

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The study of relationship between overall English achievement and English listening achievement of 7th graders aimed to investigate the extent of the students' overall English listening achievement, the extent of the students' English listening achievement in the four listening types, and the relationship between students' overall English achievement, based on the NT score in English, and their English listening achievement. The research subjects were 168 seventh graders in the academic year 2006 at Sa School, Nan Province. The research instrument, the English listening test, was designed by the researcher. The data were collected on 12 - 17 March, 2007. The Computerized Program, percentage, arithmetic mean, and Pearson correlation coefficient, was used to analyze the collected data. Summary and discussions of the findings, implementation and suggestion as well as recommendations for further studies were presented respectively.

Summary of the Findings

1. The students' overall English listening achievement was 73.88 percent. The result revealed that students' English listening achievement was at a good level.
2. The students' listening achievement to sentences was 89.17 percent, which was at an excellent level. The students' listening achievement to the meaning of signs was 85.71 percent, which was at an excellent level. The students' listening achievement to monologues was 75.83 percent, which was at a good level. The students' listening achievement to conversations was 60.06 percent, which was at a moderate level. In conclusion, the students' highest listening achievement was listening to sentences; the lowest was listening to conversations.
3. The Pearson correlation coefficient of the relationship between students' overall English achievement, based on the NT score in English, and their English listening achievement was .21. It means there was a positive relationship between these two variables at the 0.01 level.

Discussions of the Findings

From the results obtained, three discussions from the study were presented as follows:

First, students' overall English listening achievement was at a good level, based on the listening criterion benchmark (Wongsothorn, 2001, as cited in Sreejai, 2004, p. 48). This result was inconsistent with the former studies, for example, (Sukamson, 1989 as cited in Wongsothorn, 1993), (Cheevacharoenkul, 1980, and Mitipat, 1979 as cited in Cheevacharoenkul, 1980, p. 4). These studies illustrated that Thai students had a problem with English listening and needed to improve. The result of Prapphal and Ophanon-ammata's (n.d.) study was the same as those studies. Their study found that Thai science graduates and non - science graduates who took the CU - TEP in 2001 attained the lowest scores on the listening test. One reason why this study revealed different result from other studies might be that nowadays Thai students have many opportunities to listen to English from various media such as movies and songs. Moreover, there are many teaching materials to enhance students' English listening achievement, for example, cassette tapes, CDs, and VCDs. As a result, students' English listening achievement is better than the former students.

In addition, the good level of the students' listening achievement might be affected by English learning in Grade 7 since the students were tested on their listening achievement using English contents for Grade 6 while studying in Grade 7. Hence, the students possibly acquired some English knowledge from Grade 7 which assisted them to obtain a good score from the listening test.

The second point is, from the results the students attained the highest scores on listening to sentences (89.17 percent) followed by listening to the meaning of signs (85.71 percent), monologues (75.83 percent), and conversations (60.06 percent). Remarkably, the students had the excellent levels of listening to sentences and meaning of signs. It was assumed that because the tape scripts in Part II, listening to sentences, and Part IV, listening to meaning of signs were presented in short simple sentences and easy to understand. Besides, the choices in both parts were illustrated in pictures which might capture the students' interest more than letters alone. Even though there were five choices to match the meaning of each sentence or sign and the chance of answering correctly is just 20 percent. Considering Part I, listening to

monologue, the students obtained 75.83 percent (good level). There were six simple sentences in the monologues and five questions about the monologue, thus, the choices presented in true - false items gave the students 50 percent of chance to answer correctly. The chance of answering correctly without knowledge about the test content might be one reason for the students to get good scores in listening to the monologue. Moreover, the length of the tape scripts and questions might also affect the students' good score in listening to the monologue.

On the other hand, the students attained the lowest scores in listening to conversations. Their listening achievement for conversation was at a moderate level. The scripts for the conversations were longer than those for a monologue in Part I, sentences in Part II, and meaning of signs in Part IV. When listening to such long conversations, the students need to pay careful attention and try to summarize contents of the conversations to answer each questions in Part III. In addition, Part III, listening to conversations, was the multiple - choice test of which each test item consisted of four choices mostly written in words or sentences. It was assumed that choices presented in words or sentences captured the students' interest less than picture choices although the percentage of doing the multiple - choice test correctly is 25.

