

ผลของสำเนียงครูภาษาอังกฤษที่มีต่อความสามารถในการฟังเพื่อความเข้าใจ
ของนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย



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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาครุศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

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ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

EFFECTS OF TEACHERS' ENGLISH ACCENTS ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION
ABILITY OF UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS



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for the Degree of Master of Education Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Department of Curriculum, Instructions, and Educational Technology

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กิริติ สุพัตกุล : ผลของสำเนียงครูภาษาอังกฤษที่มีต่อความสามารถในการฟังเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย. (EFFECTS OF TEACHERS' ENGLISH ACCENTS ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS) อ. ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก : ผศ. ดร. จันทร์ทรงกลด คชเสนี, 130 หน้า.

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ (1) เปรียบเทียบความสามารถในการฟังเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนจากการฟังภาษาอังกฤษสำเนียงต่างๆ และ (2) ศึกษาเจตคติของนักเรียนที่มีต่อภาษาอังกฤษสำเนียงต่างๆ ในการวิจัยนี้กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักเรียนจำนวน 412 คนจากโรงเรียนเทพศิลา โรงเรียนศรีพฤฒา โรงเรียนเตรียมอุดมศึกษาพัฒนาการ และโรงเรียนหอวัง เครื่องมือที่ใช้เก็บข้อมูลในการวิจัยมี 2 แบบคือ (1) แบบสอบวัดผลสัมฤทธิ์การฟังเพื่อความเข้าใจ ซึ่งประกอบด้วยการฟังสำเนียงอังกฤษแบบอเมริกัน สำเนียงอังกฤษแบบไทย และสำเนียงอังกฤษแบบฟิลิปปินส์ และ (2) แบบสอบถามเจตคติของนักเรียนเกี่ยวกับภาษาอังกฤษสามสำเนียงดังกล่าว เครื่องมือที่หนึ่งเป็นข้อสอบแบบเลือกตอบจำนวน 48 ข้อ ซึ่งมีเป้าหมายเพื่อวัดความเข้าใจของนักเรียนในสถานการณ์ต่างๆ ในชีวิตประจำวัน ส่วนแบบสอบถามเจตคตินั้นผู้วิจัยได้ดัดแปลงจากงานวิจัยก่อนหน้านี้

ผลการวิจัยพบว่าสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษแบบฟิลิปปินส์มีผลกระทบต่อคะแนนของนักเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญในระดับ 0.05 แต่สำหรับสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษแบบอเมริกันและสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษแบบไทยนั้น ไม่พบว่ามีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ค่าเฉลี่ยของการวัดเจตคติต่อภาษาอังกฤษสำเนียงต่างๆ นั้นพบว่านักเรียนมีเจตคติด้านบวกต่อสำเนียงอังกฤษแบบอเมริกันสูงกว่าสำเนียงอื่นๆ แทบในทุกด้าน แต่สำเนียงอังกฤษแบบไทยได้รับค่าเฉลี่ยด้าน 'อ่อนโยน' มากกว่าสำเนียงอื่นๆ ส่วนสำเนียงอังกฤษแบบฟิลิปปินส์นั้นได้รับค่าเฉลี่ยต่ำกว่าสำเนียงอื่นๆ ในทุกๆ ด้าน ผลวิจัยนี้ชี้ให้เห็นถึงความสำคัญของการเพิ่มให้นักเรียนได้รับฟังสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษอื่นๆ นอกจากสำเนียงของเจ้าของภาษาในห้องเรียน เพื่อเสริมสร้างให้นักเรียนมีความคุ้นเคยและสร้างเจตคติที่ดีต่อสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษอื่นๆ และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะที่เป็นภาษากลางของโลกในยุคปัจจุบัน

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The objectives of this study were (1) to compare listening comprehension ability of students listening to varieties of English accents and (2) to explore students' attitudes towards varieties of English accents. The 412 participants were selected from Thepleela, Sripruetta, Triamudomsuksa Pattnakarn, and Howang School. There were 2 research instruments: (1) the listening comprehension test consisted of American, Thai, and Filipino accents and (2) the attitude questionnaire. For the first instrument, the multiple-choice test contained 48 items and aimed to assess the students' listening comprehension ability based on various situations in everyday life. The attitude questionnaire was adapted from previous studies.

The finding revealed that there were significant differences between the scores obtained from students listening to Filipino accent versus the other two at 0.05 level. However, there was no significant difference between scores of students listening to Thai and American accents. For data acquired from the attitude questionnaire, the mean scores clearly showed that the participants have higher attitudes towards American English more than other varieties in almost every aspect. However, one aspect that the Thai accent has the highest average score is 'gentle'. On the other hand, the Filipino accent has the lowest score in every aspect. The results have pedagogical implications that Thai students should be exposed to non-native speakers' English accent more in the classroom to increase their familiarity in order to promote a better understanding of World Englishes for Thai students.

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The increasing significance of English as an International Language (EIL) and as a global lingua franca is observable in virtually all countries of the world. English has gained its greater status in educational area to its role as the language of international business, tourism, communication media (Zacharias, 2003). In the specific case of Thailand, the recognition of the growing importance English can be seen in the increasing number of schools, from kindergarten to university level, in which English is used as the medium of instruction. English does not belong to only native speaker groups but also to the population of the world. Therefore, the importance of English language acquisition has been emphasized in Thailand. Growing numbers of native English speakers also come to Thailand to teach English in language centers and universities. Among the trends that have recently come into view in the English language teaching, the controversy lies on whether learners' performance depends on the fact that their teachers are native speakers (NS) or non-native speakers (NNS). However, while this controversy reveals considerable different viewpoints, it is possible to assert that sharing the students' mother tongue greatly benefits learners (Liang, 2002; Guo, 2005, Major et al, 2005; Rubdy et al, 2008).

The major difference between native English speaker teachers (NESTs) and non-native English speaker teachers (NON-NESTs) is obviously their pronunciation. NESTs have a native accent which is considered a perfect model of language input for students,

while NON-NESTs can rarely achieve native-like pronunciation. However, in the EIL context, the interactions do not always occur between native and non-native speakers, but rather for communication among the non-native users of English (Matsuda, 2003). English has become World Englishes which have particular characteristics depending on the people who use it. Therefore, the disadvantage of NON-NESTs regarding their pronunciation might not be the significant weakness as students should develop their familiarity and positive attitudes towards other accents which they might encounter in the future (McKenzie, 2006; Rubdy et al, 2007).

The characteristics of World Englishes vary in pronunciation, lexical choice, and grammar which can be different from Standard English such as British English and American English but still can be comprehensible (McKay & Hornberger, 1996). However, the increasing role of World Englishes is not widely accepted among users of English. For instance, English learners in secondary levels in Japan whom Matsuda (2003) studied perceived English as an international language but they had little awareness of varieties of English used by non-native speakers and believed that English was the property of native English speakers (Americans and British). Several studies have investigated attitudes towards various accents of English which are considered as the most distinctive feature of varieties of English of the world and yielded similar results that the non-native accents are acceptable while the native accents are preferable (Widdowson 1994; Gibb, 1999; Matsuda, 2003; Yoshikawa, 2005; McKenzie, 2006; and Young, 2007). The American/British-centric view of English can be problematic when students learn English for international communication, which often concerns both native and non-native speakers of different accents of English. The current study aims at

investigating whether Thai students have similar view of English language through the exploration of their listening comprehension abilities and attitudes towards English accents through listening test.

Listening comprehension is one of the important abilities of language comprehension. The significance of listening skill definitely has a key role in foreign language classrooms as language input. By emphasizing the role of comprehensible input, second language acquisition research has given a major boost to listening. As Nunan (1997) has pointed out, listening is essential in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin. Listening is thus fundamental to speaking. Types of language input have influence on listeners' comprehension. Different phonological modifications (on sounds, stress, and intonation), the speaker's accent, and style are features that cannot be overlooked in designing or choosing listening exercises or tests for language classroom.

On the issue of the effects of accents on listening comprehension, previous research have shown that, in general, the familiarity of accents contributes to listening comprehension ability; however, there were still some unclear matters. Smith and Bisazza (1982) investigated how well native speakers of American English and English speakers from Hong Kong, India, the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan and Thailand comprehended General American, Indian and Japanese accents. Except for the Japanese and Indian subjects, the American accent was found to be the easiest to comprehend and the Indian was perceived to be the most difficult. However, while the Japanese subjects were most successful with the Japanese-accented text and least successful with the Indian

accent, the Indian subjects found the text read with an American accent slightly easier to understand than the Indian-accented text. Another study by Flowerdew (1994) provided support for local English accent of Twi and Ewe in Ghana to be more advantageous to English listening comprehension than British and American English. The study investigated Ghanaian subjects who were native speakers of either Twi or Ewe and found that the native speakers of Twi were more successful when they heard the passage read in Twi-accented English and the native speakers of Ewe were similarly advantaged when they heard Ewe-accented English. Major and Fitzmaurice (2002), however, found other contrasting results. The overall results indicated that both native and non-native listeners scored significantly lower on listening comprehension tests when they listened to non-native speakers of English. Native speakers of Spanish scored significantly higher when listening to Spanish-accented speech whereas native speakers of Chinese scored significantly lower when listening to speakers who shared their native language. From the review of previous research, it is evident that no clear trend emerges from the previous research. Thus, the body of this research aims at investigating how each English accent affects students' listening comprehension.

In terms of learners' attitudes towards accents of English, there have been several studies on the recognition of accents of English in the Asian context such as Singapore, Japan, and Korea which aimed to raise students' awareness in multicultural world society representing by global role of English language (Matsuda, 2003; Yoshikawa, 2005; Young, 2006; and Young, 2007). These studies yielded similar findings that students who studied English as a foreign language had lower attitudes towards accents of English other than British and American English. Since different accents of English have a

significant role in the global communication at present, English language instruction should help increase students' familiarity with other accents of English other than the native speaker model. Liang (2002) conducted a study at a university in California, USA to investigate 20 ESL students' attitudes towards six ESL teachers' accents and the features of the teachers' speech that contributed to the students' preference for teachers. Five of the teachers were NNS from different language backgrounds and the other was a NS. The results showed that, although the students rated accent of ESL teachers' as very important, these factors did not affect the students' attitudes toward NON-NESTs in their home countries. In fact, the students held generally positive attitudes toward these teachers and believed that accent was not as relevant as they had first thought.

There exists a created myth that the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker, who can talk about odd British sayings, what Americans eat for breakfast, differences between UK regional accents, things a native speaker will know instinctively, and things a non-native speaker may not (Luksha, 1996). However, at present, English belongs to the world and various accents are acceptable as long as they are comprehensible. Considering this current situation, providing students with various accents of English, including a local accent, might not be a drawback but an advantage because it enables them to use English for communication and to interact with other non-native English users in the world. To answer the question whether students are able to comprehend other accents of English or not, further empirical study needs to be conducted. Also, students' attitudes towards English accents should be investigated to find out whether they are aware of accents of English other than British and American English in order that they will be able to comprehend the differences in the global community. However, a few

studies have been conducted in Thai context. Being exposed to a wide variety of English appears to be important in an era of teaching English as an International Language. This study seeks to investigate the effects of English accents on listening comprehension ability and attitudes towards English accents of upper secondary school students. This group of students was selected because they have been exposed to English language and has certain knowledge of other accents of English in the world because they have opportunities in encounter both NESTs and NON-NESTs, including Thai English teachers, in their previous years of study. Consequently, the results of this study can provide a vital insight for English language teachers and educational administrators in Thailand for their management in the recruitment of foreign teachers for English instruction.

Research Questions

The specific research questions for this study are:

1. To what extent do different English accents affect the listening comprehension ability test scores of students?
2. What are the attitudes of students towards different English accents?

Research Objectives

The purposes of this study are:

1. To compare listening comprehension ability test scores of students listening to different English accents.
2. To explore students' attitudes towards different English accents.

Statement of Hypotheses

Based on the results of prior research on effects of unfamiliar accents of English on listening comprehension ability (Smith and Bisazza, 1982, Flowerdew, 1994, Major and Fitzmaurice, 2002, Young, 2007), which revealed that participants could understand their local and some non-native accents of English as equal as the native accents, the students' scores on listening comprehension tests of the English accents selected in this study will not have a significant difference.

$$(H_0 : \mu_{\text{Thai}} = \mu_{\text{Filipino}} = \mu_{\text{American}}, \alpha = 0.05)$$

Scope of the Study

This study is an experimental research study that aims to find the effects of accents of English teachers on the students' listening comprehension ability scores. It was conducted in secondary schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 with Grade 11 students. It focused on a proficiency test for listening comprehension ability the student had; thus, teaching styles and techniques of teachers were not controlled in this present study. The scope of study is as follows:

- 1) The population in this study is upper secondary school students in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2.
- 2) The independent variable is different English accents.
- 3) The dependent variable is students' listening comprehension ability test scores.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are as the following:

- 1) The difficulty of the questions items in the test might not be equal as they were based on different contents. This might be another factor that could affect the comprehension other than accents.
- 2) There was a limitation to find the second voice for recording Filipino and Thai accents. The speakers' voices of Filipino and Thai accents were modified by a program to make single voice become two different voices. This might effect the natural voice quality.
- 3) The level of the students' proficiency was not controlled.
- 4) Exposures of accents of the students were varied.

Assumption of the Study

- 1) The present study assumed that the students put their best afford in doing the listening comprehension test because the test was given to them as a part of their course and administered by their own teacher.
- 2) On the attitude questionnaire, it was assumed that the students gave valid data concerning their attitudes towards English accents.
- 3) The students were assumed to have similar academic background as they were in the government schools which used the same curriculum.
- 4) It was assumed that the students were about the same age and shared the same culture background.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were used regularly in the study according to these definitions:

1. English Accents

An accent refers to a manner of pronunciation of a language. Accents of English are variation across the areas where English is spoken as a first, second, and foreign language. Among native English speakers, many different accents exist. Some regional accents are easily identified by certain characteristics. There is also possibility for misunderstanding between people from different regions, as the way one word is pronounced in one accent will sound like a different word in another accent. Also, non-native speakers of English tend to carry over the intonation and phonemic inventory from their mother tongue into their English speech. The English accents included in the current research were based on the model of World Englishes of Svartvik and Leech (2006). The English accents in this study were American, Thai, and Filipino accents of the English teachers which were selected according to the survey of numbers of foreign teachers in secondary schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 conducted by the researcher.

2. Native Speakers English Teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native Speakers English Teachers (NON-NESTs)

For the purpose of this study, 'native speaker' refers to people who speak English as their first language from the supra-national standards countries which include the

United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand according to the model of World Englishes of Svartvik and Leech (2006), whereas 'non-native speaker' refers to people who speak English as a second or foreign language elsewhere. To be more specific, this study restricts that NESTs refers to English teachers in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 who speak English as their first language from United States of America and NON-NESTs refers to English teachers in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 who speak English as a second or foreign language from Thailand and the Philippines.

3. Listening Comprehension Ability

Listening comprehension ability refers to students' ability to understand the spoken texts. In this study, students' listening comprehension ability is students' scores which were measured by the listening comprehension tests developed by the researcher.

4. Attitudes towards English Accents

Language attitudes are the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others (Crystal, 1997). Attitudes towards accents of a language are part of language as a whole. The researcher used the verbal-guise test to investigate the attitudes towards English accents in this study. The verbal-guise technique is to examine attitudes towards the accents of the speaker of the passage by asking the listeners to evaluate the personal qualities of the recorded speakers on the basis of their voices (accents). A questionnaire allows the personality traits of the accents evaluated to be attributed to the voices they heard (pleasant, confident, clear, modest, funny, gentle, intelligent, and fluent). The attitudes towards three English

accents selected in this study (American, Thai, and Filipino) were measured by the scores obtained from the questionnaire adapted from Rujipomwasin (2004), McKenzie (2006), and Young (2007).

Summary

Apart from this introductory chapter, the thesis is organized into four more chapters.

The second chapter reviews the relevant literature on English accents illustrated by several models of World Englishes, overview of listening comprehension, including listening comprehension test constructs, and attitudes towards English accents.

The third chapter describes the methodology that was used to conduct this research. It presents the subjects of the study, research design and procedure of data collection.

The fourth chapter illustrates and analyzes the data collected, in an attempt to provide an answer to the research questions.

The final chapter summarizes the findings, specifies how these answer the research questions, points out the pedagogical implications, and provides suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since this research aims to compare listening comprehension ability of student listening to different English accents and investigate the attitudes towards English accents, the related literature and research studies were reviewed to provide sufficient background for the study. The topics about accents of English in the world, listening comprehension, and attitudes towards English accents will be discussed as well as previous studies concerned these topics.

Accents of English in the World

This section discusses the overview of English in the world in which accents are part of the variations. The first part introduces models of World Englishes and another part describes other types of variation in English language, including accents.

