

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE ENGLISH LISTENING AND SPEAKING OF
STUDENTS STUDYING AT A PRIVATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN BANGKOK,
THAILAND



SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
SRINAKHARINWIROT UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2012

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE ENGLISH LISTENING AND SPEAKING OF
STUDENTS STUDYING AT A PRIVATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN BANGKOK,
THAILAND



Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language
at Srinakharinwirot University

June 2012

Copyright 2012 by Srinakharinwirot University

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE ENGLISH LISTENING AND SPEAKING OF
STUDENTS STUDYING AT A PRIVATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN BANGKOK,
THAILAND



AN ABSTRACT
BY
NUALSRI KHAMPRATED

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language
at Srinakharinwirot University

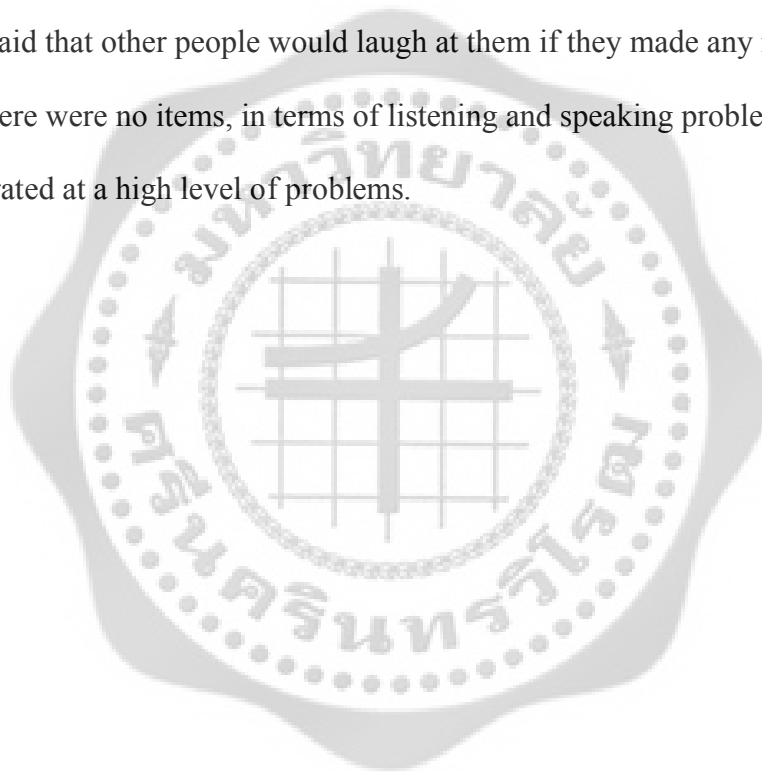
June 2012

Nualsri Khamprated. (2012). *The Problems with the English Listening and Speaking of Students Studying at a Private Vocational School*. Master Project, M.A. (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University. Mater's Project Advisor: Assistant Professor Dr. Saiwaroon Chumpavan

This study attempted to investigate the English listening and speaking problems and causes of these problems among private vocational school students. The participants of the study were third-year certificate students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school Bangkok, Thailand. The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four parts: (a) the general background information of the participants, (b) their problems with English listening, (c) their problems with English speaking, and (d) the causes of their English listening and speaking problems. The questionnaires were distributed directly to the participants, and 356 copies of the questionnaire were returned. The data were analyzed by using percentages, mean scores, standard deviation, and the level of problems experienced by the students.

The results of the study showed that there were 8 out of 20 items rated at a high level of English listening problems. The students reported that it was difficult to understand a speaker with a regional accent, a speaker who spoke too quickly, after only listening once, and it was also difficult for them to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation. The students also realized that it was difficult for them to understand jokes due to cultural differences. The limited grammar and vocabulary skills of the students made it difficult for them to understand spoken English and they became nervous and worried as a result.

In terms of speaking problems, there were 7 out of 20 items rated as high level of difficulty. The students reported that it was difficult to speak English with the correct intonation, to speak as fluently as a native speaker, and experienced frustration when practicing speaking with a student with a lower level of English ability. They did not want to make mistakes when speaking in front of their friends, and they always forgot to say the final sounds of words. Their limited grammar skills made it difficult for them to speak English, so they get nervous and worried when they spoke to foreigners. They were also afraid that other people would laugh at them if they made any mistakes while speaking. There were no items, in terms of listening and speaking problems which the participants rated at a high level of problems.



ปัญหาการฟังและพูด ภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนที่ศึกษาอยู่ในโรงเรียนอาชีวเอกชน ในกรุงเทพมหานคร



เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ

มิถุนายน 2555

ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ

นวลศรี ขำประเทศ. (2555). ปัญหาการฟัง พูด ภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนที่ศึกษาอยู่ในโรงเรียน
อาชีวเอกชนในกรุงเทพมหานคร สารนิพนธ์ ศศม. (การสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะ
ภาษาต่างประเทศ). กรุงเทพฯ :บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ.
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาปริญญานิพนธ์: ผศ. ดร.สาวยรุณ จำปาวัลย์

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัญหาการฟัง พูดและสาเหตุของปัญหาการฟัง พูด
ภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่ในโรงเรียนอาชีวเอกชนแห่งหนึ่งในกรุงเทพมหานคร กลุ่ม
ตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ นักเรียนระดับประกาศนียบัตรวิชาชีพปีที่ 3 ที่กำลังศึกษาในปีการศึกษาที่
2/2554

เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย คือแบบสอบถาม แบบสอบถามแบ่งเป็น 4 ส่วน คือ (1) ข้อมูลทั่วไป
ของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง, (2) ปัญหาในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง, (3) ปัญหาในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ
ของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง และ (4) สาเหตุของปัญหาการฟังและพูดภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง ผู้วิจัยแจกได้
แบบสอบถามให้กลุ่มตัวอย่างด้วยตัวเอง และได้รับแบบสอบถาม 356 ฉบับคืนจากกลุ่มตัวอย่าง ผู้วิจัย
ได้นำข้อมูลที่ได้จากแบบสอบถามมาวิเคราะห์ผลโดยใช้ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ค่าความเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน
และค่าระดับของปัญหา

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า มี 8 ปัญหาการฟังภาษาอังกฤษเป็นปัญหาที่อยู่ในระดับสูง ซึ่งปัญหาที่พบใน
การฟังคือ ปัญหาความยากในการฟังสำเนียงของชาวต่างชาติที่มาจากหลายเชื้อชาติ ปัญหาเมื่อผู้พูดพูด
เร็วเกินไป ปัญหาเมื่อฟังแค่เพียงครั้งเดียว และปัญหาเมื่อผู้พูดออกเสียงไม่ชัดเจน นอกจากนี้ความ
แตกต่างด้านวัฒนธรรมยังเป็นปัญหาในการเข้าใจเนื้อเรื่องำขึ้น ข้อจำกัดด้านไวยากรณ์และคำศัพท์ทำ
ให้เกิดปัญหาในการฟัง ทำให้ผู้ฟังวิตกกังวลเมื่อฟังผู้พูดไม่เข้าใจ

ในด้านปัญหาการพูดนั้นพบว่า มี 7 ปัญหาที่เป็นปัญหาที่อยู่ในระดับสูง ได้แก่ ปัญหาการพูดไม่
ถูกต้องตามน้ำเสียง พูดไม่คล่องแคล่วอย่างเจ้าของภาษา และปัญหาการไม่อยากฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับ
เพื่อนที่มีระดับความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษน้อยกว่าตน นอกจากนี้การไม่อยากพูดติดต่อน้าเพื่อน
และลืมออกเสียงท้ายคำ ก็เป็นปัญหาในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษด้วย กลุ่มตัวอย่างมีข้อจำกัดด้านไวยากรณ์
จึงทำให้เกิดความวิตกกังวลเมื่อจะต้องพูดสนทนากับชาวต่างชาติ เนื่องจากกลัวว่าผู้อื่นจะหัวเราะตน
หากพูดผิด ส่วนสาเหตุที่ทำให้เกิดปัญหาการฟังพูดนั้น ไม่พบหัวข้อที่เป็นสาเหตุที่ทำให้เกิดปัญหาใน
ระดับสูง

The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of the Master's Program in English, and Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project, "The Problems with the English listening and speaking of students at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand" by Nualsri Khamprated as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Srinakharinwirot University.

Master's Project Advisor

.....
(Assistant Professor Dr. Saiwaroon Chumpavan)

Chair of the Master's Project in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

.....
(Dr. Anchalee Jansem)

Oral Defense Committee

.....Chair
(Assistant Professor Dr. Saiwaroon Chumpavan)

.....Committee
(Dr. Walaiporn Chaya)

.....Committee
(Assistant Professor Nittaya Wankangwan)

This Master's Project has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

at Srinakharinwirot University.

..... Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

(Dr. Wanee Aujsatid)

June...., 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this Master's project has been possible because of the assistance of the following people. First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my Master's project advisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Saiwaroon Chumpavan, for her kindness, guidance, thoughtful advice, patience, warm encouragement, and valuable time.

My sincere gratitude is also extended to Dr. Anchalee Jansem, Chair of the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, for her endless kindness. I am very grateful to Dr. Walaiporn Chaya for her gracious assistance, invaluable suggestions and friendly support. I also would like to extend my thanks to Assistant Professor Nittaya Wankangwan for her kind and invaluable feedback and warm encouragement.

The completion of this study would not have been possible without the cooperation from all 372 third-year certificate private vocational students who participated in the study. I am very grateful to all of them for providing useful information for the analysis of this study.

I would like to thank Mr. Simon MacIver for his time in proofreading the English text and for his precious remarks. My deepest thanks also go to Mr. Andrew Stotz for his supporting scholarship and warm encouragement. Furthermore, my sincerest thanks are also owed to all classmates, Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Srinakharinwirot University for their help. Many heartfelt thanks also go to all my teachers, colleagues, friends, and relatives for their kind assistance. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to my father and my mother for their love and care.

Nualsri Khamprated

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
I BACKGROUN OF THE STUDY	1
Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Research Questions	4
Significance of the Study.....	4
Methodology	5
Participants.....	5
Selection of the school	5
Selection of the students.....	5
Instrumentation	6
Data collection procedures	6
Data analysis	7
Confidentiality of the Participants	7
Limitations of the Study	7
Organization of the Study.....	8
II REVIW OF THE LITERATURE	9
The Thai Education System.....	9
The academic stream	9
The vocational stream.....	10

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

CHAPTER	Page
The Importance of Listening and Speaking Skills	
in Language Classroom.....	11
Listening skills	11
The Listening problems of English as a	
foreign language (EFL) learners	12
Speaking Skills.....	16
The Speaking Problems of English as a	
foreign language (EFL) learners.....	17
Causes Leading to Listening and Speaking Problems	
Of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners.....	20
Studies Related to English Listening and Speaking of	
English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners.....	27
Summary.....	30
III METHODOLOGY.....	32
Participants.....	32
Selection of the school.....	32
Selection of the students	33
Instrumentation	33
Pilot study	35
Data Collection Procedure.....	36
Data Analysis	36

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

CHAPTER	Page
IV RESULTS	38
General Background Information of the Participants.....	38
Listening Problems.....	39
Research Question 1	39
Results	39
Speaking Problems.....	50
Research Question 2	50
Results	50
Causes of English Listening and Speaking Problems	58
Research Question 3	58
Results	58
English teachers.....	60
The attitude of the students	60
The motivation of the students	61
Classroom environment	61
English exposure.....	61
The Summary of the Results.....	62
V DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND	
RECOMMENDATIONS	64
Discussion.....	64
Research Question 1	64
Results	64

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

CHAPTER	Page
Discussion.....	65
Research Question 2	67
Results	67
Discussion.....	67
Research Question 3	70
Results	71
Discussion.....	71
Implications of the Study.....	72
Recommendations for Further Study	73
Conclusion.....	74
REFERENCES.....	75
APPENDIX.....	80
VITAE	92

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES		Page
1.	Conclusion of the Questionnaire	35
2.	General Background Information	38
3.	English Listening Problems Experienced by Private Vocational Students	40
4.	The English Listening Problems of Accounting Students	41
5.	The English Listening Problems of Retailing Students	44
6.	The English Listening Problems of Computing Students	46
7.	The English Listening Problems of Hospital Management Students	48
8.	The English Listening Problems of English for Services Business	49
9.	The English Speaking Problems Experienced by Private Vocational Students	50
10.	The English Speaking Problems of Accounting Students	52
11.	The English Speaking Problems of Retailing Students	54
12.	The English Speaking Problems of Computing Students	55
13.	The English Speaking Problems of Hospital Management Students	57
14.	The Causes of English Listening and Speaking Problems of each Major	59

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In an era of globalization, advanced technology allows people from all over the world to connect with each other. For this reason, people need to use an international language in order to communicate. English is used as an international language of communication for various purposes including education, technology, business, and cultural development. As a result of the importance of the English language, many countries throughout the world have established English as their second or foreign language, and it is taught at both school and university levels.

