

2013-07-01

Content Video in a Low-stakes Listening Test: EFL Learners' Perceptions of the Video Input and Strategy Use

Sukanya Tanewong

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/pasaa>



Part of the [Reading and Language Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tanewong, Sukanya (2013) "Content Video in a Low-stakes Listening Test: EFL Learners' Perceptions of the Video Input and Strategy Use," *PASAA*: Vol. 46, Article 5.

DOI: 10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.46.1.5

Available at: <https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/pasaa/vol46/iss1/5>

This Original Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Chulalongkorn Journal Online (CUJO) at Chula Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in PASAA by an authorized editor of Chula Digital Collections. For more information, please contact ChulaDC@car.chula.ac.th.

**CONTENT VIDEO IN A LOW-STAKES LISTENING TEST: EFL
LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE VIDEO INPUT AND
STRATEGY USE**

Sukanya Tanewong

Prince of Songkla University, Thailand
Email: sukanya.ta@psu.ac.th

Abstract

This article reports the findings of an investigation into the perceptions of EFL learners regarding video input used in a listening test and the strategies they employed during the comprehension process. Content videos composed of TV commercial messages (TVCMs) and public service announcements (PSAs) were used as the listening texts and question preview, along with repeated input, were embedded in the test design. Forty-three EFL learners took the test and expressed their opinions about it via questionnaire. Twenty students were then purposively selected for retrospective interviews. Their perceptions of the video input and their strategy use while comprehending the video were examined. Results showed students' positive comments on the video texts and suggested that the test tasks provided opportunities for students to apply metacognitive strategies, such as advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, comprehension monitoring, and double-check monitoring, to enhance their comprehension. The study illustrates the potential of using TVCMs, PSAs, and test tasks that can facilitate the use of metacognitive strategies in a video listening test for low-intermediate or intermediate EFL learners. The implications of the findings regarding listening

assessment and pedagogy in the EFL classroom context are discussed.

Keywords: Listening comprehension; Video listening test; Perceptions; Learner strategies

For several decades video and television material have been favored by language teachers as tools for instructional delivery, particularly in listening classes. “Familiarity and ease of use appeared to explain teachers’ preference for video and television compared to more recent technology” (Vanderplank, 2010, p. 2). In addition to their use for pedagogical purposes, videos have become increasingly used in listening tests and discussed in the assessment context. A number of studies have investigated the effects of video input in comparison to audio input on test performance as well as test-takers’ medium preferences (e.g., Baltova, 1994; Coniam, 2001; Gruba, 1993; Progosh, 1996; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005; Wagner, 2010a, 2010b). Findings from these studies suggest that test-takers tend to prefer videos. However, there seems to be no conclusive results from these comparative studies and test-takers’ opinions on whether the presence of the visual mode in the listening test has a positive effect on their performance. Furthermore, results of such studies are unable to provide insights into the process of video comprehension, i.e. how test-takers actually use the audio and visual inputs and what strategies they employ to comprehend the video. Despite research evidence of the preference of test-takers and their perceived differences when a listening test is provided with visual support, none of the previous studies examined what factors lead to those perceived differences. Therefore, this study investigated the specific ‘variables’ salient to the learners’ preferences and strategies they employ during a video listening test.

The Role of Video Input in Second Language (L2) Listening Comprehension

Owing to the increasing use of video and multimedia materials in education, the role of visual media has been of particular interest over the last twenty years. Listening researchers seem to agree that incorporating videos in teaching L2 listening will enhance listening comprehension by the learners (Mendelsohn, 1998; Rubin, 1994, 1995; Secules et al., 1992; Thompson & Rubin, 1996; Vandergrift, 2004, 2007). However, results in studies using a quasi-experimental design to examine effects of visuals on the learners' listening test performance remain inconclusive. This may be due to methodological shortcomings in most of the studies (see Wagner, 2010a). In addition, the conflicting results may be related to the types of visual elements incorporated in the videos- context or content visuals - that have been provided with the audio input (Ockey, 2007).