1. Models of World Englishes

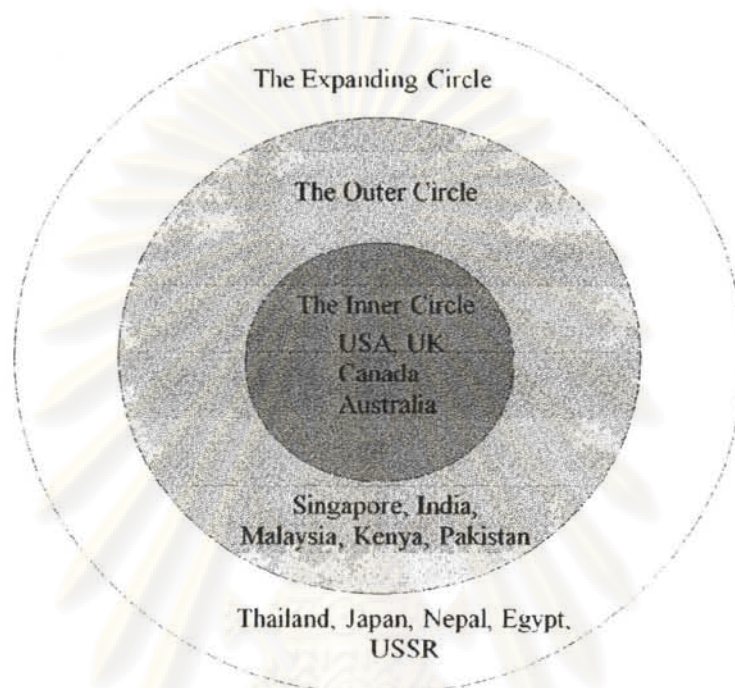
One of the primary consequences of the global spread of English is the swift increase of English speakers around the world. According to Rubdy and Saraceni (2006), nowadays English speakers are estimated to range between 700 million and 1.8 billion, consisting of speakers of English as a first, second, and foreign language from different parts of the world. For that reason, the use of English in the world is not homogeneous. Its roles vary primarily according to the different national contexts in which it is used. The models of World Englishes have been proposed by several researchers and linguists to show the standardization and diversification of the English language. However, the status

of Standard English is still argued. This section will discuss important models of World Englishes proposed by Kachru (1996), Graddol (1996), and Svartvik and Leech (2006).

Kachru's model (1996) suggested that the possession of English belonged to native speaker group whereas Graddol (1996) opposed that non-native speaker group also had power to control over the English language. The speakers of English are divided into three categories, which can be represented through three circles (Kachru, Kachru, and Nelson 2006). The Inner Circle includes countries such as the UK, the USA and Australia where English is the mother tongue for the majority of the population. The Outer Circle refers to countries such as Singapore, India and Canada, where English, although it is not an official language, has become part of nation institutions, and plays the role of 'second' or 'additional' language, together with local languages because of its importance for historical reason. Lastly, the Expanding Circle consists of countries where English is only a foreign language. These countries such as Egypt, Japan, and Thailand, acknowledge the importance of English as a world language although they neither have a history of colonization by members of the Inner Circle, nor does English have any particular administrative standing in the society like in the Outer circle Countries (Kachru, 1996). Kachru further explains that the Inner Circle countries are a 'norm-providing' group, meaning that English language norms are built up in these countries since English is their first language. On the other hand, the Outer Circle countries are considered 'norm-receiving' or 'norm-developing' whereas the Expanding Circle ones are regarded as 'norm-dependent varieties'.

Figure 2.1

Kachru's Three Circles of English (Kachru, 1996)

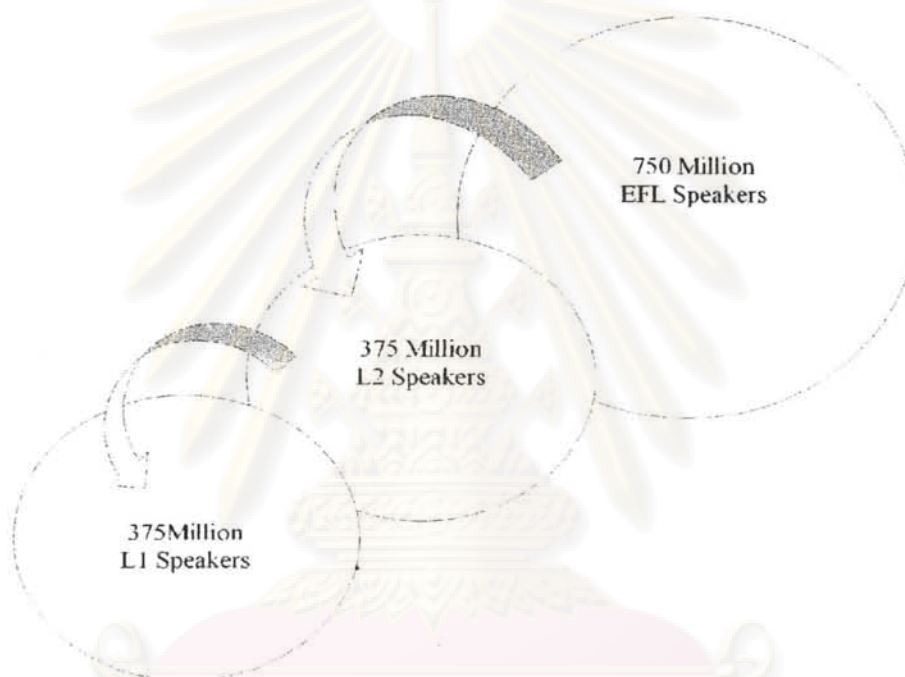


Thus, this model suggests that native speakers are representatives of the correctness and the ideal characteristics for those in the Outer and Expanding Circle to look up and follow the norms (Graddol, 1996). On the other hand, Graddol (1996) proposes another way to classify the users of English around the world. Similarly, he divides English speakers into three broad categories. The first group is L1 (First language) speakers who use English as their mother tongue and often the only language. The dominant culture of speakers living in this category is based on English too. The United States of America and Australia are examples of this group. The next group, L2 (Second language) speakers employ English as a second or additional language. English is present in the community where L2 speakers probably use local varieties of English. Therefore, the original local cultures and languages can be reflected in the English

language use by L2 speakers, which makes even more and more differing from the varieties of English spoken by first language speakers. The third category consists of people who learn English as a foreign language or EFL speakers.

Figure 2.2

Changing Patterns in the Use of English (Graddol, 1996)



In contrast to Kachru's model, Graddol's pattern suggests that L2 and EFL speakers will sooner or later outnumber L1 speakers and the influence of language from the EFL speakers also can possibly be transferred to L1 speakers.

The fact that English is used in various contexts especially in the Outer Circle countries has resulted in the emergence of different varieties, often serving different purposes. Some people fear that the varieties of English will become incomprehensible and unworthy the label 'English' (Kachru, Kachru, and Nelson, 2006) and thus there is a need for one common standard to assure intelligibility among users of English in various

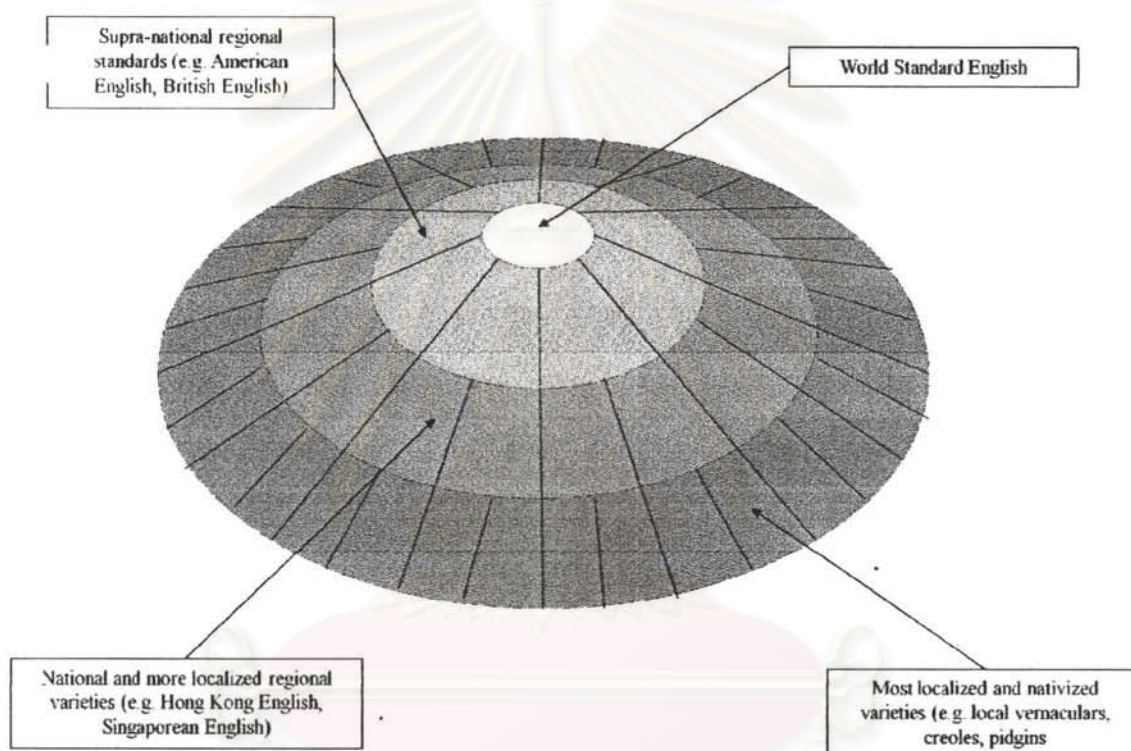
contexts. The major argument against the acceptance of many standards is that they provide a threat to the global intelligibility of English. In fact, this is not necessarily the case. Kachru (1996) believes that acknowledging a variety of norms would not lead to a lack of intelligibility among different users of English. Even though these varieties did become gradually more diverse, Crystal (1997) claims that the consequences would not be critical since the use of an only single language by a community does not assure social harmony and mutual understanding within the society. On the other hand, the presence of more than one language (or variety) does not cause social turmoil within a community. Widdowson (1994) argues that the fact that many bilingual users of English acquire the language in educational contexts, will likely guarantee some unifying forms because the emphasis is placed on a particular standard.

Hence, in view of the various functions English serves currently, that varieties of English exist alongside a more standard form. According to Graddol (1997), English is a vehicle for international communication and the basis for constructing cultural identities. To fulfill the first function, English should be intelligible among users around the globe and consequently, requires a common standard. This involves the ability and willingness for English users, including those from the Inner Circle countries, to adjust their English and make it more comprehensible to other users of English worldwide (Jenkins 2006). The second function of English, the construction of cultural identities, encourages the development of 'nativized Englishes' (Kachru, 1996). They have a dialect to express their national identity; and they have another dialect which can guarantee international intelligibility, and use one or the other according to the situation.

Svartvik and Leech (2006) has proposed a new model of World Englishes based on previous models to show standardization and diversification of dialects around the world as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3

A Model of World English (Svartvik and Leech, 2006)



The latest model of World English by Svartvik and Leech (2006) suggests that one World Standard English is the center of the model whose characteristics are understood by all varieties. In the second layer, supra-national regional standards are referred to English language that is used in the national and regional level of the native speaker area such as British English and American English. The next layer is English varieties of national and more localized regional varieties of the countries that English has major role in use such as Hong Kong English and Singaporean English. The most

outer layer is referred to the most localized and nativized varieties such as vernaculars, creoles, and pidgins.

A number of experts, including Kachru, the inventor of the Three Circles model, have pointed out that as English become a global language, the differences between the circles are getting less clear and also less significant. At the same time, the native speakers of English in the inner circle have begun to lose their status as the norm providing for learning English around the world. Therefore, Standard English, despite the fact that it is greatly influenced by American English at the present time, cannot be included with any native-speaker variety. However, the diagram above merely shows a conceptual model. Crystal (cited in Svartvik and Leech, 2006) has said that the Spoken Standard English is still in the developmental progress which emerges in public communication where English is the only language for public discussion and the process of accommodation has a powerful influence for people to reach mutual understanding.

This current model by Svartvik and Leech is chosen to be the framework of this thesis because it is the latest model which provides the dimensions of the usage of English based on region and its status in more detail than the original Three Circles of English by Kachru. As varieties of English in Asia are the main focus of the current study, referring to this model will be able to describe status of English and the location spoken clearly.

2. Types of Variation in English

This section will introduce an overview of models and explanations on types of linguistic variation in forms in order to provide a framework for the presentations of

World Englishes. Variation in World Englishes can be found at all levels of language; spelling, phonetics/phonology (pronunciation), lexis (vocabulary), syntax (grammar), and pragmatics (discourse). All varieties of English share the similarity of vocabulary because it derives from a common set of texts. However, new words arise independently in different contexts through several processes such as word-formation (coining), compounding, derivation, and borrowing. (Melchers and Shaw, 2003). In syntax level, studies of grammatical variation in World Englishes have been conducted at describing certain salient features such as tag question (Crystal, 1997), in which there are deviations as in question tag (“You didn’t call him, did you?” versus “You didn’t call him, is it?”), the use of tense and aspect (“Did you eat yet?” versus “Have you eaten yet?”), and irregular verb form (“dived” versus “dove”). Pragmatics is concerned with how we use language in particular situations to achieve goals of communication. It is concerned with appropriateness rather than correctness. Some aspects of pragmatic differences are in linguistic forms in used for a specific purpose across varieties. Different societies call for different system of address, different types of politeness, and provide different occasions in which it is suitable to say something; for example, refusal, greetings, and accepting compliment.

The discussion will exclude variation in spelling as the present study focuses on spoken rather than written texts. Specifically this study will focus on the differences of English accents between native and non-native speakers of English.

According to Crystal (1997), non-native pronunciations of English result from the common linguistic phenomenon in which non-native users of any language tend to carry the intonation, phonological processes, and pronunciation rules from their mother tongue

into their English speech. They may also create innovative pronunciations for English sounds not found in the speaker's first language. Phonological distinctions between a speaker's first language and English create a tendency to neutralize such distinctions in English. Also, differences in the distribution of sounds may cause substitutions of native sounds in the place of difficult English sounds or simple deletion. The differences in accents presumed that non-native speech perceptions reflect both the abstract phonological properties and phonetic details of the native language.

In conclusion, the above discussion has provided an overview of the English language in the world nowadays and has illustrated the distinctive variation in phonology (accents) which is the focus of the current study. The following section will give a detailed discussion of listening comprehension ability and attitude towards English accents.

Listening Comprehension

1. Definition of Listening Comprehension

Prior to designing and utilizing a possible framework for the assessment of second language listening comprehension proficiency, this section will discuss the nature of the listening comprehension construct.

According to Guo (2005), listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This process involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these three things simultaneously. Ronald and

Roskelly (1985, cited in Guo, 2005) defined listening as an active process requiring the same skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising, and generalizing that writing and reading demand.

Language learning depends on listening since it provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication. Listening is the first language mode that children acquire. It provides the foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, and it plays a life-long role in the processes of communication. Listening is the fundamental language skill. It is the medium through which people gain a large portion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation. In the era of mass communication, much of its oral is of vital importance that students are taught to listen effectively and critically.

According to second language acquisition theory, language input is the most essential condition of language acquisition. As an input skill, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Because of the importance of listening in language learning and teaching, it is essential for language teachers to help students become effective listeners. In the communicative approach to language teaching, this means modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations, precisely those that learners are likely to encounter when they use the English language outside the classroom. Therefore, the investigation of familiarity and unfamiliarity to different English accents is essential to language teachers to help students develop their familiarity in the accents that students face difficulty in comprehending.

2. The Process of Listening Comprehension

Listening is an invisible mental process, making it difficult to describe. However, listeners must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, understand intention and retain and interpret this within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance (Rost, 2002). Listening, then, is a complex, active processes of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know.

Listening process are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input. The two most important ways are bottom-up view and top-down view.

Bottom-up process is based on the text; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up includes listening for specific details of sounds decoded into phonemes which are used to identify individual words. The process continues to the sentence level, followed by an analysis of content to understand the basic linguistic meaning and interpretation of the literal meaning in the communicative context to understand what the speaker means. This bottom-up process includes recognizing similar or distinctive sounds, and recognizing word-order patterns. On the other hand, top-down process is listener based. The listener uses the background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language to make sense out of the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help listeners to interpret what

is heard and anticipate what will come next. It is quite possible to understand the meaning of the word before decoding its sounds because listeners have knowledge of the world. The various types of knowledge involved in understanding language which are not in the fixed pattern and even can be used simultaneously. Top-down strategies include listening for the main idea, predicting, drawing inferences, and summarizing.

Listening comprehension is a top-down process in which listeners used various kinds of knowledge such as context and world knowledge to interpret what the speaker is saying. However, the bottom-up process cannot be overlooked as the linguistic information also plays an important part in the characteristics of input. Listening comprehension tends to be an interactive, interpretive process in which listeners use prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge in understanding messages while metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies are applied to facilitate comprehension and to make their learning more effective. Metacognitive strategies are important because they regulate and direct the language learning process. Research shows that skilled listeners use more metacognitive strategies than their less-skilled counterparts (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The use of cognitive strategies helps students to manipulate learning materials and apply specific techniques to a listening task. Socio-affective strategies describe the techniques listeners use to collaborate with others, to verify understanding or to lower anxiety.

To conclude, the listening comprehension is the result of an interaction between a number of information sources comprising of types of input, linguistic knowledge, context of communication, general knowledge of the world, and whatever information the listeners have that can be able to help them to comprehend what they hear.

3. Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension can be affected by several factors. According to Buck (2001), major factors that can influence on listening comprehension in second language are phonological modification in connected speech, accents, prosodic features, speech rate, and topic familiarity.