In Thailand, English has been established as the first foreign language, but recently, the Ministry of Education has aimed to reform education to enable learners to communicate and work effectively in English, as well as Chinese and other languages (Ministry of Education, 2005). People study English to serve different purposes in their daily lives. The most frequently used skills in English communication are listening and speaking. Therefore, it is necessary to have good listening and speaking skills in order to achieve effective communication.

Listening and speaking are the key elements of language learning. People spend much more time on listening and speaking than on reading and writing in their daily lives. Most language learners consider the ability to listen and speak as crucial to language learning. They need to be both confident and proficient in listening and speaking in order to communicate effectively (River, 1981). Problems in communication may arise when the speaker lacks listening and speaking skills. Because of the importance of both listening and

speaking skills, these two skills have been taught to students by both Thai and foreign teachers. Educators have tried to find a new method of teaching to help students improve their English communication skills, instead of the old-fashioned approach of focusing on grammar. Therefore, communicative approaches were proposed as a new approach for language teaching in 1970. In Thailand these approaches were introduced as the principal teaching method in 1987 (Ministry of Education, 2002). The goal of the communicative approach is to help Thai students use English effectively in their daily lives.

In Thailand, children begin their first level of education when they are three years old. They continue to study at this level until they are six years old. Students remain at the primary level before advancing to the secondary level, where they study for three years. After students graduate from Grade 9, they must decide between the academic stream by continuing to high school or choosing the vocational stream. Students who choose the academic stream usually intend to enter a university, while vocational schools offer programs that prepare students for employment or further studies. Academic students usually focus on English for university entrance, but vocational students study English mostly for career purposes.

In order to prepare students for their career, vocational schools offer job training during the third-year certificate. Job training outside school provides opportunities for students to use their English in real-life situations. It can also help students to identify their problem areas in English and find ways in which to solve them. Although both academic and vocational students study English at all levels, Thai students still have problems with their English listening and speaking. According to Toolsiri (2005), Thai students are good at grammar, but when they have to speak English they fail to utter the language correctly.

Similarly, Wanthanasut (2008) found that students were afraid of making mistakes while speaking English and did not dare to speak English with others as they were afraid that they would be misunderstood. Problems with speaking and listening can also be found in a study by Sirilukkananan (2007) in which she found that nursing students valued speaking and listening skills the most. However, the speaking ability of nurses seemed to be their weakest point, especially when they had to deal with foreign patients. Furthermore, a study by Chonprakay (2009) showed that listening comprehension was still a big problem for Thai students.

As the cited studies show, Thai students and Thai speakers of English have difficulty and encounter problems with listening and speaking. These problems may discourage students from speaking English and may cause them to lose confidence in their speech. Most Thai students are not effective speakers since English is not their mother tongue. They may be unable to comprehend natural spoken English with normal speech patterns or when a speaker speaks too quickly. Therefore, students and English learners should be able to identify their listening and speaking problems and improve the quality of their listening and speaking skills to be more efficient English learners.

Purpose of the Study

Vocational students must do job training outside school to prepare themselves for their future careers. Most vocational students do their job training during the third year of their certificate. As a teacher who has been teaching in a private vocational school for four years, the researcher has found that students cannot use English effectively in their job training. They experienced many difficulties related to listening and speaking when using English in real life situations. As a result, the researcher would like to identify the specific listening and

speaking problems that students have in order to try and make these students more effective language learners. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the problems and main causes of problems that third-year certificate students at a private vocational school in Bangkok had with English listening and speaking skills.

Research Questions

The following research questions are asked in this study:

1. What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand have with listening to English?
2. What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational in Bangkok, Thailand have with speaking English?
3. What were the main causes of the English listening and speaking problems experienced by students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand?

Significance of the Study

The findings and implications of this study could be used as a guideline for teachers to identify the problems that students have with English listening and speaking. If these problems are related to the teacher, then schools might provide teaching training programs for teachers to improve their skills and methods. If the problems are related to the students, then the teachers should help them to find the best way to solve these problems in order to help the students to become more effective and proficient learners.

Methodology

Participants.

Selection of the school.

The private vocational school where the researcher was teaching was selected for purposive sampling in this study. There were a total of 1,026 students at this school, and the total number of third-year students was 372. At the time of this study the school offered five majors: (a) Accounting, (b) Computing, (c) English for Services Business, (d) Hospital Management, (e) and Retailing. In order to prepare students for their future careers, all vocational schools offer job training to allow students to apply their knowledge in real life situations. At this vocational school, job training is mandatory for second and third year students. The researcher had been teaching at this vocational school for almost five years and had received similar feedback from the workplaces where students did their job training that indicated the students were incapable of using English to communicate effectively. Therefore, the researcher was interested in the English listening and speaking problems experienced by the students and the causes of these problems. For these reasons, the researcher chose this private vocational school to participate in this study.

Selection of the students.

The third-year students are preparing themselves for their careers, so the school offers job training to help them develop their skills. This opportunity will allow students to apply their knowledge to real life situations. They also have the opportunity to use English during their job training. After encountering English listening and speaking problems during their job training, they may be able to identify their problems with English listening and speaking. For this reason, the researcher asked third-year students who already had job training

experience in second and third year of their study to participate in this study. There were 372 third-year students from all five majors: (a) Accounting, (b) Computing, (c) English for Services Business, (d) Hospital Management, and (e) Retailing asked to participate in this study. However, on the day that the questionnaire was distributed, some students did not attend class and others failed to return the completed questionnaire to the researcher.

Therefore, the total number of participants in this study was 356.

Instrumentation: Questionnaire.

A questionnaire was used to collect data from students about problems that they may have with listening and speaking in English and the causes of these problems. The questionnaire is divided into four parts. The first part of the questionnaire asks students' general background information. The second part concerns students' problems with English listening; while the third part concerns students' problems with English speaking, and the last part focuses on causes of problems with English listening and speaking. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and evaluated by the study adviser and EFL teacher for appropriateness, as well as comments and suggestions.

Data collection procedures.

The data for this study were collected through the completion of the questionnaire. In the first week of March, 2012, the researcher visited the English classes of students in all five majors and distributed the questionnaire. The participants were asked to complete a consent form stating that they would be willing to participate in the study. The participants, who would not be willing to participate in, would be excluded from the study. The researcher collected the questionnaire as soon as each of the participants had completed it.

Data analysis.

The data collected for this study were coded according to the following three research questions.

1. What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand have with listening to English?
2. What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational in Bangkok, Thailand have with speaking English?
3. What were the main causes of the English listening and speaking problems experienced by students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand?

Confidentiality of the Participants.

The participants were informed that their names and personal information would remain confidential and not appear in the study. All personal information would be destroyed following the completion of the study.

Limitations of the Study

1. The participants in this study were limited to third-year students only. They were asked to participate by answering questions about their English problems in terms of listening and speaking and the causes of those problems.
2. The data collected from the questionnaire was dependent on their honesty of the participants and their ability to respond.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I of this study introduces the background and some of the common problems that second language learners have with listening and speaking. Chapter II presents a review of the related literature and research studies relevant to the study. Chapter III concerns the methodology of the study, Chapter IV deals with the results and Chapter V discusses the results, suggests recommendations for further studies, and conclusion of the study.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The focus of this research is English listening and speaking and common problems with listening and speaking experienced by third-year Thai students at private vocational school. This chapter presents an overview of the Thai system of vocational school education. The main focus of this research was listening and speaking problems, but it was also necessary to provide definitions of both listening and speaking skills, as well as establish the importance of listening and speaking skills. The problems commonly experienced with English listening and speaking are also discussed, as well as the factors leading to listening and speaking problems. The last part of this chapter deals with studies related to English listening and speaking problems experienced by EFL learners.

The Thai Education System

In Thailand, children begin their first level of education when they are three years old. Students are in early year of educations until they are six. After studying three years in early year, students start to study in Grade 1-Grade 6, primary level for six years. Then follow by three years of lower secondary or Grade 7-Grade 9. After students graduate from Grade 9, they must decide between the academic stream by continue to study Grade 10-Grade 12 (upper secondary) or opting for the vocational stream. Students who enter the academic stream usually intend to enter university, while vocational schools offer programs that prepare students for employment or further studies.

The academic stream.

Thai students have the same basic education from pre-education until they finish Grade 9. After graduating, students have to decide whether to continue to study in the academic

stream, Grade 10-Grade 12 or the vocational stream. Students who decide to study in an academic stream intend to enter university. There are many programs offered in the academic stream, for example, Science-Mathematics, Mathematics-English, English-French, English-German, English-Chinese, and English-Thai-Social Science. The academic stream aims to enable learners to progress according to their aptitude and interests and establishes a basis for either furthering higher education or for working and pursuing a career suitable for their aptitude both either entrepreneurs and paid workers. During the three years of the academic stream, students focus their study on a particular academic field in preparation for university entrance. In terms of studying English, students mostly focus on study English for taking exams. If their grades are good, they may apply for university admission. Students study for four years at university to get their Bachelor's degree before they can start work or continue to study.

The vocational stream.

After graduating Grade 9, students can apply to study in a vocational school for three years to get a Certificate in Vocational Education. There are eight fields of study undertaken as majors: (a) trade and industry, (b) agriculture, (c) home economics, (d) fisheries, (e) business and tourisms, (f) art and crafts, (g) textiles, and (h) commerce (Ministry of Education, 2005). Vocational Education aims to enable students to develop vocational knowledge and skills useful for working both as entrepreneurs or paid workers. All the subjects that vocational students study are relevant to each level of education from the primary to the university level. Besides providing students with the opportunity to develop occupational knowledge and skills, vocational schools also provide mandatory training programs for students in order for them to experience real-life work situations. Before they

start job training, students need to get themselves ready in terms of their theoretical knowledge and working skills. Nowadays, the importance of English is recognized by educational institutions as it plays a significant role in all fields, especially education and business. As a result, students with good English skills will have better career opportunities. The English curriculum in vocational schools aims to fulfill the ability of the students to use English as part of their job. For example, vocational schools provide the following subjects to help students study English relevant to vocational knowledge: English for Workplaces, English for Tourism, English for Nursing Business, English for Computing, English for Accounting, English for Hospitality and so on. After studying the theoretical aspects for a year, students will have the opportunity to apply their knowledge to a real-life work situation. After their workplace training, students may be offered a job. Some students work after they graduate with a Vocational Certificate, but some students continue to study for a higher Diploma Certificate which takes two years to complete. Additionally, some students apply to continue study in a university to get their Bachelor's degree.

The Importance of Listening and Speaking Skills in Language Classroom

Listening skills.

Listening requires effort and concentration, and it is difficult to know whether someone is listening to the speaker or not. If the listeners do not pay attention or are not ready to listen and a listening failure may occur. Poor listening skills can create serious problems for students. For example, it can result in lower grades, incorrect assignments and less job opportunities. Grant (1987) pointed out that listening is important for two main reasons. First, without listening skills, communication can break down. It is easy to communicate if we understand spoken language after listening. Second, listening is important because it

enables students to learn the language more easily. For example, after hearing words, students will be able to pronounce the words, as well as sentences or even intonation patterns. Students need to hear language before they are able to successfully reproduce it.

According to Nunan and Miller (1995), there are four main factors in terms of listening for foreign language learners. First, listening is vital in the language classroom and also provides input for learners. Learning cannot begin without a correct understanding of level-appropriate input. Second, spoken language provides a means of interaction for the learners. Learners must cooperate to achieve understanding and also have access to native speakers. Furthermore, the failure of the learner to understand may be seen as a motivating factor in terms of interaction and learning rather than a barrier. Third, authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner as they must comprehend language as actually used by native speakers. Finally, teachers can use listening exercises to introduce students to new forms of vocabulary, grammar and language interaction patterns. It can be concluded that listening skills are crucial to language learning and help language learners to comprehend spoken language. Therefore, listening is a critical means of acquiring a second language and language performance skills.

The listening problems of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

There are many causes of the problems that affect the listening skills of English learners. Underwood (1989) organizes the major listening problems as follows:

The first problem is a lack of control over the speed of the speaker, and the fact that the listener cannot control the speed of the speaker. Many English language learners believe that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension is that the listeners cannot control the speed of the speaker. It is impossible for the listeners to control the speed of speech from an

uncontrolled source. For example, if the listener is listening to a radio broadcast, they cannot ask for a slower speed.

The second problem is the inability to have things repeated. The inability to have things repeated is something the listeners must face when exposed to an uncontrolled source. Listeners are not always in the position to have the speakers to repeat their speech. For example, if they are listening to the radio or watching television, they are unable to ask for repetition.

The third problem is the limited vocabulary of the listeners. This is one of the most significant problems with listening. When listening to speech from an uncontrollable source, the listeners may be distracted by a word that they are unfamiliar with. A listener needs to understand the vocabulary in order to comprehend what they are listening to. For example, if the speaker chooses words which the listeners do not know, it will be difficult for them to understand what they are hearing. Encountering unknown words may cause listeners to stop and think about meaning of the word and miss the next part of the speech.

