

# An Exploration of the Opinions towards the Use of the EWA Application for Improving English Listening Ability of Grade 8 Students at an English Medium Instruction School in Samut Sakhon Province

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore what Grade 8 students' opinions about the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an English as Medium Instruction (EMI) School in Samut Sakhon Province. The study's sample group included 55 students in Grade 8 during the first semester of the academic year 2021 at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province. The research instruments were EWA application and a questionnaire towards learning via the EWA application. The findings revealed that the opinions of Grade 8 students at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability were positively high ( $M = 3.95$ ). When considering each aspect, it found that the statements, images and videos of the EWA application are correlated with each content of a lesson and the EWA application helps practice students' English listening for comprehension, were at a highest level ( $M = 4.73$  and  $4.51$ ).

**Keywords:** Opinions on English listening, English listening for comprehension, EWA application

## Introduction

Over the last several decades, there has been a wide range of research on listening skills conducted in other countries, including improving young students' listening skills through storytelling, improving listening skills by activating student prior knowledge, and developing listening skills by stimulating students' prior knowledge. In Thailand as well, for example, the development of English listening skills of grade 5 students uses a communication language learning management model. Listening skills play an important role in language learning [1] and are considered the most essential language skills [2]. Listening is an essential skill for language students. Once students have received the information from listening, they will be provided with the knowledge they need to learn a language and will be able to begin another skill step by step [3]. According to Doff [4], for a conversation to be effective, students must first understand what the speaker is saying to them. It was discovered that most students encountered difficulties in organizing English language teaching activities that focused solely on learning grammar skills, reading skills, and vocabulary with little emphasis on other English language learning skills while teaching English listening skills. Many teachers believe that listening is a skill that students can naturally develop in a language learning system [5].

Furthermore, teaching and learning activities in the classroom in which teachers test students' listening skills but do not teach them listening skills, and students use listening skills in the classroom but do not listen for comprehension [6]. The students' own listening abilities were discovered to be deficient: (1) Learners have difficulty hearing native speakers'

sounds, (2) Learners must understand every trade that will affect their understanding and anxiety about listening, (3) Learners do not comprehend listening when the pronunciation level is too rapid, (4) In order to test their listening comprehension, students must listen more than once, (5) Learners are discouraged in their listening because they do not relax and must challenge every understanding they hear, (6) The student is discouraged from listening when he or she has been listening for an extended period of time and has lost interest or intention to continue listening [7]. During the process of teaching English listening skills, it was discovered that most students encountered difficulties in organizing English language teaching activities that focused solely on learning grammar skills, reading skills, and vocabulary with little emphasis on other English language learning skills.

In this day and age, technology plays an important role in teaching English, particularly listening skills through media such as radio, television, video, and movies. However, the most advanced media applications are unavoidable. There are numerous methods for enhancing students' listening ability, in particular. One is by providing exercises to train students to become competent listeners capable of responding to sentences or instructions [8]. Therefore, teachers can use listening application to enhance students' learning ability in listening skill, but there isn't a lot of research on how students feel about learning with the application, and the studies that do exist are few in number.

The EWA application is a different kind of educational tool from traditional learning that the researcher has chosen to study. It is another intriguing application that is likely to inspire and foster a positive attitude in students as they develop their English listening skills. We can see from the sample research that while attitudes of students toward using the application to learn have not been studied, applications can actually improve listening performance. The findings of some of the research were examined. The quality of most studies on this attitude is poor. Another intriguing application that the researcher has chosen to investigate applications that are probably to inspire and foster a positive outlook in students to help them develop their skills The EWA application, which is unlike traditional learning and is simple to use, is called Listen to English.

The EWA application contains a large number of English courses and lessons, similar to more than 1000 English books, ranging from simple lessons to advanced levels and real-life conversations. Learning from the film's various dialogues, stories, accents, and emotions allows students to have fun while practicing listening and understanding the true meaning of the emotion. Each movie clip includes a clear translation and explanation of the situation, as well as the option for students to direct the actors to speak more slowly if they are unable to understand what the actors are saying. The application also includes games to help with

learning. EWA is an application that helps the students improve their English skills. Students can learn English by watching short movie clips that allow them to practice listening and imitating sounds with lessons ranging from the basics to the advanced level. As a result, the EWA application is a valuable technological tool for effective English listening practice that students can use whenever and wherever they want. However, in order to be successful at listening, students must first understand their own listening level. The next step is to find lessons that are appropriate for the students. Some sentences may be simple for some, but difficult for others, so select a level appropriate for the students.