The phonological system is the complex set of rules that determine the pronunciation of the connected speech. The lack of such knowledge is thus possible to lessened comprehension. Listeners need to know how the sound system works in order to be able to process natural speech in authentic situations. Also, listeners will encounter words pronounced in a various manner in several occasions. When the dialect spoken which includes accent (pronunciation), vocabulary, and grammar is unfamiliar to the listeners, difficulty in comprehension is increased. Buck (2001) commented that native speakers are generally used to hearing a wide variety of English but when they hear a new dialect for the first time, they might not understand it very well and it takes some times to get used to the new variety. On the other hand, L2 listeners are usually much less familiar with the range of English varieties and have considerable troubles when they encounter a new variety for the first time.

Numerous studies have measured the effect of different variables on listening comprehension. Among these variables are rate of speech, discourse features, grammar, students' attitudes, topic familiarity, and most obviously, accent (Major et al, 2005). Although accent is generally believed to be one of the main features that have an impact on one's ability to understand spoken language, very little research has carefully

measured the effects. Goh (1999) reported that 66% of learners list a speaker's accent among the factors that influence listener comprehension (lesser factors include vocabulary, prior knowledge, speech rate, and type of input). Several studies support the widespread view that unfamiliar accents, both native and non-native, cause difficulty in comprehension. In contrast, there is a good deal of evidence that familiarity with an accent aids comprehension. A study by Flowerdew (1994) in West Africa comparing Twi, Ewe, and British English Received Pronunciation, speakers demonstrated that Twi and Ewe speakers better understand English when spoken by those with the same native language.

Thus, accent which is selected as the major factor to affect listening comprehension in this study is considered as the key feature in spoken English. When listeners hear an unfamiliar accent, for example students who hear Indian English for the first time after having studied only American English might face problems. This may interrupt the whole comprehension process. In other words, an unfamiliar accent can make comprehension almost impossible for the listeners (Buck, 2001).

In the English language, the prosodic features of stress and intonation also carry a great deal of communicative information. Stress and intonation are very significant in word recognition. Word stress, sentence stress, and intonation are all important in listening comprehension for meaning. Moreover, these prosodic features can carry a hidden meaning that includes or sometimes contradicts the literal meaning of the words. Utterances with communicative effects are expressed by the stress and intonation and listeners need to be able to understand those features in order that they will be capable of interpreting reasonably (Gussenhoven, 2002).

In addition, speech rate has been identified as a major factor affecting listening comprehension. Most language learners have faced the problem that they do not understand something they hear because it seemed too fast, or have a feeling that they could have understood if only the speech had been slower. Buck (2001) stated that this is due to a lack of processing automaticity. When listeners get more familiar, they learn to process the language more automatically and speech seems to become slower. However, the actual speech does affect comprehension. Study by Griffiths (1990) confirmed the effect of speech rate on listening comprehension that rate-controlled recorded text cannot only be used to facilitate listening comprehension through reducing speech rate but it can also help language learners become accustomed to increasingly rapid deliveries. Another research by Griffiths (1992) which investigated the effects of three different speech rates on the comprehension revealed that comprehension was significantly better at the slowest speech rate and worse at the higher rates. This includes hesitations such as pauses, repetition, and false starts (Buck, 2001). Hesitations that slow down the speech rate such as pauses assist comprehension for L2 listeners only when the listeners recognize those hesitation remarks; otherwise, comprehension can be negatively affected. In conclusion, the research has shown speech rate to be obviously an important variable in listening comprehension.

Topic familiarity is another factor that can affect listening comprehension ability. According to Schmidt-Rinehart (1994), several studies examined the effects of topic familiarity on listening comprehension. The results of the studies reveal the importance of the role of background knowledge. The results revealed a higher proportion of correct idea units between the familiar and unfamiliar passages for the recognition measure.

Another experiment by Chiang and Dunkel (1992) investigated the effect of speech modification, prior knowledge, and listening proficiency on EFL listening comprehension. After listening to a lecture, the Chinese EFL students' comprehension was measured by a multiple-choice test that contained both passage-dependent and passage-independent items. Regarding topic familiarity, the subjects scored higher on the familiar-topic lecture than on the unfamiliar-topic lecture. A significant effect was found on the passage-independent items. This interaction between prior knowledge and test type showed that passage independent items provide a measure of background knowledge.

4. Framework of Listening Comprehension Test

The uniqueness in constructing listening tests comes from the transient nature of the spoken language. Listeners cannot usually move backwards and forwards over what is being said in the way they can in a written text. According to Wagner (2000), there is no standard definition or model of second language listening ability, because the act of listening necessarily differs according to what listeners are listening for, the level of the learner, and the context of the situation. Therefore, in creating a model of listening ability, it is first necessary to identify, and select the target language use domain, and then to describe tasks representative of that target language use domain. There are a vast number of listening situations that can be chosen as the test domain for listening comprehension, including informal conversation, radio listening, television watching, telephone conversations, or specific job settings. One of the most common domains used in the assessment of listening, however, involves listening in everyday life settings, and, following the recommendations of Bachman and Palmer (1996) to focus on specific tasks

in which language is used purposefully, it was decided to focus on an academic listening target language use domain.

Since listening comprehension plays an important role in facilitating language learning, Buck (2001) suggested some effective methods to assess listening skill into three approaches historically:

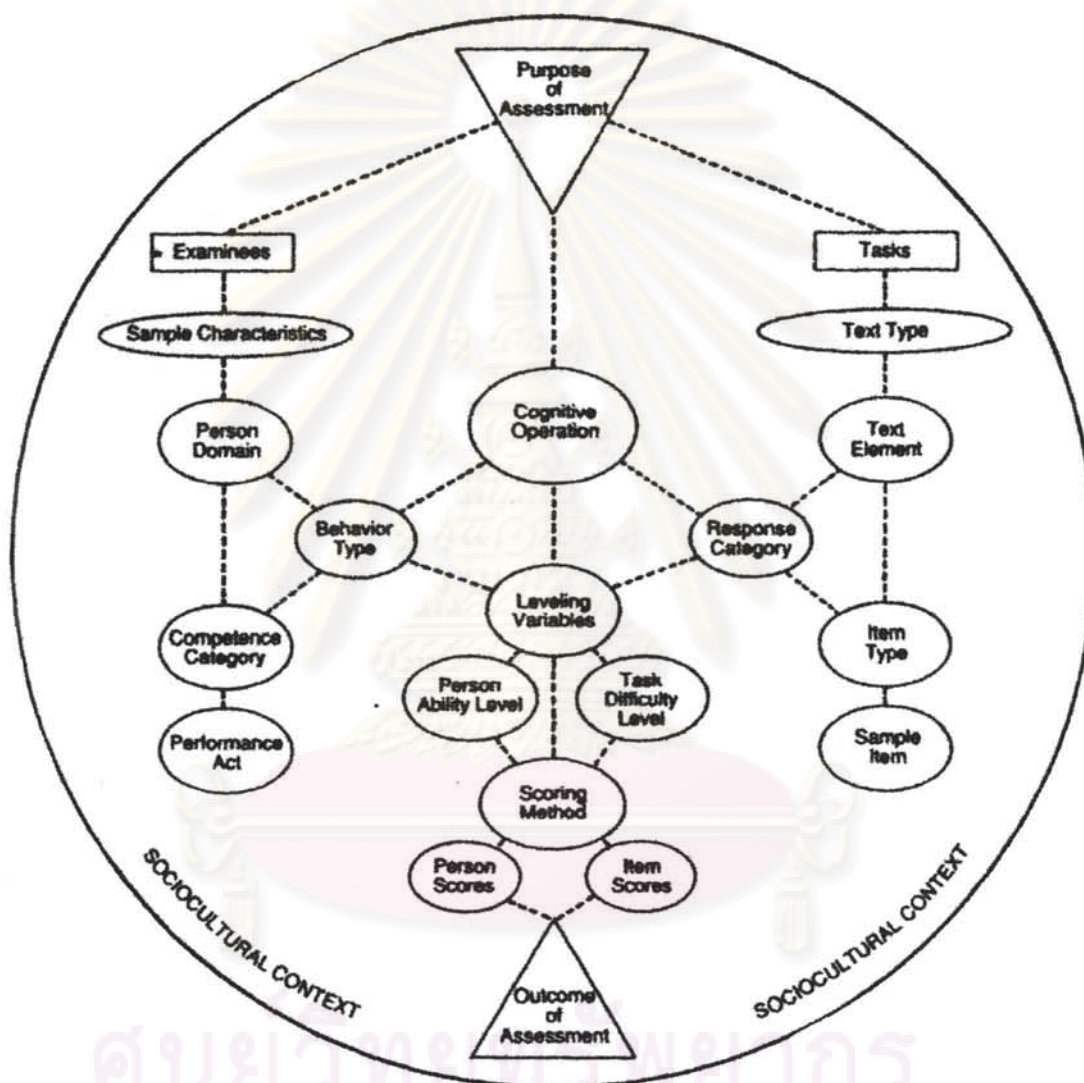
- 1) Discrete-point approaches such as phonemic discrimination tasks, paraphrases recognition, and response evaluation
- 2) Integrative approaches such as reduced redundancy, listening cloze, gap-filling tests, dictation, sentence-repetition tasks, and translation
- 3) Communicative approaches with authentic texts and authentic tasks

However, some approaches or activities that emphasize listening for words rather than listening for meaning are discouraged by scholars such as Richards (Wu, 2005). A lot of researchers of listening comprehension also suggested that top-down process instead of bottom-up process should be applied to listening comprehension strategies. Also, interaction of listener's life experience and prior knowledge about the world with spoken text greatly enhances the process and construction of meaning (Chiang & Dunkel, 1992).

A general framework for the consideration of listening comprehension assessment was provided by Dunkel, Henning & Chaudron (1993). This framework attempts to relate the various aspects and components of listening comprehension that already mentioned in previous topic. The framework explains interrelationships among the components.

Figure 2.4

Model of Second Language Listening Comprehension Assessment (Dunkel, Henning & Chaudron, 1993)



According to this framework, the purpose of assessment component determines the form and function of all of the other elements. Accordingly, it has the most prominent starting position at the top of the figure. Tasks represent both text types and elements within texts, as well as the text meanings that are conveyed in these elements, and the

particular test item types and sample items that are based on the texts. These constitute the key material to be comprehended. Response category is viewed as extending from particular cognitive operations to include response modes, generic item formats, and specific item formats. Scoring method indicates the manner in which the level of performance is recorded and reported. Assigning ability and difficulty levels are referred to leveling variables that serve to differentiate performance levels. Competence category indicates the various native and acquired skills and knowledge required to perform the task, including memory of schemata. Sample characteristics represent the intended examinees classified according to any appropriate subcategories such as intelligence, personality, experience and background knowledge which relates to cognitive operation. All of the elements of the model are embedded in a field of sociocultural context, reflecting the fact that any assessment involves sociocultural value assumptions.

According to the framework of listening comprehension assessment by Dunkel, Henning & Chaudron (1993), as with the other skills, the specifications for listening tests should specify what the test takers should be able to do. Hughes (2003) provided the classification of purposes of listening tests as the following:

Informational:

- Obtain factual information
- Follow instructions
- Understand requests for information
- Understand expressions of need
- Understand requests for permission

- Understand apologies
- Recognize and understand opinion
- Follow justification of opinion

Interactional:

- Understand greetings and introductions
- Understand expressions of agreement and disagreement
- Recognize speaker's purpose
- Recognize indications of uncertainty
- Recognize requests for clarification
- Recognize requests for opinion
- Recognize indications of failure to understand
- Recognize and understand corrections by speaker
- Recognize and understand modifications of statements and comments

Hughes (2003) also included testing lower level listening skills in a diagnostic test including:

- Discriminate between vowel phonemes
- Discriminate between consonant phonemes
- Interpret intonation patterns

Moreover, for content validity, other factors such as text type, length, and speed, mentioned in the previous section should be specified as fully as possible. Then, tasks must be chosen with the test specification in the consideration. Possible techniques in assessing listening skills are explained by Hughes (2003) as the following:

- Selection: Multiple-choice, True-false
- Production: Completion, Short answer, Composition

A full specification of item type involves details of item format. Item format includes information about response mode and item type as mentioned earlier. Each of the specific item formats may have an infinite number of representative sample items in order to point out that sample items comprise the most discrete representation of the task. Finally, the selection of a particular scoring method will be a function of the purpose of the assessment and the nature of the tasks and competencies that are being assessed. A few of the varieties of scoring method available are as follows: Binary (pass-fail, correct-incorrect); Partial credit; Rating scale; Degree of correctness; Profile; Holistic; Analytic; Raw score; Scaled score (Dunkel, Henning & Chaudron, 1993).

Details of test specifications of this study can be further found in the research instrument section in Chapter III.

Attitudes towards English Accents

Accents are phonological part of a language and attitudes towards accents are also part of how one view or feel about the language. This section will discuss first on the centre concept of language attitudes before move on to be more specific on attitudes towards accents.

Attitudes towards global languages such as English are likely to be strong. The term 'language attitudes', however, is a broad term, which encompasses an extensive range of possible empirical studies, concerned with a number of specific attitudes. Baker (1992) identified the following major areas:

- 1) attitude to language variation, dialect and speech style
- 2) attitude to learning a new language
- 3) attitude to a specific minority language
- 4) attitude to language groups, communities and minorities
- 5) attitude to language lessons
- 6) attitude of parents to language lessons
- 7) attitude to the uses of a specific language
- 8) attitude to language preference

This study will attempt to measure listening comprehension ability of and attitudes toward different English accents of upper secondary students learning English as a foreign language. It is for this reason that 1) and 4) of the above categories will be the main focus of the research. However, any conclusions drawn are likely to have implications for 2) and 7) categories: attitudes to learning a new language and attitudes to the uses of a specific language, in this case, English.

The importance of language attitudes in second language acquisition is supported by a number of theories that have highlighted the importance of social factors in second language proficiency. Although such factors are considered vital, social factors are only believed to have an indirect influence on second language proficiency. For instance, social variables such as the socio-economic level, age, gender and ethnic background of the learner can affect their opportunities to learn languages, which, in turn, would directly influence proficiency in the target language. In order to investigate how learner attitudes affect foreign language acquisition, this section will provide an overview of theories of

second language acquisition which focus the importance of learner attitudes in second language acquisition.

1. Krashen's Theory of Language Acquisition

One of the famous theories that concern with language attitudes relationship with language acquisition is proposed by Krashen. In his theory, attitudes is also included in the important factors affected the language acquisition.

Krashen's theory of second language acquisition consists of five main hypotheses (Krashen, 1981): the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. The affective filter hypothesis refers to the way in which affective factors relate to second language acquisition. The filter influences language development by determining the amount of input the learner comes into contact with and the amount of input which is converted to intake. In addition to motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety state, attitude towards the target language is also viewed as an important affective variable.

Krashen's theory has become very popular among second language learners and teachers, for it comprises ideas that are easily understood and applicable. However, it has also received a criticism on the part of second language researchers and theorists. As acquisition is believed to be subconscious and learning conscious, it is thought to be extremely difficult to test the validity of the monitor model by empirical research. Another criticism concerns the explanation how learners monitor to edit their language performance. The model refers to monitoring only in terms of production and does not attempt to explain the reception of utterances by learners. There are, therefore, serious

theoretical problems concerning the monitor model. Nevertheless, it can be considered important in the context of this study because it is one of the theories of second language acquisition to recognize the importance of learner attitudes in the acquisition of the target language.

2. The Acculturation Model

Another model of language acquisition that states about language attitudes is the Acculturation Model, which focuses on how language learners think about the target language community and culture. Thus, this model also deals with attitudes of learners towards the target language.

The Acculturation Model of second language acquisition was created by Schumann in 1978. Acculturation can be defined as the integration of a second language learner with a target language community and culture. Acculturation and second language acquisition are affected by social and psychological variables. The social variables determine what the good and bad conditions for learning situations are. The seven distinguished variables include (1) political, economical, cultural equality of a target language and L2 group, (2) assimilation, preservation, and adaptation (3) enclosure (4) cohesiveness and size (5) congruence (6) attitude and (7) Intended length of residence. As attitude is one social variable, the model elaborates that both groups need to have positive attitudes towards one another for the conditions for second language acquisition to be favorable.

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These affective variables only influence acculturation when social distance is not a determining factor, for instance, when the social variables do not have a positive or a negative influence. The other affective variables are thought to include:

- 1) Language shock: the extent to which the learners feel foolish when they speak the second language.
- 2) Culture shock: the extent to which the learners feel anxious and/or disorientated when they enter the target culture.
- 3) Ego permeability: the extent to which the learners feel inhibited. This is dependent upon whether the learners perceive their first language to be fixed or flexible.

In the case of attitudes, the acculturation model does not indicate whether these attitudes are causes or effects of second language acquisition (Baker, 1992). In addition, the acculturation model has yet to be tested by empirical research. The model, therefore, remains purely theoretical.

3. Accommodation Theory

Accommodation theory brings language attitudes into one of the factors that contribute to language acquisition. This theory concerns with the relationship between the learner's group and the target language group. How they view themselves and another can influence their language acquisition.

Accommodation theory was created by Giles and his associates (1991). The main principle of the theory is to examine in what way intergroup language use reflects social and psychological aspects of interethnic communication (Ellis, 2003). Giles is concerned

with the correlation between a learner's social group (ingroup) and the target language social group (outgroup). Giles also believes that second language proficiency largely relies upon motivation, which is to a great extent affected by how individual learners view themselves in terms of ethnic identity. This is determined by the following variables:

- 1) Identification of the individual learner with his ethnic ingroup. To what degree a learner identifies himself with his own ingroup.
- 2) Inter-ethnic comparison. If a learner makes positive or negative comparisons between his group and the outgroup.
- 3) Perception of ethno-linguistic vitality. If a learner views his ingroup as low or high in status and bounded with or excluded from institutional power.
- 4) Perception of ingroup boundaries. If a learner views his ingroup as culturally and linguistically excluded from the outgroup (hard boundaries) or as culturally and linguistically correlating (soft boundaries).
- 5) Identification with other ingroup social categories. If a learner can identify with any kind of his ingroup social categories, e.g. occupation, gender, education and accordingly has an adequate or inadequate status within his ingroup.