In conclusion, considering the students' scores in each part, the length of the tape scripts and questions, as well as the number and the format (pictures or sentences) of choices affected the students' listening scores. Furthermore, the cause of students getting high score in the listening test was inconsistent with the results in other studies reviewed in Chapter II (Wongsothorn, 2001 as cited in Sreejai, 2004; Sukamson, 1989 as cited in Wongsathorn, 1993; Cheevacharoenkul, 1980, Mitipat, 1979 as cited in Cheevacharoenkul, 1980, p. 4, and Prapphal and Ophanon - ammata's, n.d.). The reason might be they had a chance to listening to the tape scripts three times. The more they listened to the scrip, the more scores they received.

The final part to discuss concerns a positive relationship between students' overall English achievement, based on the NT score in English, and their English listening achievement ($r = 0.21$) at the 0.01 level. This result shows that students' English achievement can predict their English listening achievement. Students who have high English achievement also have high English listening achievement. This finding supports Vandergrift's study (2006) on second language listening: L2

proficiency significantly contributes to L2 listening comprehension ability. Nevertheless, the findings from the current study and Vandergrift's study are inconsistent with other scholars, for instance, (Chomsky, 1965 as cited in Hadley, 2001, p.3) and (Savignon, 1997 as cited in Hadley, 2001, p.4), who distinguish competence from performance. Those scholars believe that students with high language proficiency (competence) do not necessarily have high language performance. This is because competence is one's implicit or explicit language knowledge while performance is one's actual production and comprehension of language use (Chomsky, 1965 as cited in Hadley, 2001, p. 3).

However, the relationship between students' English achievement and their English listening achievement was considered low ($r = 0.21$), as the correlation coefficient was between $- 0.50$ and 0.50 , which is considered "low" (Piyaphimolsit, 2005, p. 81). More examination of the relationship between these two variables, language achievement and language listening achievement, is recommended.

Suggestions

The findings from the study of relationship between overall English achievement and English listening achievement of 7th graders will be beneficial for English teachers and TESOL researchers. The following are some suggests for both parties.

1. Suggestions for English teachers: The findings from the current study showed that Thai Students' overall English listening achievement was at a good level. Although students have good listening achievement, they need to improve their long conversation and long dialogue listening skills. As the environment inside and outside of school, including the community and homes has not promoted development of students' listening and speaking skills and students have little opportunity to practice English on a daily basic (Punthumasen, 2007, p.3), teachers should give students an opportunity to listen to English production from various media: videos, CDs, DVDs, TV, etc. and varied content types: news, songs, talk shows, etc. This is because English listening is a skill which needs regular practice to increase performance. To insert a listening part on an English test is also necessary to evaluate students' actual listening achievement.

2. Suggestions for TESOL researchers: This research tested students' overall English achievement and their listening achievement which was tested while they were in different grades. That is, their overall English achievement was tested while they were in Grade 6 and their listening achievement while they were in Grade 7 but the test was designed with English content of Grade 6. It was assumed that one of reasons that the students had good scores in the listening test was the influence of English studying in Grade 7. Thus, further studies should perform while students are in the same academic year to prevent the influence of higher grade study on the results. It is challenging to investigate how much the overall English achievement affects English listening. Besides, researchers should design the research instrument, the listening test, carefully to prevent the invalid results. Scoring should be rated according to the difficulty of the content and percent of correct guessing, for example, any multiple - choice items have 25 percent of correct guessing without knowledge about that content while true - false items have 50 percent. In addition, study of the relationship between students' speaking and listening achievement is recommended as in real life communication we cannot separate these two skills from each other. Hence, to study the relationship between these two skills might reveal some beneficial aspects for English pedagogy if the ultimate goal of English teaching and learning is for communication in the globalization era.