

**A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG
SYNTACTIC KNOWLEDGE, LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE AND
LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH OF FIRST-YEAR
NURSING STUDENTS, MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY**

PONGSAK SAKDA

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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PONGSAK SAKDA : A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SYNTACTIC KNOWLEDGE, LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH OF FIRST-YEAR NURSING STUDENTS, MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY. THESIS ADVISORS : MAURICE M. BROUGHTON, M.A., ANCHULEE SUWANDEE, Ph.D. 82 P. ISBN 974-664-707-5

This study investigates the relationships among syntactic knowledge, lexical knowledge and listening comprehension in English of first-year nursing students attending Mahidol University. It also aims to formulate an equation to predict listening comprehension performance of the subjects by using syntactic and lexical knowledge as the predictors.

The subjects of the study were 87 first-year nursing students in 1999 academic year from the Faculty of Nursing, Siriraj Hospital and the School of Nursing, Ramathibodi Hospital, taking their first-year courses at the Salaya campus, Mahidol University. The research instruments comprising *The Grammar Test*, a standardized test of the Oxford Placement Test 1, a vocabulary test and a listening comprehension test constructed by the researcher, were employed to collect data. The correlational analyses (Pearson's r) and a related statistical device in this family – multiple regression – were then applied to analyze the data obtained; and all statistical calculations were computed via SPSS for Windows release 9.05.

The results of the statistical analyses indicate significant positive relationship between syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension ($r = .363$), and between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension ($r = .456$). With regard to the proportion of total variation in listening comprehension that is explained jointly by syntactic and lexical knowledge, both word recognition and knowledge of syntactic structures contribute just over a quarter of total variance (27%) to listening comprehension. The multiple regression equation to predict listening comprehension (LC) by using syntactic knowledge (SK) and lexical knowledge (LK) as the predictors in the formation of raw score is:

$$\text{Predicted LC} = 7.595 + 0.367 \text{ SK} + 0.407 \text{ LK}$$

And the equation in the formation of standard score is:

$$Z_{\text{predicted LC}} = 0.259 Z_{\text{SK}} + 0.386 Z_{\text{LK}}$$

To conclude, although knowledge of vocabulary and syntactic structure are important components of listening proficiency, they are not enough to make EFL learners good listeners. There are several factors considered vital in facilitating listening comprehension. Listening is a complex skill that deserves the attention of learners and teachers alike.

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พงษ์ศักดิ์ สักดา : การศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่าง ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ ความรู้คำศัพท์ กับความเข้าใจในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ ของนักศึกษาพยาบาลชั้นปีที่ 1 มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล (A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SYNTACTIC KNOWLEDGE, LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH OF FIRST-YEAR NURSING STUDENTS, MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY). คณะกรรมการควบคุมวิทยานิพนธ์ : MAURICE M. BROUGHTON, M.A., อัญหุติ สุวรรณดี, Ph.D. 82 หน้า. ISBN 974-664-707-5

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่าง ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ ความรู้คำศัพท์ กับความเข้าใจในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ ของนักศึกษาพยาบาลชั้นปีที่ 1 มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล การศึกษานี้ยังมีจุดมุ่งหมายที่จะสร้างสมการทำนายความสามารถในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง โดยใช้ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ และความรู้คำศัพท์เป็นตัวทำนาย

กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการศึกษาคั้งนี้คือ นักศึกษาพยาบาลชั้นปีที่ 1 ปีการศึกษา 2542 จำนวน 87 คน จากคณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ โรงพยาบาลศิริราช และคณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ โรงพยาบาลรามาริบัติ ซึ่งเรียนวิชาพื้นฐานในระดับชั้นปีที่ 1 ที่มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล ณ ศาลา เครื่องมือที่ใช้เก็บข้อมูลในการศึกษาวิจัย ประกอบด้วย 1) The Grammar Test ซึ่งเป็นข้อสอบมาตรฐานที่ใช้วัดความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์จากชุด Oxford Placement Test 1 2) แบบสอบวัดความรู้คำศัพท์ และ 3) แบบสอบวัดความเข้าใจในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ ที่ผู้วิจัยจัดทำขึ้น ข้อมูลทั้งหมดถูกนำมาวิเคราะห์ค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์แบบเพียร์สัน (Pearson's r) และการถดถอยแบบพหุคูณ (Multiple regression) โดยใช้โปรแกรม SPSS for Windows release 9.05

ผลจากการวิเคราะห์พบว่า ทั้งความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ และความรู้คำศัพท์ มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกอย่างมีนัยสำคัญกับความเข้าใจในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ โดยสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์เท่ากับ .363 และ .456 ตามลำดับ สำหรับสัดส่วนของความสามารถในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษที่สามารถอธิบายได้ด้วยความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์และความรู้คำศัพท์ที่มีสัดส่วนประมาณ 1 ใน 4 (27%) ส่วนสมการถดถอยพหุคูณเพื่อทำนายความสามารถในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ (LC) โดยใช้ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ (SK) และความรู้คำศัพท์ (LK) เป็นตัวทำนาย สามารถเขียนเป็นสมการในรูปคะแนนดิบได้ดังนี้

$$\text{Predicted LC} = 7.595 + 0.367 \text{ SK} + 0.407 \text{ LK}$$

และสมการในรูปคะแนนมาตรฐานดังนี้

$$Z_{\text{predicted LC}} = 0.259 Z_{\text{SK}} + 0.386 Z_{\text{LK}}$$

แม้ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์และความรู้คำศัพท์จะเป็นองค์ประกอบที่สำคัญของความสามารถในการฟัง แต่ก็ยังไม่เพียงพอที่จะทำให้ผู้เรียนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศมีความสามารถในการฟังที่ดี เพราะยังมีปัจจัยอื่นอีกหลายอย่างที่ช่วยให้มีความเข้าใจในการฟังมากขึ้น การฟังเป็นทักษะที่ค่อนข้างซับซ้อนสมควรที่จะได้รับความใส่ใจจากทั้งผู้เรียนและผู้สอน

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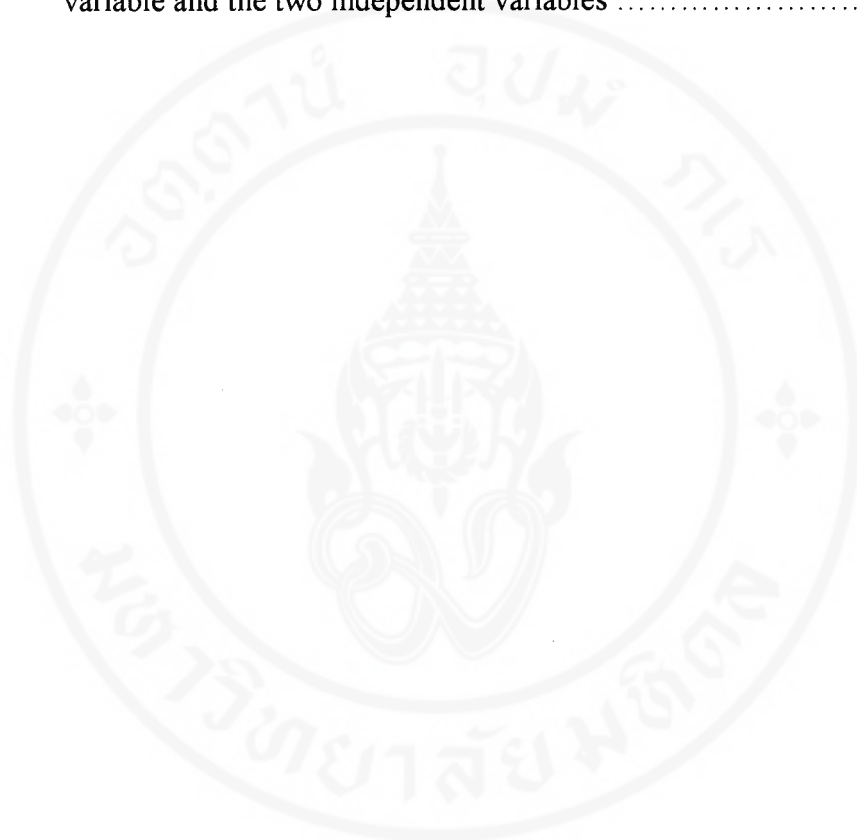
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

English is an important language that has been widely used as the main medium of international communication for more than a century. With its world spread today, the number of English native speakers is approximately 350 million; additionally, there are a great number of users as a second or a foreign language in every part of the globe (Quirk & Stein, 1990:60). English nowadays is, therefore, not merely the language of England or other native speaking countries, but it has become an international language. In Thailand, though it is not an official language, it plays a crucial role in Thai society both in the workplace and educational system.

Obviously, the purpose of learning English today is for communication in order to serve the era of globalization. In this age, people all over the globe can communicate with each other through various high-technology media such as electronic mail and the Internet, and of course English is used as a vehicle in communication. These electronic media have also effected a shift from literacy to orality in modern life. Freedman (1982, cited by Dunkel, 1991) asserts that “we have slowly but emphatically shifted our means of communication from the printed word to images and sounds, from books to television, movies, radio, and recordings. Instead of reading today, most of us prefer to look and listen.”

Of the language skills, listening is perhaps the most critical for language learning, especially at beginning stages. In almost any setting, listening is the most frequently used language skill. Of the total time devoted to communicating, 45% is spent listening, 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing (Feyten, 1991). The increase in holiday travel brings English speakers to most part of the world. Even people of non-native English communities who have little prospect of travelling to English-speaking countries will find that there are many occasions on which they will want to use their listening skills. Also, increasing of communication between countries through business links and telecommunication provides many potential contacts with foreigners. The listening skill, of course, is needed in these circumstances.

Listening seems to develop easily in the mother tongue, but requires extra effort when listening to a foreign language (Underwood, 1989:1). In addition, it is a highly integrative skill, and research has demonstrated its crucial role in language acquisition (Dunkel, 1986, 1991; Feyten, 1991).

No one knows exactly how listening works or how people learn to listen and understand. Several linguists have attempted to explain this complex process. An outstanding model among those, proposed by Crowder (1972), is a theory of auditory memory. The major assumption of this model is that there are three different kinds of memory and three distinct stages involved in the process of aural reception of an utterance.

At the first stage, the sounds go into a sensory store, often called the *echoic* memory, and are organized into meaningful units, according to the knowledge of the language the listener already has. Unfortunately, the sounds remain in the echoic memory for a very short time (probably only about a second). The listener does not

have very long in which to sort out what is heard and might, particularly if listening to a foreign language, make errors as he/she attempts to organize the stream of sounds into meaningful units. The listener might be further troubled by the arrival of new information in the echoic memory before he/she has had sufficient opportunity to deal with that already held.

The second stage is the processing of the information by the *short-term* memory. This again is a very brief stage existing no more than a few seconds. At this point, words or groups of words are checked and compared with information already held in the *long-term* memory and the meaning is extracted from them. Once the meaning has been grasped, the actual words are generally forgotten. Again, the speed of processing is important. If a second 'chunk' of information arrives in the short-term memory before the previous 'chunk' has been processed, the system might get overloaded. The language learner may be unable to process the incoming stream fast enough and will fail to extract meaning from it. As the learner gets more used to listening, and has at the same time learned more of the language, he/she can process some often-heard chunks more or less automatically, thus leaving 'space' and energy to deal with the more difficult or less familiar input.

Once the listener has constructed a meaning from the utterance (which may or may not be the meaning that was intended by the speaker), he/she might transfer the information to the long-term memory for later use. It seems that generally a listener who wants to do this interprets the message and stores it in the long-term memory in a reduced form. The evidence for this is the fact that when recalling something from the long-term memory, people usually only remember the 'gist' of what has been heard, rather than the exact words spoken.

There seems to be a fixed amount of new information that can remain in working memory. This has been estimated at two to four propositions, or basic ideas. Beyond this, it is difficult for the listener to experience a sense of coherence in what he/she is listening to.

Traditionally, listening has often been regarded, alongside reading, as a passive language skill. To understand any speech, however, the listeners take an active role in the process by drawing on various types of knowledge, applying what they know to what they hear and trying to understand what the speaker means. To listen successfully to spoken language, the listener has to place language in a 'context of situation' in order to work out what is conveyed especially when the speaker use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions. Listening, therefore, is not merely a receptive skill but has to be thought of as an active one (Anderson & Lynch, 1988).