When context-only videos are presented, learners are provided with information about the speakers and the settings in which the communication takes place. On the other hand, content videos consisting of visual and/or written images offer learners more information that is related to the actual content of the audio input (Ockey, 2007).

With regard to context-only video, some studies found that context visuals can lead to increased test-taker group performance. Parry and Meredith (1984), Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005), and Wagner (2010a) used a *t*-test, a two-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA), or multi-variate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) in their respective studies and found that the test-takers in the video (experimental) group scored higher than those in the audio-only (control) group, and the difference was statistically significant.

However, research findings from other studies (Coniam, 2001; Ginther, 2002; Gruba, 1993; Ockey, 2007) seem to indicate that context visuals are not helpful to test-takers in academic listening tests. Results from the two studies by Coniam and Gruba suggest that video materials consisting of 'talking heads', such as talk shows

and simulated academic lectures that provide only paralinguistic features, do not aid comprehension of the spoken text. As Ginther (2002) notes, context visuals have a slightly debilitating effect on the test-takers' performance since they do not provide content related information while still requiring processing themselves. There seems to be no consensus among these previous studies on whether context-only videos have positive or negative effects on test-takers' performance.

While there is a growing body of research investigating the effect of context-only video on test-taker performance, comparatively few studies employing content video have been conducted. However, when content video was presented, a positive effect on the comprehension of gist was noted. Baltova (1994) used a film to study the effects of content video on French language learners' listening comprehension. The visual clues to which students in the video group were exposed enhanced their comprehension of the main points of the story but not the details. The facilitative effect of content visuals on test performance was also reported by Ginther (2002). Ginther found that the performance of both high-and low-proficiency groups on the listening computer-based TOEFL was improved when content visuals (photos, diagrams, and/or drawings) were presented. Ginther concluded that listening comprehension is enhanced when visuals are directly related to the spoken input.

Because of the mixed results in the research on the supporting role of visual input in listening comprehension, Gruba (2004) argued that little is known about how L2 listeners process dynamic visual elements in video comprehension. Based on the constructivist perspective of comprehension (see Gruba, 1999, 2004), Gruba used a seven-category framework to analyze verbal reports from 12 upper-intermediate learners of Japanese at an Australian university while they were watching three Japanese news clips. The framework included categories such as 'Listeners may utilize visual elements to generate a number of tentative hypotheses,' 'Listeners may utilize visual elements to confirm an emerging interpretation, and 'Visual

elements may confuse or hinder interpretation' (Gruba, 2004, p. 63). He concluded that visual elements work in a number of ways that go beyond verbal elements and are better thought of as integral resources to comprehension whose influence shifts from primary to secondary importance as a listener develops a fuller understanding of the video text. Gruba's findings were consistent with previous studies. As Mac William (1986) points out, visual elements in authentic video materials can sometimes distract learners' attention from the audio input, and may actually hinder comprehension. In fact, what is being shown on a video text can be facilitating, unhelpful, or even misleading depending on whether it is congruent with what is being said and how well it relates to the learner's proficiency level (Baltova, 1994; Rubin, 1995; Thompson, 1995).

Learners' Perceptions of the Use of Video with L2 Listening Test Tasks

Because video is commonly used in teaching listening, it seems that learners are comfortable with, accustomed to, and favor its use in testing (Wagner, 2010a). Responses to questionnaires in Parry and Meredith's 1984 study indicated that learners provided with visual support were more motivated in maintaining their interest and concentration in listening than those hearing only the audio. Progosh (1996) surveyed sixty two Japanese English learners' opinions about a video listening test. When asked to compare video listening tests to their previous testing experiences using audiocassettes on achievement tests, the vast majority of the students expressed a preference for video testing. They also thought it was a good idea to use video in listening tests, although they were undecided whether video made it easier or harder to understand the audio.