A failure to recognize signals is the fourth problem of listening. These signals can make the listener confused about what they are hearing. For example, if we are giving directions, we need to use sequencing words to put our information in order by using words like first, second, and third. If the listeners do not know these signals, it will be difficult for them to follow the directions. These signals indicate that the speaker is moving from one phase to another, giving examples, or repeating a point. The listener may notice some markers like “secondly, or then,” or react to the body language, gestures, or changes in the speaker’s intonation.

The fifth problem is interpretation. This problem is found with listeners who lack the requisite background knowledge to understand the context of what they are hearing. An example of this is if Thai students, who are unfamiliar with the context of snow, hear the sentence 'The snow was so bad that there was nobody in the school.' This might be difficult for Thai students to interpret correctly if they have never experienced snow. In other words, communication is easier if the listener has some relevant knowledge.

The sixth listening problem is the ability to concentrate and the concentration level of the listener. Even the shortest break in attention can lead to students becoming bored. For example, if students are listening to something from a poor and unsuitable machine, it can make listening hard and boring for them. It can be difficult for the listener to concentrate when listening to a foreign language. Learners sometimes feel that listening is very tiring even if they are interested, since it requires a strong effort to follow the meaning.

The final problem is established language habits or learning behaviors that the learner has picked up from their teachers. As a teacher wants their students to understand everything they hear, they may repeat and pronounce words slowly and carefully. This can make students worry if they fail to understand particular word or phrase. For example, if a teacher requires students to listen to something and do an exercise, the students feel that if they do not understand every word they are not confident they can complete the task successfully.

It can be concluded that the process of learning listening skills is very complex. The background knowledge and the skills of listeners must be all utilized simultaneously. However, our processing space is limited. Before we can understand what we have heard, the speech is over and what is worse, we cannot always ask for repetition. Students must comprehend the text as they listen to it, retain the information in their memory, integrate it

with that which follows, and continually adjust our understanding of what we hear in the light of both prior knowledge and incoming information. As a result of processing all this information, listeners may lose concentration rather quickly and sometimes give up listening. Less proficient learners of English as a second or as a foreign language (ESL/EFL) have even more serious problems. Many of them are fully occupied with identifying the words used in the speech, and there is almost no space for top-down processing. These types of situations are far from the ideal atmosphere for listening and learning.

Moreover, Yan (2005) studied the effects of anxiety on listening and found that there were three main part causes, those of the learner, the teacher, and those related to the environment. The causes of the learner's problems can be attributed to their experiences as a listener. Their past experience plays a key role. They may feel anxious because they have never taken any formal listening courses before entering university. As a result, they may feel frustration if they do not grasp every idea and understand every word. When students are overly concerned about what other students think of them, it may lead to a decrease in their self-esteem. The cause of problems related to the teacher is concerned with how students feel about their teachers. Students may experience anxiety if their teachers are dictatorial, authoritarian, and intimidating. Also, students may feel that the teacher is biased if they are not treated equally in class. Moreover, many students report increased anxiety when they are called on individually in class or if they fear that they are being evaluated solely on the results of their examinations. If a student cannot provide a good response or fails to frequently ask and answer questions in class, they fear that the teacher may regard them as foolish. The environmental causes are related to the class atmosphere. When learners compare themselves unfavorably with others, their anxiety may increase. When

their efforts are met with frustration or failure, they may begin to doubt whether or not they can do as well as other students. In evaluations, some students reported that they were often frightened when asked questions and afraid that they would be laughed at if they gave the wrong answers. The validity of this anxiety is well established among Thai students and Thai English learners.

Additionally, Chonprakay (2009) investigated the listening problems of Thai undergraduate students and found that listening was a serious and widespread problem. It can be seen from this study that in order to be an effective listener, students need more practice and should try to learn from the media around them and the teacher should use various visual aids to give learners more opportunity to practice their listening and to become more acquainted with the sounds.

Speaking skills.

Speaking is one of important skills in English language learning and a fundamental part of human communication. In non-English speaking countries, learning English as foreign language is an integrated process in which the learner may not ignore one or more of the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, some students still lack the necessary four basic skills, especially speaking. It may be because English is hard to understand, and they are too afraid of making mistakes to practice with confidence. In terms of international relations, the ability to speak English is very important as it enables non-native speakers to participate at an international level. At this level, speaking skills are measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation successfully in the target language. This can lead second or foreign language learners to believe that speaking abilities can improve their levels of professional success.

The speaking problems of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

In terms of the speaking problems related to anxiety, studies have found that anxiety about speaking English has been identified in many other countries. Xiuqin (2006) interviewed Chinese students and identified and summarized the causes of their anxiety about speaking as follows. The first problem was related to a lack of proficiency in English, the second was the fear of making mistakes and being subject to ridicule, and the third was related to large class sizes, followed by an unwillingness to take risks, then a low tolerance of ambiguity, and finally the competitive nature of the classroom.

A lack of proficiency in English inhibits effective language learning. It is sometimes difficult for students to understand the teacher; and as a result, they are unable to effectively answer questions. Some students want to ask the teacher to repeat themselves, but they fear that other students would think that their English is poor. This type of student remains silent and avoids eye contact with teacher to indicate that they do not understand and allow the teacher to make the assumption that they are not ready to answer questions.

The second main cause of anxiety is the fear of making mistakes and being subject to the derision of their peers if they lack confidence in their ability to speak English. In the classroom, students may be frightened when they speak English in front of the class. They may be afraid of making mistakes or receiving negative evaluations from their peers and teacher. The fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by their peers prevents students from allowing themselves to practice speaking in the classroom.

The third cause of anxiety is large class sizes. The size of a class affects the learning environment of a classroom. A large class size can also make nervous students more anxious, especially if they have to address the entire class. For some students, losing face in

front of a class is unbearable. In a large class, some students may avoid speaking activities in order to not speak in front of such a large group. However, this problem cannot be easily solved in schools and universities at the present time. Student anxiety can be decreased by making the class atmosphere more relaxed and the content more enjoyable.

The fourth cause is concerned with students who are unwilling to take risks and limit their own opportunities to speak English. An unwillingness to take risks blocks a student's opportunities to explore English. If students are willing to take risks when speaking, they gain greater exposure to the target language and increase their language production. However, if they are not willing to take this risk, they may undermine their ability to effectively deal with their problems with speaking. These students fear that they will make fools of themselves by taking risks and think that the best way to avoid seeming foolish is to keep silent and to not join discussions.

The fifth cause is a low tolerance of ambiguity, which is problematic for some students and may lead to misunderstanding the language. Students require clear explanations of the rules in order to effectively engage in classroom activities. If there is any vagueness in the teacher's instructions, the students may experience anxiety and discomfort.

The final cause is related to the competitive nature of the classroom, which leads students to unfavorably compare themselves to others. Some students, consciously or unconsciously, compete with each other and this can also increase their level of anxiety and frustration. If students are not sure that they can answer correctly, they will keep silent to avoid losing face. Their self-consciousness prevents them from actively participating in classroom activities.

Additionally, there are some causes for anxiety in the oral English classroom found in a study by Lui (2007) which include the following. First, a lack of vocabulary, second, low English proficiency, third, a lack of preparation, followed by a lack of practice, then the fear of making mistakes and being laughed at, next, the fear of losing face, then the fear of being the focus of attention, followed by the fear of being unable to follow and understand others, then, the inability to express ideas and finally, memory disassociation.

In terms of the skill levels of students, a lack of vocabulary was identified as the main cause of student anxiety in the oral English classroom. It was found from the interviews that a limited vocabulary is a common cause of student anxiety. A low English proficiency also makes students nervous and contributes to their lack of confidence in speaking English. The students revealed in their reflective journals that they thought their English was poor; and for that reason, they were afraid of speaking English. A lack of preparation reduces student self-confidence in speaking English. It was also found in their reflective journals that a few of students did not feel nervous when speaking English without any preparation. These students said that they could practice speaking English and improve their self-confidence when speaking English without preparation, while the rest of students said that they were nervous and did not want to speak English without preparation. A lack of practice is very significant problem for English learners. Although the students had been enrolled in an English course for years, they did not have much time to practice speaking English in the classroom due to factors such as limited class time and large class sizes. Many students reported that they were nervous when talking to others in English as they rarely had the opportunities to practice English conversation.

One of the main causes of problems with learning English was the fear of making mistakes and being laughed at, which also made students anxious when speaking to others in class. Students said that they were still nervous and worried about making mistakes, even when they were prepared. The fear of losing face makes students feel nervous and shy. They may forget all the words they had prepared when speaking in front of the class. The fear of being focus of attention occurred when students were singled out to speak in class. The fear of being unable to follow and understand spoken English caused many students to become anxious in the oral English classroom. Students reported that they felt anxious when the teacher asked questions because they could not understand the question and were afraid that the teacher would ask them to answer it.

The inability to express ideas was another cause for student anxiety in the oral English classroom. The inability to translate their ideas from their own language to English made them anxious and caused them to not want to speak English. Additionally, memory dissociation leads to memory loss. Some students became so nervous that they temporarily forgot what they had prepared or they forgot the necessary words to express their thoughts or ideas.

Causes Leading to Listening and Speaking Problems of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners

Some students and English learners cannot speak English effectively even though they have been studying English for more than 10 years. There are many factors that lead to poor performance in both listening and speaking. There are five causes to consider. The first is the teacher, the second is the students' attitudes, the third is students' motivation, followed by the classroom environment, and finally, the level of the students' exposure to English.

The teacher plays very important role in teaching English. There are many studies which support the idea that the teacher is one of the factors that impairs the ability of a student to listen to and to speak English effectively. Yan (2005) examined EFL teaching in China and found that the listening skills of students were rated unsatisfactory. It was found that in most high schools, English classes were teacher-centered and exam-oriented, and listening was usually ignored or abandoned. Students still felt frustrated when required to communicate in English, even if they had studied English at the university level. This frustration was exacerbated by a majority of teachers who did not take these issues into consideration in the course of their teaching, and this resulted in increased aggravation, anxiety and frustration among the students.

According to Senan (1997), the teacher must know the subject matter well and have a high level of English proficiency in order to successfully teach their students. The English skills of an English teacher must be of a higher level than the students in the classroom. The teacher needs to make their class enjoyable as students generally learn better in a positive learning environment. Yanling and Guizhen (2006) conducted a study of anxiety in English foreign classrooms in China and found that teachers caused anxiety because their input in the classroom was only in English, which made students worried and anxious. Moreover, when the teacher corrected language errors in the classroom, it caused some students to feel humiliated or as if they were being punished for their errors.

A teacher should be able to do something beyond teaching tasks, such as creating good relationships with their students. If a teacher can empathize with their students, they can improve their student's learning behavior. Before teaching a class, a teacher must possess some knowledge and experience of psychology and management. A teacher should also

establish a comfortable classroom atmosphere, be flexible enough to recognize the abilities of their students and their personal likes and dislikes. If a teacher can build a good relationship with their students and understand their needs, the teaching process may run more smoothly and students may pay more attention to class, which allows them the opportunity to become more successful learners.

The attitudes and the likes and dislikes of students are crucial factors in the development of second language learning. Rubin & Thompson (1994) defined attitude as the key to success in language learning. A learner's attitude can also be defined as how they feel about other aspects of the target language, such the culture and people associated with it. A student who admires the culture and wants to learn about it may become more familiar with the target language as a result. There is a clear relationship between attitude and success, and a positive attitude will help learners to achieve their goals. Second language learners can benefit from a positive attitude, while a negative attitude may lead to decreased motivation. Teachers also need to be aware of the fact that everyone has both positive and negative attitudes and that negative attitudes can be changed (Brown, 2000). In addition, according to Muangmood (2005), attitudes are internal factors that affect spoken language. An attitude or a set of attitudes can be described as a feeling about somebody or something based on individual experience. A student with positive experiences tends to have a more positive attitude. On the other hand, a student with a negative attitude seems unlikely to study English, which can be related to a failure of learning. Besides, students with positive attitudes can achieve higher scores than those who have negative attitudes (Muangmood, 2005). Moreover, Mokkarawut (2006) stated that a bad attitude towards learning could create a cycle of demotivation in which the learner experiences difficulty in applying their

English skills for the purpose of communication. A negative attitude could lead a student to not wanting to practice speaking English. As a result, they became afraid of speaking English, and their ability to communicate in English in real-life situations was limited (Mokkarawut, 2006). Furthermore, it was also found in Wanthanasut's study that students were found to be afraid to consult with their teachers. They complained that they had too much homework and not enough time to practice English in class. This indicated that if students do not have good attitudes toward language learning, it would be difficult for them to improve their language skills (Wanthanasut, 2008).

To have a positive attitude towards the English language is a good start for a second language learner. An English teacher should generate a class environment that is conducive to enhancing language learning and promoting positive attitudes towards learning. It is very important for learners to have positive attitudes as it motivates them to reach their goals, which make the learning process much easier for them. On the other hand, a learner with a negative attitude will find it both boring and difficult to learn English and as a result, they may fail as language learners.