Consequently, the researcher intends to study the opinions of English listening comprehension with the EWA application because the researcher sees the EWA application as a modern, good, and interesting medium that is appropriate for the modern age in which students have access to the internet and technology. Furthermore, students can select lessons based on their own interests at any time and from any location, so they should be able to create motivation and positive attitudes for students as well as develop effective listening skills in the future.

## Research Purpose

To explore the opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability of Grade 8 students at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province.

## Research Question

What are the Grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province?

## Literature Review and Related Research

**Teaching Listening and Teaching Listening for Comprehension Procedures** Because listening is a receptive skill, it is thought to be a passive skill. However, this is not the case. Listening can be described in numerous ways. According to [9], listening is an active activity in which the listener actively participates in generating the overall message exchanged between the listener and the speaker. The listener must be active in order to construct a message from what we hear the speaker say. Moreover, according to [10], "hearing is the capacity to recognise and comprehend what others are saying." This requires comprehending a speaker's accent or pronunciation, grammatical structure, vocabulary, and meaning. These four abilities are possessed by an able listener. In other words, hearing is one method for comprehending spoken communication.

Moreover, listening is a conscious process which interprets what we hear [11]. This demonstrates that listening is a crucial step in the information processing of what is heard. Next, he underlines that while listening, people integrate new information with their existing knowledge. This highlights that listening is an active talent, since individuals not only hear but actively digest the information they are hearing.

There are three steps that must be achieved when teaching listening. According to [12], there are three stages of listening: prior to listening, during listening, and after listening. In pre-listening, background information is created for students. The students engage their schemas by questioning what they already know, then determine why they listen and forecast what they will hear. In while-listening, the learners are given feedback, beginning with listening for the gist and subsequently the detail. Then, they can determine if what they hear corresponds to what they should hear. In addition, the students monitor if their predictions were accurate and whether the activity is completed successfully. In the final step of the post-listening phase, students examine their task's solution and discuss any difficulties they encounter. They receive feedback on whether they can complete the task and how they can react to it.

Likewise, Angwattanakul [13] suggested the 4-step guidelines for teaching listening comprehension skills. Firstly, educate students on the value of developing their listening abilities and pique their interest. After listening, instructors are required to inform students of a specific goal or assignment. For instance, after hearing, students may be asked to complete quizzes or create charts outlining what they have heard. Secondly, give the prepared messages or stories to the students to hear. The frequency of listening depends on the level of difficulty of the material and should be at a normal speaking rate for the students. After listening, assign exercises to the students. Finally, while praising students' work, teachers offer solutions and give them the chance to fix their errors.

### **EWA Application**

The EWA application includes brief videos of numerous situations you will come across in daily life, including greetings, requesting to use the restroom, ordering food and drinks, getting directions, and getting assistance. There are Thai subtitles as well as English readings for those who are hard of hearing. There are various listening capacities. The level of a lesson on a topic of interest can be selected by the student. You can speed up, slow down, or repeat the audio of the video after choosing the lesson you want to practice listening to. Any lessons discovered will be documented and tracked back to identify the chapters that were covered. It is an effective technological tool for practicing English listening. There is no set time or place for students to learn.

The EWA Application is one of the new educational applications. Therefore, at the time this study was conducted, there is no relevant research found for the review. However, to support the study, the section presents some relevant literature about using teaching, particularly application, for teaching listening skills.