Statement of the Problem

For many English language learners, the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension, as opposed to reading comprehension, is that the listener cannot control how quickly a speaker speaks. They feel that the utterances disappear before they can sort them out, whereas the words in a written text remain on the page where the reader can glance back at them or re-examine them thoroughly.

Another difficulty associated with controlling the 'input' (what the speaker says) is that the listener is not always in a position to get the speaker to repeat an utterance. This is particularly likely to be the case when the listener is not a part of the conversation. And, of course, repeats cannot be asked for when listening to the radio or watching television.

This means that if listeners cannot keep up with the input, they might be so busy working out the meaning of one part of what they hear that they miss the next part. Or they may simply ignore a whole chunk because they fail to sort it all out quickly enough. Either way, they fail.

Additionally, foreign language learners, whose first language is based on a different phonological system, rhythm and tone, often suffer from poor listening skills when exposed to a foreign language, either in not understanding or misunderstanding what is being said to them. Syananondh (1985) states that Thai-speaking students who have learned English as a foreign language in Thailand usually face difficulties when they have to listen to native speech. The problems in the listening skill occur both at secondary school and university levels.

First-year nursing students of Mahidol University, like those of other Thai-universities and other subject areas, have a relatively low achievement in English. One of the salient problems, again according to Syananondh (1985), is that they have difficulties in understanding what they hear especially when exposed to native speech. With regard to English courses for first-year nursing students, students are required to attend listening class for one hour a week. In the class, they are provided with opportunities to listen to spoken English and practice using expressions and vocabulary in various situations. Their listening comprehension ability, however, does not seem to improve very much. Consequently, it is important to determine which factors, types of knowledge and skills, are important to consider when we are attempting to improve the teaching of listening comprehension.

Goh (1997) analyzed the diaries of 40 ESL learners enrolled on an intensive English language program at National Institute of Education, Singapore. The analysis

revealed beliefs and knowledge second language learners had about their listening, and their metacognitive awareness in listening. The students' beliefs and observations were classified under person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge. In the light of person knowledge, an outstanding factor mentioned in many diaries as one of the obstacles to listening comprehension was limited vocabulary or familiarity with academic terms. In addition, several learners gave the inability to divide streams of speech into words or parts of sentences as one of the problems during listening. It is known that, while listening, we parse speech by determining the relationship of words and groups of words to a central theme. We utilize knowledge of grammar to understand the relationship of words to the theme enabling us to listen effectively. If we cannot do this quickly and effectively, our comprehension is impaired.

In the same vein, in a survey of 30 Chinese teachers and 60 students in Hong Kong, Boyle (1984) identified the factors perceived to be most salient influences on EFL listening comprehension. These were studied in terms of speaker factors, factors in the oral text, and listener factors. In respect of listener factors, a factor mentioned by several students and considered vital in aiding or hampering the effectiveness of listening comprehension was knowledge of the target language in its various aspects e.g. phonology, syntax, lexis, and cohesion. In listening to any foreign languages, as we know, knowing more words and understanding structure of a text would enhance our comprehension of such language more accurately. In the present study, the researcher is, therefore, interested in investigating the relationships among knowledge of structure or syntactic knowledge, word recognition or lexical knowledge, and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students attending Mahidol University as

the basis for developing materials used in listening courses and improving their listening skill.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationships among syntactic knowledge, lexical knowledge, and listening comprehension in English of first-year nursing students attending Mahidol University. In addition, one goal is to formulate an equation to predict listening comprehension ability of those by using syntactic and lexical knowledge as the predictors. The research is also designed to obtain information to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Is there any relationship between each pair of the variables -- syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and lexical knowledge and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students?
2. If the correlation exists, what is the direction of the relationship?
3. Can the two independent variables (syntactic and lexical knowledge) predict listening comprehension of the subjects, and if so, which one is the better predictor?

Significance of the Study

This study is designed to study the relationships among syntactic knowledge, lexical knowledge, and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students attending Mahidol University. It is expected that the results obtained will provide benefits in the following ways:

1. They may provide some useful information for EFL teachers engaged in designing or developing materials for listening courses.

2. They may suggest ideas for English teachers in developing classroom listening instruction.

3. They may also pave the way to further research dealing with factors affecting listening comprehension.

Research Hypotheses

In a study of the effect of speech modification, prior knowledge, and listening proficiency on the lecture learning of students of English as a foreign language, Chiang and Dunkel (1992) provide evidence that simplification of linguistic forms involving an alteration in syntax (e.g. the use of two simple sentences rather than one complex sentence) and a change in the lexis of a message (e.g. using “to hold tightly to” rather than “to cling to”) enhances the comprehension for EFL listeners.

In another study, Call (1985) examined the relationship between auditory short-term memory and listening skill. Results of the study revealed that memory for syntactically arranged words is an important component of proficiency in listening comprehension; thus, it can be inferred that syntax also plays a crucial role in rendering auditory input comprehensible.

With regard to the role of lexis, Levine and Reves (1990) have underlined the important role of vocabulary as a predictor of overall reading skill as well as listening ability. They contend that lack of adequate vocabulary is one of the main obstacles to text comprehension.

Again according to Boyle (1984), in terms of syntax and lexis, students gave much more importance to vocabulary than the syntactic structures on the lists of

important factors affecting listening comprehension. They stated “if you know the words, you know what it’s all about”.

Consequently, the present study sets out to test the following two hypotheses:

1. There will be a significant positive relationship between syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students.
2. Syntactic and lexical knowledge can predict listening comprehension, and that lexical knowledge will be the better predictor than syntactic knowledge.

In this study, as it is seen, the first hypothesis is one-tailed because it predicts a relationship only in one direction that is believed to be positive. The researcher sets alpha decision level at 5 per cent chance of error can be accepted ($\alpha = .05$).

Scope and Limitations of the Study

1. Variables to be examined in this study are as follows:

1.1 independent variables or predictor variables:

- a) syntactic knowledge
- b) lexical knowledge

1.2 dependent variable: listening comprehension ability

2. The subjects in the study are first-year nursing students attending Mahidol University in 1999 academic year.

3. This study aims to identify factors that affect listening comprehension of students as a product, not a process of acquisition.

Definition of Terms

Syntactic knowledge: This term refers to grammatical proficiency of the subjects. In this study, grammatical knowledge of the subjects was measured by *The Grammar Test*, a standardized test of the Oxford Placement Test 1 by Dave Allan (1992).

Lexical knowledge: This term refers to knowledge of vocabulary or word recognition of the subjects. In this study, the recognition of English words of the subjects was assessed by a vocabulary test constructed by the researcher.

Listening comprehension: This term refers to ability to understand spoken English of the subjects. In this study, listening comprehension ability of the subjects was evaluated by a listening comprehension test constructed by the researcher.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED RESEARCH

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationships among syntactic knowledge, lexical knowledge, and listening comprehension in English of first-year nursing students. The study was carried out in the Faculty of Nursing, Siriraj Hospital and the School of Nursing, Ramathibodi Hospital at Mahidol University. Related literature and relevant research were reviewed as a necessary background information for the study. The review consists of the following 3 main parts:

1. Related literature on listening comprehension
 - a. The nature of listening
 - b. Theoretical aspects of listening comprehension
 - c. Importance of listening comprehension in language learning
2. Variables in the study and related research
3. Theoretical aspects of statistics used in the study

Related Literature on Listening Comprehension

Rivers (1966, cited by Morley, 1991) asserts that “speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person.” This assertion emphasizes the comprehension of speech as primary importance in communication. Therefore, some background information of pertinent elements that constitute effective listening is necessary to be reviewed.

a. The Nature of Listening

Listening is a word that we use every day without giving it much thought. Yet listening comprehension is a vital mental capacity – one of the principal means by which we understand and take part in the world around us. Weaver (1972) maintains that listening is used more than any other single language skill in normal daily life. On average, we can expect to listen twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read, and five times more than we write.

Listening can be defined broadly as “everything that impinges on the human processing which mediates between sound and the construction of meaning...” (Morley, 1984). In other words, it is the activity of paying attention to and attempting to get meaning from what we hear.

Byrnes (1984) defines listening as “a complex, problem-solving skill”. She explains that listening is more than just perception of sounds, although perception is the foundation. Listening also includes comprehension of meaning-bearing words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and connected discourse.

Saricoban (1999) notes “listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying.” This involves understanding a speaker’s accent or pronunciation, his/her grammar and vocabulary, and grasping the meaning conveyed.

Listening ordinarily is not an isolated skill. In normal, everyday communication, listening usually occurs together with speaking. Only in certain circumstances – for instance, in a lecture, at the theater, or when listening to the radio – does listening appear to be an isolated skill, not interacting with other language skills. Yet, even in those special situations, listeners often have support from the written word (lecture handouts, theater program notes, radio program listings) to

figure out the meaning; moreover, skilled listeners in such circumstances apply what they know from other skills (e.g. from the sociolinguistic rules of speaking) to predict what is likely to be said next (Oxford, 1993).

Listening, however, is sometimes difficult. The fleetingness of speech demands vigilance on the part of the listener who usually requires understanding the meaning conveyed spontaneously, without any chance to rewind a tape and listen again. Furthermore oral speech, unlike the written word, contains many ungrammatical, reduced, or incomplete forms. It also contains hesitations, false starts, repetitions, fillers, and pauses, all of which make up 30-50% of any conversation (Nord, 1981).

In order to understand how the hearing mechanism works and what hearing contributes to language comprehension, it is essential to understand the sound we are exposed to and how our auditory system functions.

Sound is produced by the movements of air particles created by objects in contact. The movements of air particles start from the point of contact, and continue from the contact point in the form of fluctuations of air. One basic fact about sound, and about speech sound in particular, is that sound reveals the structure of the objects that produce it. For instance, we hear differences in speech sounds because of the structure of the speech organs that produced them. Speech sounds are produced by continuous fluctuations of an air stream, originally produced in the lungs, coming into contact with the various parts of our vocal apparatus (especially the larynx, palate, tongue, teeth and lips). A second important fact about sound is that it is temporary. Sound waves quickly fade away. It typically allows only a second or two for us to perceive and make sense of it (Rost, 1994).

Sound perception begins when sound waves travel into the auditory system. The pinna (in the outer ear) modifies the incoming sound, in particular the higher frequencies, and allow us to locate the source of sound. Sound waves then travel down the canal and cause the eardrum to vibrate. The vibration is passed along through the middle ear which its major function is to ensure efficient transfer of sounds (which are in the form of air particles) to the fluids in the cochlea.

The cochlea is the most important part of the ear in terms of auditory perception. The cochlea is a small bony structure, about the size of a thumbnail, which is narrow at one end and wide at the other. It is filled with fluid. The membrane inside the cochlea responds mechanically to movements of the fluid. Lower frequency sounds stimulate primarily the narrower end of the membrane and higher frequency stimulates only the broader end. Each different sound, however, produces varying patterns of movement in the fluid and membrane.

At the side of the cochlea nearest the brainstem are thousands of tiny hair cells, with ends both inside and outside the cochlea. The outer hair cells are connected to the auditory nerve fibers that lead to the auditory cortex of the brain. These hair cells respond to very small movements of the fluid in the membrane, and convert the mechanical movements of the fluid into nerve (neural) activity. At this point, sound waves are quickly, almost automatically, classified as speech or non-speech. If they are speech sound, phonological decoding process begins (Rost, 1994).

To sum up, sound perception is the basis of hearing and an essential process in listening. We hear speech sounds by converting sound waves to neural transmissions. In the next section, theoretical aspects of listening comprehension are presented to provide information background of the theory underlying listening comprehension.

b. Theoretical Aspects of Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is defined by Richards, et al. (1992) as “the process of understanding speech in either a native or foreign language. This process is referred to in psycholinguistics as speech recognition or speech perception.” They contend that the study of listening comprehension process in second language learning focuses on the role of individual linguistic units (e.g. phonemes, words, grammatical structures) as well as the role of the listener’s expectation, the situation and context, background knowledge and the topic. It therefore includes both bottom-up processing and top-down processing.