Using a film as a listening assessment instrument, Baltova (1994) asserted that young French learners enjoyed watching the story in the video and maintained more interest and better concentration. Ginther (2001) reported similar results from

questionnaires in which the majority of adult participants expressed a preference for context and content visuals in the TOEFL®CBT listening-comprehension test, although they found some aspects of particular visuals unattractive and sometimes distracting. Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005) surveyed 42 ESL test-takers after taking a video listening test and the participants responded positively to being able to see the speaker's gestures and facial cues (e.g., lip movements), although some of the lower proficiency students found some visual cues unhelpful and distracting. Similar to other studies, Wagner (2010b) found the test-takers had positive opinions about the use of video texts in listening tests. Wagner concluded that the inclusion of the visual channel seems to lower test-takers' anxiety, increase their interest, and help them focus better, even though the test-takers did not seem to think the use of video would help them score better.

Negative responses towards video listening tests have also been reported. For example, participants in studies by Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995) and Coniam (2001) stated that taking the video listening test was too complicated; they were busy looking up and down from their question paper or answer sheet to the video monitor and were distracted by the visual images. Furthermore, the majority of participants in Coniam's study even commented that the context-only video was more of a hindrance than a help.

It would seem that video input either positively or negatively influences learners' attitudes, affects, and performances on listening tests. Preferences about visuals in listening tests depend on the types of visuals presented and test design. Test-takers are more likely to prefer visuals which bear information that complements the audio input so that they can make the most of the visual clues which are present in the 'cognitive environment'- everything listeners have in their minds that could have a considerable influence on the interpretation of the spoken text- to aid comprehension (Buck, 2001, p. 26).

Listening Support for EFL Learners in a Listening Test

Authenticity is a desirable test quality (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). More digital video will inevitably be used as input for listening tests because of the growing trend in language assessment to make tests as authentic as possible. Moreover, an increasing number of researchers (e.g., Gruba, 1997, 1999; Ockey, 2007; Wagner, 2007, 2008, 2010a, 2010b) argue for a listening construct that includes the ability to make use of the accompanying visual information while the auditory input is being processed.

Given that the definition of the listening construct extends beyond the ability to comprehend the aural stimulus, the use of content video in a low-stakes classroom listening test still poses a challenge to the test developer or teacher. As Buck (2001) contends, it would be worth incorporating visuals into test design if it gives us a better listening assessment instrument that can better measure the listening construct and does not increase the cognitive load of test-takers or interfere with the testing process.

When exposed to authentic materials EFL learners, even at an intermediate level, encounter several difficulties such as speech rate, missing parts of the text, unfamiliarity with pronunciation, or inability to recognize known words (Chang & Read, 2006; Goh, 2000; Hasan, 2000). Putting these learners in a testing situation in which a dual-channel listening input is provided only once may, in fact, increase their cognitive load in real-time processing. As Rost (2007) notes, “more input usually leads to more confusion” for lower-proficiency listeners (p. 103). Wagner (2010b) also reported a negative correlation between viewing rate and test performance. To facilitate video comprehension, listening support is necessary for EFL learners at intermediate or low –intermediate levels.

The most popular forms of listening support in listening comprehension tests are question preview and repeated input. Research on question preview indicates that previewing the test questions not only facilitates comprehension of the listening input but also affects test-takers’ listening strategies (Buck, 1991; Chang,

2008; Chang & Read, 2006). It also helps the test-takers cope with listening anxiety caused by the pressure to process input rapidly (Sherman, 1997).

Repeated input has been found to be helpful to EFL listeners by allowing them more time to process information, making the input clearer and more comprehensible. Repeated input provided in the test may also affect both the cognitive and the affective strategies used by test-takers. In fact, the opportunity to listen to the test input three times makes the test-takers monitor their comprehension and feel less nervous (Chang, 2008; Chang & Read, 2006). It is anticipated that the repetition embedded in the design of the test in this study will give the test-takers an opportunity to process both visual and aural information simultaneously, or individually, without time constraints or limitations in their working memory capacity.