### **Relevant Literature**

According to Youngning's research, as cited in [14], podcasts can be used to improve listening comprehension skills as well as to gauge the attitudes and learning habits of English language learners. It serves as a tool for improving students' listening comprehension abilities. Thirty-three Basic English-taught grade 11 students from Chulabhorn Rajawittayalai School in Satun Province served as the sample group for this study. The findings revealed that, on average, the students' ability in using podcasts to improve their listening comprehension skills was statistically significantly higher at the .01 level. However, the findings of the qualitative data analysis on the use of podcasts to enhance listening skills from the satisfaction and learning behavior questionnaire. It revealed that although the sample's students had favorable opinions of using podcasts to hone their listening comprehension abilities, they were unable to fully comprehend what they were hearing.

Srikrasang [15] conducted research at Panyapiwat Learning Center or CPRAM with third-year vocational certificate students majoring in Mechatronics on the growth of academic achievement in the English Listening-Speaking 2 course using the Hello English app on mobile phones. 13 third-year vocational certificate students majoring in Mechatronics at Panyapiwat Learning Center or CPRAM, Academic Year 2017, who took an English listening-speaking course in the first semester of that academic year served as the sample group for this study. According to the study's findings, students majoring in mechatronics at Panyapiwat Learning Center or CPRAM who studied using lessons from the language-assistance program had average interview scores that were 24.62 percent higher than they had been previously. The mean, frequency, and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Students at Panyapiwat Learning Center or CPRAM who studied with lessons from the language-assisted program at the Vocational Certificate level (Vocational Certificate 3) majoring in Mechatronics have higher learning achievement after studying than before, and students are satisfied with learning from the Hello English program as the lessons help them learn the language at a high level.

Pumjit and Leungnapha [16] conduct research on the use of applications to improve English listening skills. The research sample consisted of 181 undergraduates of Business English Major, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. According to the findings, students used the following applications: YouTube (98 percent), BBC Learning English (25 percent), TED (21 percent), and Podcasts (19 percent). Most students

agree that using the application to improve their listening skills is simple, whether they are watching language programs, movies, or listening to international music. It would not be difficult for the students to find an opportunity to listen to English if they really wanted to. Students may not understand at first, but as they learn more frequently, they will understand more and more [17]. Sriwithas et al. [18] conducted a study of learning management using YouTube videos in conjunction with the idea of teaching language for communication to improve the listening and speaking English skills of 43 Grade 9 students at Wat Bueng Thong Lang School. The results showed that students' listening skills were better and they had positive opinions of teaching management, which were in line with Sriphuangmalai and Thienpermpool [14], studying English listening by organizing learning through podcasts of Grade 6 students at Nong Kung Sala Nam Thieng Wittayakorn School. The sample group included 30 students. The findings demonstrated that using podcasts to teach the students improved their listening comprehension skills compared to the score they can make before being taught. Following the experiment, the students had extremely positive opinions of the use of podcasts to organize learning in English for comprehension. This is in line with Shiri's [19] international study, which looked at how using podcasts as a teaching tool and listening motivational strategy for Iranian students learning English as a second language affects their listening and comprehension abilities. 34 students made up the sample group. The students were split into two groups by the researchers: the experimental group listened to podcasts, and the sample received regular instruction. According to the study's findings, the podcasting student group performed better on the listening comprehension test than the control group, developed an effective listening level, and had a strong desire to listen to podcasts.

In addition to video-based application, podcasts have also been examined. The findings demonstrated that using podcasts to teach the students improved their listening comprehension skills compared to the score they can make before being taught. Following the experiment, the students had extremely positive opinions of the use of podcasts to organize learning in English for comprehension.

The impact of TED TALK's widespread use as a listening medium on students' listening abilities was examined by Takaesu [20]. She also looked into teaching strategies for the creation of teaching activities for students with poor listening skills. Students believe that the lectures have improved their listening motivation, comprehension, and comfort with hearing different speaking accents, according to qualitative data analysis based on surveys and journals from students. It also helps students choose lectures that are appropriate for their level of understanding and serves as a platform for planning a variety of supportive-based activities for struggling students. In order to determine whether using Duolingo to learn English

can help students' listening abilities, Putri and Islamiati [21] studied listening teaching using Duoligo. 36 students from class X-Tata Boga 3 at SMKN 2 Karawang served as the sample for this study. The outcomes demonstrated that the students' pre- and post-study English proficiency for Communicative English subjects was higher than before, and the students had a very high level of satisfaction with the Duoligo application.