Hence, high motivation and high level of proficiency in second language acquisition can be achieved when a learner has weak identification with his ingroup, makes positive or no comparison between ingroup and outgroup, has low perception of ethno-linguistic vitality, the perception of ingroup boundaries is soft, and the ingroup status is satisfactory.

Overall, despite fundamental differences among Krashen's theory, the acculturation model and accommodation theory, research into second language acquisition in the socio-psychological paradigm has generally highlighted the important influence of the attitude of the individual on levels of achievement in second language acquisition (McKenzie, 2006). It has been demonstrated above that the role of attitude in second language learning has been recognized in a number of socio-psychological models and in Krashen's monitor model of second language acquisition. This relationship, undeniably, appears to be extremely complex in nature and is likely to vary according to the social context. Ellis (2003), for instance, has stated that levels of proficiency in the second language are not determined by variables such as age, sex, social class or ethnic identity but rather by the attitudes and social conditions associated with these factors. One of the aims of this study, therefore, will be to measure whether and to what extent, such variables influence attitudes.

Previous Studies

Several previous studies have been investigated the effects of English accents on the listeners' listening comprehension ability, (Smith and Bisazza, 1982; Flowerdew, 1994; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994; Major and Fitzmaurice, 2002; Major et al., 2005, Boonyarattapan, 2006). The studies often concerns with other factors such as attitudes and familiarity. According to these studies, it is revealed that both attitudes and familiarity of accents contributes greatly to listening comprehension ability.

For example, Smith and Bisazza (1982) found that the Japanese subjects gained higher scores when listening to Japanese accent more than American accent. Similarly, Flowerdew (1994) found that local English accent of Twi and Ewe in Ghana to be more advantageous to English listening comprehension than British and American English. Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) supported in the same way that familiarity is important with students' listening comprehension ability. Also, Major and Fitzmaurice (2002) found that native speakers of Spanish gained higher scores when listening to Spanish accent of English. These studies supported that listeners could comprehend better when listening to their local accents which were the speech sounds that they were familiar with.

However, in the similar study by Smith and Bisazza (1982), the Indian subjects gained lower scores on Indian accent and in the same research conducted by Major and Fitzmaurice (2002), native speakers of Chinese gained lower scores when listening to Chinese accent. Similar results were revealed in the research conducted by Major et al. (2005). ESL listeners scored lower on listening comprehension tests hearing ethnic and international dialects of English compared to Standard American English. Boonyarattapan (2006) also found that the average scores of native speakers' accents were higher than the average scores of non-native speakers' accents. Thus, there is no clear trend of effects of accents whether they contribute or obstruct to listening comprehension ability.

Studies of English language attitudes have been conducted broadly since the important of English language education is recognized globally and English is internationally accepted as an important language of the world (Gibb, 1998; Gibb, 1999; Lindemann, 2003; Mastuda, 2003; Rujipomwasin, 2004; Hiraga, 2005; Yoshikawa, 2005;

McKenzie, 2006; Young, 2007; Rubdy et al., 2008; Rubdy et al., 2009). Some studies also related to the issue of different accents as well in terms that when listeners have positive attitudes towards a certain accent, it contributes to their listening comprehension ability.

Prior research by Rujipornwasin (2004) of Thai Engineering students' attitudes towards the English language showed the result that students have a high and positive perception although they encountered some problems in improving their spoken English. In addition, research on accents of English have been done to investigate English language learners' attitudes towards not only native accents but also non-native ones. Most findings show that English learners have more positive attitudes towards native accents and American English tends to be the most favorable choice. Earlier research by Gibb (1998, 1999) on Korean university students and professionals' attitudes towards native accents of English which were British, American, and Australia English revealed that Korean students were both instrumentally and integratively motivate to learn American English and believed that American English was advantageous to their education and career. Gibb has suggested that this attitude could lead to discrimination against teachers from other English-speaking countries other than the USA and against non-native teachers of English. Also, Hiraga (2005) studied British people's attitudes towards six accents of English in the USA and Britain and found out that surprisingly, American English was significantly more favorable than British regional accents. Lindemann (2003) investigated American students' attitudes towards non-native English speakers in the USA of Korean, Chinese, and Indians. The result showed that non-native accents of English in this study were rated as "moderate accent", "bad English", and

“exotic English”. Lindemann concluded that these non-native models were likely to be acceptable when they sounded closer to ‘Standard English’, which, in this case, was American English.

In Asian context in countries where students study English as a foreign language, several survey studies have been conducted concerning students attitudes towards varieties of English, mostly on the non-native accents in the Outer Circle such as Singaporean English, Indian English, and Philippine English. For example, a study of acceptance of Japanese English of secondary students in Japan was conducted by Matsuda (2003) by using questionnaire and interview as her instruments. The result of her study showed that although the students perceived English as an International Language, they did not believe that it belonged internationally. Students responded to accents of English other than American and British often with ‘I don’t know’ and ‘I’m not sure’. One reason for such responses appears to be the lack of awareness about different accents of English. Another study by Yoshikawa (2005) investigated the recognition of World Englishes of university students in World Englishes department. Students showed a higher agreement on ‘Acceptability of Japanese English,’ and ‘Taught by Japanese teachers’ but still a low agreement on ‘Singaporean and Indian English’. Additionally, McKenzie (2006) conducted a research on Japanese’s attitudes on accents of English speech has revealed that learners had more positive attitudes towards accents of Inner Circle English than those of Expanding Circle. Similar findings were found in Young’s study (2007) on Korean adults’ attitudes towards varieties of English. Young found that Korean adult preferred American English as a model for guidance but they did

not discriminate native and non-native varieties of English; however, they were not well aware of varieties of English.

In contrast, in case of the Outer Circle countries, non-native varieties of English are acceptable and more favorable by users of English. Recent studies by Rubdy, McKay, Alsagoff, and Bokhorst-Heng (2007, 2008) in Malaysia and Singapore with various ethnic groups such as Chinese, Malay, and Indian on their attitudes towards non-native accents of English revealed that participants had shown highly positive attitudes towards non-native English. The researchers concluded that users of the English language in these studies had high sense of ownership of English and non-native accents such as Singaporean, Malaysian, Indian, and Philippine English have gone beyond native and non-native dichotomy. In other words, Outer Circle varieties received their position in such societies at a contented level.

These studies are presented in order to investigate English as a foreign language students' attitudes towards accents of English and to argue for the significance of instruction about their increased authority as users of English (Matsuda, 2003). Also, students should be educated about other varieties of English other than American and British model because they should be able to perform the responsibility of English language users as well as the native varieties. According to a review by Baumgardner and Brown (2003), the global economy keeps pushing the communication around the world and different accents and behaviors are necessary to become accustomed to. The future is certainly not so distant; therefore, the study of varieties of English provides a good sense for English language teaching to introduce or continue the accents of Outer and Expanding Circle to students.

In conclusion, the previous studies examined attitudes towards native and non-native accents of English in other Asian countries which are considered as Expanding Circle groups have found that students in EFL context still look up to the Inner Circle as their role model of English. Yet, they do not have strongly negative attitudes towards the other accents. However, there were not many studies to investigate Thai students' attitudes towards accents of English in the Thai context. Previous studies in Thailand mainly examined Thai students' attitudes towards the use of English in general. Not much information on how Thai look at English as an International Language and perceive non-native accents of English has been explored. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate Thai students' language attitudes to find out their attitudes towards different English accents. In current study, the focus of investigation placed on different English accents which include American English, Filipino English, and Thai English.



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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is an experimental research. This section presents how the quantitative research was conducted. The topics include: (1) research design, (2) research procedure, (3) population and participants, (4) research instruments (5) data collection procedures and, (6) data analysis.

Research Design

This study is an experimental design. The listening comprehension test was designed by using speakers of three different English accents to compare students' listening comprehension scores and the attitudes questionnaire was adapted from previous study by Rujipomwasin (2004), McKenzie (2006), and Young (2007) to investigate their attitudes towards the three English accents.

Research Procedure

Figure 3.1

Research Procedure

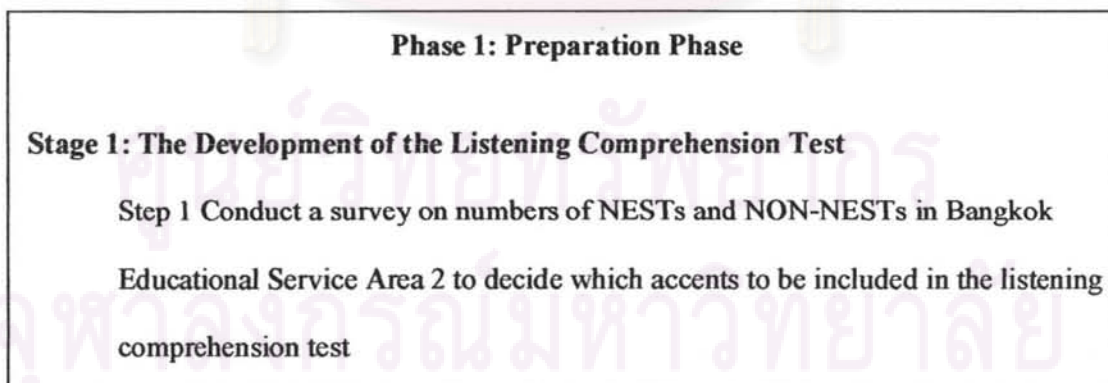
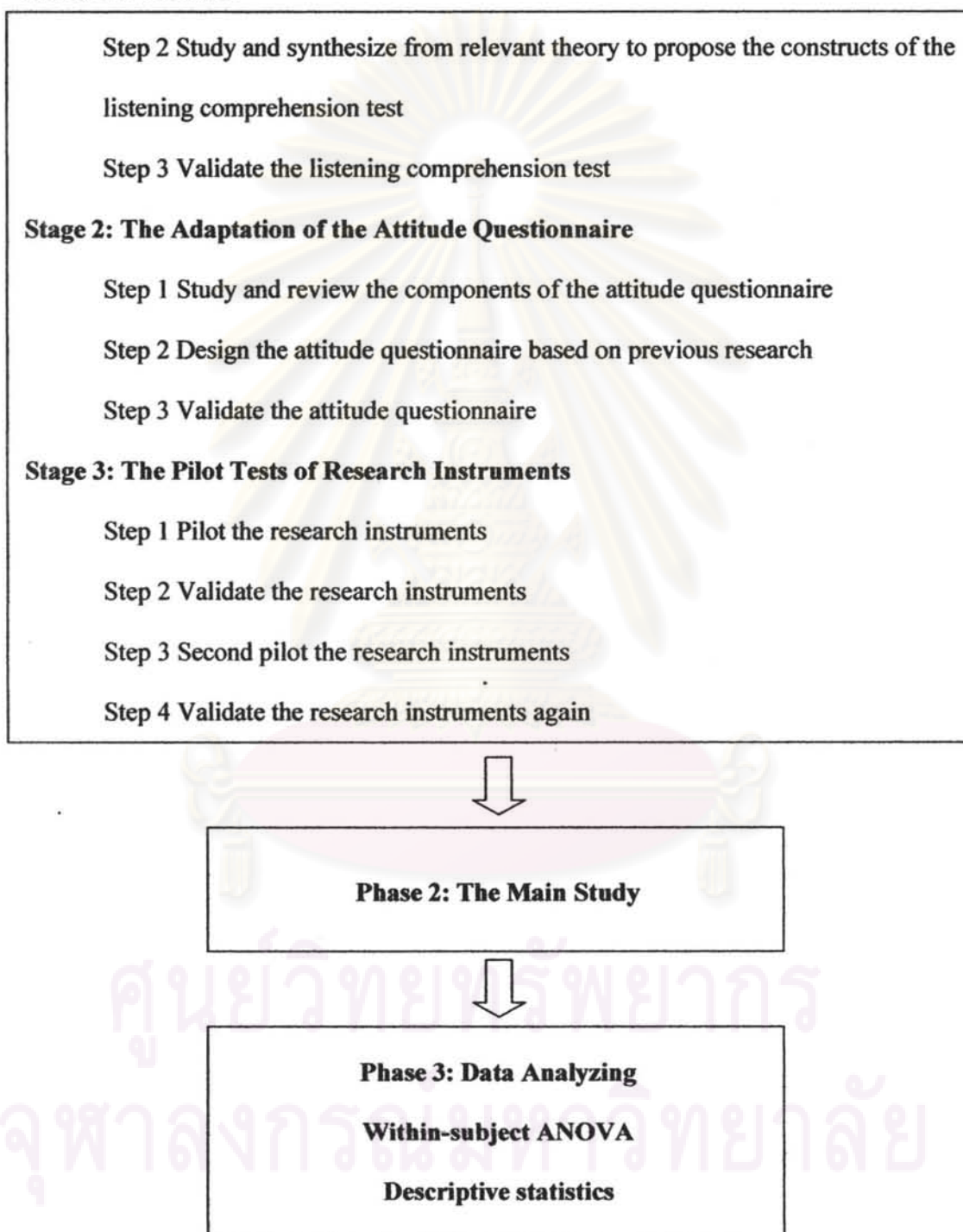


Figure 3.1 (Continued)

Research Procedure

Apart from investigating the effects of different English accents on listening comprehension ability, the researcher employed the attitude questionnaire to observe the attitudes towards the three English accents.

Population and Samples

1. Population

The population in this study was upper secondary government school students in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2. The total population was 41,450. The numbers can be broken down as shown below.

Table 3.1

Numbers of Upper Secondary School Students in Government Schools in Bangkok Educational Area 2 in Year 2008.

Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
14,732	13,565	13,153	41,450

The data was retrieved from Statistics Data of Office of Basic Educational Commission, Department Operation Center, Ministry of Education on July 9th, 2009.

2. Samples

2.1 Samples of Foreign English Teachers

In the first step, the researcher carried out the survey in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 in order to investigate the numbers of NESTs and NON-NESTs to obtain

the numbers and nationalities of them in government schools. The data identified the three English accents which would be selected in this study. As there were no official records for numbers of NESTs and NON-NESTs at secondary school level, the data were based on the telephone survey of foreign English teachers in 37 government schools in Bangkok Educational Area 2. The questions given out to the schools were “Have there been any foreign English teachers for the three to four years ago?”, and “If yes, what nationality are they?” in order to verify that the students in the secondary level actually had encounter with the NESTs and NON-NESTs before.

The schools in the survey were selected according to the following criteria:

- They are Bangkok government schools in Bangkok from Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 (37 schools).

According to the standard set by the Ministry of Education, the criteria to classify the school size at secondary level are the following:

Schools with 1 – 499 students are considered as small school

Schools with 500 – 1499 students are considered as medium school

Schools with 1500 – 3000 students are considered as large school

Schools with more than 3,000 students are considered as extra-large school

All 37 schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 were included in the survey. The researcher called 37 schools and received feedback from all schools. The survey showed that there were no foreign English teachers in small and medium schools. Thus, only the large and extra-large schools matched the criteria.

Table 3.2

Nationality Ranking of Foreign English Teachers in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2

Nationalities	Numbers of Teachers
American	23
Australian	13
Filipino	12
British	10
African American	6
Canadian	3
Singaporean	2
Malaysian	1

The table shows that the highest portion of nationality is American for NESTs and Filipino for NON-NESTs. Also, the fact that Thai teachers have major role in English classroom was included in the selection of English accents. Thus, after the survey was done, three varieties of English accents which were American, Filipino, and Thai were chosen to be the representative of accents that students were most exposed to in their English classroom. The three English accents were recorded and utilized later as a listening comprehension test.

The speakers of the test of this study were selected according to the following criteria:

- The speakers are native speakers of American, Thai, and Filipino that were resulted from the survey according to the English accents of the English teachers.
- The speakers are NESTs and NON-NESTs at large and extra-large secondary schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2.

2.2 Samples of Students

The groups of students were selected by purposive sampling technique. After the survey had been done, the student selection was based on the following criteria:

- The students are from government schools in Bangkok, in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2.
- The students are from the large and extra large schools where there are foreign English teachers.

The schools were all government schools which applied the National Education Act B.E. 2549 in the Foreign Language subject standards for the classroom practice. After the data concerning numbers of foreign English teachers were obtained, students from large and extra-large schools which have the target foreign English teachers were selected for the study.

Numbers of grade 11 students in each school were selected by purposive sampling technique to be the representative of this study. Grade 11 students were chosen because students at this level had already been exposed to the other English accents beside the native varieties in their previous years. They had an opportunity to study with at least one NESTs and one NON-NESTs based on the information obtained from the survey on the

foreign English teachers conducted earlier. Furthermore, according to the Basic Educational Curriculum B.E. 2544 (A.D. 2001), Grade 11 students should have knowledge of English vocabulary of at least 4,000 content words and have familiarity with English dialogues concerning situations in everyday life.