The level of student motivation has a clear effect on behavior of the learners. A great deal of research indicates that motivation plays an important role in successful language learning. Harmer (1991) stated that the level of motivation that students bring to class was the biggest factor affecting their success. According to Harmer (1991) and Brown (2000), there are two main types of motivation: (a) integrative and (b) instrumental motivation. The integrative motivation is the desire to learn a language in order to integrate themselves into the culture of the second language group and become involved in social interchange among the group. Instrumental motivation refers to the desire to learn a language because it would

fulfill certain utilitarian goals such as future career, reading ability, understanding technical materials, and translation. Successful language learners are those who had good motivation, such as liking the language, admiring the culture and having the desire to become familiar with the society which uses the language (Holt, 2001). A study by Mokkarawut (2006) supports this idea in the finding that students succeeded in speaking English because they needed to use English for studying and working in both Thailand and foreign countries. This type of motivation was instrumental and drove them to reach their goals. Similarly, a study by Lordasa (2007) showed that instrumental motivation played a more important role than integrative motivation. Students participating in Lordasa's study said that having a good career in the future was more important than being comfortable with American or British culture.

The motivations and their basic needs of students are of crucial significance and must not be ignored when learning English. A language learner will not be successful if the student lacks awareness of the purpose of what they are learning and are only learning English because it is required by the system or a popular subject with other students. In order to increase student motivation, the teacher must encourage them to learn English, frequently reminding them of the importance of mastering English. They should be made aware that they need English to attain their personal goals such as further studies, travel abroad, preparation for their career, and for accessing technology. If students are aware of the importance of English in their lives, they will become highly motivated learners.

The classroom environment can create either a positive or negative atmosphere for students. A stressful classroom environment can be seen as an impediment to successful language learning. A relaxed classroom environment has been shown to reduce students'

anxiety and will hopefully make them feel more comfortable. Teachers should be aware of the existence of anxiety among students and show empathy to the class both as individuals and as a group. If students feel that other students and their teacher empathize with them, they may become more active. As suggested by students in a study by Lui (2007), English teachers should try to establish a friendly, supportive, and non-threatening learning environment. It is preferable for teachers to be friendly rather than strict and critical in class. This may help students feel less intimidated about speaking English, even when they have to respond to the teacher. Muangmood (2005) argues that if we want to study the factors affecting the ability of student to speak English effectively, we also need to know about their previous learning conditions. These factors included classroom conditions, the atmosphere, the anxiety level of the students and the quality of their former English teachers. If the classroom is too hot, crowded or noisy, it can impair the students' ability to pay attention and may cause them to fail as language learners. According to the conclusion of a study by Yan (2005), teachers should be aware of the fact that anxiety is innate and commonly exists, but that they could help students to reduce their anxiety and improve the class atmosphere. It was a teacher's responsibility to create a comfortable atmosphere for their students (Yan, 2005).

The mood of the students has a significant impact on successful language learning. Teachers should provide students with a classroom environment that has a variety of visually and mentally stimulating materials. The learning activities that a teacher offers their students should be interesting to them in order to hold their attention and prevent boredom setting in. The classroom should not be too large as the larger it is, the more difficult it is to control.

An increased exposure to English gives students opportunities to use their English. The opportunity to practice and use English both inside and outside the classroom are crucial for students who wish to enhance their English skills. Some students hardly use English outside the classroom, so classroom activities which encourage them to speak English are an ideal way to allow them time to practice their English. According to a study by Chaiyakosri (2004), it was found that engineering students had problems with speaking English, especially when they needed to use it to communicate in their line of work. Most students reported that they could not use engineering terms in their speech. They suggested that teachers should provide them with listening and speaking activities that were related to their work and would be beneficial to their careers and future job prospects.

A study by Wanthanasut (2008) found that students require a number of different activities to learn the target language, such as games or songs. The students who were not exposed to more dynamic teaching methods were less successful in the classroom. Sirilukkananan (2007) claimed that extra language activities outside the classroom should be encouraged as this would give students further opportunities to use and apply their language in various situations. Using their English outside the classroom allowed them to experience real situations and helped them to realize the specific problems they had (Sirilukkananan, 2007). Lunpraphan (2007) studied problems in learning English in vocational schools and found that students requested activities that motivated them to use English with all four skills. Teachers should encourage students with interesting activities and make them practice their speaking and listening skills in order to enhance their spoken English. Onkoa (2009) also found that English learners who were not exposed to spoken English would have problems with speaking English. Therefore, exposure to English is one of the environmental

factors that increase language proficiency. If students are exposed to English in the same way that they are exposed to their first language, greater success will be achieved. The more time they spend learning English, the more knowledge they will gain. The learners' proficiency in English will also be increased if they experience a richer language environment.

In conclusion, while some Thai students have been studying English for a number of years, they still have considerable problems with listening and speaking. In order to help students to solve these problems, they need to clearly identify which listening and speaking problems they have. As a result, teachers will be able to gain a better understanding of these problems and find techniques to help students improve their listening and speaking skills.

Studies Related to English Listening and Speaking of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners

Related studies to problems with listening and speaking have been identified in Thailand as well as a number of other countries. These studies have been conducted in order to investigate the factors which affect English listening and speaking skills and identified several factors which have a negative impact on students' listening and speaking skills.

Wanchid (2003) investigated the attitudes of 30 Thai staff toward speaking English at work. This study also examined the problems faced by the staff in three situations: in meetings, in face to face conversations, and while making presentations. A questionnaire was used as instrument to collect data. The results indicated that the staff seemed to have positive attitudes toward the importance of speaking English in order to communicate effectively in their workplace, as they were motivated by the prospect of advancement or future employment opportunities. In conclusion, it could be argued that instrumental

motivation was more influential than integrative motivation. The problems that the staff reported with their speech included limited vocabulary, grammar errors, embarrassment, low self-confidence and fear of making mistakes. The staff considered these to be their main problems, while poor pronunciation and a poor accent were considered to be only moderate problems, and lack of excitement was indicated as the least significant problem.

Muangmood (2005) conducted a study entitled, “Factors Effecting Entering Students’ Ability to Speak English at Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi Phranakhon Si Ayuthaya.” Fifty students participated in this study. The instruments used in this study were questionnaire, the interview, and the recording. The findings showed that only 2% of them had an excellent speaking ability. The results of the study indicated that most of the students had a weakness in spoken English, despite the fact that they had received good grades in English from their previous schools. Moreover, the results also revealed that they lacked any sufficient learning activities outside class to develop their English language ability.

Xiuqin (2006) conducted a study to investigate anxiety regarding the English speaking skills of 38 students at Yashan University in China, and questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings showed that students were suffering from anxiety in the classroom. The students reported that the main impediment to their progress in speaking English was anxiety.

Tanveer (2007) investigated the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL and EFL learners. The participants were 20 students and qualitative semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussion techniques, and a questionnaire were used to investigate the issue. The findings indicated that students felt anxious while speaking English in front of others. They even expressed that they felt ‘stupid’ if they could not speak English well and found by other

that they try to skip the situation. The factors that created high levels of anxiety in the classroom included evaluation by the teachers, peers, and the learner's level of self-esteem regarding their second language skills. The students also reported that they became more anxious when as a result of error correction. The students expressed difficulties with aspects of English including grammar, pronunciation, the word class system and modal verbs. Furthermore, a lack of sufficient input and opportunities to practice speaking in a social context were the major causes of their problems with spoken English.

Thanakorn (2007) conducted a study entitled, "English Speaking Problems of Staff Members at SME Bank." The participants of this study were 100 employees of SME Bank. The questionnaire was used as instrument to collect data. The findings showed that the most frequent English speaking problems among the staff was a lack of opportunity to practice speaking English. These employees had problems with producing grammatically correct English sentences. They also had a limited vocabulary, so they had to pause to think about the meaning of unknown words while speaking. A lack of knowledge of technical terms was another problem as well as difficulty with using the correct tenses.

Tilahun (2008) conducted a study to explore the factors that contribute to the problems encountered in EFL listening comprehension. The subjects of the study were 149 first-year English major students of Bahir Da University in Ethiopia, and questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings from questionnaire reported that the most difficulties in listening were due to a speaker's pronunciation and fast delivery speed. Furthermore, the poor quality material used in the classroom had a negative impact on the learners.

Wanthanasut (2008) conducted a study to investigate the problems with English experienced by Mattayom Suksa 1 students at Phosai Pittayakarn School, Ubonrachthani.

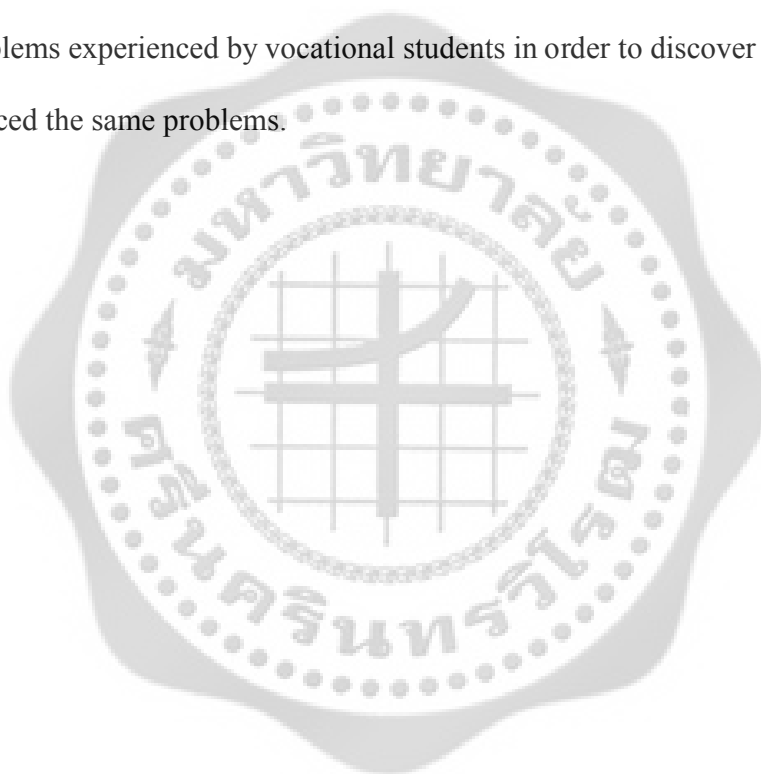
The study was also a survey of the level of severity of the problems that students had with spoken English. The subjects of the study were 267 Mattahom Suksa 1 students, and a questionnaire was used as instrument in this study. The findings showed that overall, the problems that the students had were judged to be at a moderate level. The most serious problems that students reported were a lack of confidence and a fear of making mistakes while speaking English. Another significant problem was the inability of students to form correct sentences.

Onkao (2009) conducted a study to survey the factors that had a negative impact on the spoken English of employees at Stars Microelectronics Company. A questionnaire was used as instrument in this study. This study was conducted with 102 employees, and it was found that factors such as learning conditions, motivations, attitudes and the quality of the English teacher did not cause problems for them. On the other hand, English exposure was a problem for employees when it did not focus on the English they needed in their daily lives. They reported that they were exposed to English only when they were at work and they only listened to English songs. As a result, they had less exposure to English and always had problems with their spoken English. In order to solve this problem, the students suggested that the company should provide them with the type of English they needed in their daily lives. This course, with a focus on practical English, may help them to improve their spoken English.

Summary

Based on the previous and related studies, it can be concluded that English listening and speaking skills are crucial for EFL learners who need to communicate. Although most EFL learners at this level had been studying English for more than ten years, they still

encountered English listening and speaking problems. The major problems revealed in the related studies were a limited vocabulary and difficulty with grammar and pronunciation. The students were also shy about speaking English and making mistakes in front of their friends. Another problem was a lack of exposure to English. As a result, they could not improve their English skills and encountered problems when using their English skills to communicate. The researcher was interested in investigating the English listening and speaking problems experienced by vocational students in order to discover whether or not they experienced the same problems.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology employed in this study. This methodology is comprised of four parts: (a) participants, (b) instrumentation, (c) data collection procedures, and (d) data analysis.

Participants

Selection of the school.

The private vocational school where the researcher was working at the time of this study was chosen to participate in this study for purposive sampling. The third-year students participated in mandatory job training to prepare for employment. This also allowed them the opportunity to use their English skills and overcome their English problems in real-life situations. In a vocational school, job training is offered at the beginning of the second year to prepare students for the following year, when their job training is held in real workplaces. Based on the researcher's teaching experience, the students studying in private vocational schools could not use English effectively in a variety of situations. For example, as mentioned in the summary of a report on the student job training program at a hotel; the students could not provide basic hotel information to guests, did not understand certain types of foreign accents, and generally lacked confidence when speaking English. The students themselves reported that they had problems with listening and speaking during their job training. For this reason, the researcher chose students from the vocational school where she was currently employed to participate in this study.

Selection of the students.

The third-year vocational students who did job training outside school were asked to participate in this study. These students were also selected because they had already completed their job training in the second year and still experienced difficulty using English for communication in their third year job training. These students had also received unusually negative feedback from their workplaces. The feedback indicated that the students were ineffective English speakers and could not use English in real life situations. As a result of this feedback, the researcher was interested in investigating the English listening and speaking problems experienced by these students.

