding English listening skills improvement, the participants strongly agreed that watching English movies or listening to music is an effective way to improve listening skills with the highest mean of 4.22. On the other hand, learning about pronunciation had the lowest mean of 3.43.

5.2.4 Additional suggestions

The participants provided additional suggestions regarding English listening skills improvement. They can be categorized into seven main points as follows: (1) self-learning; (2) communicating with foreigners; (3) practicing (4) using English in daily life or at work; (5) attending English training courses; (6) living or gaining experience abroad, and (7) other suggestions such as using other skills.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 English listening problems

The findings on English listening problems are divided into three main points: (1) problems related to the speakers, (2) problems related to the listeners, and (3) problems related to the context. The overall results indicated that the major listening problem that the participants faced were related to context more than the speakers and listeners. A possible explanation for this might be that the context tends to play an important role in listening comprehension since knowledge of the context can facilitate the listeners' interpretation of the meaning. If the listeners lack contextual knowledge including background and cultural knowledge, it can potentially lead to misunderstandings. Moreover, in intercultural communication, different cultural perceptions have an influence on the interpretation of verbal and nonverbal signs (Thill & Bovée, 2013). In this automotive company, Thai employees may not be

familiar with Japanese culture and face obstacles that hinder their understanding of the messages that the Japanese employees convey. It can be interpreted that this result is due to a lack of shared knowledge and background between the speakers and listeners.

For listening problems related to the context, the results of the study showed that the most frequent listening problem faced by the participants was a lack of background knowledge. Background knowledge is considered one of the listening difficulties (Underwood, 1987). If the listeners do not have background knowledge about the topic of a conversation, they cannot interpret and comprehend the message. In addition, the results affirm the study of Huang et al. (2015) who examined the role of background knowledge in Taiwanese students' English listening comprehension and found that background knowledge can influence listening comprehension. Prior knowledge and understanding regarding a topic can enable listener to predict and understand the message. Furthermore, a possible explanation for this result is that the majority of participants came from the sales department. Although they may have basic knowledge about car products to explain to customers, they may not have an insightful understanding and a profound knowledge related to automobile engineering such as cars' specifications, engines and parts. When communicating with Japanese employees who have a better engineering background knowledge, they may be unable to comprehend the message due to inadequate background knowledge. Therefore, it can be assumed that this lack of background knowledge could be a barrier to their listening comprehension.

In terms of listening problem related to the speakers, the results of the study indicated that the most frequent listening problem that the participants faced was the speakers' incorrect pronunciation. This could hinder the participants' listening comprehension and lead to misunderstandings. In the Japanese automotive company, Japanese and Thai employees are non-native English speakers and their pronunciation tends to be influenced by their L1 phonetic system. According to Swan and Smith (1987), L2 speakers may mispronounce an English word because of differences in the phonetic system of their L1. Therefore, the listeners may be unable to understand the message that speakers need to convey. The problem related to pronunciation is further

accentuated in the second most frequently encountered problem reported by the participants, which was the Japanese or unfamiliar accent of speakers. Japanese and Thai people have their own unique accents which are influenced by their L1. Therefore, it is possible for the Thai employees to face difficulty when listening to Japanese accents that they are not familiar with. This finding is in line with the studies of Fahmongkonchai (2011) and Ongsara (2018) who investigated English listening problems of Thai Bank tellers and staffs in a multinational automotive company, respectively. These studies found that the unfamiliar accents of speakers could cause listening difficulty.

Regarding listening problems related to the listeners, the results of the study revealed that problem that the participants faced the most was technical terms or unfamiliar words. This result implies that limited vocabulary knowledge is one of the factors causing listening difficulty. If listeners do not know the meaning of words, they will probably not understand the whole message. Limited vocabulary knowledge can be a barrier in listening comprehension (Goh, 1999; Hasan, 2000; Underwood, 1989). It is interesting to note that this finding aligns with the findings of listening problems related to the context, which are mainly caused by inadequate background knowledge. As mentioned earlier, most of the participants came from the sales department and they may not have a good understanding of technical automotive terms, which could hinder their listening comprehension. Moreover, the findings of the study are similar to those of Ongsara (2018), who investigated the problems and needs in English speaking and listening skills of staff in a multinational automotive company and found that technical terms and unfamiliar words were the most frequent English listening problem that the staff encountered. It can be assumed that the participants of this study and the study of Ongsara (2018) were in the same business sector, the automotive industry. There are a lot of technical automotive terms such as car models, parts and engines. Therefore, the participants perceived that technical terms or unfamiliar words were the main listening problem that they faced.