The steps in sampling process were as follows:

- 1) The target population was identified. The number of government school students in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 in July 2009 was 41,450.
- 2) The large and extra-large schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2 was selected as the representative subgroup of the population because there were NESTs and NON-NESTs. The following table shows the list of schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2. The data were acquired from Office of the Basic Education Commission, Department Operation Center, Ministry of Education.

Table 3.3

List of Large and Extra-Large Schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2

School Size	Name of School	Number of Students
	Bodindecha (Sing Singhaseni) 4	1,724
	Sukhumnawaphanuppathum	1,826
Large	Thepleela	1,963
	Thonglang	1,977
	Donmuangchaturachinda	1,992

Table 3.3 (Continued)

List of Large and Extra-Large Schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2

School Size	Name of School	Number of Students
Large	Rittayawanalai 2	2,045
	Triamudomsuksa Pattnakarn Ratchada	2,121
	Seekan	2,132
	Rattanakosin Sompot Latkrabang	2,259
	Rachadamri	2,284
	Rattanakosinsompot Bangken	2,306
	Sripruetta	2,360
	Satrisettabutbumpen	2,473
	Nawamintarachinutit Satriwittaya 2	2,478
	Ladplakaopittayakom	2,554
	Nawamintarachinutit	2,576
	BangkokNawamintarachinutit	2,671
	Benchamarachalai	2,797
	Ratchawinit Bangken	2,807
Extra-large	Nongchok	3,116
	Nawamintarachinutit Bodindecha	3,133
	Bangkapi	3,185
	Protpittayapayat	3,210
	Donmuang Thaharnagardbumroong	3,237

Table 3.3 (Continued)

List of Large and Extra-Large Schools in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2

School Size	Name of School	Number of Students
Extra-large	Thahamagardbumroong Triamudomsuksa	3,284
	Nomklao	3,411
	Thepsirinromklao	3,547
	Sarawittaya	3,687
	Bodindecha (Sing Singhaseni) 2	3,697
	Settabutbumpen	3,703
	Triamudomsuksa Nomklao	3,919
	Howang	4,085
	Triamudomsuksa Pattanakam	4,307
	Rittayawannalai	4,571
	Bodindecha (Sing Singhaseni)	5,358
	Satriwittaya 2	5,540

- 3) The total number of participants in the study which was determined by Yamane formula (1976) should be 315 and upper, with sample size for $\pm 5\%$ Precision Level where Confidence Level is 95% and $p=.05$. According to the following formula,

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$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

when

n = sample size

N = number of population

e = error rate

The sample size obtained for the study was 412.

- 4) The samples of 412 were from Thepleela School, Sripruetta School, Triamudomsuksa Pattnakarn School, and Howang School. The selection was based on the information that there were both American and Filipino who instructed in the English subject according to the survey on numbers and nationalities of the English teachers in order to ensure that the students would have exposed already to the accents they would hear in the listening comprehension test. Thepleela and Sripruetta School was chosen to be the representatives of large schools while Triamudomsuksa Pattanakarn and Howang Schools were selected for extra-large schools. Based on the survey on numbers and nationalities of foreign English teachers, English teachers from the four selected schools have the major varieties of English accents to be used for the current study.

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Table 3.4

Student Samples of the Study

School	Number of Student
Thepleela	90
Sripuetta	105
Triamudomsuksa Pattanakarn	126
Howang	91
Total	412

Totally, 412 students participated in the study by the purposive sampling technique. There were 90 Thepleela students from two classes, 105 Sripuetta students from three classes, 126 Triamudomsuksa Pattanakarn students from three classes, and 91 Howang students from two classes.

Research Instruments

As described above, one of the main objectives of the study is to compare students' listening comprehension ability of different English accents from NESTs and NON-NESTs and study the attitudes towards their accents in Bangkok Educational Service Area 2. The research instruments consisted of the listening comprehension test and the attitude questionnaire.

1. Listening Comprehension Test

- 1.1 Construction of the Listening Comprehension Test

1.1.1 Test Objectives

The listening test was a proficiency test based on the criteria targeted by the Curriculum of Basic English in learning areas of foreign languages. The test objectives align with the purpose of using language for communication. According to the curriculum, Grade 11 students should be skilful in the use of foreign languages (with emphases on listening, speaking, reading and writing) to communicate about themselves, their families, schools, the environment, free time and recreation, health, selling and buying, climate, language and science and technology with a vocabulary of around 3,600-3,750 words (words with different levels of usage). Thus, the test contents covered similar topics stated in the curriculum. This skill-based test deduced major basic listening sub-skills from Hughes (2003). Thus, the objectives of the test was to measure students' listening sub-skills of (1) deducing meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items through understanding word formation and contextual clues in utterances and spoken text, (2) identifying the main points or important information in discourse, (3) distinguishing main ideas from supporting detail, (4) understanding relationships between parts of text by recognizing discourse markers, and (5) understanding the communicative function and social relationship between speakers.

1.1.2 Test Specifications

The listening comprehension test for this study was designed by the researcher based on the scope of the tests in previous studies by Piamsai (2005) and Kyutoku (2007). The test specifications are shown below.

Table 3.5

Listening Comprehension Test Specifications

Items	Specifications
Test takers	Grade 11 students in Bangkok
Purpose of the test	To assess students' ability to understand the gist and the overall message of a spoken text, to extract specific information and to follow the significant points in an oral utterance (listening comprehension).
Time	40 minutes
Format	multiple-choice; the speakers are American, Thai, and Filipino
Number of items	48
Input	Recordings played twice
Sources	Internet, audio books, text books
Topics	Daily life: family talks, phone calls Entertainment: cinema, music, art, shopping, fashion Health: visiting doctor, dentists, clinics, hospitals School: teachers' instructions, students' assignments
Speaker characteristics	Gender: male, female Age: between 28-40 years old Accents: American, Thai, and Filipino
Speed of delivery	Approximately 150-180 words per minute
Number of voices	2 maximum

The listening constructs proposed by Hughes (2003) and Piamsai (2005) were applied as criteria to analyze which construct should be included in the listening comprehension test. Moreover, the constructs of listening part in several standardized tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC, Cambridge Proficiency Test were also investigated. The listening objectives and task types of the present test were proposed below.

Table 3.6

Listening Comprehension Test Objectives

Listening Skills	Task Types
1) Direct Meaning Comprehension 1.1) Listening for main idea(s) or important information and distinguishing that from supporting details or example. This includes distinguishing facts from opinions when clearly marked. 1.2) Listening for specific information, including recall of important details. Understanding directions and instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to short conversations and choose appropriate answers. • Listen to short excerpts, e.g. announcements, instructions, advertisements and choose correct answers.
2) Inferred Meaning Comprehension 2.1) Making inferences and deductions based on information in the text. This includes deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to short excerpts, e.g. phone calls, announcement and choose correct answers.

Table 3.6 (Continued)

Listening Comprehension Test Objectives

Listening Skills	Task Types
2.2) Determining a speaker's attitude or intention towards a listener or a topic.	
2.3) Relating utterances to their social and situational contexts.	
2.4) Recognizing the communicative functions of utterances.	

The listening comprehension test was composed of questions in which students were given short conversations, longer conversations, and monologues, in American, Thai, and Filipino accents. Respondents were instructed to select the best answer from multiple-choice questions.

Table 3.7

Objectives and Numbers of Test Items

Objectives	Item			Number of Items
	Thai	Filipino	American	
1. Identify the main idea	1, 21, 33, 34, 35, 40	5, 14, 41, 44	9, 28, 29,	13

Table 3.7 (Continued)

Objectives and Numbers of Test Items

Objectives	Item			Number of Items
	Thai	Filipino	American	
2. Extract specific details	22, 24, 36, 37, 38	6, 7, 15, 16, 42, 45, 36, 48	12, 20, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32,	21
3. Deduct meaning from unfamiliar lexical items	4, 23, 39		11, 18,	5
4. Determine speaker's intention	2, 3	8, 43, 47		5
5. Relate the conversation to social context		13	17	2
6. Recognize the communicative functions of utterances			10, 19	2

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Examples of test items relevant to the listening constructs are provided below.

Example 1

Listening Script:

(woman): How do you like your new apartment, James?

(man): Well, I enjoy living downtown, but I don't like that my apartment is so small. I want to get a bigger one but rent in a city is so expensive.

(woman): I think so too. That's why I bought a place out of town. It takes me longer to get to work but my house in the country has lot more space.

1) Direct Meaning Comprehension

1.1) Listening for main idea(s)

1.2) Listening for specific information.

What are the speakers discussing?

What does the man like about his apartment?

(a) Their homes

(a) It's small

(b) Their jobs

(b) It's in downtown

(c) Their travel plans

(c) It's expensive

(d) Their favorite cities

(d) It's big

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2) Inferred Meaning Comprehension

2.1) Making inferences

What can be inferred about the woman?

- (a) Her house is very small
- (b) She thinks the city is exciting
- (c) Her job is very difficult
- (d) She lives outside the city

2.2) Determining a speaker's attitude or

intention towards a listener or a topic.

What does the man want to do?

- (a) Get a new job
- (b) Visit another city
- (c) Find a larger apartment
- (d) Move to the country

Example 2

Listening Script:

(man): Hello, I ordered the computer disc from your catalog at the beginning of the month and I haven't received it yet. Could you look it for me please?

(woman): Certainly, sir. Do you have your order number by any chance?

(man): Yes, it's 4816490.

(woman): You're Mr. Donaldson, is that right? Well, according to my record, it left our warehouse on Monday, that was the 5th of May, so it should be delivered to you tomorrow.

2.3) Relating utterances to their social and situational contexts.

What is the man relationship to the woman?

- (a) He's her boss
- (b) He's her patient
- (c) He's her teacher
- (d) He's her customer

2.4) Recognizing the communicative function of utterances.

Why did the man telephone the woman?

- (a) To check on his order
- (b) To arrange a delivery time
- (c) To cancel his order
- (d) To change his order

As above noted, the listening comprehension test of different accents of English were designed upon the listening constructs of Hughes (2003) and Piamsai (2005). Students were presented with a conversation by English speakers in various accents and asked to select the best multiple choice answers. Conversations and spoken texts by both NS and NNS were used. Participants were asked comprehension questions using a 4-alternative multiple-choice format. The total number of questions is 48. The question format and organization are displayed below.

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Table 3.8

Listening Comprehension Test Format and Organization

Item	Text type	Accents
1-4		Thai
5-8	Short Dialogue	Filipino
9-12		American
13-16		Filipino
17-20	Long Dialogue	American
21-24		Thai
25-32		American
33-40	Monologue	Thai
41-48		Filipino

The listening comprehension test was delivered by the speakers according to the criteria stated in 2.1 Samples of Foreign English Teachers. The listening scripts were selected from instructional and authentic scripts provided by British Council, BBC, Bangkok Post, Wikipedia, YouTube, and ELLO (English Language Listening Lab Online) representing a range of topics and were further modified to be suitable to students' proficiency level.

1.2 Validation of the test

1.2.1 Validation by the Experts

The content validity of the test items were validated by three experts in the field of English language testing. The experts were requested to rate each item whether it was compatible with the objectives and the listening comprehension aspects stated. They used the evaluation form adapted by the researcher based on Piamsai (2005) (See Appendix A). More specifically, the experts evaluated each item by evaluating whether the item was matched to the test objective and giving comments for improvement in case needed.

The test was validated by three experts in the language testing in July, 2009. The experts commented the overall test as the following:

- The quality of voices of each accent was not totally equal. There were buzzing sounds in recording of Filipino accent. Thus, the researcher had to redo the re-recording according to the suggestions.
- Regarding the test content, one expert suggested that the organization of multiple choices should be arranged according to their length. It helped in random the correct answer. The researcher, therefore, modified the test accordingly.
- Item numbers 2, 6, 11, and 18 were modified slightly to decrease the difficulty of vocabulary.
 - In item 2, the recorded script of the sentence 'I'd better rain check this time.' was removed because the vocabulary level was too difficult for the students.

- In item 6, a multiple choice ‘It’s too cheap.’ was suggested that it was too obvious to be the wrong one which was not considered as a good distracter; therefore, it was changed to ‘It’s expensive.’
- The question in item 11 was misleading. It was revised as ‘What does the woman suggest?’ instead of ‘What does the woman imply?’
- Similar to item 11, the question in item 18 was changed from ‘What does the speaker imply?’ to ‘What does the speaker suggest?’
- There were minor adjustment on the language punctuation and the test instructions. For example, the question that stated “Which statement does not true according to the talk?” was changed to “Which statement does NOT true according to the talk?”
- The experts recommended that the directions should begin with the conversation numbers and state that the conversation was for which item numbers for students to prepare listening for each part of the test. The instructions were recorded and added accordingly.

The revised test after the modification in accordance with the experts’ suggestions and the tape scripts are presented in Appendix B and C.

1.2.2 The First Pilot Test

After the modification, the test was pilot tested with 44 Grade 11 students who were not the participants in the study at Triamudomsuksa Pattanakarn School in August, in first semester of academic year 2009. Initially, the listening comprehension tests and questionnaire was tried out with 44 students in August 2009. The head of English subject

department and the teacher in charge from each school was contacted and asked for permission to deliver the listening test. The students were in Grade 11. The purpose of this stage was to validate the content, the reliability value, difficulty index, and discrimination index of the test.

In the first pilot stage, the test contained 48 items. The test data were analyzed using SPSS program (version 16). Descriptive statistics were generated for the test item. The total scores obtained from the test takers in the pilot stage were shown as follows:

Table 3.9

Descriptive Statistics of the First Pilot Test (N=44, Total Scores = 48)

Statistics	Values	Std. Error
Mean	31.95	0.77
Median	32.00	
Mode	32.00	
Std. Deviation	5.11	
Minimum	22.00	
Maximum	44.00	
Skewness	0.28	0.36
Kurtosis	0.13	0.70

There were 44 students who took the test. The highest score was 44 out of 48 and the lowest score was 22. The average score was 31.95. It was very close to the center of

distribution which was 32. The most frequency obtained score was 32. Because the mean, the mode, and the median were not same in this analysis, the distribution of scores was not normal. Moreover, the skewness value indicated that the shape of the distribution was not normal since it was not close to zero (0.28). The standard deviation (SD) was 5.11. The larger the SD, the more variability from the central point in the distribution. Thus, when considering the mean at 31.95, the SD of 5.11 was somehow large. So, it was inferred that the participants' ability in taking the listening comprehension test was not similar and they were diverse group of students with different level of proficiency, which is acceptable group of participants in this study.

To analyze the test reliability, this study used Cronbach's alpha of the listening comprehension test. Cronbach's alpha is a statistical index of internal consistency that is determined by the correlations of items and the numbers of items in a scale. Higher alpha implies the higher internal consistency. It has been suggested that an acceptable scale should produce a Cronbach's alpha larger than 0.7 in its target population (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The results of the first pilot test showed that the Cronbach's alpha fell on 0.71 calculated by the SPSS program. Therefore, the test had enough internal consistency.

Furthermore, the test was analyzed for difficulty index and discrimination index of the test. The difficulty index and the discrimination index were calculated based on the following formulas:

$$\text{Item Difficulty Index} = \frac{N_{\text{correct}}}{N_{\text{total}}}$$

N_{correct} = number of students answering correctly

N_{total} = number of students taking the test

$$\text{Item Discrimination Index} = IF_{\text{upper}} - IF_{\text{lower}}$$

IF_{upper} = item difficulty for the upper group on the whole test

IF_{lower} = item difficulty for the lower group on the whole test

The criteria suggested by Piamsai (2005) were used. The item should have the difficulty index value between 0.2-0.8 and the discrimination index value at 0.2 or higher.

The item difficulty analysis indicated that items 1, 12, 13, and 27 needed to be improved. Items 1, 12, and 27 received lower discrimination index than the criteria (lower than 0.2), item 12 had the difficulty index lower than the criteria (lower than 0.2), and items 13, and 27 obtained higher difficulty index (more than 0.8). Thus, for item 12, one of the choices was changed to lessen the level of difficulty. For items 1, 13, and 27, level of the vocabulary of choices were modified to increase the level of difficulty. The modification of each item is showed below.

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Item 1

Difficulty Index 0.79

Discrimination Index 0.09

Before Modification**After Modification**

What are these people talking about?

What are these people talking about?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) A journey they are about to take. | (a) A journey they are about to take. |
| (b) A final exam they are going to take. | (b) A final exam they are going to take. |
| (c) Something they forgot to say to their friend. | (c) Something they forgot to say to their friend. |
| (d) A multiplication problem they cannot find the solution to. | (d) A problem about the assignment that they cannot find the solution to. |

Item 12

Difficulty Index 0.19

Discrimination Index 0.11

Before Modification**After Modification**

What will the women probably do?

What will the women probably do?

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (a) Find a hospital. | (a) Go to the restroom. |
| (b) Wait at a drugstore. | (b) Wait at a drugstore. |
| (c) Buy some aspirin. | (c) Look for some aspirin. |
| (d) Go to a doctor's office. | (d) Go to a doctor's office. |

Item 13

Difficulty Index 0.86

Discrimination Index 0.23

Before Modification

What are the speakers discussing?

- (a) Their jobs.
- (b) Their homes.
- (c) Their favorite cities.
- (d) Their travel plans.

After Modification

What are the speakers discussing?

- (a) Their jobs.
- (b) Their homes.
- (c) Their work place.
- (d) Their travel plans.

Item 27

Difficulty Index 0.94

Discrimination Index 0.17

Before Modification

The novels are popular among _____

- (a) IT professionals.
- (b) High school students.
- (c) Teachers and parents.
- (d) Publishing officials

After Modification

The novels are popular among _____

- (a) IT professionals.
- (b) High school students.
- (c) Teachers and parents.
- (d) Female university students.