TVCMs and PSAs as the Listening Texts

Compared to other TV material, TVCMs and PSAs seem to be more attractive to EFL listening teachers who want to expose students to authentic material at low intermediate or intermediate levels. They are "short, focused, and thematic in content," so they can be used to introduce, review, or wrap up the themes of the lesson (Davis, 1997, p.13). Visual, and sometimes written, images make it easier for EFL learners to understand the language. Moreover, creative displays with musical tunes and visual slogans make listening classes more enjoyable, and students are more motivated to learn (Lynch, 1985; Sherman, 2003). Despite their prevalence in the language classroom (Davis, 1997; Picken, 1999; Sherman, 2003; Vanderplank, 2010); there is a dearth of studies that examine learners' responses to these video genres in an assessment context. Whereas video materials like films, news, and context-only videos were used in most of the previous studies, content videos consisting of authentic TVCMs and PSAs were employed in the present study.

Metacognitive Strategies for Listening Comprehension

As test-takers are watching and listening to audio-visual messages, multiple sources of input enter their comprehension process, including linguistic/paralinguistic characteristics, i.e. the images and soundtrack (voice-over and background music) of the video text. Accordingly, the definition of the listening construct to be measured is based on the most contemporary and defensible views of the comprehension process proposed by Kintsch in 1998 and Buck in 2001 (Gruba, 1999; Ockey, 2007). Therefore, video-based listening comprehension in the current study is defined as a dynamic construction-integration process in which test-takers not only use a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge sources, but also employ various interactive strategies, including metacognitive strategies, to construct meaning and interpret the incoming data.

Metacognitive strategies are the learners' mental activities that direct their listening process, including planning for listening, monitoring of comprehension during data intake, evaluating comprehension, and identifying comprehension difficulties. These strategies are important because they manage, regulate, and guide the learners' comprehension process with the application of appropriate cognitive strategies. Proficient listeners have a better understanding of the strategies they can use to facilitate their comprehension and interactional efforts (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Additionally, there is empirical evidence that learners with higher proficiency levels make greater and more effective use of metacognitive strategies (e.g., Goh, 2000; Vandergrift, 1998, 2003a). Vandergrift (2003a), for instance, compared the listening comprehension strategies of more- and less-skilled seventh-grade Canadian students of French. Students listened to three short, authentic texts in French and were prompted to think aloud during the process. Vandergrift found significant quantitative differences in strategy use; that is, more skilled listeners used more metacognitive strategies, especially comprehension monitoring, than did their less skilled counterparts. In addition, more skilled listeners reported

greater use of questioning elaboration, whereas the less skilled listeners used more translation. A qualitative analysis of think-aloud protocol confirmed these differences and also found that the successful listeners used a wider variety of strategies to regulate listening processes and appeared to orchestrate these strategies in a continuous metacognitive cycle to achieve comprehension (Vandergrift, 2003a).

Research findings on strategy use by successful learners have led L2 listening experts to advocate the teaching of strategy to L2 learners and, more recently, there has been a greater interest in the pedagogical method known as metacognitive pedagogical sequence, or metacognitive instruction, in which learners' awareness of metacognitive strategies are heightened and their use of these strategies are developed (e.g., Cross, 2011; Goh & Taib, 2006; Vandergrift, 2002, 2003b; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). With this approach, listening tasks can be designed to guide learners in the use of strategies, i.e. prediction, monitoring, evaluating, and problem solving, to help them develop the metacognitive knowledge needed for self-regulation in L2 listening. Both primary-level and university-level Canadian learners of French (Vandergrift, 2002, 2003b) and young Chinese learners of English as a second language (ESL) learners (Goh & Taib, 2006) exposed to such tasks reported positive attitudes toward the approach and increased motivation, confidence, and understanding of their own thinking processes during listening tasks. Furthermore, results of more recent studies (Cross, 2011; Goh & Taib, 2006; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010) indicated that less skilled listeners could benefit the most from process-based listening instruction.

Although researchers have attempted to bridge the existing gap between theory and classroom reality in L2 listening comprehension and listening strategies, most of these studies were conducted with audio only input and in the learning context. We still need to further explore what strategies the learners bring with them

and use while comprehending a video text in a listening assessment context.