5.3.2 English listening skills improvement

Regarding listening skills improvement, the majority of participants strongly agreed that watching English movies or listening to music can improve listening

skills. English movies or music can improve listening skills because they contain dialogues, words and sentences spoken by native speakers (Adnan, 2014). This could help the listeners to learn more English vocabulary and sentences, to understand English conversations and become more familiar with English pronunciation. This finding corroborates the study of Safranji (2015), who investigated the extent to which the listening comprehension of university students in Serbia was enhanced through movies. It was found that most of the students could enhance their listening skill through watching films by learning more vocabulary, slang, idioms, enabling them to interact better with foreigners and understand their pronunciation and cultures.

Additionally, they agreed that increasing English vocabulary and knowledge by reading English books or English websites can improve listening skill. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge could also obstruct listeners' comprehension of the message (Goh, 1999; Hasan, 2000; Underwood, 1989). It can be inferred from this study that the participants perceived that increasing their vocabulary knowledge can improve their listening skill because it helps them understand word meanings and the whole message. This can be an effective strategy to enhance listening comprehension. This result also reflects the listening problem related to the listeners discussed in the previous part, which was technical terms or unfamiliar words. These results would seem to suggest that the participants believed that expanding English vocabulary and knowledge could help them to solve their listening problems and promote listening comprehension. Furthermore, they agreed that they need to practice listening skills with native speakers. This will allow the listeners to understand how English language is actually spoken and learn more vocabulary and sentence structure. This result is in agreement with the study of Julamonthol (2015), who found that practicing listening skills with native speakers can improve listening comprehension.

5.3.3 Additional suggestions

For additional recommendations regarding listening skill improvement, the majority of the participants suggested the most effective way to improve their English language skills was autonomous learning through English films, video clips, English news, English music, books, and mobile applications. Most of the participants who suggested improving listening skills by autonomous learning had a TOEIC score

ranging between 750-845, which is considered an advanced proficiency level. It can be assumed that as most of them had a high level of English proficiency, they were able to learn autonomously without support or help from language instructors. Self-learning allows the listeners to explore the techniques and learning resources that best suit them or match their interests in order to gain maximum learning outcomes (Inayati, 2015). If language learners enjoy learning and what they listen to, they will have more motivation to continue listening (Safran, 2015). This finding is consistent with the study of Julamonthol (2015), who found that autonomous learning can improve listening ability.

Additionally, some of the participants suggested improving their listening skills through authentic learning such as communicating with foreigners or Japanese employees, using English in daily life or at work, and gaining experience abroad. In foreign language learning, learners should get as much exposure to the target language as possible (Aladjem & Jou, 2016). Communicating with foreigners and Japanese employees could be one way to help participants improve their listening ability. When hearing an unfamiliar accent for the first time, the listening comprehension process of the listeners might be hampered (Buck, 2001), and it could cause difficulty for the listeners. To reduce this problem, the listeners should become more familiar with foreign pronunciation and accents by having conversations with foreigners and Japanese employees. In terms of improving language skill by authentic learning, the findings support those of Lo et al. (2018), who found that authentic learning positively affected students' skills and practical use of English as a second language in Oman. The findings also showed that the participants who suggested improving the listening skills through authentic learning approaches had a TOEIC score of 650 – 745, which is a basic level of English proficiency in the workplace. It is possible that the participants who had a basic English proficiency level may think that by learning from real-life situations they could ask for more clarification if they do not understand the message.

5.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the English listening problems faced by 100 Thai employees in a Japanese automotive company and to explore their

suggestions for improving English listening problems. A questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The findings of the study indicated that the main English listening problems of Thai employees in Japanese automotive company were a lack of background knowledge, incorrect pronunciation, and technical terms or unfamiliar words. The participants strongly agreed with listening comprehension improvement by watching English movies or listening to music. The participants also gave suggestions for improving their listening comprehension by self-learning through the media and stories, communicating with foreigners, practicing listening, using English in daily life or at work, gaining overseas experience, and attending English training courses.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research.