The test statistics are summarized in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10

Test Statistics Summary of the First Pilot Test

	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Test Scores	31.95	22	44	5.11
Difficulty index	0.62	0.19	0.94	0.19
Discrimination index	0.32	0.11	0.54	0.10
Cronbrach's Alpha	0.71			

1.2.3 The Second Pilot Test

After the first listening comprehension test was revised and improved. It was tried out again. 47 students participated in the second pilot test. The purpose of this stage was to confirm that each test item had satisfied value according to the criteria set by the researcher and could be ready to use in the main study.

In late August 2009, another group of 47 students at Triamudomsuksa Pattanakarn School who were not selected for the main study participated in the second pilot second.

Descriptive statistics were generated for the test item. The total scores obtained from the test takers in the second pilot stage were shown below:

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Table 3.11

Descriptive Statistics of the Second Pilot Test (N=47, Total Scores = 48)

Statistics	Values	Std. Error
Mean	29.90	0.77
Median	30.00	
Mode	32.00	
Std. Deviation	5.12	
Minimum	17.00	
Maximum	42.00	
Skewness	0.75	0.34
Kurtosis	0.38	0.67

47 students participated in the test. The highest score was 42 out of 48 and the lowest score was 17. The average score (29.90) was very close to the center of distribution (30). The most frequency obtained score was 32. From the value of the mean, the mode, and the median, it can be concluded that the distribution of scores was not normal. Moreover, the skewness value indicated that the shape of the distribution was not normal either (0.75). The standard deviation (SD) was 5.12. Similarly to the first pilot test, it was inferred that the participants' ability was diverse and acceptable to be participants in this study.

The test was calculated by SPSS program to find Cronbrach's alpha value again. In the second pilot test, Cronbrach's alpha fell on 0.76. The test at this stage carried

satisfied reliability value and difficulty and discrimination index together with appropriate content validity. The test statistics of the second pilot test are summarized in Table 3.12 and the details of difficulty index and discrimination index of the two pilot tests are provided in Appendix D and E.

Table 3.12

Test Statistics Summary of the Second Pilot Test

	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Test Scores	29.90	17	42	5.12
Difficulty index	0.58	0.24	0.80	0.17
Discrimination index	0.37	0.20	0.64	0.12
Cronbrach's Alpha	0.76			

2. Attitude Questionnaire

In addition to the listening comprehension test, the test regarding students' attitudes toward English accents in the listening tests was developed to investigate the domains that are related to listening comprehension. The attitude scale was designed to measure attitudes toward English accents. Degree of attitudes toward English accents was comprised of five-point Likert scales. The attitude questionnaire was presented after the students completed the listening comprehension test.

The attitude scale was adapted from questionnaires of Rujipomwasin (2004), McKenzie (2006), and Young (2007). The questionnaire aimed at identifying the

students' attitudes of English accents. The questionnaire was constructed for the verbal-guise test. Three varieties of English were selected to investigate participants' attitudes towards native and non-native varieties of English; American English, Thai English, and Filipino English. The text for recording of the verbal-guise was similar to what students heard in their listening comprehension tests.

Before carrying out this instrument, it was necessary to decide which kind of traits (adjectives) should be chosen. The researcher wanted to investigate students' attitudes towards the three English accents in terms of two dimensions: status and solidarity. These two reflect the important dimensions of social interaction that affect language use (Baker, 1992). In prior studies by Liang (2002), Major and Fitzmaurice (2002), Lindemann (2003), Rujipomwasin (2004), Hiraga (2005), Major et al. (2005), McKenzie (2006), Young (2006), and Young (2007), similar traits chose for investigating the solidarity dimension were mostly friendly-unfriendly, pleasant-unpleasant, gentle-not gentle, funny-not funny and etc. For the status dimension, previous studies used mainly the traits which were intelligent-ignorant, confident-unconfident, and clear-unclear.

In order to obtain a degree of validity of these traits, Young (2007) and McKenzie (2006) employed the adjectives in the seven-point scale based on the development of questionnaire in their study. The adjectives employed were obtained during the pilot study, where participants, considered comparable judges to the listener-judges selected for their main study, were asked to provide descriptions of each of the different English speakers. In total, the most frequent descriptions were selected. Similar process was done by Rujipomwasin (2004). She asked Thai Engineering students who were comparable to the listeners in her main study to give descriptions of English speeches they heard and the most

frequent descriptions were selected for the verbal-guise test. The traits selected for the three studies reflected characteristics on principal dimensions of solidarity and status dimensions. Using the statistical method in Rujipomwasin (2004), McKenzie (2006), and Young (2007), it resulted that traits were clearly divided into two factors: educated, intelligent, clear, successful, fluent, confident, and elegant had high loadings on status whereas pleasant, gentle, modest, funny, comforting, friendly, and kind had high loadings on solidarity.

In order to construct a semantic differential scale for the verbal-guise test in the current study, the descriptions corresponded to personality traits used in the previous verbal-guise studies by Rujipomwasin (2004), McKenzie (2006), and Young (2007) were adapted. Some duplicated personality traits such as intelligent – educated, and gentle – kind, therefore, only one trait that covers similar aspect was selected. The test aimed to investigate attitudes towards different English accents by providing different adjectives to rate according to the listeners' opinions. Finally, eight traits for measuring Thai students' language attitudes towards three English accents of the teachers were obtained: intelligent, confident, fluent, clear, pleasant, modest, funny, and gentle. All the items were translated into Thai and verified by experts in English language field. The experts suggested that some items which had been translated did not convey the same meaning as they had in English. The feature 'fluent' was changed from 'คําคงแคล่ว' to 'พูดคล่อง' and 'gentle' was changed from 'อ่อนโยนนุ่มนวล' to 'อ่อนโยน'.

The attitudes questionnaire was pilot tested together with the first pilot test of the listening comprehension test. No question about the meaning of each feature emerged from the students after they completed the attitudes questionnaire. The test reliability identified by Cronbrach's alpha calculated by SPSS program fell on 0.85. The sample of the attitude questionnaire can be found in Appendix F.

Data Collection

The study aimed at examining the effects of different English accents used by English teachers as the independent variable and the students' listening comprehension scores was the dependent variables, and to investigate students' attitudes towards the English accents. To achieve the objectives of the research, the experiment consisted of several steps.

The main study was conducted in September 2009. The steps of the test administration were as the following:

- 1) The English teacher of the class was given the listening test CD. The instructions were recorded together with the listening items.
- 2) The teacher distributed the question and the answer sheet to the students.
- 3) The teacher started playing the CD.
- 4) Students received instructions of the test from the recording.
- 5) Students started doing the listening comprehension test of which they heard each conversation twice.
- 6) After listening to the conversation, the students answered the listening comprehension test.
- 7) After the students completed the test, they listened to three different accents again to complete the attitude questionnaire.

All participants from each school went through identical procedures. The procedure took about 40-45 minutes in each time for one class.

In the last step of the study, the data were collected in order to be analyzed afterwards.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved quantitative data for both listening comprehension test and attitudes toward the English accents. The analyses were as the following:

Table 3.13

Summary of Data Analysis

Research Questions	Objectives	Research Instruments	Statistics for Analysis
1. To what extent do different English accents affect the listening comprehension ability test scores of students?	To compare listening comprehension ability of students listening to varieties of English accents.	Listening Comprehension Test	Repeated Measures ANOVA
2. What are the attitudes of students towards different English accents?	To explore students' attitudes towards varieties of English accents.	Attitude Questionnaire	Descriptive Statistics

For the data acquired from the listening comprehension tests, SPSS statistical program (version 16) was used for data analyses. In order to answer research question 1 and the test hypothesis 1, the scores from the listening comprehension test from different accents were calculated and compared using the Repeated Measures (within groups analysis of variances). The data were analyzed to compare the listening comprehension scores of students within the same group from three different English accents whether the differences in scores are significant as shown in the table below.

Table 3.14

Group of Scores for Data Analysis

	Accents		
	American	Thai	Filipino
Item	5-8	1-4	9-12
Number	17-20	21-24	13-16
	25-32	33-40	41-48
Total Score	Σ American	Σ Thai	Σ Filipino

Repeated Measures was suitable to test the significant difference of the listening comprehension ability of the students who listened to the three accents at the same time.

The use of within-subject ANOVA allowed the researcher to discuss about the effect of English accents.

Also, in order to investigate the students' attitudes towards different English accents in the national level, descriptive statistics, which includes mean and standard deviation, were carried out to explore this issue. The rating scales should reflect students' attitude towards English accents as the following:

5.00-4.50	-	totally agree
4.49-3.50	-	agree
3.49-2.50	-	neutral
2.49-1.50	-	disagree
1.49-1.00	-	totally disagree

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CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with repeated measures to test hypothesis 1 and for research question 1. The second part concerns quantitative analysis of data to answer the second research question 2.

The Comparison of the English Accent Effects on the Students' Listening Comprehension Test Scores.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the students' average scores obtained from listening comprehension tests of the three English accents selected in this study.

$$(H_0 : \mu_{\text{Thai}} = \mu_{\text{Filipino}} = \mu_{\text{American}}, \alpha = 0.05)$$

The test reliability for the listening comprehension test in the main study with 412 students was calculated by SPSS program and was resulted at 0.69 which is lower than the criteria. This could be because in the pilot stages, the number of students participated in the pilot tests were limited. When the number of participants increases, the variables became more diverse and, thus, reduce the test reliability.

To test the hypothesis, repeated measures ANOVA was performed to investigate the significant differences between the scores. When conducting a repeated measures ANOVA, the assumption of sphericity must be met (i.e., that homogeneity of the differences between samples groups). In the present study, Mauchly's Test of Sphericity

is employed, which should exceed 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) for sphericity to be assumed (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Kyotoku, 2007). Table 4.1 shows the result of the test.

Table 4.1

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Accents	.99	5.36	2	.07

From the table, the p value was more than 0.05. This means that the sphericity was assumed. This made the use of a within-subject ANOVA possible because the assumption was not violated.

A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to compare the overall mean scores of the three English accents. The means and standard deviations of the scores for each accent as well as analysis of variance summaries are presented in Table 4.2 and in Table 4.3.

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Table 4.2

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Each Accent (N=412, Total Score=16)

Accent	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Thai	10.61	2.31	412
Filipino	9.54	2.27	412
American	10.97	2.33	412

Table 4.3

Within-Subjects Analysis of Variance Summaries for the Three Accents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Accent	454.807	1.000	454.807	44.642*
Error	4187.193	411.000	10.188	

* $p < .05$

The results showed a significant overall effect for all the three English accents, $p < .05$. In order to examine the individual differences between the scores of the three English accents, a pairwise comparison analysis was conducted for the repeated measures factor. The Pairwise Comparisons table below shows all the possible comparisons of the repeated measures variable. All comparisons are adjusted for the Bonferroni method.

Table 4.4

Post Hoc Test: Pairwise Comparisons for the Three Accents

(I) accent	(J) accent	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Thai	Filipino	1.06*	.17	.00	.67	1.46
	American	-.36	.16	.06	-.74	.014
Filipino	Thai	-1.06*	.17	.00	-1.46	-.67
	American	-1.43*	.15	.00	-1.79	-1.07
American	Thai	.36	.16	.06	-.014	.74
	Filipino	1.43*	.15	.00	1.07	1.79

* $p < .05$

As can be seen from Table 4.4 (above), when the results were analyzed for contrasts between the mean scores, the differences between Filipino and Thai accents, and between Filipino and American accents reached statistical significance.

The results above demonstrate a clear pattern that Filipino English are rated significantly lower than the other two. This finding is consistent with data from the number of studies previously conducted and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The Students' Attitudes towards English Accents

All participants were asked to listen to the recorded speech again after they finished the listening comprehension test. They were provided with the attitude questionnaire without knowing which accents were included. The three accents, which were from Thai, American, and Filipino, were arranged to be heard at random. The students were informed to give their opinions on a five-point Likert scale rating according to the answer sheet with eight adjectives (Appendix F). The instructions provided were conducted in their native Thai language so that the students had a clear explanation of the meaning of each adjective word used. The result of the mean scores is displayed in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.4 below.

Figure 4.1

Mean Scores of English Accents of Eight Adjectives (N=412)

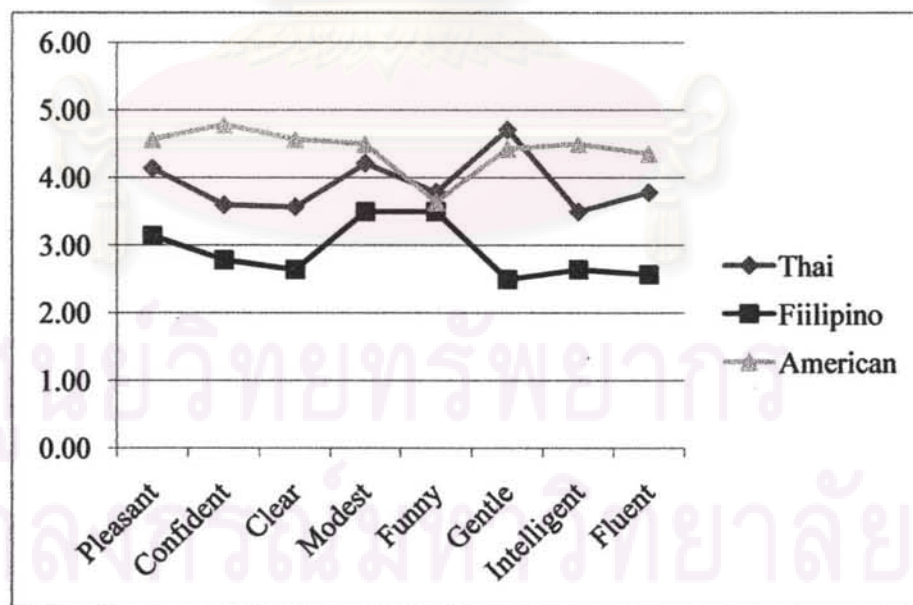


Table 4.5

Mean Scores of English Accents of Eight Adjectives (N=412)

Adjectives	English Accents			SD	Average
	Thai	Filipino	American		
Pleasant	4.14	3.14	4.57	0.73	3.95
Confident	3.60	2.79	4.79	1.00	3.73
Clear	3.57	2.64	4.57	0.97	3.59
Modest	4.21	3.50	4.50	0.51	4.07
Funny	3.79	3.50	3.64	0.14	3.64
Gentle	4.71	2.50	4.43	1.20	3.88
Intelligent	3.50	2.64	4.50	0.93	3.55
Fluent	3.79	2.57	4.36	0.91	3.57
Average	3.91	2.91	4.42		

*5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree

For data acquired from the attitude questionnaire, SPSS statistical program (version 16) was used for data analyses. From overall descriptive statistics, it is clearly shown that the participants have higher attitudes towards American English more than other accents in almost every aspect. The only trait that does not seem to have large difference in the mean scores is 'funny'. However, one aspect that the Thai accent has the highest average score is 'gentle' (4.71). On the other hand, the Filipino accent has the lowest score in every aspect.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V consists of five parts. This chapter includes the research summary and the summary of the findings in the first part. The second part provides the discussions of the findings. Lastly, the recommendations for future studies are presented in the final part.

Research Summary

The present study has two main objectives: 1) To compare listening comprehension ability test scores of students listening to different English accents and 2) To explore students' attitudes towards different English accents. The investigation focuses on the different English accents which are considered to have no significant effect on the students' listening comprehension ability.

Various studies showed different results on the effects of different English accents to the listening comprehension ability. With the accents the listeners were not familiar with, they seemed to have low level of understanding while they could understand some familiar local accents as equal as the native accents such as American and British. The results hope to expose the level of listening comprehension difficulty of different English accents to clarify what are the more familiar English accents for Thai students. This study hopes to carry notable implications for Thailand in the issue of recruitment of English teachers that NESTs and NON-NESTs are adequately qualified, especially in terms of their accents, to give the instruction for students to be able to communicate with English in the world. All of these interests lead to two research questions as the following:

1. To what extent do different English accents affect the listening comprehension ability test scores of students?
2. What are the attitudes of students towards different English accents?

Selecting the English Accents

The selection of the English accents in this study was grounded on the survey of NESTs and NON-NESTs who teach English in Bangkok government schools from Bangkok Educational Service Area 2. As there was no official records for numbers of foreign teachers in secondary school level, the data was considered based on the telephone survey.

After completed the survey, the researcher selected three English accents which were American, Thai, and Filipino to be the representative of accents that students were most exposed to in their English classroom.

The Listening Comprehension Test

A listening comprehension test was developed to investigate the variable mentioned. The test went through the validation process by asking three experts to validate the test. Two pilot tests were conducted to confirm that the statistic validation such as reliability index, difficulty index, discrimination index, and content validity were matched to the criteria set to be the most possible valid test for the main study. The test was improved and carried out in the main study.

Participants

The participants were 412 eleventh grade students from Thepleela School, Sripruetta School, Triamudomsuksa Pattnakarn School, and Howang School. The students were sample from the total population of 41,450 students.

Instruments and Data Analysis

The research study instruments consisted of the listening comprehension test and the attitude questionnaire. In terms of statistical procedure, a repeated measures ANOVA was used to investigate the effect of the variable on the test scores. To examine the students' attitudes towards different English accents, the participants were asked to do the attitude verbal guide test adapted from Rujipornwasin (2004), McKenzie (2006), and Young (2007) by listening to the three accents and react to them by giving their opinion on each voice according to eight traits. The mean scores of the attitude questionnaire were calculated to verify the average scores of the three accents.