O’Malley, et al. (1989) explain listening comprehension as “an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge as well as relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill task requirements.” They contend further that task requirements vary depending on the phase in listening comprehension and include maintaining attention to the aural text; parsing, or encoding the information to develop a meaningful representation that is stored in short-term memory; and utilization, or drawing upon existing knowledge both to enhance the meaning of the information and to store the information for later retrieval.

It is suggested by Richards, et al. (1992) that in accounting for the nature of processing spoken language, it has been recognized that ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ modes work together in a cooperative process.

Peterson (1991) maintains that bottom-up processing of language information is evoked by an external source, that is, by the incoming language data itself. Bottom-up comprehension of speech, then, refers to the part of the process in which the

understanding of incoming language is worked out proceeding from sounds, to grammatical relationship and lexical meaning, and so on. The composite meaning of the message is arrived at based on the incoming language data.

Top-down processing, on the other hand, comes from an internal source. That is, it is evoked from prior or existing knowledge and global expectations. These include expectations about language and expectations about the 'world'. Chaudron and Richards (1986) note: "Top-down processing involves prediction and inferencing on the basis of hierarchies of facts, propositions, and expectations, and it enables the listener or the reader to bypass some aspects of bottom-up processing."

In another perspective of using language, Brown and Yule (1983) suggest that language functions can be divided into two major groups: language for interactional purposes and language for transactional purposes. They point out that the purpose of interactional language function is to further social relationships and express personal attitudes. Interactional language is listener-oriented more than message-oriented, focuses more on person than on information, and has an important objective: to establish and maintain social relationship. Some features of interactional language use are talking about 'general' topics (such as the weather and the immediate environment), shifting of topics with agreement on them, identifying the concerns of the other person, and, in general, 'being nice' to the other person and a little less attention to detail.

The purpose of transactional language function, on the other hand, is to convey factual or propositional information. Transactional language is message-oriented, with a focus on content and a concern for getting things done. Some features of transactional language are instructing, giving directions, explaining, describing,

ordering, inquiring, requesting, checking on the correctness of details, and verifying of understanding.

Taking dual perspectives – language functions (interactional and transactional) and language processes (bottom-up and top-down) -- into account, Richards (1990) proposes a model of material design for second language listening comprehension that combines language functions and language processes. He uses the two language functions and the two language processes to construct the four-part grid, which allows for a listening activity according to the demands of the function for listening and the process which can be expected to be most prominently involved.

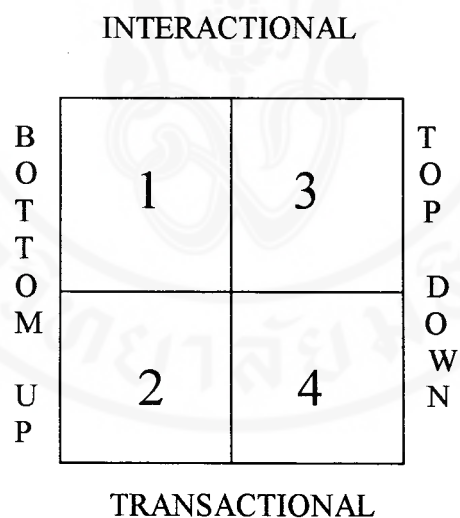


Figure 1: The model of the combination between language functions and language processes.

Richards gives an example for each of the four cells as follows. In the bottom-up mode:

1. Listening closely to a joke (interactive) in order to know ‘when to laugh’.
2. Listening closely to instructions (transactive) during a first driving lesson.

In the top-down mode:

3. Listening casually to cocktail party 'talk' (interactive).
4. Experienced air traveller listening casually to verbal air safety instructions (transactive) which have been heard many times before.

Other examples of interactional uses are greetings, small talk, jokes, compliments, and passing the time of day with friends. Other examples of transactional uses are instructions, descriptions, lectures, news broadcasts.

Richards notes that in many situations both interactional and transactional purposes are involved. In particular, he suggests that effective classroom participation requires both: interactional to interact with teacher and other students while accomplishing class tasks, and transactional to assimilate new information, construct new concepts, and acquire new skills.

C. Importance of Listening Comprehension in Language Learning

Ideas about language learning and language teaching have been changing in some fundamental ways during the past two decades. There have been significant shifts in learning theory, linguistic theory, and instructional models, with an important movement from a primary focus on teaching and a teacher-centered classroom to an increasing concern with learning and a learner-centered classroom (Morley, 1991). At the same time there has been a shift from a major emphasis on structure to an emphasis that includes attention to language function and communication.

While every aspect of language study has been influenced by these changes, none has been affected more than listening comprehension. The status of listening began to change from one of neglect to one of increasing importance, as during the

1980s, new instructional frameworks that emphasized functional language and communicative approaches gave special emphasis to listening. Today, attention to listening in second language development is becoming an important topic of study in both theory and pedagogy (Morley, 1991).

Advocates of the comprehension approach to L2 instruction suggest that listening comprehension should be the focal methodology in foreign/second language instruction, particularly at the initial stages of language study. As Asher (1982) points out, readiness to talk is a developmental phenomenon in the infant which is preceded by hundreds of hours of listening.

Moreover, it has been claimed that the goal of all second/foreign language instruction is the development of communicative competence and oral fluency. Postovsky (1981) contends that this goal is achieved by putting the horse (listening comprehension) before the cart (oral production). In other words, the key to achieving proficiency in speaking is developing proficiency in listening comprehension. He also notes:

Emphasis on aural comprehension training and relaxation of the requirement for oral production in the initial phase of instruction foster development of linguistic competence and produce better results than those obtained through early and intensive oral practice (p.99).

The emphasis then in many second/foreign language classrooms is on providing listening activities as a vital part of the L2 instruction. Dunkel (1986) posits that teaching students to 'listen to understand' rather than to 'listen to repeat' or to 'listen to converse' has become a prime goal of many classroom foreign- and second-language instructor.

Rost (1994) notes the vital role of listening in L2 instruction in that: it provides input for the learner, without comprehensible input at the right level, any learning

simply cannot begin; spoken language provides a means of interaction for the learner, since learners must interact to achieve understanding, access to speakers of the language is essential; authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to attempt to understand language as it is actually used by native speakers; and listening exercises provide teachers with a means for drawing learners' attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, interaction patterns) in the language.

To conclude, the importance of listening comprehension in language learning and language teaching has moved from a status of incidental and peripheral importance to a status of significance and central importance. Especially at the beginning stages of language learning, listening is very important, it is by listening that learners can have the most direct connection to the meaning of the new language. In addition, it is widely accepted that listening plays an important role in L2 instruction.

Variables in the Study and Related Research

In the present study, there are two types of variables to be examined – dependent and independent variables.

A dependent variable is observed to determine what effect, if any, the other types of variables may have on it. In other words, it is the variable of focus on which other variables will act if there is any relationship. Thus, a dependent variable cannot be identified in isolation. It makes sense only in the context of the other variables in the study. In the present study, a dependent variable is listening comprehension ability of the subjects that were measured by a listening comprehension test constructed by the researcher.

Independent variables, on the other hand, are variables selected by the researcher to determine their effect on or relationship with the dependent variable. In the present study, the independent variables are knowledge of grammar or syntactic knowledge and word recognition or lexical knowledge.

a. Syntactic Knowledge

Syntax or grammar, in most traditions of linguistic description, is seen as one of the three main components of language structure – the other two are phonology and semantics. It is also usually limited to the analysis of structures at sentence level (Carter, 1993). In recent years, however, with an increasing interest in text and discourse, the boundaries of the study of grammar have been extended.

With regard to the role of grammar in language comprehension, Ross (1982) points out that to understand spontaneous speech, the listener must have the ability to grasp ideas quickly as they are heard. Recognizing grammatical structure of a language would facilitate in parsing speech and then grasping meaning associated.

Similarly, the result of the study by Call (1985) suggests, as mentioned earlier, that memory for syntactically arranged words is an important component of proficiency in listening comprehension; thus, it can be inferred that syntax also plays a crucial role in rendering input comprehensible. In the same vein, Taylor (1981) and Wipf (1984) have noted the importance of recognizing grammatical signals in the skillful processing of spoken language. In other words, knowledge of structure is an important component of listening proficiency.

Higgs and Clifford (1982), additionally, investigated the education histories of language learners who were unable to progress beyond satisfactory level and found

that most of these individuals had learned the target language in unstructured situations in which communication was valued over accuracy of form. By contrast, learners who were able to progress to higher levels of proficiency had formally studied the structures of the language from their first exposure. They recommend that the teaching of grammar skills should be included in the foreign language curriculum from the beginning levels onwards.

To date, however, there have been no studies that investigated the effect of syntactic or grammatical knowledge on listening comprehension directly, but mostly explored the effects of syntactic modification or simplification of the input. Some related studies are described below.

In a study of L2 listeners' comprehension of modified and unmodified lectures, Dunkel (1988) found that presentation of the lecture in conversational (modified) style rather than so-called broadcast (unmodified) style led to higher achievement on a post lecture recognition quiz and to an increase in the quantity of lecture notes. In this case, the modified speech enhanced L2 comprehension.

Chiang and Dunkel (1992) investigated the listening comprehension of high-intermediate and low-intermediate students (based on scores on the Comprehensive English Language Test [CELT]) on lectures that were modified and some that were not. The modified discourse contained information redundancies and elaboration. They found that high-intermediate students benefited from speech modification while low-intermediate students did not.

In the present study, syntactic knowledge of the subjects was assessed by *The Grammar Test*, a standardized test of the Oxford Placement Test 1 developed by Dave Allan (1992) (see Appendix).

b. Lexical Knowledge

In language comprehension, word recognition is considered the most important element in the comprehension process. Rivers and Temperly (1984) assert that “in speech comprehension process, if we understand the key words, we can often infer their relationships to each other. Then we can construct an acceptable interpretation of what we hear.”

Similarly, Krashen and Terrell (1983) emphasize the importance of vocabulary on language comprehension in that vocabulary is basic to communication. If acquirers do not recognize the meanings of the key words used by those who address them, they will be unable to participate in conversation. And if they wish to express some idea or ask for information, they must be able to produce lexical items to convey their meanings.

Due to the fact that choice of vocabulary is in the hands of the speaker, not the listener, the listener's limited vocabulary can cause difficulties in understanding the message conveyed. Sometimes, listeners can deduce the meaning of a word from its context. This is something that frequently occurs in mother tongue listening when a word is not understood or not heard clearly. For people listening to a foreign language, an unknown word can be like a sudden barrier causing them to stop and think about the meaning of the word and thus making them miss the next part of the speech.

From a list of listening difficulties (Ur, 1984), the problem mentioned could be classified into 4 categories: 1) the problem of sounds which include pronunciation, rhythm, intonation and stress; 2) lacking the ability to skim what is heard, which includes the inability to keep up with redundancy, noise, and inability to guess; 3)

lacking exposure and practice with different kinds of accents and colloquial vocabulary; and 4) inability to link words to the context.

As we have seen, these problems are related to word recognition or knowledge of vocabulary. To foster the growth of foreign and second language learners' vocabulary, Nagy and Herman (1987) suggest:

Vocabulary instruction that does improve comprehension generally has some of the following characteristics: multiple exposures to instructed words, exposures to words in meaningful contexts, rich or varied information about each word, the establishment of ties between instructed words and students' own experience and prior knowledge, and an active role by students in the word-learning process (p.33).

There is now some evidence to suggest that earlier neglect of vocabulary in language learning and research is now being replaced by a vigorous interest (Laufer, 1986). To date, however, there have been no studies that have attempted to isolate the effects of lexical knowledge on listening comprehension; most applied linguists have been paid their attention to the role of lexis in reading. The studies of the role of lexis in listening comprehension are mostly found in the survey studies about the factors involved in comprehending speech.

As mentioned earlier, Goh (1997) analyzed the diaries of 40 ESL learners enrolled on an intensive English language program at National Institute of Education, Singapore. The students' beliefs and observation were classified under person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge. In the light of person knowledge, an outstanding factor mentioned in many diaries as one of the obstacles to listening comprehension was limited vocabulary or academic terms. In respect of task knowledge, unfamiliar vocabulary was considered as one of the troubles in

comprehending the message conveyed. Even in strategic knowledge, several learners mentioned improving vocabulary as one of strategies for developing listening.