## Research Methodology

### Population and Participants

The population of this study were Grade 8 students in the first semester of the academic year 2021 at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province. All of them used English as a medium language for communication and were able to use technology for studying on their own. The participants were 55 Grade 8 students employed with the purposive sampling. All of the were studying in the first semester of the academic year 2021 at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province.

In this study, the researcher mainly focused on students that studied in the bilingual program because they had to study and communicate with teachers and other people by using English. It is also certain that they studied English listening skill with the researcher.

### Research Instruments

A questionnaire is employed to be gauged students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability. The questionnaires were constructed by considering the importance of data to be analysed and the safety of information according to the Personal Data Protection Act [22]. To illustrate, the researcher didn't collect the students' personal data, such as age, gender, educational level, etc. as it is not useful for analysis and does not affect the interpretation as they are in the same age and educational level. Therefore, there will be only one section which is the data of students' opinion towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability which were divided into 3 aspects (content, language, and usefulness). Each aspect consists of a set of statement for students to read and choose their opinion by being classified into the 5-Likert scales (5 means strongly agree or highly satisfy, 1 means strongly disagree or highly dissatisfy).

### Data Collection

1. The researcher explains the lesson, the application process, and the evaluation techniques to the students.

2. Students complete 10 lessons using the EWA application, which the researcher has scheduled over the course of five days with two lessons of ten minutes each.



3. Following the deadline, the researchers gave out a questionnaire to gauge how the students felt about structuring their learning for English listening comprehension using the EWA application.

4. The researcher reviews the completed feedback form that was returned before using it for more in-depth data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The data from the opinion was examined using Microsoft Excel to determine the mean, standard deviation, percentage, and meaning of opinion. The mean was then interpreted and presented in an essay format [23]. The mean-score results of the questionnaire were mapped and interpreted meaning with the interval criteria of Saiyot and Saiyot [24] as follows:

4.51 – 5.00	means	highest / highly satisfied
3.51 – 4.50	means	high / satisfied
2.51 – 3.50	means	moderate
1.51 – 2.50	means	low / dissatisfied
1.00 – 1.50	means	lowest / completely dissatisfied

## **Research Results and Discussion**

The section presents the results with regard to the research question. Therefore, the research results reveal the opinion of the Grade 8 students at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province towards the teaching of English listening for comprehension through the EWA application.

In response to the research question, *What are the Grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province?*, the 10 questionnaire items were constructed to explore the students' opinions with the 5-Likert scale. The 10 items can be categorized into three aspects, i.e. content, language, and usefulness. The results are presented with four tables. The first table is the overall results of the students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability. The second to the fourth tables depict in detail with discussion on each aspect about the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability.

**Table 1** The overall result of the Grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province

Aspects	Statements	M	S.D.	Meaning
Content	1. The listening content has the easy conversation appropriate to the students' English listening ability.	3.14	0.66	Moderate
	2. The listening content has the appropriate duration for learning.	4.27	0.45	High
	3. Images and videos of the EWA application are correlated with each content of a lesson.	4.73	0.34	Highest
Language	4. Pronunciation, accent, and text are clear and easy to understand.	3.87	0.95	High
	5. The speakers' speed is appropriate.	3.63	0.77	High
	6. Students are able to pronounce English words according to the conversation correctly.	3.94	0.87	High
Usefulness	7. The EWA application helps students listen in detail and answer the questions from the conversation.	4.33	0.47	High
	8. The EWA application helps practice students English listening for comprehension.	4.51	0.38	Highest
	9. The EWA application helps motivate the students' interest in listening outside the classroom.	3.58	0.87	High
	10. Students are able to use the EWA application for developing their own English efficiently.	3.54	0.82	High
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>High</b>

According to Table 1, the grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province were found to be at a high level, with an average of 3.95. This is consistent with Srikrasang [15] and Putri and Islamiati [21] who used their applications to improve the students' English listening ability and found that their students were satisfied with the application at the high level. There are two items that the students thought they were at the highest level, which were items 3 in the content aspect and 8 in the usefulness aspect. For the high level of opinion, there were seven items, which were items 2, 4-6, 7, and 9-10. Moreover, there is one items at the moderate level, which is item 1. For the detail results of each aspect and discussion are shown the following Tables.