There were 1,026 students at this school. All 372 third-year certificate students were asked to participate in this study. The school currently offers five majors: (a) Accounting, (b) Computing, (c) English for Service Businesses, (d) Hospital Management, and (e) Retailing. There were 221 Hospital Management students, 60 Computing students, 44 Accounting students, 40 English for Service Businesses students, and 7 Retailing students. However, on the day the researcher scheduled to administer the questionnaire to the participants, some students missed the English classrooms, and others failed to return the completed questionnaire to the researcher. Therefore, the total number of the participants of this study was 356, 214 students came from Hospital Management, 55 students came from Computing, 40 students came from Accounting, and 7 students came from Retailing.

Instrumentation: Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to investigate students' problems with English listening and speaking and the causes of these problems. The questionnaire used in this study was divided into four parts. The first part of the questionnaire is concerned with general background

information such as their age, major, and how long they have been studying English. The students need to rate their level of their agreement with the statements in the second, third and fourth parts of the questionnaire. There are five levels to show how much they agree or disagree with each statement: 5 indicates strong agreement, 4 indicates agreement, 3 indicates uncertainty, 2 indicates disagreement, and 1 indicates strong disagreement.

The second part of the questionnaire is concerned with the problems that students experience with English listening. There were 20 items in this section about general problems with English listening that the students experienced in their daily lives. The third part of the questionnaire is concerned with the problems that students experience with English speaking. There were also 20 items in this section about general problems with English speaking that the students experienced in their daily lives.

The last part of the questionnaire focused on causes of problems with English listening and speaking. There are five causes, including the English teacher and the classroom environment, the attitude and motivation of the student, and their level of exposure to English. Each statement in this section required the student to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. The detail of the amount of each part in questionnaire is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Conclusion of the Questionnaire

Part	Description	Number of Items
		(<i>N</i> = 78)
I	Participants' general background information	3
II	Problems with the English listening	20
III	Problems with the English speaking	20
IV	Causes of English listening and speaking	
	English teacher	10
	Student's attitude	6
	Student's motivation	5
	Classroom environment	7
	English exposure	7

Pilot study.

The researcher developed the questionnaire. In order to test the efficacy of the questionnaire, it was pilot tested with 30 students at one of the private vocational schools in Bangkok in the second week of February 2012. The respondents were asked to answer the preliminary questionnaire in order to identify ambiguities, uncommon terms, and statements. They were also requested to comment on the contents of the questionnaire, express their opinions, or make suggestions concerning this study. After the pilot test, the questionnaire was also evaluated by the study advisor and an EFL teacher for appropriateness to use as an instrument of this study.

Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected through a questionnaire in the first week of March, 2012. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the participants. The researcher also presented in each class in order to offer assistance to any students who needed it. Copies of the questionnaire were collected upon completion, and all participants were informed that all their personal information would remain confidential and would be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were processed, computed, and analyzed by using descriptive statistics. In order to calculate the results of this questionnaire, percentage and mean scores were used, and the collected data were coded according to the following research questions.

1. What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand have with listening to English?
2. What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational in Bangkok, Thailand have with speaking English?
3. What were the main causes of the English listening and speaking problems experienced by students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand?

Part I of questionnaire was concerned with the general background of the students, such as their GPA and how long they had been studying English. A five-point Likert scale was used to score the level of problems in Part II, Part III, and Part IV of the questionnaire. Part II was concerned with problems with English listening, while Part III was concerned with

problems with English speaking. Part IV examined the causes of problems with English listening and speaking skills. The scale used in questionnaire to specify the student's level of agreement or disagreement were based on the following criteria of Reniss Likert (1932):

Scale	Agreement	Mean Range	Level of problem
5	Strongly agree	4.50 – 5.00	Very high
4	Agree	3.50 – 4.49	High
3	Uncertain	2.50 – 3.49	Moderate
2	Disagree	1.50 – 2.49	Low
1	Strongly disagree	1.00 – 1.49	Very low

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the problems experienced by third-year students studying in second semester academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok with English listening and speaking, as well as the causes of these problems. The data from this study was obtained from the questionnaire.

General Background Information of the Participants

This part is concerned with general information regarding the Grade Point Averages of the students and the length of time they have been studying English. The results were presented as a mean score to establish general background information about the participants and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

The General Background Information of the Participants

Major	GPA		Years of studying English	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Accounting	3.30	1.63	12	2.01
English for Services Business	3.24	.44	12	1.17
Hospital Management	3.02	.47	13	1.45
Computing	2.94	.40	12	1.82
Retailing	2.35	.19	12	.00

Table 2 shows that the highest average GPA (3.30) was maintained by Accounting students, with an average of 12 years of studying English, followed by 3.24 from the English for Services Business students, with an average of 12 years of studying English. The next group was Hospital Management students with a 3.02 GPA and an average of 13 years of studying English, followed by Computing students with 2.94 and an average of 12 years of studying English, and finally Retailing students with 2.35 and an average of 12 years of studying English.

The purposes of this study were to investigate the listening and speaking problems of these students as well as the causes of these problems. All of items in the questionnaires were put in the form of negative questions. If the participants agree or strongly agree with a particular item, this clearly indicates that this is a problem area. Therefore, the research questions focused on items that were rated as high ($M = 3.50-4.49$) or at a very high level ($4.50-5.00$) as based on the criteria established by Likert. The results of this study are presented in accordance with each of the research questions.

Listening Problems

Research Question 1.

What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand have with listening to English?

Results.

This part presents the problems private vocational students experience with English listening. The participants were asked to rate each problem based on a five-point Likert scale: 5 for strong agreement, 4 for agreement, 3 for uncertainty, 2 for disagreement, and 1 for strong disagreement. The results showed only the items that were rated at a high and a

very high level of difficulty. The results of the English listening problems of participants from all five majors are shown below in Table 3.

Table 3

The English Listening Problems Experienced by Private Vocational Students (N = 356)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
1. Difficulty understanding a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent.	3.70	.94	High
2. Difficulty understanding when a speaker speaks too quickly	3.69	1.00	High
3. Difficulty understanding after listening only once	3.68	.97	High
4. Difficulty understanding a speaker with poor pronunciation	3.66	.97	High
5. Difficulty understanding jokes because of cultural differences	3.63	.94	High
6. Difficulty understanding English because of a limited understanding of grammar.	3.59	1.02	High
7. Getting nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker is saying.	3.59	.98	High
8. Difficulty understanding spoken English because of a limited vocabulary.	3.53	.91	High

Table 3 indicates that students agreed that it was difficult to understand a regional accent ($M = 3.70$) or when a speaker speaks too quickly ($M = 3.69$). They recognized that they found it difficult to understand after only listening once ($M = 3.68$) and is difficult for them to understand a speaker with a poor pronunciation ($M = 3.66$). They also realized that it was difficult to understand jokes because of cultural differences ($M = 3.63$). Moreover, it was difficult for them to understand spoken English because of their limited understanding of grammar, so they got nervous and worried when they did not understand what a speaker was saying ($M = 3.59$). The students thought it was difficult to understand spoken English language due to their limited vocabulary ($M = 3.53$). The English listening problems experienced by students from each major are shown in following tables.

Table 4

The English Listening Problems of Accounting Students ($n = 40$)

Problems	M	SD	Level of problem
1. Difficulty understanding when a speaker speaks too quickly	4.00	.82	High
2. Difficulty understanding a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent	3.98	.83	High
3. Difficulty understanding a speaker with poor pronunciation	3.90	.90	High
4. Difficulty catching words with similar linking sounds	3.90	.90	High

(continued)

Table 4

The English Listening Problems of Accounting Students (n = 40) (continued)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
5. Difficulty understanding after listening only once	3.88	.91	High
6. Getting nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker is saying	3.88	.88	High
7. Difficulty understanding a native speaker speaking at a normal pace (i.e., on the radio or TV)	3.85	.83	High
8. Difficulty guessing the meaning from the context, when failing to catch every word.	3.78	.95	High
10. Difficulty understanding English because of a limited understanding of grammar.	3.65	1.05	High
11. Stopping listening when failing to understand what a speaker is saying	3.63	1.00	High
12. Difficulty understanding without seeing the speaker's body language	3.63	.95	High
13. Difficulty understanding every word when listening to English speech	3.60	1.03	High
14. Difficulty understanding spoken English because of a limited vocabulary	3.58	1.06	High
15. Difficulty concentrating if failing to understand what a speaker is saying	3.58	.87	High

The Accounting students reported 15 out of 20 items of English listening problems at a high level. The mean score rankings was from 3.58 to 4.00. The students agreed that it was difficult to understand a speaker when they spoke too quickly ($M = 4.00$) and that it was also difficult for them to understand a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent ($M = 3.98$). They also had difficulty understanding a speaker with poor pronunciation and catching words with linking sounds ($M = 3.90$). The students also recognized that acquiring general understanding from the first listening was difficult and that they got nervous and worried if they did not understand what a speaker was saying ($M = 3.88$). They found that it difficult to understand a native speaker speaking at a normal pace ($M = 3.85$) and if they were unable to catch every word, it was difficult for them to guess the meaning from the context. ($M = 3.78$). It was difficult for them to understand jokes because of cultural differences ($M = 3.75$) and their limited understanding of grammar made it difficult for them to understand spoken English ($M = 3.65$). They stopped listening when they failed to understand what a speaker was saying and they also realized that understanding spoken English without being able to see the body language of the speaker was difficult ($M = 3.63$). The students experienced difficulty understanding every word when they listened to English speech ($M = 3.60$), their limited vocabulary made it difficult for them to understand spoken language, and if they did not understand what a speaker was saying, they found it difficult to concentrate ($M = 3.58$).

Table 5

The English Listening Problems of Retailing Student (n = 7)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
1. Difficulty understanding a speaker with poor pronunciation	4.00	.58	High
2. Difficulty catching words with linking sounds	4.00	.58	High
3. Difficulty understanding after listening only once	4.00	.58	High
4. Difficulty understanding jokes because the cultural differences	3.86	.69	High
5. Difficulty understanding without seeing the speaker's body language	3.86	.38	High
6. Difficulty understanding a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent	3.71	.95	High
7. Difficulty understanding a native speaker speaking at a normal pace (i.e., on the radio or TV)	3.71	.76	High
8. Difficulty guessing the meaning from the context, if the student fails to catch every word.	3.71	.49	High
9. Difficulty understanding because of limited pronunciation	3.57	1.13	High

(continued)

Table 5

The English Listening Problems of Retailing Students (n = 7) (continued)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
10. Difficulty understanding when a speaker speaks too quickly	3.57	.98	High
11. Difficulty understanding spoken English because of a limited vocabulary	3.57	.79	High
12. Difficulty understanding every word when listening to English speech	3.57	.79	High
13. Stopping listening when failing to understand what a speaker is saying	3.57	.79	High
14. Getting nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker is saying	3.57	.53	High

The Retailing students reported that they experienced a high level of difficulty with 14 of the 20 items. The students found it difficult to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation, catching words with linking sounds, and understanding after only listening once ($M = 4.00$). They recognized that cultural differences made it difficult to understand jokes and spoken language without seeing the body language of the speaker ($M = 3.86$). The students experienced difficulty understanding a speaker with regional accents, such as an American, Australian or British accent speech spoken at a normal pace and they also recognized that it was difficult to guess the meaning from the context if they could not catch

every word, and that they also ($M = 3.71$). The students experienced difficulty with the following items, which had the same mean score of 3.57; they found it difficult to understand English spoken because of limitation of pronunciation and vocabulary. They also had problems understanding every word when listening to English speech, and got nervous, worried or stopped listening if they did not understand what a speaker was saying.