The Study

The present study used content video made up of TVCMs and PSAs. Question preview and repeated input were embedded in the test design. The test-takers' perceptions of the video input and their perceived strategy use during the process of video comprehension were then examined.

Specifically, this paper reports the findings on the following research questions:

1. What were the students' perceptions of the video input?
2. What strategies were they aware of employing when taking the video listening test?

Method

Participants

The participants in the study were 43 (27 male and 16 female) first-year medical students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus who enrolled in an elective listening course. The listening lessons usually started with a warm-up activity to gain the students' attention and provide some background information about the topic of the main listening task. Pre-teaching of vocabulary was provided at this stage. In addition to pre-listening topic preparation and vocabulary instruction, two types of listening support - question preview and repeated input - were provided during the main listening task. Most of the listening texts were audio material. TVCMs and PSAs were often used to introduce or wrap up the themes of the lesson and usually involved a cloze exercise. Although this group of students had frequent opportunities to practice listening using such video material, they had never taken a video listening test as part of an assessment or received any strategy instruction during a video watching activity.

All students had been told that the purpose of the study was to help improve listening instruction and assessment using authentic video material. None of them had previously seen the video texts used in the study. Their listening proficiency ranged from low intermediate to intermediate levels based on their TOEFL® CBT listening scores on POWERPREP® software.

Instruments

The Listening Test

Material selection. The listening input consisted of four public service announcements (PSAs) and six TV commercial messages (TVCMs) from *CNN International* and *The Discovery Channel*. PSAs used in the study were messages from non-profit organizations (e.g. CARE, ONE EARTH organizations) that informed and educated the viewer about the purpose of the organization, as well as inviting the viewer to take action or to participate in the organization's fundraising. The other six messages were intended to sell products (e.g. PHILIPS TV) or services (e.g. SINGAPORE AIRLINES). Students listened to the voice-over in each message while viewing the images. In other words, students were engaged in one-way, non-participatory (non-collaborative), transactional listening which required students to interpret the speaker's utterances and use visual cues from the images. The lengths ranged from 30 to 85 seconds. They were carefully chosen so that they would be suitable for the learners' proficiency level. All the recorded messages were transferred onto a DVD to be used in a computer-based language laboratory.

Listening task. A multiple-choice (M/C) listening task was designed to assess the students' ability to comprehend these messages. Two to four M/C items were constructed for each video text for a total of 30 items. The test items included questions assessing the ability to identify the main ideas and purposes, draw inferences based on information presented, and use local context cues to interpret the meaning of a word, as well as understanding vocabulary and details. These items were not 'visually biased'; that is,

attention only to the images would not facilitate answering any of the items. The estimated reliabilities (KR 20) for the 30 items in the pilot studies were 0.75 and 0.78 respectively. The instructions for the test and all the M/C questions were presented on the computer monitor, and only the answer sheet was provided to the test-takers.

Questionnaire

A short questionnaire with three open questions was employed to elicit the students' responses to the test. They were asked to say whether they had seen these TVCMs and PSAs before the test, to express their opinions on the use of these video texts as the listening input, and the use of video in listening assessment in general.

The retrospective interview

Twenty test-takers (11 males and 9 females) were then purposively selected for 30-minute retrospective interviews which were carried out in Thai. The interview was aimed at obtaining further insights into the students' perceptions of the unique features of the video input and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the video listening test with the listening support they received as well as their report of the strategies used while trying to comprehend the video.

Procedure

Two pilot studies were conducted earlier with similar groups of students taking the same listening course. In addition to a pilot study of the listening test, questionnaires, and retrospective interview, there was a trial of the experimental procedure in the two previous studies. The data in the main study was collected the following semester. The video listening test was administered in the evening in a computer-based language lab where 43 students had an individual computer monitor and a set of headphones. The video texts were transferred from the teacher's computer to each student's computer so that students could see them on their own computer and listen through headphones.