Similarly, in a survey of 30 Chinese teachers and 60 students in Hong Kong, Boyle (1984) identified the factors perceived to be most salient influences on EFL listening comprehension. These were studied in terms of speaker factors, factors in the oral text, and listener factors. In terms of listener factors, both teachers and students gave much importance to the knowledge of vocabulary. They stated “if you know the words, you know what it’s all about”

In the present study, lexical knowledge of the subjects was measured by a vocabulary test constructed by the researcher (see Appendix).

Theoretical Aspects of Statistics Used in the Study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationships among a dependent variable – listening comprehension and two independent variables – syntactic and lexical knowledge. In addition, it is aimed to formulate an equation to predict listening comprehension ability of the subjects by using syntactic and lexical knowledge as the predictors. In order to do so, correlational analyses and a related statistical device in this family – multiple regression – are required.

a. Correlational Analyses

In general, correlational studies are designed to investigate the nature and strength of functional relationships among the variables of interest to the researcher (Brown, 1988). More precisely, the correlational analyses are employed to determine the degree of relationship between pairs of two or more variables. In order to express

the extent to which two variables are related, we need to compute a measure of association called a *correlation coefficient*.

In calculating correlation coefficient, the decision as to which measure of association to use with a set of data depends on the type of scale in which each variable is expressed (nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio). For example, lambda (λ) and/or phi coefficient (ϕ) is used with a pair of nominal-scaled variables, Kendall's tau-*b* and/or Spearman's rho (r_s) is used with a pair of ordinal-scaled variables, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) (also referred to as **Pearson's r**) is used with a pair of interval- or ratio- scaled variables (Elifson, et al., 1990).

In the present study, all variables (listening comprehension, syntactic knowledge, and lexical knowledge) are at interval level; thus, the Pearson's r was applied to measure the linear relationship between two pairs of variables as shown in figure 2 and the result of the calculation indicates *correlation coefficient* of each pair.

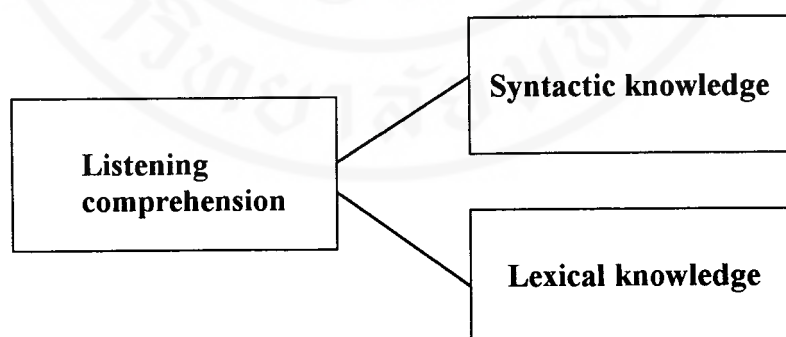


Figure 2 : The two pairs of the studying relationships between the dependent variable and the two independent variables.

The direction of a relationship is indicated by the sign of the correlation coefficient. A positive relationship indicates that high score on one variable tend to be associated with high score on a second variable, and conversely, low score on one

variable tend to be associated with low score on the second variable. A negative relationship indicates that low score on one variable tend to be associated with high score on a second variable. Conversely, a high score on one variable tends to be associated with low score on the second variable. The magnitude of correlation coefficient varies from +1 to -1. A +1 correlation coefficient indicates a perfect positive relationship, a -1 correlation coefficient indicates a perfect negative relationship and a zero correlation coefficient indicates no relationship between the variables (Hatch & Farhady, 1982).

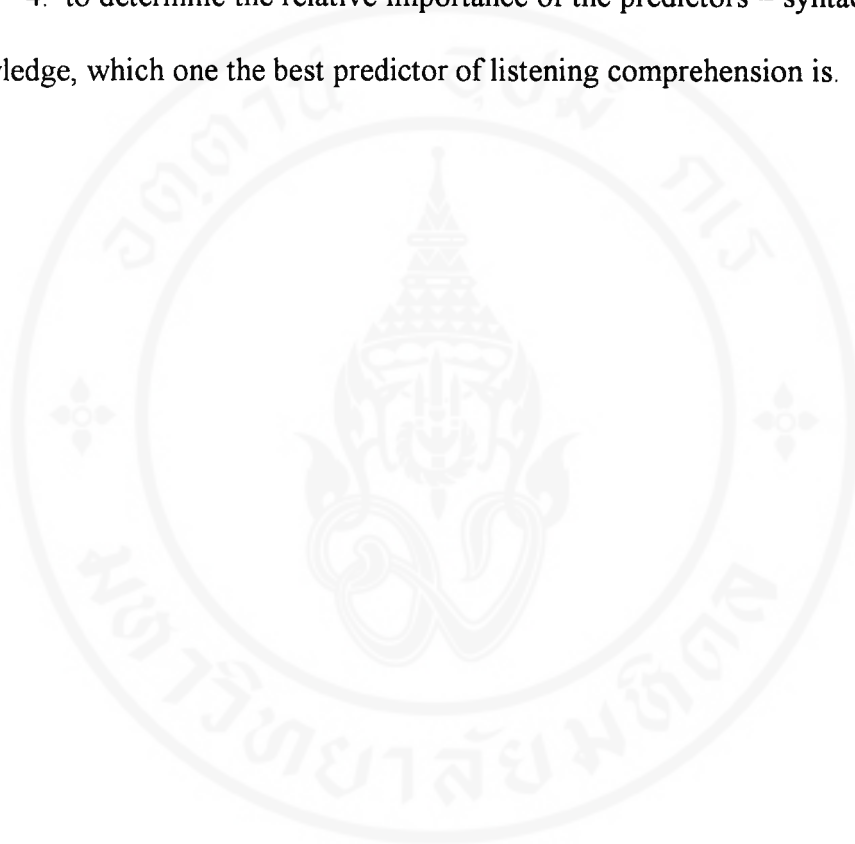
b. Multiple Regression

Multiple regression is a statistical procedure to identify which independent variable is more important or contributes more to the dependent variable. The basic concepts are similar to simple regression in that the researcher is interested in the degree of relationship among all variables and with each other, as reflected in simple *Pearson r* coefficient. Multiple regression allows us to use two or more interval-level or ratio-level variables simultaneously as predictors of an interval-level dependent variable; whereas simple regression involves only one independent and one dependent variable. Of course, several predictor variables used jointly can potentially account for considerably more variation in a dependent variable than can a single predictor variable (Elifson, et al., 1990).

In the present study, multiple regression is used in the following manner:

1. to formulate an equation to predict values on listening comprehension from those of syntactic and lexical knowledge;

2. to measure the linear relationship between listening comprehension and the combined effects of syntactic and lexical knowledge;
3. to measure the proportion of total variation in listening comprehension that is explained jointly by syntactic and lexical knowledge; and
4. to determine the relative importance of the predictors – syntactic and lexical knowledge, which one the best predictor of listening comprehension is.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the procedures of the research to determine the relationships among the two independent variables – syntactic and lexical knowledge, and the dependent variable – listening comprehension of the first-year nursing students attending Mahidol University.

The procedures used in the study to be discussed are as follows:

1. Population and subjects
2. Research instruments
3. Statistical devices
4. Procedure
5. Data analyses and hypotheses testing

Population and Subjects

The target population of this study was first-year nursing students from the Faculty of Nursing, Siriraj Hospital (NS) and the School of Nursing, Ramathibodi Hospital (NR). In 1999 academic year, there were 435 students altogether. Most of them were female and all passed the entrance examination to study in those faculties of Mahidol University.

In determining appropriate sample size for research activities, Srisa-ard (1992:38) suggests the use of certain criteria. The criteria are that if the number of the

population is a three-digit number (100-999), the appropriate sample size would be 15 to 30 per cent of a given population. Similarly, if the number of a population is a four-digit number (1,000-9,999) and a five-digit number or more (10,000 upward), the appropriate sample size would be 10 to 15 per cent and 5 to 10 per cent of a given population respectively.

The number of target population of the present study was 435 students divided into 9 groups by the Department of Foreign Languages for forming English classes – 6 groups of NS and 3 groups of NR. They were grouped according to a name list that was arranged in alphabetical order, any group thus could be representative of the population. The researcher decided to apply 20 per cent of a given population to be the subjects, thus the number of subjects in this study is 87. There were about 40-50 students in each group and the researcher selected a group of NS and a group of NR – each group consisting of 47 and 40 students respectively.

Research Instruments

The instruments employed in the present study were a grammar test, a vocabulary test, and a listening comprehension test.

The grammar test was given in order to assess the students' grammatical proficiency, and thus obtain a value for their syntactic knowledge in English. *The Grammar Test*, a standardized test of the Oxford Placement Test 1, was chosen for this study because it is a validated and efficient means of measuring students' syntactic knowledge. It is a multiple choice test of grammatical structure of English covered by the majority of English language coursebooks, whether functional or structural in orientation, in the range elementary to advanced. The structures chosen for testing are

the results of detailed research into the content of the most widely known and used coursebooks and public examinations. The format and the item-balance of the test are based on evidence provided by computers of the difficulty levels of particular items across an international sample (Allan, 1992). *The Grammar Test* has been divided into two parts – items 1 to 50 are Part 1 and Part 2 is items 50 to 100. Both parts are similar in format that makes it possible for one part to be used if there is only a limited amount of time available. Thus, only Part 1 was selected for this study (see Appendix).

The vocabulary test was designed to measure students' knowledge of vocabulary, and thus provide a value for their lexical knowledge in English. The scope of tested words is based on students' English coursebook 'Strategies for Success' and 'A University Word List' by Nation (1990:235-9). The test contains 50 items and is divided into two parts. The rationale of constructing Part 1 was to assess the subjects' synonym recognition of tested words, and that of Part 2 was to examine their understanding of meaning or definition of the words found in the test.

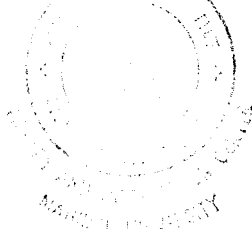
There are 26 items in Part 1 and each question consists of one sentence followed by four choices: a, b, c and d. In each sentence, a word or phrase is underlined. Students must choose from the four choices the one that is the closest synonym to the underlined word or phrase. When the choice replaces the underlined word or phrase, the sentence should still have its original meaning. Some topics used in the sentences are those a typical first-year nursing students might study (e.g. health care, science, and technology); however, some are related to the other areas of interest.

In Part 2, the remaining 24 items were constructed based on the method of making Vocabulary Levels Test by Nation (1990:261-72). This part is divided into 8 sections and each section consists of six words and three definitions. Each definition is

one item, so there are 24 items altogether. Students had to match each definition with one of the six words provided that is the most correct answer. Nation claims that this type of item provides very low chances of guessing correctly, tests a large number of words in a short time, and allows learners to make use of whatever knowledge they have of the meaning of a word. The vocabulary test initially contained 60 items, ten items were removed after having been piloted (see Appendix).

The listening comprehension test was designed to test subjects' ability to understand spoken English and thus provide a value for their listening comprehension. Format of the test is similar to Section 1 (Listening Comprehension) of the TOEFL, one of the most widely known instruments for testing English proficiency. The test was pre-recorded, so the subjects had to do the test based on what they heard from the test tape. The content of the test covers a wide variety of social or everyday topics of conversation including topics related to university setting e.g. attending lectures. Approximately one third of the words found in the vocabulary test appeared in this test. The test contains 50 items and is divided into 4 parts.

Part 1 contains 20 single sentences. The statements are played on tape and are repeated. There is a 7 to 8-second period of silence after each statement is read out. During this time, students had to read the four choices in the test booklet and choose the sentence that is closest in meaning to the one they hear. Since each statement is spoken twice, students would have about 15 seconds to select the response for an item. The rationale of constructing this part is to test subjects' ability to understand accurately single statements made by native speakers. Most statements contain between 5 and 15 words.



Part 2 contains short dialogues between two people. After the subjects hear the conversation, they must read the question and four possible answers in the test booklet and choose the best answer. There is a 7 to 8-second period of silence after each conversation which is repeated twice; thus, for an item, students would have approximately 15 seconds to select the response. Since the rationale of constructing this part is to test subjects' ability to understand social or everyday topics of conversation, thus the English used is more informal than the one used in the classroom or read in a book. There are 20 short dialogues in this part.