Table 6

The English Listening Problems of Computing Students ($n = 55$)

Problems	M	SD	Level of problem
1. Difficulty understanding every word when listening to English speech	3.98	4.12	High
2. Difficulty understanding a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent	3.78	.90	High
3. Difficulty understanding a speaker with poor pronunciation	3.69	.88	High
4. Difficulty understanding when a speaker speaks too quickly	3.65	.97	High
5. Difficulty catching words with linking sounds	3.62	1.01	High
6. Difficulty understanding English because of a limited understanding of grammar.	3.60	1.10	High

(continued)

Table 6

The English Listening Problems of Computing Students (n = 55) (continued)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
7. Difficulty understanding after listening only once	3.58	.88	High
8. Difficulty understanding jokes because of cultural differences	3.56	.90	High
9. Stop listening when failing to understand what a speakers is saying	3.53	1.02	High
10. Getting nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker is saying	3.53	.98	High

The Computing students reported that 10 out of 20 items were at a high level of difficulty with English listening. The students also realized that it was difficult for them to understand every word when listening to English speech ($M = 3.98$) and when a speaker had a regional accent, such as an American, Australian and British accent ($M = 3.78$). Moreover, they found that it was difficult to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation ($M = 3.69$) and when they spoke too quickly ($M = 3.65$). The students also recognized that it was difficult to catch words with linking sounds ($M = 3.62$). Additionally, their limited understanding of grammar made it difficult for them to understand spoken English ($M = 3.60$) and to understand after listening only once ($M = 3.58$). The issue of cultural differences also caused difficulty with understanding jokes ($M = 3.56$). The students were

nervous, worried, or stopped listening when they could not understand what a speaker was saying ($M = 3.53$)

Table 7

The English Listening Problems of Hospital Management Students ($n = 221$)

Problems	M	SD	Level of problem
1. Difficulty understanding after listening only once	3.75	.92	High
2. Difficulty understanding when a speaker speaks too quickly	3.71	.98	High
3. Difficulty understanding jokes because of cultural differences	3.71	.95	High
4. Difficulty understanding a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent	3.66	.93	High
5. Getting nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker is saying	3.65	.96	High
6. Difficulty understanding English because of a limited understanding of grammar	3.64	.99	High
7. Difficulty understanding a speaker with poor pronunciation	3.61	.97	High
8. Difficulty catching words with linking sounds	3.52	.85	High

The Hospital Management students reported 8 out of 20 items with a high level of problem with English listening. The mean score ranking was at 3.52 to 3.75. The students

realized that it was difficult to understand after listening only once ($M = 3.75$) and when a speaker spoke too quickly ($M = 3.71$), and also, cultural differences lead to difficulties understanding jokes. The student found it difficult to understand a speaker with regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent ($M = 3.66$). They were nervous and worried if they did not understand what a speaker was saying ($M = 3.65$) and their limited understanding of grammar made it difficult for them to understand spoken English ($M = 3.64$). They also recognized that it was difficult to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation ($M = 3.61$) and also catching words with linking sounds ($M = 3.52$)

Table 8

The English Listening Problems of English for Services Business Students (n = 40)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
Difficulty understanding a speaker with poor pronunciation	3.58	1.24	High

There was only 1 out of 20 items that the English for Services Business students reported a high level of difficulty. They also found it difficult for them to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation with a mean score of 3.58.

Speaking Problems

Research Question 2.

What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational in Bangkok, Thailand have with speaking English?

Results.

This part presents the problems private vocational students experience with English speaking. The participants were asked to rate each problem based on a five-point Likert scale: 5 for strong agreement, 4 for agreement, 3 for uncertainty, 2 for disagreement, and 1 for strong disagreement.

The results only showed the items that were rated at a high and a very high level of difficulty. The results of the English speaking problems of participants from all five majors are shown below in Table 9.

Table 9

The English Speaking Problems Experienced by Private Vocational Students (N = 356)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
1. Difficulty speaking English as fluently as a native speaker	3.63	1.01	High
2. Stopping speaking English when cannot clearly express ideas	3.54	1.00	High
3. Avoiding speaking English in front of friend for fear of making mistakes	3.54	.99	High
4. Difficulty speaking English with the correct intonation	3.52	.96	High

(continued)

Table 9

The English Speaking Problems Experienced by Private Vocational Students (N = 356)

(continued)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
5. Forgetting to say the final sound of each word	3.52	.93	High
6. Getting nervous and worried when speaking to foreigners	3.51	.97	High
7. Speaking slowly when translating from Thai to English	3.50	.99	High

There were 7 of 20 items that the students reported a high level of problems with in all five majors. The students found it difficult to speak fluently as a native speaker ($M = 3.63$). The students stopped speaking English when they could not clearly express their ideas and did not want to make mistakes when speaking English in front of their friends ($M = 3.54$). They realized that it was difficult to speak English with correct intonation and they always forgot to say the final sound of each word ($M = 3.52$). They got nervous and worried when speaking English to foreigners ($M = 3.51$). The students recognized that spoke slowly because they frequently translated from Thai to English ($M = 3.50$).

In terms of English speaking problems from each major, the results are shown in following tables:

Table 10

The English Speaking Problems of Accounting Students (n = 40)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
1. Difficulty speaking English as fluently as a native speaker	3.78	.80	High
2. Speaking slowly when translating from Thai to English	3.73	.91	High
3. Avoiding speaking English in front of friend for fear of making mistakes	3.73	.78	High
4. Difficulty speaking English because of limited understanding of grammar	3.68	.83	High
5. Difficulty speaking English because of a limited vocabulary	3.63	.84	High
6. Difficulty speaking English in complete sentences	3.63	.87	High
7. Difficulty speaking English with the correct intonation	3.63	.84	High
8. Being afraid that other people will laugh if they make mistakes when speaking	3.63	.74	High
9. Losing self-confidence when mistakes are always corrected by someone else	3.60	.78	High
10. Forgetting to say the final sound of each word	3.58	.64	High
11. Being afraid of speaking English to foreigners because of poor pronunciation	3.53	.93	High
12. Difficulty concentrating without knowing how to say something in English	3.53	.69	High

There were 12 out of 20 items that the Accounting students experienced a high level of problem and the mean score ranking was from 3.53 to 3.78. The students found it difficult to speak fluently as a native speaker ($M = 3.78$). They also spoke slowly because they frequently translated from Thai to English and did not want to make mistakes while speaking in front of their friends ($M = 3.73$). It was difficult for them to speak English because of their limitation of understanding in grammar ($M = 3.68$). The students reported that it was difficult to speak English because of their limited vocabulary, speaking English in complete sentence and correct intonation, and they were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English ($M = 3.63$). The students reported that they lost confidence when someone corrected their mistakes ($M = 3.60$) and they frequently forgot to say the final sound of each word ($M = 3.58$). They also found it difficult to speak to foreigners because they were afraid that their pronunciation would not be understood and it was difficult to concentrate if they did not know how to say something in English ($M = 3.53$).

Table 11

The English Speaking Problems of Retailing Students (n = 7)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
1. Difficulty speaking English as fluently as a native speaker	4.00	.58	High
2. Stopping speaking English when they cannot clearly express ideas	3.86	1.21	High
3. Getting nervous and worried when speaking to foreigners	3.86	.90	High
4. Frustration due to practicing English with students whose English ability was below theirs	3.71	1.11	High
5. Losing self-confidence when mistakes are corrected by someone else	3.71	.95	High
6. Avoiding speaking English in front of friends for fear of making mistakes	3.71	.76	High
7. Being afraid that other people will laugh if they make mistakes when speaking English	3.71	.76	High
8. Difficulty speaking English because of limited pronunciation skills	3.57	.98	High
9. Difficulty speaking English because of limited vocabulary	3.57	.98	High
10. Difficulty speaking English because of a limited understanding of grammar	3.57	.53	High

There were 10 out of 20 items that the Retailing students experienced a high level of problem and their mean score ranking was from 3.57 to 4.00. The students found it difficult to speak fluently as a native speaker ($M = 4.00$), they stopped speaking when they could not clearly express their ideas and they were nervous and worried when speaking to foreigners ($M = 3.86$). The students found it frustrating to practice speaking English with someone whose English ability was below their own, they lost self-confidence when frequently corrected by someone else, they did not want to make mistakes when speaking English in front of their friends, and were afraid that people would laugh at them if they made mistakes when speaking English, were all rated at the same mean score of 3.71. In addition, these students reported difficulty speaking English because of a limited understanding of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary at the same mean score of 3.57.

Table 12

The English Speaking Problems of Computing Students ($n = 55$)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
1. Being afraid of speaking English to foreigners because of poor pronunciation	4.15	5.54	High
2. Difficulty speaking in complete sentences	3.67	.79	High
3. Difficulty speaking English as fluently as native speakers	3.65	.91	High
4. Difficulty speaking English because of limited pronunciation skills	3.64	.99	High

(continued)

Table 12

The English Speaking Problems of Computing Students (n = 55) (continued)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
5. Difficulty pronouncing some consonant clusters correctly, e.g. <i>sh</i> , <i>ch</i> , and <i>thr</i> .	3.61	1.00	High
6. Forgetting to say the final sound of each word	3.60	.95	High
7. Getting nervous and worried when speaking to foreigners	3.56	.92	High
8. Speaking slowly when translating from Thai to English	3.55	.86	High

The Computing students reported a high level of problem with 8 out of 20 items and the mean score ranking was from 3.55 to 4.15. The students were afraid of speaking English to foreigners because of their poor pronunciation ($M = 4.15$). The students found it difficult to speak in complete sentences ($M = 3.67$) or to speak as fluently as a native speaker ($M = 3.65$). The students also reported difficulty speaking English because of their limited pronunciation skills ($M = 3.64$), and they found it difficult to pronounce some words that started with consonant clusters such as *sh*, *ch* and *thr* ($M = 3.61$). The students also frequently forgot to say the final sound of each word ($M = 3.60$), got nervous or worried when speaking to foreigners ($M = 3.56$), and they spoke English slowly because they frequently translated from Thai to English ($M = 3.55$).

Table 13

The English Speaking Problems of Hospital Management Students (n = 221)

Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
1. Speaking slowly when translating from Thai to English	3.85	3.94	High
2. Difficulty speaking English as fluently as a native speaker	3.64	1.00	High
3. Avoiding speaking English in front of friends for fear of making mistakes	3.63	.95	High
4. Getting nervous and worried when speaking to foreigners	3.61	.95	High
5. Difficulty speaking English with the correct intonation	3.56	.94	High
6. Being afraid that other people will laugh if they make mistakes when speaking	3.55	.94	High
7. Forgetting to say the final sound of each word	3.54	.91	High

The Hospital Management students reported a high level of problems with 7 out of 20 items. The students reported that they spoke slowly when translating from Thai to English ($M = 3.85$), that they found it difficult to speak English as fluently as a native speaker ($M = 3.64$), they did not want to make mistakes when speaking English in front of their friends ($M = 3.63$), and they got nervous and worried when speaking to foreigners ($M = 3.61$). They also experienced difficulty speaking English with the correct intonation ($M = 3.65$), they were afraid that people would laugh at them if they made mistakes when speaking English ($M = 3.55$), and frequently forget to say the final sound of each word ($M = 3.54$).

The English for Services Business students were the only major that did not report any problems with speaking English. As there were no items rated at a high level of difficult, the results was no shown here.

Causes of English Listening and Speaking Problems

Research Question 3.

What were the main causes of the English listening and speaking problems experienced by students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand?

Results.

This part presents the causes of English problems experienced by private vocational students with English listening and speaking. The participants were asked to rate each problem based on a five-point Likert scale: 5 for strong agreement, 4 for agreement, 3 for uncertainty, 2 for disagreement, and 1 for strong disagreement. The results only showed that only one item was rated at a high or a very high level of difficulty.

The results revealed that overall there was no single cause of English listening and speaking problems that were rated at a high level by all five majors. However, there were some causes of problems that were rated at a high level of difficulty by each major. The following causes of English listening and speaking problems were rated by major and caused by the following factors: the influence of the English teacher, the attitude and motivation of the students, the classroom environment, and their level of exposure to English. The results of causes of English listening and speaking rated as high level from each major were presented in Table 14.

Table 14

The Causes of English Listening and Speaking Problems of Each Major (N = 356)

Major	Causes of problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level of problem
English Teachers:				
Computing (<i>n</i> = 55)	Teachers do not use multimedia to support teaching English listening and speaking	3.55	.90	High
	Teachers always ask the students with the best English skills the most questions	3.51	.74	High
Students' attitude:				
Computing (<i>n</i> = 55)	Learning English with teacher is better than independent study	3.56	.94	High
Students' motivation:				
Accounting (<i>n</i> = 40)	Enjoy speaking English but lack	3.67	1.03	High
and Computing (<i>n</i> = 55)	confident when speaking	3.58	.99	High

(continued)

Table 14

The Causes of English Listening and Speaking Problems of each major (continued)

Major	Causes of problems	M	SD	Level of problem
Classroom Environment:				
English for Services	The teaching aids in the classroom	3.80	1.29	High
Business (n = 40)	are ineffective.	3.62	1.15	
and Computing	The classroom is too hot to	3.53	1.43	High
(n = 55)	concentrate.	3.62	.93	
English Exposure:				
Computing (n = 55)	No foreign friends to practice speaking English with	3.56	1.08	High

English teachers.

The Computing students were the only group that reported that their English teachers were the cause of their English listening and speaking problems. There only rated two items at a high level of problems of English teacher. The Computing students reported that their teacher did not use multimedia to support teaching listening and speaking ($M = 3.55$) and that their teachers asked the students with the best English skills the most questions ($M = 3.51$).

The attitudes of the students.

The cause of the attitude of the students was only found among the Computing students and there was only one item rated at a high level. The results showed that students thought that learning English with teachers was better than independent study ($M = 3.56$).

The motivation of the students.

There was only one item rated at a high level of difficulty by the Accounting and Computing students and the following table shows the English listening and speaking problems experienced by these major groups. The Accounting students reported that they enjoyed speaking English, but they lacked confidence ($M = 3.67$). The Computing students identified the same causes as the Accounting students, that they enjoyed speaking English but lacked confidence when speaking English ($M = 3.58$)

Classroom environment.

There were two items regarding the classroom environment as a cause of English listening and speaking problems. The two items that were rated at a high level of classroom environment problems by Computing and English for Services Business students. The English for Service Business students reported that the teaching aids in the classroom, such as microphones, computers, and projectors were ineffective ($M = 3.80$) and that the classroom was too hot for them to concentrate properly ($M = 3.53$). The Computing students reported that the teaching aids in the classroom, such as microphones, computers, and projectors were ineffective, and that the classroom was too hot for them to concentrate properly at the same mean score of 3.62.