**Table 2** The result of the content aspect from the Grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province

Aspect	Statements	M	S.D.	Meaning
Content	1. The listening content has the easy conversation appropriate to the students' English listening ability.	3.14	0.66	Moderate
	2. The listening content has the appropriate duration for learning.	4.27	0.45	High
	3. Images and videos of the EWA application are correlated with each content of a lesson.	4.73	0.34	Highest
	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>High</b>

For the content aspect, the grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province were found to be at a high level ( $M = 4.05$ ). However, when each statement is considered from highest to lowest ranks, the results reveal that Statement 3, *Images and videos of the EWA application are correlated with each content of a lesson*, is at the highest level ( $M = 4.73$ ), whereas the lowest rank of all the statements is Statement 1, *The listening content has the easy conversation appropriate to the students' English listening ability*, with the mean score of 3.14, at the moderate level, which is consistent with Takaesu [20] that the system chooses the right level of appropriate activities to students to improve their English listening ability.

**Table 3** The result of the language aspect from the Grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province

Aspect	Statements	M	S.D.	Meaning
Language	4. Pronunciation, accent, and text are clear and easy to understand.	3.87	0.95	High
	5. The speakers' speed is appropriate.	3.63	0.77	High
	6. Students are able to pronounce English words according to the conversation correctly.	3.94	0.87	High
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>High</b>

For the language aspect, the grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province

were found to be at a high level ( $M = 3.81$ ). Moreover, all the items of this aspect were also at the high level. According to Youngning's research, as cited in [14] when podcasts were used to improve listening comprehension and found the difficulty that students did not fully understand the recording, the statement 4, *pronunciation, accent, and text are clear and easy to understand*, proved that if the EWA application is used in the future, students will understand the English language clearer and easier.

**Table 4** The result of the usefulness aspect from the Grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province

Aspect	Statements	M	S.D.	Meaning
Usefulness	7. The EWA application helps students listen in detail and answer the questions from the conversation.	4.33	0.47	High
	8. The EWA application helps practice students English listening for comprehension.	4.51	0.38	Highest
	9. The EWA application helps motivate the students' interest in listening outside the classroom.	3.58	0.87	High
	10. Students are able to use the EWA application for developing their own English efficiently.	3.54	0.82	High
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>High</b>

For the usefulness aspect, the grade 8 students' opinions towards the use of the EWA application for improving English listening ability at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province were found to be at a high level ( $M = 3.99$ ). However, when each statement is considered, the results reveal that Statement 8, *The EWA application helps practice students English listening for comprehension*, is at the highest level ( $M = 4.51$ ). This is consistent with Pumjit and Leungnapha's research [16] which found that students felt easy when they watched language programs, movies or listening to international music because they can learn more frequently.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The research findings revealed that grade 8 students' opinions on English listening for comprehension using the EWA application at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province were at a high level, with an average value of 3.95. The results of the study can be concluded as follows:

The EWA application, which is a useful listening practice tool and offers a source of images, videos, and audio from native speakers as if the students were in a real situation, helps students organize their learning and improve their English listening comprehension. The content is not too challenging and has a variety of features, which encourages students to feel motivated to listen to English and fosters a positive opinion of the language. Students must practice listening, but they are free to practice as much as they like.

A study of opinions on English listening for comprehension through the EWA application of Grade 8 students at an EMI school in Samut Sakhon Province. The researcher has discovered what is useful for teaching and learning activities and has suggestions as follows:

1. Recommendations for use

- 1.1 There should be preparation of equipment, classroom, internet signal before teaching management.

- 1.2 Teachers should act as facilitators and be with students at all times to train them to be responsible.

2. Suggestions for the next research

- 2.1 Should conduct research experiments with students at other levels such as primary school level, grade level high school tertiary Vocational level, etc.

- 2.2 Comparison should be made between the EWA application and other applications.

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