Part 3 contains five short talks. All talks are between 30 to 45 seconds in length and the language used is formal. Since the rationale for constructing this part is to measure the subjects' ability in comprehending the central or main idea of the short talks delivered by native speakers, after each talk students had to choose from the four possible answers in the test booklet. There is a 7 to 8-second period of silence between each talk. Every talk is repeated; thus, for an item, students would have about 15 seconds to read the 4 options in the test booklet and choose the correct answer.

Part 4 contains a passage with the blanks of five omitted words. The passage is heard on tape. Students had to complete each blank with the words they heard by writing them in the answer sheet. The passage is repeated after a 5-second pause at the end of the first round. The rationale underlying this part is to test subjects' ability of transferring the omitted words they hear to match those they know and must be compatible with the meaning in the passage.

All directions in the listening comprehension test are written in Thai in order to help the subjects do the test accurately. Also, some items were revised after having been piloted (see Appendix).

With regard to the sequence of administering, *The Grammar Test* and the vocabulary test were given to the subjects on the same day in the English class; and the listening comprehension test was administered a few days later in the listening lab, as part of the English class. The subjects had no prior exposure to the testing formats used in this research.

Statistical Devices

Statistical devices used in this study are as follows:

1. **Item analysis.** An item analysis was employed to examine the level of difficulty and the discrimination power of the tests constructed by the researcher.

2. **KR-20.** The KR-20 formula was used to confirm the reliability of the tests constructed by the researcher.

3. **Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r).** The Pearson's r was used to indicate correlational relationships between syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension by using the scores the subjects obtained.

4. Multiple regression analyses

4.1 *Multiple regression equation* was used to predict values on listening comprehension of the students from those of syntactic and lexical knowledge. A multiple regression equation with two independent variables is written in the following manner:

$$\text{Predicted } Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2$$

Where

Predicted Y = the predicted value of the dependent variable

a = Y-intercept

b_1 = the slope associated with the first independent variable (X_1), and

b_2 = the slope associated with the second independent variable (X_2)

(Elifson, et al., 1990:265)

The slopes are interpreted in the following manner: b_1 represents the units of change in Y given one unit increase in X_1 , holding X_2 constant; and b_2 represents the units of change in Y given one unit increase in X_2 , holding X_1 constant.

4.2 *Multiple correlation coefficient (R)* was used as a measure of the linear relationship between listening comprehension, and the combined effects of syntactic and lexical knowledge.

4.3 *Coefficient of multiple determination (R^2)* was used as a measure of proportion of total variation in listening comprehension that is explained jointly by syntactic and lexical knowledge.

4.4 *Standardized regression coefficient or beta weights (β)* was used to determine the relative important of the predictors -- syntactic and lexical knowledge, which one the best predictor of listening comprehension is.

Procedure

The procedure of the present study was carried out as follows:

1. The subjects were randomly selected from the target population.
2. The research instruments -- vocabulary test and listening comprehension test were constructed and the drafts of both tests were approved by the thesis advisors.
3. Both tests -- vocabulary test and listening comprehension test -- were piloted with a group of first-year NS students of Mahidol University who were not the subjects in the study.

4. Item analysis and KR-20 were employed to examine level of difficulty, the discrimination power, and the reliability of both tests.

5. Since the number of items needed is 50, thus ten inappropriate items (too difficult and/or lack of discrimination power) of vocabulary test were removed; also, some items of listening comprehension test were revised after having been piloted.

6. All the research instruments – *The Grammar Test*, the vocabulary test, and the listening comprehension test – were then administered to the subjects.

7. Results of all tests were collected, analyzed, and interpreted via statistical procedure. In this study, SPSS for Windows release 9.05 were employed.

Results of examining the two tests constructed by the researcher after having been piloted were summarized and shown below.

	Vocabulary test	Listening comprehension test
Number of Subjects	44	46
Total Score	60	50
Min.	17	16
Max.	45	42
Mean	28.21	25.35
SD	6.50	6.89
KR-20	0.73	0.82
AVG DIFF	0.46	0.52
AVG DISC	0.35	0.34
SE	2.37	2.96

Data Analyses and Hypotheses Testing

After obtaining data, the statistical calculations were performed to collect all the information that is necessary for testing the hypotheses. The steps, according to Brown (1988), are as follows:

1. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was applied to examine the degree of relationship between subjects' score on the listening comprehension test and those on *The Grammar Test*, and between score on the listening comprehension test and those on the vocabulary test. The results of the calculations were *observed statistics*.

2. The *critical value* was identified by turning to readily available tables and determine the critical value for a given statistic on the basis of the *degrees of freedom (df)* that are allowable, and level of significance (α).

3. The observed statistics (from step 1) are compared with the critical value which is obtained from the appropriate table for accepting or rejecting the hypotheses.

4. At the last stage of data analyses, multiple regression analyses were performed to calculate and interpret the other aspects of the data obtained.

In this study, however, the researcher did not do the calculation manually, every procedure was computed via SPSS for Windows release 9.05.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings of the study. All findings are based on the analyses of the data obtained -- the subjects' scores on *The Grammar Test*, a vocabulary test, and a listening comprehension test.

The presentation of the findings is organized as follows:

1. Descriptive statistics of variables in the study
2. Correlational relationship between the variables
3. Multiple regression analyses

Descriptive Statistics of Variables in the Study

Descriptive statistics are presented in order to summarize the results of basic calculation of each variable. Mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score the subjects obtained are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Each Variable

Variables	Total	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Syntactic knowledge	50	19.70	4.19	11	33
Lexical knowledge	50	24.21	6.93	10	42
Listening comprehension	50	24.49	6.58	11	43

Number of subjects is 87.

Mean is probably the single most common reported indicator of central tendency. In this study, it was employed to indicate the average score the subjects obtained from each test. From Table 1, listening comprehension has the highest mean score (24.49) which indicates that most subjects get a higher score on listening comprehension test than those obtained from the other two tests.

The standard deviation (SD), on the other hand, is a sort of average of the differences of all scores from the mean. These differences are also called their *deviations* from the mean – hence the name standard deviation. In other words, standard deviation is used to indicate the average of how far individuals varied from the mean. From Table 1, lexical knowledge has the greatest standard deviation value (6.93). This reveals that individual subject's score on vocabulary test shows more variation from the mean than those of the other two tests.

Correlational Relationship between each Pair of the Variables

According to the prime concern of the present study, the researcher is interested in determining the degree of relationship between the two pairs of variables as shown in Figure 2. In order to test the first hypothesis – “There is a significant positive relationship between syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students”-- Pearson's r was applied to measure the linear relationship between the two independent variables and the dependent variable. Results of the computation are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2
Correlation Coefficient between Syntactic Knowledge
and Listening Comprehension

		Syntactic Knowledge	Listening Comprehension
Syntactic Knowledge	Pearson's <i>r</i>		.363**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N		87
Listening Comprehension	Pearson's <i>r</i>	.363**	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

According to the finding in Table 2, the Pearson correlation coefficient of the relationship between syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension is .363, statistically significant at the .01 level. This reveals that syntactic knowledge correlates positively and significantly with listening comprehension.

Table 3
Correlation Coefficient between Lexical Knowledge
and Listening Comprehension

		Lexical Knowledge	Listening Comprehension
Lexical Knowledge	Pearson's <i>r</i>		.456**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N		87
Listening comprehension	Pearson's <i>r</i>	.456**	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

With regard to the finding in Table 3, the Pearson correlation coefficient of the relationship between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension is .456, statistically significant at the .01 level. This indicates that lexical knowledge correlates positively and significantly with listening comprehension.

Consequently, the first hypothesis of the present study is accepted.

Multiple Regression Analyses

Another purpose of the present study is to formulate an equation to predict listening comprehension of the subjects by using syntactic and lexical knowledge as the predictors. The researcher also intended to find the multiple correlation coefficient (R) and coefficient of multiple determination (R^2). In order to do so, multiple regression was applied. The entry system used in the present study is called Stepwise. Results of the computation are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Coefficients of the Two Independent Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	p-value
	B	S.E.	β		
Lexical Knowledge	.367	.092	.386	3.986	.000
Syntactic Knowledge	.407	.152	.259	2.676	.009
(Constant)	7.595	3.275		2.319	.023

Dependent Variable: Listening Comprehension

According to the findings in Table 4, the multiple regression equation to predict listening comprehension (LC) by using syntactic knowledge (SK) and lexical knowledge (LK) as the predictors in the formation of raw score is:

$$\text{Predicted LC} = 7.595 + 0.367 \text{ SK} + 0.407 \text{ LK}$$

(Standard error = 5.69)

And the equation in the formation of standard score is:

$$Z_{\text{predicted LC}} = 0.259 Z_{\text{SK}} + 0.386 Z_{\text{LK}}$$

Furthermore, the findings in Table 4 were also applied to test the second hypothesis – “Syntactic and lexical knowledge can predict listening comprehension, and that lexical knowledge is the better predictor than syntactic knowledge.” As shown in the table, the standardized regression coefficient or beta weight of lexical knowledge (.386) is greater than that of syntactic knowledge (.259). This indicates that lexical knowledge is the better predictor of listening comprehension than syntactic knowledge, and of course both syntactic and lexical knowledge can predict listening comprehension to some degree. The second hypothesis is, therefore, accepted.

With regard to multiple correlation coefficient (R) and coefficient of multiple determination (R^2), results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Multiple Correlation Coefficient and Coefficient of Multiple Determination

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate
.520	.270	.253	5.69

Predictors : Lexical Knowledge, Syntactic Knowledge

As shown in Table 5, the multiple correlation coefficient and coefficient of multiple determination were .520 and .270 respectively. The value of multiple R

(.520) indicates that the linear relationship between the combined effects of syntactic and lexical knowledge, and listening comprehension is moderate. In addition, coefficient of R^2 (.270) reveals that 27 per cent of total variance in listening comprehension can be explained jointly by syntactic and lexical knowledge in which 20.8 per cent can be explained by lexical knowledge, while syntactic knowledge contributes only 6.2 per cent. In other words, both syntactic and lexical knowledge contribute approximately a quarter of total variance to listening comprehension.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses in detail the data obtained from the investigation on the relationships among syntactic knowledge, lexical knowledge, and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students attending Mahidol University. The discussion is presented as follows:

1. Discussion of the findings
2. Implications for teaching and learning listening

Discussion of the Findings

The prime goal of the present study is to examine the relationship between the two independent variables – syntactic and lexical knowledge, and the dependent variable – listening comprehension; and if the correlation exists, what the direction or extent of the relationship is. *The Grammar Test*, a standardized test of the Oxford Placement Test 1, a vocabulary test and a listening comprehension test were used as the research instruments to obtain the data. The results of the statistical analyses indicate significant positive relationship between syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension as shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

It is not surprising for there to be a positive relationship between grammatical knowledge and listening comprehension (Table 2). As Ross (1982) points out, to

understand spontaneous speech, the listener must have the ability to grasp ideas quickly as they are heard. Recognizing grammatical structure of a language would facilitate in parsing speech and then grasping associated meaning. The finding also supports the study by Call (1985) who posits that memory for syntactically arranged words is an important component of proficiency in listening comprehension. Furthermore, Taylor (1981) and Wipf (1984) have noted the importance of recognizing grammatical signals in the skillful processing of spoken language. In other words, knowledge of structure is an important component of listening proficiency.

It is thus reasonable to conclude that the teaching and learning of grammatical structure should not be neglected. As noted by Higgs and Clifford (1982), the teaching of grammar skills should be included in the foreign language curriculum from the beginning levels onwards. Larsen-Freeman (1991) maintains that it is very important for EFL teachers to realize that teaching grammar is not merely filling the learners with grammatical paradigms and syntactic rules. What the teachers are supposed to do is to cultivate linguistic performance in the students, which is consistent with the grammatical facts. In other words, grammar teaching is not so much knowledge transmission, as it is skill development. She suggests further that teacher should be aware of the following nature of EFL learners.