English exposure.

Only the Computing students reported a high level of English exposure problems, as presented in the following table. There was only Computing students rated English exposure as a high level. The students reported that they do not have friends to practice speaking English with ($M = 3.56$)

The Summary of the Results

It was found that there were 8 items regarding English listening problems that the students rated at a high level of problem. The listening problem that the students rated as the most difficult was to understand speakers with regional accents, such as an American, Australian or British accent. The second most difficult listening problem was to understand a speaker who speaks too quickly, the third was to understand after only listening only once. The fourth and fifth most difficult listening problems were to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation, and difficulty understanding jokes because of cultural differences. The sixth and seventh most difficult listening problems were a difficulty understanding English because of a limited understanding of grammar and getting nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker was saying. The final listening problem experienced by these students was difficulty understanding spoken English because of a limited vocabulary.

In term of speaking problems, there were 7 out of 20 items rated as high level. The speaking problem that the students rated as the most difficult was speaking English with the correct intonation. The second most difficult speaking problem was speaking English as fluently as a native speaker, and the third was frustration with practicing English with students whose English ability was below theirs. The fourth and fifth most difficult speaking problems were avoiding speaking English in front of friends for fear of making mistakes, and forgetting to say the final sounds of words. The sixth and seventh most difficult problems were difficulty speaking English because of a limited understanding of grammar, and getting nervous or worried when speaking English with foreigners. The final speaking problem experienced by these students was fear of people laughing at them because of the mistakes

they may make while speaking, which indicates a low level of confidence among these students regarding their English ability.

In term of causes of English listening and speaking problems, there was no item rated as high level of problems. It can be revealed that students were satisfied with their English teacher and they had good attitude and motivation toward English.



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter contains three main sections: a discussion, recommendations for further studies, and conclusion. The details are as follows:

Discussion

Research Question 1.

What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand have with listening to English?

Results.

This study investigated English listening problems of the third-year students at a private vocational school in Bangkok. There were 20 items, all in the form of negative sentences. There were 8 items regarding English listening problems that the students rated at a high level of problem. The listening problem that the students rated as the most difficult was to understand speakers with regional accents, such as an American, Australian or British accent. The second most difficult listening problem was to understand a speaker who speaks too quickly, the third was to understand after only listening only once. The fourth and fifth most difficult listening problems were to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation, and difficulty understanding jokes because of cultural differences. The sixth and seventh most difficult listening problems were a difficulty understanding English because of a limited understanding of grammar and getting nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker was saying. The final listening problem experienced by these students was difficulty understanding spoken English because of a limited vocabulary.

Discussion.

The participants reported that it was difficult for them to understand a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, Australian or British accent. It can be assumed that listening to speakers with a variety of national and regional accents was difficult for these students. Listeners may encounter a wide variety accents among native speakers and this may cause misunderstandings as the students find it difficult to comprehend the message and respond correctly or effectively.

The second most difficult problem reported by the students was a failure to understand when the speaker spoke too quickly. It is impossible for the listener to control the speed of the voice of a speaker from an uncontrolled source. Many English language learners claim that the greatest difficulty they experienced with listening comprehension was the inability to control the speed of the speaker (Underwood, 1989). In addition, the findings of Tilahun (2008) revealed that first year English major students at Bahir Du University in Ethiopia experienced the most difficulty in terms of English listening problems with pronunciation and rapid delivery. It is difficult for English learners to understand a message well if a speaker speaks too quickly. When listeners, especially EFL learners, try to catch every word, they miss other parts and cannot grasp the main idea of what they have been listening to.

Many EFL learners experience difficulty understanding English after only listening to something once. When learners listen to an uncontrolled source, such as radio or television, they cannot ask for repetition. It is very difficult for listeners to understand after only listening once, especially if they are not in the position to ask for repetition (Underwood,

1998). Listeners may also become bored in this situation, which may lead to decreased motivation and impair the development of their listening ability.

It is also difficult to understand a speaker with poor pronunciation. If a speaker pronounces a word incorrectly, the listeners may misinterpret their message, such as the speaker says “I need cash,” but the listener mishears it as “I need cats.” Communication problems may occur if the listener is only able to understand accurate or standard English pronunciation.

A difficulty understanding jokes because of cultural differences occurs anywhere that English is spoken as a second or a foreign language. This difficulty can be overcome by sharing mutual knowledge and using a common context in order to make communication easier. Even if listeners can understand the surface meaning of text, they may have considerable difficulties in comprehending the whole meaning of the passage, unless they are familiar with the context (Underwood, 1998).

A difficulty understanding English because of a limited understanding of grammar is one of the main causes of listening problems. There are a lot of grammatical rules in the English language, so it is difficult for learners to understand and use grammar correctly. If a listener has a limited understanding of grammar, they may also have listening comprehension problems. Another common experience among learners is becoming nervous and worried when failing to understand what a speaker is saying. Listeners become frustrated when they fail to understand something and this leads to demotivation and boredom, which may lead to low grades or failure on listening exams.

A difficulty understanding spoken English because of a limited vocabulary is another significant and common listening problem experienced by EFL learners. If a speaker uses

words that a listener is unfamiliar with, the listener may stop to think about the meaning of the unknown word and miss the next part of the speech (Underwood, 1989).

Research Question 2.

What problems did students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational in Bangkok, Thailand have with speaking English?

Results.

The speaking problem that the students rated as the most difficult was speaking English with the correct intonation. The second most difficult speaking problem was speaking English as fluently as a native speaker, and the third was frustration with practicing English with students whose English ability was below theirs. The fourth and fifth most difficult speaking problems were avoiding speaking English in front of friends for fear of making mistakes, and forgetting to say the final sounds of words. The sixth and seventh most difficult problems were difficulty speaking English because of a limited understanding of grammar, and getting nervous or worried when speaking English with foreigners. The final speaking problem experienced by these students was fear of people laughing at them because of the mistakes they may make while speaking, which indicates a low level of confidence among these students regarding their English ability.

Discussion.

The problem that these students rated as the most difficult, speaking English with the correct intonation is a common experience for EFL learners. As good intonation makes speech sound smooth as well as easy to understand, EFL learners should be taught by native speakers in order to model their intonation on authentic English speech. However, there are many students who have limited or no access to practice speaking with a native English

speaker. Unless students have the opportunity to hear a native speaker, they will be unable to recognize correct English intonation.

The second most difficult problem was speaking English as fluently as a native speaker, another common experience among EFL learners. All English learners wish to speak English as fluently as a native speaker, and depending on their background, attitude and motivation, they may achieve this goal. If a learner has a good attitude, a high level of motivation and enjoys learning English, their performance is likely to improve. On the other hand, learners who have a poor attitude, a low level of motivation and do not enjoy studying English have a low probability of success or improvement. The latter type of students may feel that speaking English as fluently as a native speaker is beyond them.

The third most common problem, the frustration experienced by students who have to practice English with students whose English skills are below theirs, are common in a language classroom where the students have different levels of English ability. Many Thai students only have the opportunity to practice English in a classroom setting. As teachers usually assign pair work and group work in class, students can only practice with students with similar levels of English proficiency. This problem is exacerbated if students have to work with students with a lower level of English proficiency. This can also lead to students with higher English proficiency becoming frustrated that they are unable to communicate with learners at a similar or a higher level and that their ability to improve their speaking ability through peer practice will be impaired.

The fourth most common English problem, avoiding speaking English in front of friends for fear of making mistakes, was experienced by shy students who lacked confidence in their speaking skills. The results revealed that many of the participants had inhibitions

about speaking that impaired their ability to speak English effectively. These students worried too much about making mistakes and had a fear that people would laugh at them if they failed to speak English correctly. This may be due to the fact that they may have had bad experiences learning English, they may have been laughed at by their peers because of their poor pronunciation or they may have had a teacher who placed too much emphasis on speaking grammatically correct English. As a result, these students found it difficult to improve their English because of their own fears and inhibitions about speaking.

The fifth most common English speaking problem, forgetting to say the final sound of each word, is a significant problem for Thai students. In the English language, final sounds play a key role in conveying the meaning of certain words. There is no equivalent in the Thai language, so Thai students are unfamiliar with saying the final sound of individual words in English. This could be the fault of teachers who did not pay enough attention to the final sounds of individual words or did not let them practice speaking English. These problems are caused by the inability of the listener to accurately differentiate the final sounds of individual words. The students are aware that they should say final sound of each word, but a lack of pronunciation practice may be the cause of this problem.

The sixth most common English problem, difficulty speaking English because of a limited understanding of grammar, is another significant problem for Thai students. Students experience a high level of difficulty speaking English according to the grammatical rules. This is especially true for less successful English learners. As Thai teachers typically focus on teaching grammar, Thai students have accordingly developed the habit of placing a lot of emphasis on producing grammatically correct speech. A limited understanding of grammar makes it difficult for a student to speak English. These students are sometimes unable to

convey messages to others because of grammatical errors, as errors involving tenses, modifiers, subject-verb agreement, and the active and the passive voice. An inability to speak with correct grammar can be considered one of the significant barriers to efficient communication.

The penultimate problem for learners, becoming nervous and worried when speaking to foreigners, is a common problem among learners with limited opportunities to speak English with foreigners. As a result of low self-confidence, these learners are generally too shy to speak English with native speakers. Their anxiety is based on the fact that if they speak to foreigners, they will not be understood or misunderstood because of their limited English skills. On the other hand, if they dare to speak English with foreigners, they may learn to speak faster as they have had a chance to practice with a native speaker.

The final problem, the fear of being laughed at for making mistakes, is another typical experience of learners who are too shy or inhibited to speak English. Learners who are shy and inhibited worry more about their ability to use the language effectively. This anxiety may lead them to be less willing to participate in practice speaking activities. This trait can lead to a failure to make progress in speaking English. If a student is too shy, they may not take the necessary risks that are required to practice their English and ultimately, to enhance their English speaking ability.

Research Question 3.

What were the main causes of the English listening and speaking problems experienced by students studying in the second semester of the academic year 2011 at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand?

Results.

Overall, there were no items that the students rated at a high level of problem. The results of the study revealed that students were satisfied with both their English teachers and the classroom environment. The results also indicated that students had a good attitude and a high level of motivation as they were aware of the importance of English in terms of their careers as well as being a part of their daily lives. They also reported that they tried to gain exposure to and learn English independently.

Discussion.

Although there were no items that were rated at a high level of problems, there were some items that some majors experienced difficulty with, such as the fact that their English teachers did not use multimedia to support listening and speaking learning activities. These students also claimed that they preferred studying with a teacher to independent study. It can be assumed that they do not spend much time gaining exposure to English or learning English independently. They also reported that while they enjoyed speaking English, they also lacked confidence in their own ability. This may be due to a lack of speaking practice, which in turn leads to a lack of confidence in their English skills in general and their speaking ability in particular.

In terms of the classroom environment, the students reported that the teaching aids such as microphone, computers and projectors were ineffective. Teachers had difficulty using these aids, which led to the students becoming bored. In terms of their exposure to English, the students reported that they did not know any native speakers they could practice speaking English with. This indicates that students believe that if they can improve their speech, they will have more opportunities to practice speaking English with foreigners, which will

ultimately make them more comfortable speaking with other EFL students and native speakers.

Implications of the Study

According to the results, students experienced various problems with English listening and speaking. These problems are caused by students themselves as well as teachers. For example, their fear of making mistakes prevents them from practicing speaking English so they have less opportunity to be exposed to English. Their English teachers did not use multimedia to support listening and speaking learning activities. The teachers of this private vocational school should make the most positive drives of learners and enhance their listening and speaking abilities in order to help them to be effective English learners. The implications of this study are as follows:

For students, it is very important for them to have positive attitudes toward learning English language. The whole learning process would be much easier. Students should not be shy to make mistakes as they should understand that making mistakes is a part of learning process. They should spend their time as much as possible to be exposed to English. This is very important because it can help them to improve their English by experiencing the real situation. For example, they can do activities to be exposed to English such as listening to English songs, watching English movies, and having foreign friends to practice speaking English with. The more they are exposed to English the more they learn and improve their English language.

For teachers, they should be able to do something beyond teaching tasks and if teachers can make a good relationship with students it would be easier to read their mind and interest to reach teaching goal. As teachers know that when teaching any class, the mood of students

has a great effect on success of the lesson. Teachers should create a warm and supportive environment to help students feel comfortable to study English. Teachers need to make class enjoyable so students enjoy learning English and find ways to help students to become more extroverted by trying to get them involved classroom activities as much as possible. Teacher might arrange activities that students can use English language in real context. For example, arranging field trip to some tourist attraction spots like The Grand Palace, Khaosan Road, and assign them to interview the foreigners, so students have opportunities to use their English in real life situations. Good teachers do not force knowledge onto their students but impart it to them.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study only investigated the English listening and speaking of the third-year students studying at a private vocational school in Bangkok. In order to gain deeper and clearer data about the problems these students experienced with English listening and speaking and causes of these problems, other researcher should replicate this study again in order to gain wider findings. A study with students from different levels or universities should be conducted in order to compare the results, which may lead to improved EFL learning in Thailand. Additionally, English listening and speaking strategies should be investigated by schools, colleges, university, and companies. These organizations can also evaluate the English listening and speaking skills of students and help them to hone their skills with the materials and equipment required to improve their English skills.