5.5.1 The study only focused on the English listening problems of Thai employees who worked in a Japanese automotive company, which was a small group of people. As such, generalizations cannot be made. Further research should be conducted with participants in other international companies in Thailand in order to compare the results with the current study.

5.5.2 Further research should include a qualitative method such as interviews in order to obtain in-depth information regarding the participants' listening comprehension problems.

5.5.3 Further research should be conducted on problems in other skills, such as reading or writing, to explore the difficulties faced by users of English in different aspects.

5.5.4 As the result of this study indicated that participants believed that they could improve their listening skills without formal trainings, further research should be conducted on how autonomous learning and authentic learning can be effective in improving English listening skills.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

A Study of English Listening Problems of Employees in Japanese Automotive Company

The major objective of this questionnaire is to investigate the English listening problems of employees in Japanese Automotive Company and suggestion for improving English listening problem for the smooth and successful operation in business. It is part of a research paper as partial fulfillment of the requirements for master's degree of Arts in Career English for International Communication, Language Institute, Thammasat University. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and be used only for academic study purposes. Your cooperation in answering this questionnaire is highly appreciated.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts:

Part 1: Demographic data

Part 2: Self-assessment of English listening problems

Part 3: Listening skill improvement

Part 4: Recommendation or suggestion

Part 1: Demographic Data

Instruction: Please read the following statements and check (✓) the bracket or write a short answer for each item.

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age years old

3. Which department are you in?

- Sales Business Planning Administration
 Parts Service Product Planning
 Others Please specify

4. Educational Level

- Bachelor's degree in
 Master's degree in
 Doctoral degree in
 Others Please specify

5. Level of TOEIC score

- TOEIC 500 - 645 TOEIC 650 – 745 TOEIC 750 – 845
 TOEIC 850 – 990 I don't have TOEIC score

6. Year of experience

- Less than 1 year 1 – 3 years 4 – 6 years
 7 – 9 years More than 10 years

Part 2: Self-assessment of English listening problems

Instruction: The questions in this part aim to investigate the frequency of the listening problems encountered when communicating in English with Japanese or foreign colleagues at work. Please check (✓) the statements that corresponds to your answer or opinion.

No.	Statements	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
<u>Problems related to speakers</u>						
1.	I find it difficult to understand when speakers speak too fast.					

No.	Statements	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
2.	I find it difficult to understand Japanese or foreign speakers' pronunciation.					
3.	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.					
4.	I find it difficult to understand when the speaker's pronunciation is wrong.					
5.	I find it difficult to understand Japanese or unfamiliar accents of speakers.					
<u>Problems related to listeners</u>						
6.	I find it difficult to understand the message when listening only once.					
7.	I find it difficult to understand to concentrate on listening.					
8.	I find it difficult to understand technical terms or unfamiliar words in a conversation.					
9.	I find it difficult to understand slang, idioms or phrasal verbs in a conversation.					
10.	I find it difficult to understand a message with a complex grammatical structure.					
11.	I find it difficult to extract the keywords or main idea of a conversation					
<u>Problems related to context</u>						
12.	I find it difficult to understand conversations when I lack background knowledge.					

No.	Statements	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
13.	I find it difficult to understand conversation that the topics are unfamiliar					
14.	I find it difficult to understand conversations when I don't understand the cultural context.					

Part 3: Listening skill improvement

Instruction: From the listening problems mentioned in the previous part, if you need to improve your listening abilities, which statements correspond to your opinion? Please check (✓) the statements that corresponds to your answer or opinion.

No.	Listening skill improvement	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1.	I need to learn about pronunciation.					
2.	I need to understand Japanese or foreign accents.					
3.	I need to practice my listening skills by talking with my Japanese or foreign colleagues.					
4.	I need to practice my listening skills with native speakers.					
5.	I need to improve my listening skills by watching English movies or listening to music.					
6.	I need to increase my grammar knowledge.					
7.	I need to increase my English vocabulary and knowledge by reading English books or					

No.	Listening skill improvement	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
	English websites					
8.	I need to improve my English listening proficiency by attending English training courses.					
9.	I need to improve my English knowledge related to my work by attending business English training courses.					
10.	I need to concentrate on the messages from speakers while I am listening.					

Part 4: Additional suggestions

Do you have any recommendations or suggestions to improve English listening skills?
Please specify.

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Thank you for your kind cooperation in answering this questionnaire.

BIOGRAPHY

Name	Miss Srisaovapak Phoonkum
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