

**An Individualized CELL Listening Comprehension  
Program: Making listening more meaningful for  
Thai learners of English**

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**A Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Education) in the School of  
Languages, International studies and Tourism, Division of  
Communication and Education, the University of Canberra**

August 2005



## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project was to examine theories of learning, theories of teaching, and theories of listening comprehension with a view to developing and testing a computer-enhanced listening comprehension system for English as a Foreign Language within the Thai university system. In addition to carrying out an in-depth literature review, factors contributing to difficulties in the listening process were also carefully examined in order to build a sound foundation for dealing with listening comprehension. A brief history and analysis of Computer Assisted Language Learning were presented together with a review of some computer programs with the aim of determining their characteristics. An Individualized CELL Listening Comprehension Program was then developed on the basis of four theoretical frameworks: the Constructivist approach, the need to use authentic spoken passages, reduction of cognitive load and response to learner differences.

The system was then used by twenty students of Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), Thailand for a period of fifteen weeks. Students were volunteers from different proficiency levels. SUT midterm and final examinations were employed, in part, to observe the effect of the program on proficiency levels. The SUT examinations, which were usually in a multiple-choice format, tested students on minor details through short, simple conversations. These tests might not fit entirely within best practice for listening but they seem to be a common way of measuring listening development in several educational contexts. Pretests and posttests examining global ideas and specific details in written and multiple-choice formats were then developed so as to provide a more accurate gauge of improvement in listening skills. Log files were kept in order to scrutinize in detail students' interactions with the system. Questionnaire and interview techniques were applied to seek out students' attitudes towards the program.

The results revealed that the participants performed better than their peers in the same proficiency levels in SUT midterm and final examinations although the difference was not at a statistically significant level. However, posttest scores were better than those of pretest at a statistically significant level in most aspects except in case of the global ideas. The log files revealed that all students tended to focus on the word level by attempting to understand and decode every word in the transcriptions. This fixation is likely to explain the low global ideas scores. Analysis was complicated by the fact that some students were not able to use the

program frequently enough, usually because of unexpectedly heavy schedules. However, the data extracted through questionnaires and interviews showed that most students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the various features of the program and felt that use of the program had improved their listening skills. In addition to findings relating to the development of listening comprehension, the study revealed that the majority of students felt that they did not think listening comprehension and, more generally the study of English, was sufficiently important to spend time on. This interesting but shocking discovery needs to be attended to immediately as it may have a strong effect on how Thai students prioritize their learning of English, and how this may impact on the levels of proficiency which they might subsequently attain.

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IPA	International Phonetics Association
AEDS	Association for Educational Data Systems
ASEE	American Society for Engineering Education
IALL	International Association for Language Learning Technology
ADFL	Association of Departments of Foreign Languages
SGAV	Structural-global Audio-Visual
SSLA	Scottish Second Language Association
TEAL	Teaching English as an Additional Language

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my gratitude and special thanks to my primary supervisor, Prof. Andrew Lian, for his great help, mental stimulation, encouragement and reassurance throughout the period of my study.

Also I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my friends: Debbie Turk and Felicia Zhang for their valuable suggestions and support.

My special thanks also go to Dr. David Pederson for his time and help on the statistical suggestion.

I am indebted to all the participants who eagerly participated in the study and enabled me to complete my project.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to every member of my family: Assoc. Prof. Nontana Puakpong – my beloved father, Assoc. Prof. Bubpha Puakpong – my lovely mother, and my two sisters, without whose love, understanding and moral support this thesis would never have been completed.