Firstly, learners do not learn structures one at a time. From their first encounter with the definite article, learners might master one of its pragmatic functions – e.g., to signal the uniqueness of the noun phrase. But even if they are able to do this pragmatically, it is not likely that learners will always produce the definite article when needed, because learners typically take a long time before they are able to do this consistently. Thus, learning is a gradual process involving the mapping of form,

meaning, and pragmatics; structures do not emerge in learners' interlanguage fully developed and error-free. To expect that they will do so in an instructional setting is therefore unrealistic. Recycling various aspects of structures over time seems a much more reasonable alternative.

Secondly, even when learners appear to have mastered a particular structure, it is still common to find backsliding occurring with the introduction of new forms to the learners' interlanguage. For example, the learner who has finally mastered the third person singular marker on present-tense verbs is likely to overgeneralize the rule and apply it to newly emerging modal verbs. Thus, teachers should not despair at similar regressive behavior on the part of their students.

Lastly, second language learners rely on the knowledge and the experience they have. If they are beginners, they will rely on their L1 as a source of hypotheses about how the L2 works; when they are more advanced, they will rely increasingly on the L2. Teachers should realize that there is no need to teach everything about a structure to a group of students; rather, the teacher can build upon what the students already know. It also follows that the challenging dimension for a given grammatical structure will shift from class to class depending on the students' L1 backgrounds and level of L2 proficiency. Successful teaching involves identifying the relevant challenge for a particular group of students.

With regard to the evidence from the findings shown in Table 3, it is also not surprising that lexical knowledge correlates positively and significantly with listening comprehension. The result agrees with Goh (1997) and Boyle (1984); they have noted that word recognition or knowledge of vocabulary is a factor perceived as one of the most salient influences on EFL listening comprehension. This is, additionally,

consistent with Rivers and Temperly's (1984) assertion: "In speech comprehension process, if we understand the key words, we can often infer their relationships to each other. Then we can construct an acceptable interpretation of what we hear."

Furthermore, Krashen and Terrell (1983) emphasize the importance of vocabulary on language comprehension in that vocabulary is basic to communication. If acquirers do not recognize the meanings of the key words used by those who address them, they will be unable to participate in conversation. And if they wish to express some idea or ask for information, they must be able to produce lexical items to convey their meanings.

In teaching vocabulary needed for listening comprehension, many EFL teachers typically find that some learners have a large reading vocabulary and read well, but have great difficulty in comprehending spoken English. It is what Rixon (1986) called the weak relationship between English sounds and the way they are spelt in the written language as perceived by EFL readers. Changes in sounds when they occur in rapid, connected speech and different ways of pronouncing the 'same' sound also cause difficulties in listening comprehension. These learners need to have the chance to transfer their reading vocabulary to the task of listening.

Activities to turn a reading vocabulary into a listening vocabulary are suggested by Nation (1990). A very effective technique is to choose an interesting simplified reading text which is at a vocabulary level well below the learners' reading level. The teacher then reads the story aloud to the learners for 10 or 15 minutes each day trying to keep the learners interested in the story. Wherever a word occurs which the teacher feels the learners might not recognize, the teacher writes it on the blackboard while repeating the sentence containing it. This is done without

interrupting the flow of the story. If the words occur again, the teacher simply points to it on the blackboard. If an irregular verb form appears, the teacher says its stem form immediately after it. In this way a list of 20 or so words is written on the board as an aid to understanding the story. Gradually, as the story progresses, there is less need to write words and the telling can speed up. The interest of the story keeps the learners' attention and the story line helps with the interpretation of the vocabulary.

In regard to the first research question – “Is there any relationship between each pair of variables – syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and lexical knowledge and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students?” -- the results of the correlational analyses clearly indicate that both syntactic and lexical knowledge significantly correlate with listening comprehension. Addressing the second question – “If the correlation exists, what is the direction of the relationship?” – the results also demonstrate a positive relationship between the two independent variables and listening comprehension. These findings imply cooperative work between knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in facilitating listening comprehension. As Call (1985) points out, knowledge of vocabulary is not enough to make students good listeners; they must also be able to use syntax to help them recognize the relationships among the words they have heard and to retain utterances in memory long enough to understand them.

Lastly, with regard to the third research question – “Can the two independent variables (syntactic and lexical knowledge) predict listening comprehension of the subjects, and if so, which one is the better predictor? – results of multiple regression analyses clearly reveal that both syntactic and lexical knowledge can predict listening comprehension, and that lexical knowledge is the better predictor. The findings are in

accordance with Levine and Reves (1990) who have underlined the important role of vocabulary as a predictor of overall reading skill as well as listening ability.

For the proportion of total variance in listening comprehension that is explained jointly by syntactic and lexical knowledge, it is considerably low – only 27 per cent. With the evidence from some studies, there are many variables or factors contribute to effective listening such as knowledge of specific topic or subject (Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994), auditory memory (Call, 1985), interaction and attention (Pica, et al., 1987), listening strategies (Chien & Li, 1998), speech rate (Griffiths, 1992), and accent (Taurozo & Luk, 1997). The finding that the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary contribute only 27 per cent of total variance to listening comprehension is therefore not surprising.

All findings, however, are limited to the subjects in the present study and cannot be generalized to other subjects.

Implications for Teaching and Learning Listening

The present study was carried out to examine whether there was any relationship between the two pairs of variables – syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and lexical knowledge and listening comprehension of first-year nursing students. The results demonstrate a significantly positive relationship between the two independent variables and the dependent variable. It is thus reasonable to apply such findings to classroom teaching and learning the listening skill. With regard to the role of grammatical knowledge and knowledge of vocabulary in listening comprehension based on this study, the following suggestions might be beneficial to the development of listening skills.

1. Although many EFL listeners in some survey studies put knowledge of vocabulary high on a list of important factors considered vital in aiding listening comprehension, it is not enough to make them good listeners. Recognition of syntactic structures is also needed to help them recognize the relationship among the words they have heard and retain utterances in memory long enough to understand the speech. Formal exercises focusing on the recognition of syntactic structures thus are essential to the development of this skill. Focusing on listening for the formal properties of the target language before the learners are asked to listen for meaning will provide them with the tools they need to process incoming input efficiently and to acquire the target language more quickly.

2. In line with the evidence that, from the results of this study, grammatical knowledge and word recognition contribute approximately only a quarter of total variance to listening comprehension, it is suggested that knowledge of grammar and vocabulary alone are not enough for effective listening. As mentioned earlier, listeners' background knowledge, the listening strategies they use, their understanding of the features of spoken English e.g. sounds, stress and intonation, the organization of speech, pauses and 'fillers', and 'formal/informal' language are some of the salient factors that foster their listening comprehension. Classroom listening activities should, therefore, help in activating learners' prior knowledge and providing some useful listening strategies. Rather, the activities such as introducing the learners to other speakers of English, personally or through use of video and audio tapes, or exposing them to different types of authentic materials and situations (formal or informal, spoken by native speakers or foreign speakers, delivered slowly or quickly) would familiarize the learners with the natural speech of English.

Thus, recognition of syntactic structures and knowledge of vocabulary are two of the important components of listening proficiency. Learning grammar and improving vocabulary size are still essential for developing listening skills. However, as we know, syntactic and lexical knowledge are not enough to make EFL learners good listeners; some of the factors considered vital in aiding listening comprehension e.g. background knowledge, strategies used in listening, and understanding of the features of spoken English are also needed. Consequently, in teaching listening skills, it is essential that teachers should not slowdown or distort speech in the mistaken notion that will help students to understand. Anything heard by the students should contain the typical rhythm, intonation, pauses, contractions and elision as the target language. This would be more beneficial to the learners.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Listening is a fundamental language skill, but often overlooked by foreign and second language teachers. However, the important development of ideas about language learning and language teaching from a primary focus on teaching and a teacher-centered classroom to an increasing concern with learning and a learner-centered classroom make it important for the status of listening to change from one of neglect to one of increasing importance. The new instructional framework that emphasizes functional language and communicative approaches give notable emphasis to listening. Today, attention to listening in second language development is becoming an important topic of study in both theory and pedagogy.

Listening is the activity of paying attention to and attempting to get meaning from what we hear. Since listening cannot be observed and people can listen in their mother tongue with little effort, most of us take listening for granted. It is a skill which seems to develop easily in the mother tongue, but requires considerable effort when listening to a foreign language. Those foreign language learners whose first language is based on a different phonological system, rhythm and tone often suffer from very poor listening skills when exposed to a foreign language, either in not understanding or misunderstanding what is being said to them.

Factors, types of knowledge and skills that are considered important to improve listening comprehension, consequently, need to be explored. With the support of

evidence from some survey studies, knowledge of vocabulary and syntactic structures are two of several salient factors frequently mentioned by the respondents in those studies. In addition, these two factors are commonly found as an area of emphasis in first-year nursing students' coursebook. The researcher is thus interested in determining the nature of the relationship between the two factors and listening comprehension.

The review of relevant literature was presented to give relevant background information necessary for this study. The first part deals with related literature on listening comprehension that is further divided into the nature of listening, theoretical aspects of listening comprehension, and importance of listening comprehension in language learning. Literature of variables in the study and related research are presented later. Finally, the last section provides ideas about theoretical aspects of statistics used in the study.

The target population of this study was first-year nursing students from the Faculty of Nursing, Siriraj Hospital and the School of Nursing, Ramathibodi Hospital. In 1999 academic year, there were 435 nursing students taking their first year courses at the Salaya Campus, Mahidol University. By applying criteria for determining the appropriate sample size needed to be representative of a given population suggested by Srisa-ard (1992:38), the number of subjects in this study was 87. The research instruments comprising *The Grammar Test*, a standardized test of the Oxford Placement Test 1, a vocabulary test and a listening comprehension test, constructed by the researcher, were employed to collect data. The correlational analyses and a related statistical device in this family – multiple regression – were then applied to analyze the

data obtained; and all statistical calculations were computed via SPSS for Windows release 9.05.

The results of the statistical analyses indicate significant positive relationship between syntactic knowledge and listening comprehension, and between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension. However, the correlation coefficients of those variables were not very high especially that between grammatical knowledge and listening comprehension (.363) – it was in fact rather weak. For the linear relationship between listening comprehension and the combined effects of syntactic and lexical knowledge, it was .520 which might be considered moderate.

In regard to the proportion of total variation in listening comprehension that is explained jointly by syntactic and lexical knowledge, it was also not very high. Both word recognition and grammatical knowledge contribute only about a quarter (27%) of total variance to listening comprehension.

The multiple regression equation to predict listening comprehension (LC) by using syntactic knowledge (SK) and lexical knowledge (LK) as the predictors in the formation of raw score is:

$$\text{Predicted LC} = 7.595 + 0.367 \text{ SK} + 0.407 \text{ LK}$$

(Standard error = 5.69)

And the equation in the formation of standard score is:

$$Z_{\text{predicted LC}} = 0.259 Z_{\text{SK}} + 0.386 Z_{\text{LK}}$$

To conclude, although knowledge of vocabulary and syntactic structure are important components of listening proficiency, they are not enough to make EFL learners good listeners. As mentioned earlier, there are several factors considered vital

in facilitating listening comprehension. Listening is a complex skill that deserves the attention of learners and teachers alike. Meaningful, interesting language tasks using everyday, unsimplified speech are valuable. Encouraging learners to tap their own background knowledge, identify the purpose of listening task and use appropriate strategies can help our EFL students improve their listening skills.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the results of this study, some recommendations for further study are proposed as follows:

1. Further study should be extended to investigate the effectiveness of the other factors or types of knowledge considered important in facilitating listening comprehension.
2. Further study exploring listening strategies EFL learners use should be conducted. It would be interesting to find out whether there is the relationship between the strategies they use and their performance in listening comprehension.
3. This study should be replicated with other students who have different level or field of studies to find out if the results are different from those in the present study.

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APPENDIX

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

VOCABULARY TEST

Part 1

Directions: In the following questions, 1-26, each sentence has an underlined word or phrase. Below each sentence are four choices of other words or phrases -- a, b, c and d. You must choose one of the words or phrases that best keeps the meaning of the original sentence if it is substituted for the underlined word or phrase. Then, on your answer sheet, mark X on the letter you have chosen.