Findings

1. The students' scores from the multiple choice format test show significant difference among the English accents they heard during the test. There was a significant difference between the scores obtained from listening to Filipino and Thai accent, and another pair was Filipino and American accent. However, the scores obtained from listening to Thai and American accent did not show any significant difference. Therefore, it

proves that the Filipino accent is more difficult for the students to comprehend than the other two.

2. For the students' attitudes towards English accents, the participants rated the American accent the highest score in every aspect except for 'funny'. Thai accent received second preference with the aspect 'gentle' that has the highest average score. The Filipino accent was given the lowest score.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of different English accents on the listening comprehension test scores of the students. The participants' attitudes towards different English accents were also investigated by using the verbal-guise test questionnaire.

There were two research questions in this study: (1) To what extent do different English accents affect the listening comprehension ability test scores of students? and (2) What are the attitudes of students towards different English accents? One hypothesis was set to correspond to the first research question that the students' listening comprehension ability of the English accents selected in this study will not have a significant difference. The second research question on the participants' attitudes towards English accents was answered by the data obtained from the questionnaire. The discussions based on the findings are presented in the following section.

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1. Discussion on Listening Comprehension Ability

The average scores in the listening comprehension test from the Filipino accent were found to be different and significantly lower than the average scores from the Thai and American accents. There are possible reasons which could explain the listening comprehension scores in the present study as follows:

1.1 The first reason for the difference in the test scores between Filipino accent and other two may have to do with familiarity (Flowerdew, 1994; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994; Major et al., 2005, Boonyarattapan, 2006). The participants might experience difficulty in comprehending speech that diverges from the models or patterns of oral production to which they are accustomed to. The students in this study have been exposed more to Thai and American accents in the classroom and media. They have been taught by Thai teachers and some American instructors. Also, the listening materials in English class they have gone through were mainly American. At present, they are Grade 11 students in Thailand who have limited exposure to the Filipino accents outside the classroom although they sometimes have a chance to encounter Filipino teachers. Despite the fact that international varieties of English are generally spoken by Filipino speakers in Thailand, it is still a rare opportunity to encounter Filipino accent in the students' environment.

1.2 The second reason might concern with their attitudes towards different English accent which has compelling effects on listening comprehension (Baker, 1992; Gibb, 1998; Gibb, 1999; Liang, 2002; Lindermann, 2003; Rujipornwasin, 2004; Hiraga, 2005; Yoshikawa, 2005; McKenzie, 2006; Young, 2006; Young, 2007). Previous studies showed that the listeners could comprehend a language or dialect better when they have

more prestige status. Attitude is another possible reason for the greater comprehensibility of Thai speakers for Thai listeners. Positive attitudes increase comprehension whereas negative attitudes decrease comprehension. The students may have praised their own English as a result of their confidence and self-congratulatory behavior, relative to Thai speakers. If so, it is not surprising that the Thai students had less difficulty understanding the English of speakers who shared their native language. In this present study, apparently, the American accent receives the most value in the positive aspects according to the attitude questionnaire because of the reason that students might see the American accent as their role model and they have very pleasant attitudes towards the native speaker's accent. Thus, the study reveals the relation between the listening comprehension ability and the listeners' attitudes.

2. Discussion on Attitudes towards English Accents

The overall results show that the Filipino English received lowest scores on the traits 'pleasant', 'clear', 'gentle', and 'fluent'. Also, they scored lower in the items spoken by Filipino accents in the listening comprehension test. This might reflect their trouble in comprehension.

The results demonstrate that when the evaluations of all eight traits are averaged together for each of the three speakers, a clear pattern emerges: American English is rated significantly higher than the other two. It is clear from the results presented above that clear patterns exist among the students' ratings of all eight aspects for the three accents. A high degree of consistency is found in the data collected in these studies. In particular, it has been widely demonstrated that speakers of standard varieties tend to be rated most

positively in terms of competence such as on traits such as 'clear', 'intelligence' and 'fluent' (McKenzie, 2006). In contrast, speakers of Thai accents tend to be rated more favourably in terms of social attractiveness such as on the traits 'gentle'. However, for the unfamiliar accent as Filipino, the students gave the lowest rate except for the trait 'funny' which could be a rather negative aspect to listeners because it could be indicated that they considered this accent amusing and might reflect their negative attitude towards the accent.

This finding is consistent with data from the limited number of studies previously conducted, which have concentrated specifically on social evaluations of English accents in Thailand (Boonyarattapan, 2006), that learners were generally more favourable towards native accents of English than non-native and agreed that the non-native accents were more difficult to comprehend. Similarly, McKenzie (2006) also found that the Japanese learners rated the accents of Inner Circle English more highly than accents of Expanding Circle English in terms of prestige. However, it was revealed that the learners expressed higher levels of solidarity with the Japanese speaker of heavily-accented English than with speakers of standard accents of Inner Circle English.

Thus, it could be concluded that the non-native accents will be more acceptable if the students were provided with more exposure. Familiarity, as mentioned before, has an important role in the students' attitudes towards the English accents.

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Recommendations

1. Pedagogical Implications

With regards to the results of the present study, the following points for listening comprehension test are noted as follows:

1.1 The important question which is a fundamental factor of this study is whether it would be pleasing to use other English accents besides American accent that is considered as the native speaker model in the listening comprehension test. The results of present study, which show the effects of English accents on listening comprehension, have essential implications for classroom teaching and testing English listening comprehension for learners. Most listening comprehension tests are restricted to Standard American English or British English accent. The result proves that Thai accent is comprehensive and acceptable because students could understand Thai accent equally to American accent due to sufficient input from Thai teachers although their attitudes towards Thai accent receives lower scores on positive traits when comparing with American accent. Yet, it is a good sign that students' own accent, Thai, is becoming satisfactory among English accents for Thai students. However, for Filipino accent which is a foreign non-native accent, students tend to have less comprehension and also they have rather low attitudes towards this accent. This situation addresses the problem of bias against other non-native English accents of NON-NESTs. Attitudes reflect students' bias which has effects on their judgment and the listening comprehension ability. As a matter of fact, there are many more non-native speakers of English than native speakers worldwide and English should be focused as an international language. Thus, Thai students should be exposed to NON-NESTs' English

accents more in the classroom to increase their familiarity. To give students more exposure would increase their comprehension ability and it would be appropriate to provide them with the test of various English accents.

1.2 The authority to create spoken English no longer depends only on the native speakers. As non-native speakers of English have already outnumbered native speakers, Graddol (1996) indicated that the influence of language from the non-native speakers also can possibly be transferred to native speakers. It is possible that the control of the future use of English would be passed to non-native speakers. The results from the study of D. Bokhorst-Heng et al (2007) revealed that Singaporean participants had a strong tendency in verifying their judgments on English grammatical features and vocabulary usage on the basis of their own standards, not the native ones. Furthermore, it was shown that the younger participants appeared more willing to rely on their intuition than the older participants. This suggested a growing sense of ownership among young Singaporeans of their language norms. The transfer of English language rule from the control of native speakers might gradually change to the non-native ones, but not suddenly, because of the people's past experience in the classroom practice and media. The study in Indonesia conducted by Zacharias (2003) indicated that many teachers expressed a marked preference for materials from English-speaking countries, in particular for teaching pronunciation and listening skills, while not many of them had tried out locally-produced materials, towards which they had a certain degree of distrust. However, some respondents commented that sometimes they found some cultural aspects too remote to be understood or even the language too difficult. The classroom observations evidenced that the students responded positively when topics were presented cross-culturally with some other accents

rather than from native speakers only. Thus it is recommended that English teachers should foster students by enhancing the opportunity to encounter various English accents to the broadest because it is obvious from this study that familiarity greatly influences listening comprehension. Also, students should appreciate non-native English accents as they play increasing roles in World Englishes.

1.3 This study carries another notable implication for Thailand in the issue of recruitment of English teachers. Thai government acknowledges the importance of English in the world nowadays and promotes English instructions. Many schools respond to the government policy and employ NS English teachers to strengthen English teaching. This policy is partly motivated by the perception that English proficiency of local NNS teachers is declining because their lack of native-like accent. However, from the findings of this study, the results of the study provides the significant evidence for the current debating issue of NNS teachers' English accent, especially, our Thai accent. Because the students show equivalent comprehension and attitude level between Thai English and American English, it is accepted that Thai English teachers are also suitable for English language instruction for international communication. Furthermore, the recruitment of other NNS English teachers should be promoted as well to increase students' familiarity with other foreign accents.

1.4 The findings of this study reflect the needs to raise students' awareness of the role of English as an International Language. The classroom instruction should include more input from other English accents. Moreover, it is recommended for English teachers to nurture students by increasing familiarity and appreciation of World

Englishes. In the classroom, teachers can provide resources and materials to promote a better understanding of World Englishes for Thai students.

2. For Further Study

The current study focused only on the listening test methods on paper assessment. The listeners were allowed to listen only to speeches without any hint from visual elements or other non-verbal language. Thus, it could not reflect the actual communication process when people are talking face to face. It is interesting to investigate further whether the surrounding factors of communication such as the interrogator's hand gestures and eye contact would have any effects on the comprehension ability when combined with different accents.

Moreover, on the issue of attitudes towards different English accents, it is shown from the present study questionnaire that the Filipino accent was rated as lowest in every aspect. It might be interested to compare the attitudes among Asian accents in future research to examine further whether they will receive lower attitudes than Thai and American accents. Also, it might be interesting to conduct the study further with different groups of students. For example, the listening comprehension ability and attitudes towards international English accents of adults who work in local or international environment could be further investigated to examine whether their listening comprehension ability and attitudes differ from the young learners.

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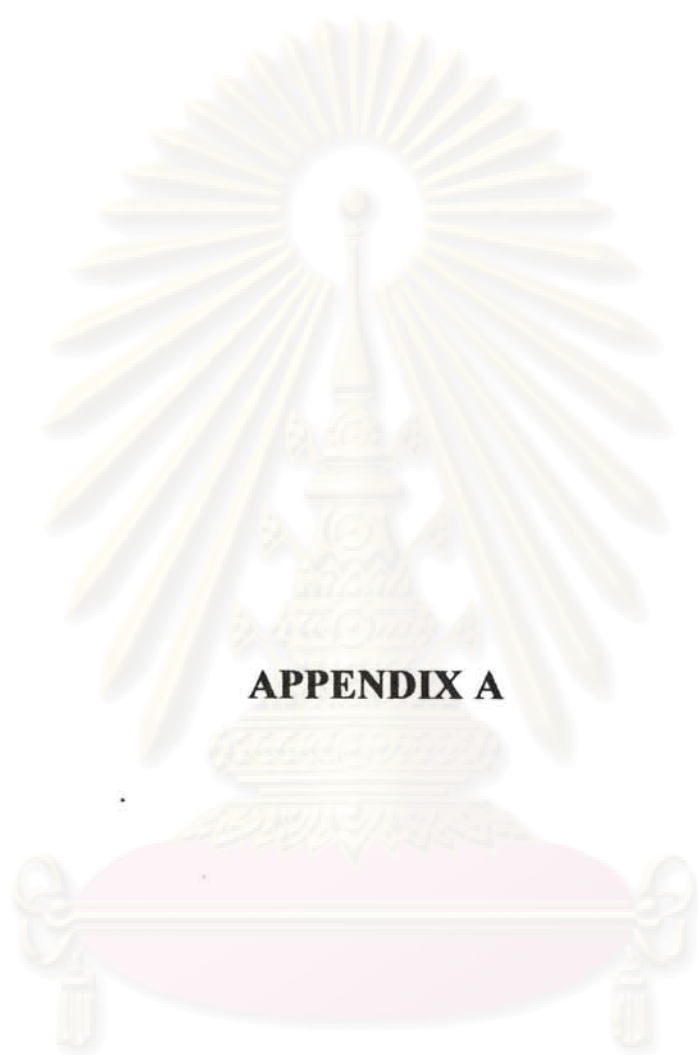
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APPENDIX A

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Test Validation Form for Expert

Item	Listening Skills	Comments
1	-listening for main idea -understanding meaning of vocabulary (essay, matching, multiple choice)	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
2	-determine speaker's intention towards the topic where obvious from the text (I'd love to, but...)	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
3	-determine speaker's intention towards the topic where obvious from the text (I don't think so)	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
4	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious -understanding meaning of vocabulary (sour, drinkable)	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
5	-listening for main idea	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
6	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
7	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
8	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
9	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
10	-listening for main idea -understand syntactic structure of the sentence (Would you mind...?)	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
11	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____

Item	Listening Skills	Comments
12	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious -understanding meaning of vocabulary (library)	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
13	-listening for main idea -understanding grammatical cohesion and references	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
14	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
15	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
16	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
17	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
18	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious -understanding meaning of vocabulary (crowded)	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
19	-understand syntactic structure of the sentence -understanding meaning of vocabulary (give someone a hand) -determine speaker's intention towards the topic where obvious from the text (That would be nice))	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
20	-understanding meaning of vocabulary (aspirin, prescription) -making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
21	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____
22	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____ _____

Item	Listening Skills	Comments
23	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
24	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
25	-listening for specific details -understanding meaning of vocabulary (romance)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
26	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
27	-listening for specific details -understanding meaning of vocabulary (trendy)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
28	-listening for main idea	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
29	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
30	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
31	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
32	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
33	-listening for specific details -understanding meaning of vocabulary (harm, improve)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
34	-listening for main idea -making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
35	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____
36	-listening for specific details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ _____

Item	Listening Skills	Comments
37	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____
38	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____
39	-listening for specific details -understanding meaning of vocabulary (store, cost)	___ Yes ___ No _____
40	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____
41	-listening for main idea	___ Yes ___ No _____
42	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____
43	-making inferences from the verbal input where the information is not obvious	___ Yes ___ No _____
44	-listening for main idea	___ Yes ___ No _____
45	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____
46	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____
47	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____
48	-listening for specific details	___ Yes ___ No _____

Content Validation

1. The content of the test reflects the objectives of the test.

Yes

No

Comments:

2. The test is appropriate for assessing the listening ability of eleventh grade students.

Yes

No

Comments:

3. The content of the test covers various settings and situations found in everyday life (see table of content below).

Yes

No

Comments:

Topics

Daily life: family talks, phone calls

Entertainment: movie, music, sport, shopping, fashion

Health: visiting doctor, pharmacy, hospitals

Dining out: lunches, restaurants

School: teachers' instructions, examination

4. The language used in the test is appropriate for eleventh grade students.

Yes

No

Comments:

5. The speech sounds are clear.

Yes

No

Comments:

6. The time allotment is appropriate.

Yes

No

Comments:



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APPENDIX B

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Sample of Listening Comprehension Test**Part A.**

Directions: You will hear 15 conversations between two people. You will be asked to answer questions about what the speakers say in each conversation. Select the best response to each question and mark the letter (a), (b), (c), or (d) on your answer sheet. The conversations will not be printed in your answer sheet and will be spoken two times.

Conversation 1

1. What are these people talking about?
 - (a) A journey they are about to take.
 - (b) A final exam they are going to take.
 - (c) Something they forgot to say to their friend.
 - (d) A problem about the assignment that they cannot find the solution to.

Conversation 5

2. What does the woman mean?
 - (a) She has no time to play.
 - (b) She knows tennis will make her fit.
 - (c) She won't start taking lessons next week.
 - (d) She doesn't think he's a good tennis player.

Conversation 10

3. What does the woman suggest?
 - (a) The author is autographing her book.
 - (b) The author's latest book is not selling well.
 - (c) The bookstore attracts large crowds during social events.
 - (d) The author will be signing a contract with the bookstore later.

Conversation 13

4. What are the speakers discussing?

- (a) Their jobs.
- (b) Their homes.
- (c) Their work place.
- (d) Their travel plans.

Conversation 14

5. What is the man relationship to the woman?

- (a) He's her boss.
- (b) He's her patient.
- (c) He's her teacher.
- (d) He's her customer.

Conversation 15

6. What is the man going to do?

- (a) Go to the theatre.
- (b) Buy a video movie.
- (c) Rent a video movie.
- (d) Go to see the movie.

Part B.

Directions: You will hear 6 talks given by a single speaker. You will be asked to answer questions about what the speaker says in each talk. Select the best response to each question and mark the letter (a), (b), (c), or (d) on your answer sheet. The talks will not be printed in your answer sheet and will be spoken two times.

Talk 2

7. What do medical experts say about washing hands?

- (a) It can prevent the spread of disease .
- (b) It cannot prevent the spread of disease.
- (c) People should not wash their hands too often.
- (d) People should use anti-bacterial soap when washing their hands.