In conclusion, to solve their English listening and speaking problems, language learners should first be able to analyze their own listening and speaking problems. Then, they are

able to apply or implement a variety of listening and speaking strategies to solve their problems and enhance their language ability.

Conclusion

This study attempted to investigate the English listening and speaking problems and the causes of these problems among private vocational students in Bangkok. The instrument used for collecting data in this study was a questionnaire composed for four parts: the first part was concerned with the general background information of the participants, the second part dealt with problems with English listening, the third with problems with English speaking, and the last part was about the causes of English listening and speaking problems. The participants of this study consisted of 372 students, from all five majors, all in their third year of the Vocational Certificate in Semester 2 of 2011. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed to identify English listening and speaking problems as well as the causes of these problems among students at a private vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand.

REFERENCES



REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2002). *Principles of language learning and teaching (4th addition)* New Jersey: Prentice – Hall. San Francisco State University.
- Chaiyakosi, T. (2004). *The problems and needs in learning technical English of industrial technology, Bangkok technical campus.* (Unpublished master's project). Srinakharinwirote University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Chonprakay, S. (2009). *An investigation of listening problems of Thai undergraduate students.* (Un published master's project), King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand.
- Grant N. (1987). *Making the most of your textbook.* London New York: Long man.
- Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching (3rd impression, 1992)*, English, Longman.
- Holt, J. N. (2011). *Motivation as a contributing factor in second language acquisition.* The TESL Journal. 7(6) Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Noris-Motivation.htm>
- Likert, R. (1932). *A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes, Issue 140 Archives of Psychology*, Paris: The University of Western Ontario.
- Lui, M. (2007). Anxiety in oral English classroom: A case study in China. Department of Foreign Language. Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(1), 119-137. Retrieved from <http://www.indonesianjelt.org/>
- Lunpraphan, S. (2004). *A study on problems in learning English of diploma in vocational education students at ST. Joan of ARC's technology school.* (Unpublished master thesis). Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Lordasa, P. (2007). *A survey study of the role of attitudes and motivation in learning English*.

(Unpublished master's project). Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Ministry Of Education. (2002). *Basic education curriculum B.E. 2544 (A.D. 2001)*.

Bangkok: The Express Transportation Organization of Thailand.

Ministry of Education, (2005). *Towards a learning society in Thailand – Developing language*

and communication skills. Retrieved, from Ministry of Education

http://www.bic.moe.go.th/fileadmin/BIC_Document/book/MOEleaflet/langaugecommunication.pdf

Ministry of Education. (2008). *Towards a learning society in Thailand – An introduction to Education in Thailand*. Retrieved from Ministry of Education.

http://www.bic.moe.go.th/fileadmin/BIC_Document/book/intro-ed08.pdf

Mokkarawut, S. (2006). *An investigation of factors affecting English speaking*: (Unpublished case study). King Mongkut's institute of Technology North Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand.

Muangmood, Y. (2005). *Factors effecting entering students' ability to speak English*.

(Unpublished research paper), Ayutthaya: Rajamangalar University of Technology Suvanabhumi Phranakhon Si Ayuthaya Wasukri campus. Ayuthaya, Thailand.

Nunan, D., & Miller, L. (Eds.). (1995). Alexandria, Va. : Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.,

Onkao, J. (2009). *A survey study of the factors affecting learning to speak English of the employees at Star Microelectronic (Public) Co.,Ltd.* (Unpublished Master's research paper), Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Rubin, J., & Thompson, I. (1994). *How to be more successful language learner*. USA: Heinle.

Sesnan, B. (1997). *How to teach English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Sirilukkananan, K. (2007). *A survey study of the attitudes of nursing students at Saint Louis College concerning the need and problems in English communication*. (Unpublished master of Arts degree). Naresuan University, Thailand.
- Tanveer, M. (2007). *Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learning in speaking skills and the influence it cats on communication in the target language*. (Unpublished master of education in English language teaching Pathway M.Ed. ELT Pathway). University of Glasgow, Scotland.
- Thanakorn, P. (2007). *English speaking problems of staff members at SME bank*.(Unpublished independent study). Naresuan University, Thailand
- Tilahun, T. (2008). *Factors that contribute to the problems EFL learners face in the listening skills classroom*. Institute of Language Studies Department of Foreign Language and Literature. Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.
- Toolsiri, T. (2005). *A survey study of the problems in learning to speak English of second –year students, Business English program at North Bangkok College*. (Unpublished Master’s research paper). Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Underwood, M. (1998). *Teaching listening*. London and New York. Longman.
- Wanchid, R. (2003). *Attitudes towards speaking English at work. A case study of the employees of OMG Metal (Thailand) Col,Ltd*. (Unpublished case study). King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology North Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Wanthanasut, L. (2008). *The problems of English speaking of Mattayom Suksa 1 students at Phosai Pittayakarn school, Ubonrachathani Educational Service Area 2*. (Unpublised master’s thesis). Ubonrachathani Rajabhat University, Ubonrachthani, Thailand.

- Xiugin, Z. (2006). Speaking skills and anxiety. Yanshan University. *CELEA Journal Bimonthly*, 29(1) 34-39. Retrieved from <http://www.celea.org.calteic/65/65-34pdf>
- Yan, S. (2005). *Effects of anxiety on listening performance and suggestions for improving listening teaching*. Shandong University of Science and Technology, China *CELEA Journal Bimonthly*, 28(1) 11-17. Retrieved from <http://www.celea.org.cn/teic/59/59-11pdf>
- Yanling, Z. & Guizhen, J. (2006). *Anxiety in foreign language classroom*. Shanxi University of Finance and Economy, China. *CELEA Journal Bimonthly*. 29(6) 96-103. Retrieved from <http://www.celea.org.cn/teic/70/70-96>





Appendix

Questionnaire of English Listening and Speaking and Causes of these Problems of
Students Studying at a Private Vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand

Questionnaire of English Listening and Speaking and Causes of these Problems of
Students Studying at a Private Vocational school in Bangkok, Thailand

This questionnaire is designed to survey the problems experienced by third-year vocational students in Bangkok related to English listening and speaking skills. The answers will be analyzed in order to improve the methods used to teach English listening and speaking skills. This questionnaire is a part of a research study in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Srinakharinwirot University.

All of the information provided will be kept in the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purposes of this research. I would like to thank you for your cooperation in answering this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is divided in to 4 parts.

- Part I: The Students' General Background Information
- Part II The Students' Problems with English Listening
- Part III The Students' Problems with English Speaking
- Part IV The Causes of Problems with English Listening and Speaking

Part I: The students' general background information

Directions: Please fill your personal information in blank provided.

1. Your major:
2. You have been studying English foryears.
3. Your GPA:

Part II: Students' problems with English listening

Directions: Please put (✓) to show how much you agree with each of the following items.

- Note: 5 – Strongly agree
 4 – Agree
 3 – Uncertain
 2 – Disagree
 1 – Strongly disagree

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Problems with English Listening					
1. I am nervous when I listen to English.					
2. I find it difficult to listen to speakers who do not open their mouths widely.					
3. I find it difficult to understand some idioms when I listen to English.					
4. I find it difficult to understand joking because of the different of culture.					
5. I find it difficult to understand speakers with dialect language.					
6. I find it difficult to understand English because of my limited pronunciation.					

(continued)

Part II: Students' problems with English listening (continued)

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Problems with English Listening					
7. I find it difficult to understand spoken English because of my limited vocabulary.					
8. I find it difficult to understand spoken English because of my limited understanding of grammar.					
9. It is difficult for me to understand every word when listening to English speech.					
10. If I cannot catch every word, it is difficult for me to guess the meaning from the context.					
11. If I do not understand what speaker is saying, I find it difficult to concentrate.					
12. I find it difficult to understand a native speaker speaking at a normal pace (i.e. on the radio or TV)					
13. I find it difficult to understand when a speaker speaks too quickly.					
14. I find it difficult to understand a speaker with a regional accent, such as an American, British or Australian accent.					
15. I find it difficult to understand a speaker with bad pronunciation.					

(continued)

Students' problems with English listening (continued)

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Problems with English Listening					
16. I find it difficult to catch words with linking sounds.					
17. I find it difficult to understand without seeing the speaker's body language.					
18. I find it difficult to understand after listening only once.					
19. I get nervous and worried when I do not understand what a speaker is saying.					
20. I stop listening when I do not understand what a speaker is saying.					

Part III: Students' Problems with English Speaking

Directions: Please put a (√) in the box to show how much you agree with each of following item.

- Note: 5 – Strongly agree
- 4 – Agree
- 3 – Uncertain
- 2 – Disagree
- 1 – Strongly disagree

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Problems with English Speaking					
1. I find speaking English very difficult.					
2. I am too shy to speak English.					
3. I find speaking English is difficult because of my limited pronunciation.					
4. I always forget to say a final sound of each word.					
5. I find it difficult to pronounce some words correctly for example <i>sh</i> , <i>ch</i> , and <i>thr</i> .					
6. If someone laughs at me while I am speaking English, I do not want to continue my speech.					
7. I find it difficult to speak English because of my limited vocabulary.					
8. I find it difficult to speak English because of my limited understanding of grammar.					
9. It is difficult for me to speak in complete sentences.					
10. I speak slowly because I always translate from Thai to English before I speak English.					
11. If I do not know how to say something in English, I find it difficult to concentrate.					

(continued)

Students' Problems with English Speaking (continued)

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Problems with English Speaking					
12. I am afraid to speak to foreigners because I think they will not understand my pronunciation.					
13. I want to speak as fluently as a native speaker but I find it difficult.					
14. I find it difficult to speak English with the correct intonation.					
15. I do not want to make mistakes while speaking English in front of my friends.					
16. I am afraid that people will laugh at me if I make mistakes while speaking English.					
17. I lose my self confidence when I make mistakes and someone corrects my English.					
18. I find it too frustrating to practice speaking English with friends whose English ability is below mine.					
19 I get nervous and worried when I speak to foreigners.					
20. I stop speaking when I cannot clearly express my ideas.					

Part IV: Causes of Problems with English Listening and Speaking

Directions: Please put a (✓) in the box to show how much you agree with each of following item.

- Note: 5 – Strongly agree
 4 – Agree
 3 – Uncertain
 2 – Disagree
 1 – Strongly disagree

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
English teacher					
1. My English teachers do not speak English in the classroom.					
2. My English teachers do not speak English clearly or with good pronunciation.					
3. My English teachers do not encourage me to speak English.					
4 My teachers always ask student whose English is good.					
5. My teachers treat students not equally in the class.					
6. My English teachers do not listen to me or answer my questions.					
7. My teachers do not have patient to wait for my answer.					
8. My English teachers do not use games and songs to motivate listening and speaking practice.					

(continued)

Causes of Problems with English Listening and Speaking (continued)

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
English teacher					
9. My teachers do not use multimedia to support activities in teaching listening and speaking.					
10. My English teachers do not give clear instructions before starting an activity.					
Student's attitude					
1. English is not important for communication in my daily life.					
2. English does not give me opportunities to gain more knowledge.					
3. I do not need to use English to make friends from other countries.					
4. I still can find a good job even though my English is not that good.					
5. I have not enjoyed learning English since I first started.					
6. Learning English with a teacher is better than independent study.					

(continued)

Causes of Problems with English Listening and Speaking (continued)

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Students' motivation					
1. I do not enjoy speaking English with my classmates because we cannot speak English very well.					
2. I am not certain that I can get a good grade even if I listen and speak effectively in the classroom.					
3. I like English, but I lack confidence when I speak.					
4. I am too shy to practice listening and speaking with my foreign friends because I am afraid that they will laugh at me.					
5. I am not sure if speaking English will ensure a good career in the future.					
Classroom environment					
1. I am too shy to speak English in front of my classmates.					
2. I am too shy to answer any question in my classroom.					
3. If my classmates do not pay attention to the activities in the class, I do not pay attention either.					
4. If the class is noisy during a listening activity, I do not pay much attention.					
5. If the classroom is too large, I find it difficult to participate in listening and speaking activities.					
6. It is too hot in the classroom to concentrate properly.					
7. The teaching aids in the classroom, such as the microphone, computer, and projector, are ineffective.					

(continued)

Causes of Problems with English Listening and Speaking (continued)

Description	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
English exposure					
1. I hardly ever speak English with my teachers or classmates.					
2. I do not have foreign friends to practice speaking English with.					
3. I do not like watching English language movies.					
4. I do not like listening to English language songs.					
6. I do not like to watch English language TV programs.					
7 There no one in my family I can practice speaking English with.					



VITAE

Name: Miss Nualsri Khamprated

Date of Birth: April 26, 1982

Place of Birth: Nakornpanom

Address: 46 Moo 10 Banphonchan Subdistrict Phonsawan District,
Nakornpanom 48190

Educational Background:

2012	Master of Arts (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok
2000	Bachelor of Arts (English) Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, Bangkok