1. A microscope is a scientific device that is used to help see things that are too small to see with the naked eye.
a. feature b. drill c. instrument d. service
2. Helmeted diving suits were first devised in the seventeenth century and improved versions are still used.
a. invented b. adapted c. denoted d. regarded
3. Galaxies consist of roughly a hundred million stars.
a. become b. contain c. alter d. fulfill
4. A guyot is a submarine mountain that does not reach the surface of the sea.
a. a tall b. a huge c. a volcanic d. an underwater
5. Bamboo has certain qualities that are important in the papermaking process.
a. characteristics b. components c. descriptions d. viewpoints
6. My brother and I look so alike that people often think we are twins.
a. loved b. hateful c. sympathetic d. similar

7. Most students do not understand the lesson, so they ask the teacher to go over it until they do.
- a. change b. repeat c. stop d. test
8. Some animals will not breed if they are kept in cages.
- a. grow up b. live long c. keep healthy d. produce young
9. I have to wear wrinkled shirt and pants; I did not iron them since my iron was out of order.
- a. did not arrange b. did not work c. was not supplied d. was stolen
10. Many reptiles are often classified as beneficial to humans.
- a. hostile b. relevant c. useful d. undesirable
11. It was very brave of you to stand up and speak in front of all those people.
- a. courageous b. courteous c. embarrassing d. surprising
12. In ancient times, exchange of goods occurred through barter.
- a. demand b. increase c. production d. trade
13. Corn from Iowa is used primarily for animal feed rather than food for human consumption.
- a. finally b. mainly c. strictly d. completely
14. The trade agreement between the two countries will expire next year.
- a. begin b. take effect c. come to an end d. change hands
15. Although the hazards of space travel are many, the rewards make it a worthwhile effort.
- a. risks b. pressures c. difficulties d. expenses
16. The city's water supply is adequate for its needs.
- a. lacking b. distributed c. sufficient d. valuable

17. The Peace Corps was set up by President Kennedy to promote peace and friendship between the United States and developing countries.
 a. proposed b. established c. supported d. declared
18. Scientists found the prints of several extinct species in the cave.
 a. active b. fragile c. related d. vanished
19. A devastating earthquake destroyed San Francisco in the early 1900s.
 a. ruined b. relocated c. restored d. recovered
20. As a result of the company's collapse, the workers became unemployed.
 a. success b. failure c. cooperation d. progress
21. The most damaging solar radiation is ultraviolet light that is reflected from water, sand, and snow.
 a. gentle b. delicate c. harmful d. painful
22. The man offered to fix the television.
 a. refused b. attempted c. charged d. volunteered
23. Asthma is a chronic disease whose chief symptom is difficulty in breathing.
 a. large b. principal c. strange d. vague
24. Many Chinese believe that powdered rhinoceros horn will cure various afflictions.
 a. heal b. delay c. maintain d. reject
25. The Hawaiian Islands were previously called the Sandwich Islands.
 a. mistakenly b. commonly c. formerly d. occasionally
26. The fundamental element of a word is known as its root.
 a. basic b. final c. compound d. trivial

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Part 2

Directions: Match each definition with one of the six words provided you think the most correct answer. Then, on your answer sheet, mark X on the letter you have chosen.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| a. ancient | 27. _____ naive |
| b. breeze | 28. _____ light gentle wind |
| c. innocent | 29. _____ inner surface of your hand |
| d. palm | |
| e. survey | |
| f. traditional | |
| a. annual | 30. _____ set of actions done to entertain people by using skill |
| b. elevator | _____ to confuse them |
| c. fit | 31. _____ physically healthy and strong |
| d. mobile | 32. _____ growing and living in natural conditions |
| e. trick | |
| f. wild | |
| a. apply | 33. _____ choose by voting |
| b. elect | 34. _____ state of untidiness or dirtiness |
| c. jump | 35. _____ make or produce |
| d. manufacture | |
| e. mess | |
| f. threaten | |
| a. elementary | 36. _____ the beginning stage |
| b. negative | 37. _____ breath noisily through the nose and mouth while |
| c. predict | _____ asleep |
| d. require | 38. _____ sufferer from the result of a disaster |
| e. snore | |
| f. victim | |

Oxford Placement Test 1

Grammar Test

Part 1

Directions: Choose the correct answers. Then, on your answer sheet, mark (X) on the letter you have chosen.

1. Water _____ at a temperature of 100° C.
a. is to boil b. is boiling c. boils
2. In some countries _____ very hot all the time.
a. there is b. is c. it is
3. In cold countries people wear thick clothes _____ warm.
a. for keeping b. to keep c. for to keep
4. In England people are always talking about _____.
a. a weather b. the weather c. weather
5. In some places _____ almost every day.
a. it rains b. there rains c. it raining
6. In deserts there isn't _____ grass.
a. the b. some c. any
7. Places near the Equator have _____ weather even in the cold season.
a. a warm b. the warm c. warm
8. In England _____ time of the year is usually from December to February.
a. coldest b. the coldest c. colder
9. _____ people don't know what it's like in other countries.
a. The most b. Most of c. Most
10. Very _____ people can travel abroad.
a. less b. little c. few

11. Mohammed Ali _____ his first world title fight in 1960.
a. has won b. won c. winning
12. After he _____ an Olympic gold medal he became a professional boxer.
a. had won b. have won c. was winning
13. His religious beliefs _____ change his name when he became champion.
a. have made him b. made him to c. made him
14. If he _____ lost his first fight with Sonny Liston, no one would have been surprised.
a. has b. would have c. had
15. He has travelled a lot _____ as a boxer and as a world-famous personality.
a. both b. and c. or
16. He is very well known _____ the world.
a. all in b. all over c. in all
17. Many people _____ he was the greatest boxer of all time.
a. is believing b. are believing c. believe
18. To be the best _____ the world is not easy.
a. from b. in c. of
19. Like any top sportsman Ali _____ train very hard.
a. had to b. must c. should
20. Even though he has now lost his title, people _____ always remember him as a champion.
a. would b. will c. did

The history of ___(21)___ is ___(22)___ short one. For many centuries men ___(23)___ to fly, but with ___(24)___ success. In the 19th century a few people succeeded ___(25)___ in balloons. But it wasn't until the beginning of ___(26)___ century that anybody ___(27)___ able to fly in a machine ___(28)___ was heavier than air, in other word, in ___(29)___ we now call a 'plane'. The first people to achieve 'powered flight' were the Wright brothers. ___(30)___ was the machine which was the forerunner of the Jumbo jets and supersonic airliners that are ___(31)___ common sight today. They ___(32)___ hardly have imagined that in 1969, ___(33)___ more than half a century later, a man ___(34)___ landed on the moon. Already ___(35)___ is taking the first steps towards the stars. Although space satellites have existed ___(36)___ less than forty years, we are now dependent ___(37)___ them for all kinds of ___(38)___ . Not only ___(39)___ being used for scientific research in space, but also the see what kind of weather ___(40)___ . By 2000, there ___(41)___ have been satellites in space for forty-two years and the 'space superpowers' are planning to ___(42)___ massive space stations built. When these ___(43)___ completed it will be the first time ___(44)___ astronauts will be able to work in space in large numbers. ___(45)___ all that, in many ways the most remarkable flight ___(46)___ all was ___(47)___ of the flying bicycle, which the world saw on television, ___(48)___ across the Channel from England to France, with nothing ___(49)___ a man to power it. As the bicycle-flyer said, "It's the first time ___(50)___ what hard work it is to be a bird!"

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 21 | a. aeroplane | b. the aeroplane | c. an aeroplane |
| 22 | a. quite a | b. a quite | c. quite |
| 23 | a. are trying | b. try | c. had tried |
| 24 | a. little | b. few | c. a little |
| 25 | a. to fly | b. in flying | c. into flying |

LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST

Part 1

คำสั่ง สำหรับแต่ละข้อคำถามใน ส่วนที่ 1 นี้ นักศึกษาจะได้ยินประโยคสั้นๆ ซึ่งแต่ละประโยคจะพูด 2 ครั้ง เมื่อนักศึกษาฟังแต่ละประโยคจบแล้ว จะมีเวลาให้ประมาณ 15 วินาที ให้รีบอ่านประโยคที่ให้มา จากตัวเลือกทั้ง 4 คือ a, b, c และ d และเลือกประโยคที่มีความหมายใกล้เคียง หรือเหมือนกันกับ ประโยคที่ฟังมากที่สุด จากนั้นทำเครื่องหมายกากบาท (X) ลงในกระดาษคำตอบ ในช่องตัวอักษรที่เลือก

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. a. The play will begin soon.
b. I arrived too late for the play.
c. The play started just as I arrived.
d. I will arrive as soon as I can.</p> | <p>6. a. Sue won the race.
b. Sue swims only on Mondays.
c. Sue exercises by swimming.
d. Sue takes daily walks</p> |
| <p>2. a. She put some coffee on the table.
b. She had a room near the shop.
c. She made a cup of coffee on the table.
d. She bought a new table.</p> | <p>7. a. We are able to buy a new car.
b. We have to buy a new car.
c. We shouldn't offer to buy a new car.
d. We don't have enough money to buy a new car.</p> |
| <p>3. a. I know I'll attend the play with you.
b. Tell me if you will attend the play.
c. You will not go to the play.
d. The play must go on.</p> | <p>8. a. Mark enjoys driving on Friday nights.
b. Mark doesn't drive on Friday nights.
c. Mark only drives on Friday nights.
d. Mark likes traffic jam on Friday nights.</p> |
| <p>4. a. Mary is playing music.
b. Mary is practicing saying no.
c. Mary is playing oboe.
d. Mary is packing to go.</p> | <p>9. a. She has changed her major to mathematics.
b. She has studied architecture for three years.
c. She cannot change her major.
d. She studies architecture now.</p> |
| <p>5. a. Jane and her twin don't look alike.
b. Jane looks after her younger brother.
c. Jane's twin doesn't like her.
d. Jane hates her brother.</p> | |

10. a. Pete always locks the door for Max.
 b. Pete never forgets to lock the door.
 c. Max has frequently told Pete to lock the door.
 d. Max has told Pete to lock the door on time.
11. a. Roger was worried about his umbrella.
 b. Roger left his umbrella for his friend to use.
 c. Roger forgot his umbrella when he rush out.
 d. Roger rushed out to buy an umbrella.
12. a. All students finished the exam at 12.30.
 b. Twelve students finished the exam on time.
 c. There were twelve items in the exam.
 d. Only six students finished the exam at 12.30.
13. a. Julie didn't remember the traffic sign.
 b. Julie didn't put her name on the form.
 c. Julie signed her name on the form.
 d. Julie understood the sign on the form.
14. a. Jerry will never help you finish.
 b. With Jerry's help, you can finish.
 c. You can help Jerry finish on time.
 d. You will never get Jerry's help.
15. a. The strawberries must be picked today.
 b. The strawberries must be picked tomorrow.
 c. There is not time to pick the strawberries.
 d. The strawberries should have been picked yesterday.
16. a. John borrowed Robert's car.
 b. John owed Robert's car.
 c. John allowed Robert to use the car.
 d. John and Robert were allowed to
17. a. The windows were cleaned.
 b. Peter was washing the windows.
 c. Natalie watched from the windows.
 d. The windows were dirty.
18. a. William is very naughty.
 b. William's language is advanced.
 c. William is unable to speak at the age of three.
 d. William could not speak until he's three years old.

19. a. They prefer staying home to going to the movies.
 b. They didn't want to stay home or go to the movies.
 c. They prefer going to the movies to staying home.
 d. They don't like staying home.
20. a. Bill eats while driving.
 b. Bill sleeps on his stomach.
 c. Bill likes to drive after eating.
 d. Bill gets sleepy while driving after eating.