Talk 4

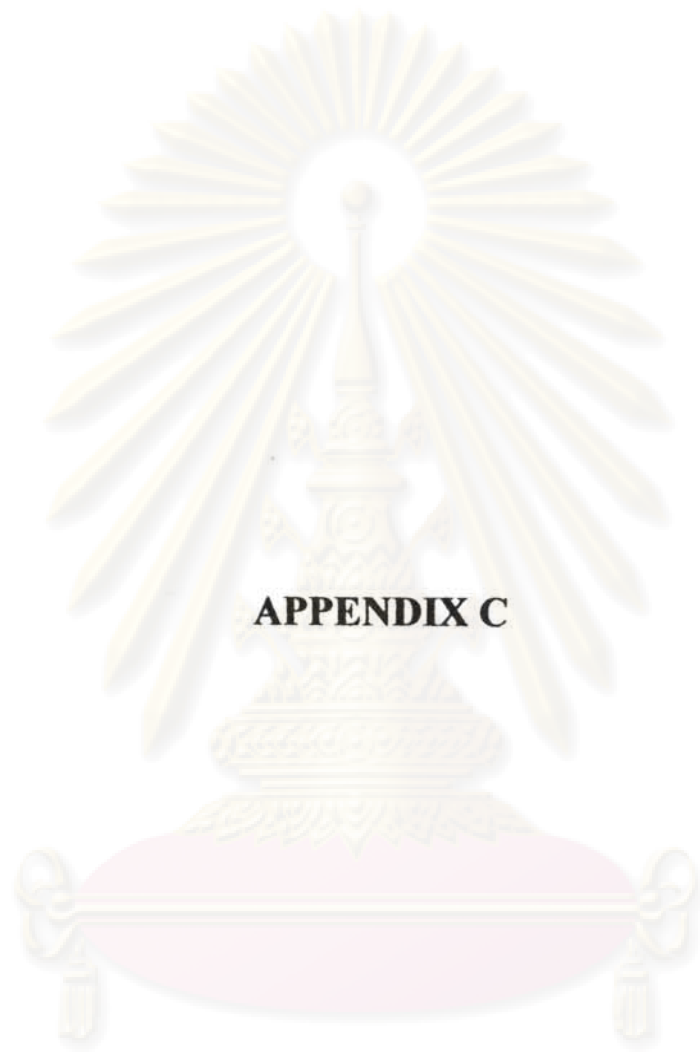
8. Which is true according to the talk?

- (a) Cherries are easy to grow.
- (b) Sour cherries are poisonous.
- (c) People don't eat fresh sweet cherries.
- (d) There are two kinds of cherries in the world.

Talk 6

9. What is this talk about?

- (a) How to quit smoking.
- (b) The dangerous of smoking.
- (c) How to control your emotion.
- (d) The importance of exercising.



APPENDIX C

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Tape Scripts of Listening Comprehension Test**Part A.**Conversation 1

(woman): It sounds like it's going to be extremely tough. I've heard that at the end of the quarter most of the questions are essay.

(man): I hope not. I really prefer matching or multiple choice.

Conversation 5

(man): You like tennis so much. Why not take some lessons? Hm... they start next week.

(woman): How am I gonna fit that in such a tight schedule?

Conversation 10

(man): Why is the bookstore so crowded?

(woman): The author's signing her book. Everybody seems to be interested in her latest work.

Conversation 13

(woman): How do you like your new apartment, James?

(man): Well, I enjoy living downtown, but I don't like that my apartment is so small. I want to get a bigger one but rent in a city is so expensive.

(woman): I think so too. That's why I bought a place out of town. It takes me longer to get to work but my house in the country has lot more space.

Conversation 14

(man): Hello, I order the computer disc from you catalog at the beginning of the month and I haven't receive it yet. Could you looking to it for me, please?

(woman): Certainly, sir. Do you have your order number by any chance?

(man): Yes, it's 4816490.

(woman): You're Mr. Donaldson, right? Well, according to my records, it left our warehouse on Monday. That was the fifth of May. So, it should be delivered to you tomorrow.

Part B.Talk 2

Medical experts say the most effective way to prevent the spread of disease is for people to wash their hands with soap and water. They say that programs to increase hand-washing with soap could be among the most effective ways to reduce infectious disease if people washed their hands with soap often. The experts say that hand-washing is especially important before and after preparing food, before eating and after using the toilet. The most effective way to wash your hands is to rub them together after using soap and warm water. They say you do not have to use special anti-bacterial soap. Be sure to rub all areas of the hands for about ten to fifteen seconds.

Talk 4

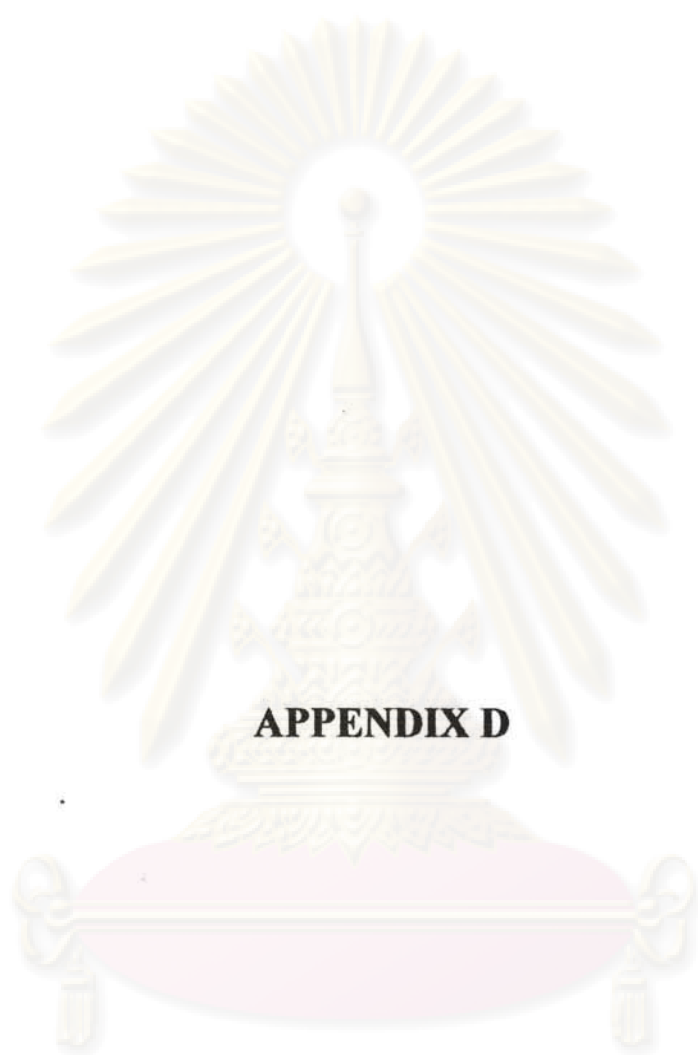
The cherry is a member of the same family of plants as the rose. It is closely related to the plum. Like cherry trees, plum trees also flower in early spring. Cherries are thought to be native to western Asia. There are two major kinds of cherries harvested in the world: sweet and sour. Sour cherries are not eaten fresh because they contain little sugar. Instead, they are processed to make prepared foods like jellies

and pies and to make alcoholic drinks. The United States is a major producer of sour cherries. Russia, Poland and Turkey are other important cherry-producing nations. Sweet cherries contain much more sugar than their sour relatives and are usually eaten fresh. Washington State is the biggest The United States, Iran and Turkey are major producers of sweet cherries. Fresh cherries do not store well. They must reach market as soon as possible. So they cost more than many other kinds of fresh fruit.

Talk 6

It is not easy to stop smoking permanently. However, doctors say you probably will live longer if you do stop smoking. You will feel better and look better. You also will protect the health of family members and others who breathe your smoke. To stop smoking, you should carefully plan your actions for at least one week. Try to stay away from people and situations that might trouble you. Do not go to public places where people smoke. Being under the influence of alcohol can also make it harder to resist smoking. So if you drink alcohol, you may need to stop temporarily.

Experts say it is best to stop smoking completely. Even one cigarette can make you a smoker again. In the first week or two without cigarettes, you probably will feel terrible. You may be angry all the time. Or you may feel sad. You may have a headache. Or your stomach may feel sick. Do not lose hope. If you stay away from tobacco, those feelings will go away in a few weeks. Tell yourself that you will be happier as a non-smoker. Move around as much as possible. Go on a fast walk or a run at least two times a day. Also, when you have the urge to smoke, you could chew gum or eat a piece of fruit or vegetable instead. One day, you will recognize that you have won the struggle against smoking.



APPENDIX D

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Item Difficulty and Discrimination Index of the First Pilot Test

Test Item	Item Difficulty Index	Item Discrimination Index
1	0.79	0.09
2	0.37	0.29
3	0.24	0.24
4	0.25	0.27
5	0.73	0.26
6	0.78	0.21
7	0.70	0.29
8	0.25	0.28
9	0.21	0.24
10	0.42	0.27
11	0.69	0.44
12*	0.19	0.11
13*	0.86	0.23
14	0.79	0.21
15	0.66	0.34
16	0.52	0.27
17	0.53	0.46
18	0.28	0.21
19	0.52	0.24
20	0.48	0.43

* The difficulty index value is not between 0.2-0.8

**The discrimination index value is lower than 0.2

Test Item	Item Difficulty Index	Item Discrimination Index
21	0.64	0.29
22	0.74	0.34
23	0.76	0.37
24	0.70	0.23
25	0.79	0.20
26	0.59	0.34
27*	0.94	0.17
28	0.77	0.44
29	0.55	0.23
30	0.70	0.54
31	0.55	0.54
32	0.79	0.47
33	0.67	0.44
34	0.71	0.20
35	0.77	0.44
36	0.53	0.29
37	0.80	0.41
38	0.77	0.29
39	0.21	0.29
40	0.66	0.31
41	0.55	0.27
42	0.39	0.40

* The difficulty index value is not between 0.2-0.8

**The discrimination index value is lower than 0.2

Test Item	Item Difficulty Index	Item Discrimination Index
43	0.42	0.31
44	0.86	0.31
45	0.74	0.53
46	0.75	0.34
47	0.80	0.50
48	0.80	0.37

* The difficulty index value is not between 0.2-0.8

**The discrimination index value is lower than 0.2

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APPENDIX E

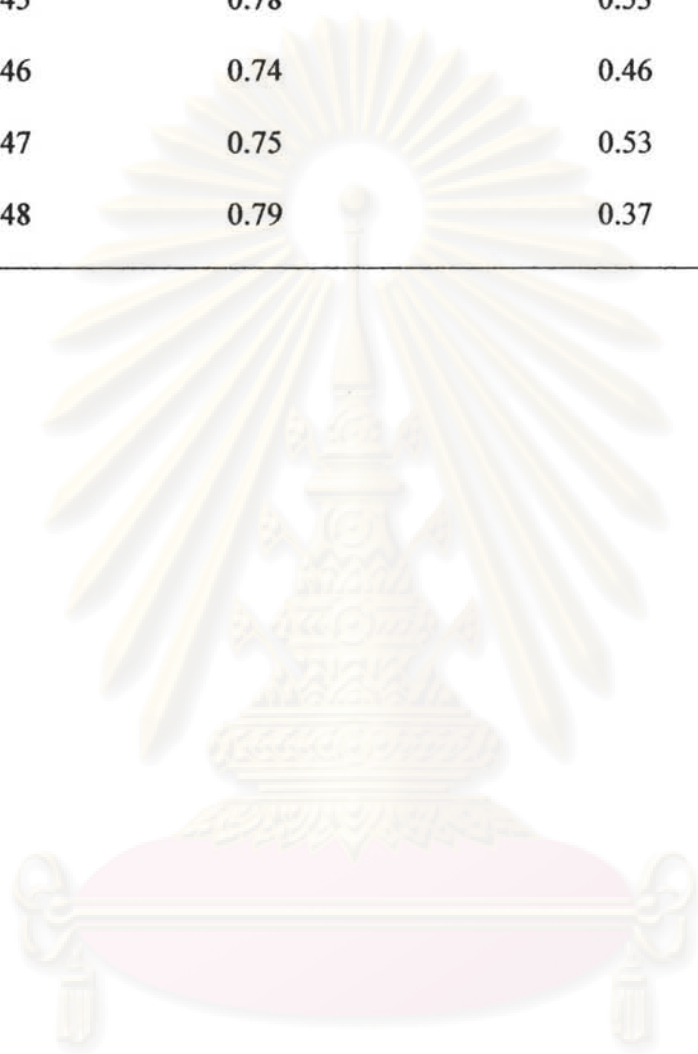
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Item Difficulty and Discrimination Index of the Second Pilot Test

Test Item	Item Difficulty Index	Item Discrimination Index
1	0.52	0.20
2	0.46	0.38
3	0.76	0.24
4	0.57	0.51
5	0.65	0.26
6	0.39	0.21
7	0.72	0.35
8	0.56	0.28
9	0.24	0.24
10	0.37	0.27
11	0.28	0.44
12	0.28	0.33
13	0.70	0.23
14	0.69	0.21
15	0.70	0.34
16	0.65	0.43
17	0.54	0.46
18	0.26	0.30
19	0.59	0.53
20	0.39	0.43
21	0.48	0.57

Test Item	Item Difficulty Index	Item Discrimination Index
22	0.59	0.37
23	0.46	0.37
24	0.59	0.37
25	0.73	0.20
26	0.54	0.47
27	0.73	0.26
28	0.77	0.44
29	0.50	0.23
30	0.72	0.54
31	0.46	0.54
32	0.63	0.47
33	0.70	0.44
34	0.77	0.20
35	0.51	0.44
36	0.59	0.29
37	0.78	0.41
38	0.71	0.29
39	0.29	0.29
40	0.69	0.64
41	0.67	0.45
42	0.28	0.40
43	0.39	0.31

Test Item	Item Difficulty Index	Item Discrimination Index
44	0.80	0.44
45	0.78	0.53
46	0.74	0.46
47	0.75	0.53
48	0.79	0.37



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APPENDIX F

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Sample of Attitude Questionnaire

(English)

Directions: You will hear three speakers in different accent talking about specific topics. Rate the speakers' accent according to the following scales by checking in the blank provided.

Speaker 1

This person sounds...

1. Pleasant

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

2. Confident

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

3. Clear

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

4. Modest

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

5. Funny

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

6. Gentle

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

7. Intelligent

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

8. Fluent

totally agree agree neutral disagree totally disagree

ศูนย์วิจัยทั่วไป
 จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Sample of Attitude Questionnaire

(Thai)

คำชี้แจง: นักเรียนจะได้ฟังผู้พูดสามคนในสำเนียงที่ต่างกันพูดเกี่ยวกับเรื่องต่างๆ จงให้ความเห็นเกี่ยวกับลักษณะของสำเนียงตามเกณฑ์ด้านล่างนี้ โดยกาเครื่องหมายลงในช่องว่างที่กำหนดให้

ผู้พูดคนที่ 1

เสียงของบุคคลนี้มีลักษณะ...

1. น่าฟัง

เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

2. มีความมั่นใจในตัวเอง

เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

3. ชัดเจน

เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

4. ถ่อมตน

เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

5. ตลก

เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

6. อ่อนโยน

เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

7. ฉลาดเฉลียว

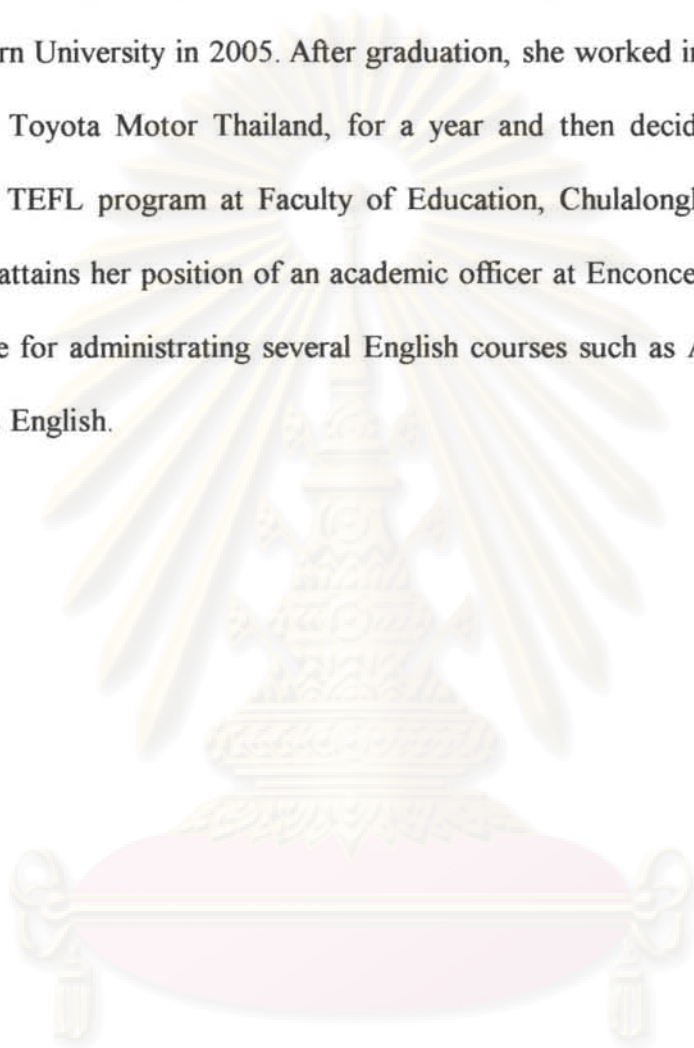
เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

8. พูดคล่อง

เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย เฉยๆ ไม่เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

BIOGRAPHY

Keerati Suppatkul was born on February 11th, 1984 in Bangkok. She obtained her bachelor's degree (1st Class Honors) in English from Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University in 2005. After graduation, she worked in Human Resources Department, Toyota Motor Thailand, for a year and then decided to continue her study in the TEFL program at Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University. At present, she attains her position of an academic officer at Enconcept E-Academy and is responsible for administrating several English courses such as Admission, TOEFL, and Business English.



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