Part 2

คำสั่ง สำหรับแต่ละข้อคำถามในส่วนของ 2 นี้ จะเป็นบทสนทนาสั้นๆ ระหว่างคู่สนทนา 2 ฝ่าย ชายและหญิง นักศึกษาจะได้ยินบทสนทนา 2 ครั้ง เมื่อฟังบทสนทนาจบแล้ว นักศึกษาจะมีเวลาประมาณ 15 วินาที ให้รีบอ่านคำถามของแต่ละบทสนทนา และอ่านคำตอบจากตัวเลือกทั้ง 4 คือ a, b, c และ d ให้เลือกคำตอบที่ถูกต้องมากที่สุด จากนั้นทำเครื่องหมายกากบาท(X)ลงในกระดาษคำตอบ ในช่องตัวอักษรที่เลือก

21. What does the man want to know?
 a. What time his brother called.
 b. Where to meet his brother.
 c. Why his brother called.
 d. When to meet his brother.
22. What's happened to Helen's bicycle?
 a. It's brand new.
 b. She had it painted.
 c. Someone repaired it.
 d. It's just been sold.
23. What does the woman mean?
 a. The class has been cancelled.
 b. An earlier class should be dropped.
 c. He shouldn't drop the class.
 d. He doesn't have to study science.
24. What does Sara mean?
 a. She doesn't have the camera.
 b. The sun hasn't set yet.
 c. There isn't any film in the camera.
 d. Her camera is broken.
25. What is the woman worried about?
 a. She doesn't want to go.
 b. Her parents won't come.
 c. The man's parents won't like her.
 d. The man doesn't want her along.
26. What does the man want to do?
 a. Review the last point.
 b. Go on to the next chapter.
 c. Leave the classroom.
 d. Point out the teacher's mistake.

27. What does the woman mean?
- She wants to hear his song right away.
 - She prefers old songs to new ones.
 - She doesn't have time to listen now.
 - She doesn't like his song.
28. Why won't the man have some coffee?
- He doesn't like coffee.
 - He just drank a cup of coffee.
 - The woman has no milk for him.
 - The woman doesn't want to make any.
29. How did the man learn about trees?
- He studied forestry in school.
 - He worked in a forest.
 - His father taught him.
 - He read a lot of books about trees.
30. What is the probable relationship between the two speakers?
- Husband – Wife.
 - Doctor - Patient.
 - Lawyer - Client.
 - Teacher - Student
31. What are these two people talking about?
- A television
 - A telephone
 - An automobile
 - An elevator
32. What does the man say about the hotel rooms?
- They're not clean.
 - They're inexpensive now.
 - There aren't any available.
 - They're still expensive in low season.
33. What does the woman say about Joan?
- She hurt herself.
 - She broke the window.
 - She waited for someone to help.
 - She repaired the broken window.
34. How much does one pillow cost?
- \$ 4.
 - \$ 5.
 - \$ 7.
 - \$ 8.
35. What does the man mean?
- He's never been to the zoo.
 - He's seen only one bear.
 - He's never seen a bear in the wild.
 - He's never seen any bear .
36. What was Tom doing?
- Listening to the professor.
 - Boring his classmates.
 - Walking around the classroom.
 - Sleeping in class.

37. What are the man and woman discussing?
- A new medicine for headache.
 - The man's health.
 - The course they're taking.
 - Their jobs.
38. What does Sara suggest the man to do?
- Accept the working conditions.
 - Quit the job.
 - Save more money.
 - Visit the zoo.
39. What is the woman going to do on Friday?
- Go to a dance.
 - Go to the Student Center.
 - Go to a lecture.
 - Go to the library.
40. Who changed the light bulb?
- Alan.
 - John.
 - Both Alan and John.
 - Nobody.

Part 3

คำสั่ง ในส่วนที่ 3 นี้จะประกอบไปด้วยบทพูดสั้นๆ 5 บท โดยผู้พูดคนเดียว ซึ่งจะมีความยาวตั้งแต่ 40-60 วินาที นักศึกษาจะได้ยินบทพูด 2 ครั้ง เมื่อนักศึกษาฟังบทพูดจบแล้ว จะมีเวลาให้ประมาณ 15 วินาที ให้รับอ่านประโยคหรือข้อความจากตัวเลือกทั้ง 4 คือ a, b, c และ d เพื่อหาว่าประโยคใดควรเป็นใจความหลักหรือข้อความใดควรเป็นชื่อเรื่องของบทพูดที่ฟัง ให้เลือกคำตอบที่ถูกต้องมากที่สุด จากนั้นทำเครื่องหมายกากบาท(X)ลงในกระดาษคำตอบ ในช่องตัวอักษรที่เลือก

Talk 1 : Which is the appropriate topic of the talk?

- The abacus
- History of calculators
- Modern computers
- American inventors

Talk 2 : Which of the following statements expresses the central idea of the talk?

- Road accidents cause the disabled to live with their relatives.
- Road accidents are mainly limited to developed countries.
- The road accident rate is increasing.
- Many more people are killed than are disabled in road accidents.

Talk 3 : Which statement best expresses the main idea of the talk?

43. a. A long and interesting history of cats.
- b. The cat was probably the first animal kept as a pet.
- c. The Egyptians worshiped cats.
- d. Cats were much in demand during the Black Plague.

Talk 4 : Which statement best expresses the main idea of the talk?

44. a. The South American bustard is the heaviest flying bird.
- b. The longest wingspan bird is the albatross.
- c. The condor is the bird with largest wings.
- d. Criteria for measuring the largest flying bird.

Talk 5 : Which of the following statements expresses the main idea of the talk?

45. a. Houdini enjoyed his work.
- b. Houdini was a master magician.
- c. Houdini spent many years with circuses.
- d. Houdini toured Europe many times.

Part 4

คำตั้ง สำหรับในส่วนที่ 4 นี้จะเป็นเนื้อเรื่องสั้นๆ และเว้นคำไว้ทั้งหมด 5 คำ นักศึกษาจะต้องเติมคำที่ขาดหายไปโดยฟังจากเทปบันทึกเสียง ซึ่งจะอ่าน 2 รอบ และเขียนคำตอบลงในกระดาษคำตอบ

A microscope is a scientific instrument that is used to help see things that are too small to see with the naked eye. The word microscope is a ____ (46) ____ of two Greek words. The words are “mikros,” or “small,” and “skopos,” or “watcher.” So a microscope is a “watcher of the small.”

A microscope consists of a series of lenses in a hollow tube. A lens is a transparent piece of glass that makes an object look larger or smaller. The lenses in a microscope make things look larger; so they are called ____ (47) ____ lenses. The lens at

the top of the tube is called the eyepiece. The lens at the bottom of the tube is called the objective.

To use the microscope, you put the object – or the specimen you want to look at – on a slide. Next, you place the slide on the stage of the microscope. A mirror under the stage ___(48)___ light up through the specimen and then up through the lens to your eye. Now the specimen appears a lot larger, and you can see many of the tiny ___(49)___ you couldn't see with the naked eye.

A microscope has many uses. Medical scientists use microscopes to see tiny organisms like bacteria that cause diseases. Scientists also use microscopes to look at the ___(50)___ of metals and at the cells of plants and animals. Microscopes are used in science, medicine, and industry.

TAPE SCRIPTS

Part 1 : Statements

1. As soon as I arrived, the play began.
2. She purchased a new coffee table for her living room.
3. Please let me know whether you will go to the play or not.
4. Mary is practicing the piano.
5. I don't think Jane looks like her brother, although she says that they're twins.
6. Sue swims an hour every day to keep fit.
7. We can't afford to buy a new car.
8. Mark avoids driving on Friday nights because there's too much traffic.
9. After studying mathematics for three years, she changed her major to architecture.
10. Max has told Pete very often to keep the door locked.
11. Roger was in such a hurry that he left without his umbrella.
12. It was half past twelve when all students finished the exam.
13. Julie forgot to sign her name on the registration form.
14. You'll never finish on time unless you get Jerry's help.
15. Yesterday was too soon to pick the strawberries, and tomorrow will be too late.
16. John let Robert use the car.
17. The windows needed washing.
18. William is three years old and speaks very well for his age.
19. David and Betty would rather stay home than go to the movies.
20. Whenever Bill drives on a full stomach, he gets sleepy.

Part 2 : Short dialogs

M = male
F = female

21. F: Your brother called. He wants you to meet him for dinner.
M: Oh, really? Did he say when?
22. M: I like your new bicycle, Helen.
F: Thanks, but it isn't new. I had my old one repainted.
23. M: I'm going to drop my science class. It meets too early in the morning for me.
F: John, that is not a good reason to drop the class.
24. M: What a beautiful sunset! You should photograph it, Sara.
F: If I had some film in my camera, I would.
25. M: When my parents come, we'll all go out to dinner together.
F: I'll come if you want, but do you think they'll want me along?
26. F: Now, if there are no more questions, let's move on to the next chapter.
M: Excuse me, professor. Could we go over that last point once more?
27. M: Judy, I just wrote a new song. Want to hear it?
F: Well, I'm waiting.
28. F: I'm going to make some coffee. Would you like some?
M: No, thanks, I had a cup just before I came in.
29. F: How did you learn so much about trees?
M: Mostly from my father – he studied forestry in college.
30. M: Now, what seems to be the trouble, Mrs. Burton?
F: I've been very dizzy lately, and last night I had some chest pain.
31. M: Oh, no, it's still out of order!
F: I guess we'll have to walk up all those stairs again today.
32. F: Hotel rooms along the beach must be very expensive.
M: Not now. During the low season, they're quite cheap.
33. M: Did Joan get someone to fix the broken window?
F: No, she did it herself.
34. F: How much are these pillows, please?
M: Four dollars each or seven dollars for the pair.

35. F: Have you ever seen a bear?
M: Only at the zoo.
36. F: Tom didn't do Professor Maurice's assignment.
M: No wonder. I heard him snoring in class.
37. M: I have a headache and a sore throat.
F: The flu is going around. Do you have a fever or a cough, too?
38. M: Sara, I can't take this job any longer.
F: If you need the money, you'll just have to be patient.
39. M: Let's go to the dance at the Student Center on Friday.
F: I'd like to, but I'm going to a lecture. Thanks for asking me though.
40. F: Alan, did you change the light bulb?
M: No, I got John to do it.

Part 3 : Short talks

Talk 1

The first machine to replace the abacus for calculating was invented by a French mathematician in 1642. A German mathematician improved this calculator in 1671. Then, in 1830, an English mathematician devised another mechanical device that had most of the features of modern computers. This machine was outdated in 1946 when an American developed the electronic computer.

Talk 2

Deaths from road accidents increase every year in nearly all the developed countries. Many people escape death, but remain disabled, caused them to spend the rest of their lives in a hospital or a home, or to be dependent on their relatives. In a few years from now, it's expected that there will be a quarter of million deaths in the world, and ten million serious injuries, due to road accidents every year.

Talk 3

Cats have a long and interesting history. In fact, the cat was probably the first animal kept as a pet. The Egyptians worshiped cats. In Europe cats were praised for their ability to catch rats and mice. They were much in demand during the Black Plague illnesses of the 11th century. The American Indian did not appear to keep cats as pets until the white settlers came from Europe that cats were kept as pets in America.

Talk 4

The answer to the question of which flying bird is the largest in the world depends on whether birds are measured by weight, wingspan, or wing area. The South African bustard is the heaviest. The average male weighs about forty pounds. The bird with the longest wingspan is the albatross. The longest measured was 3.4 meters. The bird with largest wings is the South American vulture, commonly called the condor.

Talk 5

Houdini, the famous magician, began his career with a travelling circus at the age of nine. His first trick was to pick up needles with his eyelids while he was hanging by his heels, head downward. He slowly improved this trick in secret in the family woodshed. This humble beginning was a great difference from Houdini's role as the master magician who thrilled audiences everywhere. He was world famous for his escapes – from handcuffs, chests, prison cells and sealed chambers. He even escaped from a grave six feet in the ground. When he died on October 31, 1926, he had been a public performer for forty-three years.

Part 4 : Fill in the blanks

A microscope is a scientific instrument that is used to help see things that are too small to see with the naked eye. The word microscope is a combination of two Greek words. The words are “mikros,” or “small,” and “skopos,” or “watcher.” So a microscope is a “watcher of the small.”

A microscope consists of a series of lenses in a hollow tube. A lens is a transparent piece of glass that makes an object look larger or smaller. The lenses in a microscope make things look larger; so they are called magnifying lenses. The lens at the top of the tube is called the eyepiece. The lens at the bottom of the tube is called the objective.

To use the microscope, you put the object – or the specimen you want to look at – on a slide. Next you place the slide on the stage of the microscope. A mirror under the stage reflects light up through the specimen and then up through the lens to your eye. Now the specimen appears a lot larger, and you can see many of the tiny details you couldn't see with the naked eye.

A microscope has many uses. Medical scientists use microscopes to see tiny organisms like bacteria that cause diseases. Scientists use microscopes to look at the structure of metals and at the cells of plants and animals. Microscopes are used in science, medicine, and industry.

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