The instructions which were presented to students on their computers before the test started indicated that they would not be allowed to take notes while viewing. Instead, to facilitate students' comprehension and recall, as well as reducing their test anxiety and mental effort, students would watch and listen to the input three times in a 'sandwich format' (Chang & Read, 2006; Sherman, 1997). That is, the students would view each video text and then be allowed to preview the test questions before watching the video texts two more times. The students were then shown the questions again and there was a pause during which they answered the questions. The test lasted approximately 45 minutes. Following the listening test, all participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire.

The 30-minute interviews with selected test-takers were started the next morning and finished late that evening in my office using an audio-tape recorder and a laptop. Based on their answers to the questionnaires, students were probed for more information on their opinions about using TVCMs and PSAs in the listening test. Students were also asked whether the background music distracted them from the spoken input. They were then asked to recall their strategy use in the test. Gass and Mackey (2000, p.18) stated "If the recalls were prompted a short of time after the event (generally 48 hours), recall was 95% accurate." Even so, part of the video test was replayed for students to help them recall what they thought while taking the test.

At the end of each interview, students were reminded not to tell others about the interview process. The interviews were transcribed, translated into English, and the transcripts were double-checked for accuracy.

Data Analysis

In this study two sets of data were collected, and each was analyzed separately using a different type of qualitative analysis. To find out specific 'variables' salient to the preference of the video input on the first set, I adopted an analytic inductive approach in which

categories emerged from an examination of the data rather than being predetermined and imposed on the data (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). By reading through the questionnaire and interview transcripts several times, I discovered commonalities among the students' perceptions of the video input. At first four categories (motivating, interesting, authentic/appropriate, and creative) were established and applied to the remainder of the data. As I continued to re-review the first dataset more commonalities emerged and three more categories (relaxing, enjoyable, and lasting) were formulated as shown in Table 1. On the other hand, after repeated reviewing of the second dataset comprised of the students' reports on the strategies employed to comprehend the video, I discovered common patterns that could be fitted into an adapted framework based on Vandergrift's 1997 work, as shown in Table 2. The two sets of the data were checked by a colleague who is a native speaker and acted as an independent coder. Inter-rater reliabilities were calculated as 84 and 88% respectively. Differences in coding were resolved by discussion.

Results and Discussion

The main focuses of the current study were students' perceptions of the video input and the strategies they employed; therefore, the students' overall listening performance is reported briefly and for reference only. The mean score on the listening test for the whole population was quite high at 21.51 (71.71%). The highest score, 27 (90%), was made by the student with the highest listening proficiency. The lowest score, 13 (43.33%), was obtained by the student with lowest listening proficiency in the class (based on their scores on POWERPREP® TOEFL® CBT listening and their scores on the midterm and final listening tests). Using KR 20, the estimated reliability coefficient for the scores on the 30 items was 0.70. Analysis of the interview data showed that most students could benefit from both the video input and test tasks with question preview and repeated input that facilitated the use of strategies and visual information in listening.

Students' perceptions of the video input

The commonalities emerging from the questionnaire and interview data were the positive responses to TVCMs and PSAs as the video input and that they are appropriate, but could not completely replace audio only assessment. As shown in Table 1, students perceived the video as MIRACLE listening texts; that is, they were motivating, interesting, relaxing, authentic/appropriate, creative, lasting in the mind (increasing recall), and above all making the listening test an enjoyable experience.

Table 1: Sample student comments on the unique features of video texts

FEATURES OF THE VIDEO INPUT	NO. OF MENTIONS*	SAMPLE STUDENT COMMENTS
Motivating	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ads** aroused my curiosity because they did not reveal what they wanted to promote until the end, so the listener had to follow closely. - For me, the ads created a positive attitude towards the listening test and made me feel more enthusiastic. - Video listening tests are motivating and promote good attitude towards listening. They make students want to practice on their own.
Interesting	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ads were attractive, persuasive, exciting, and creative. They were designed to capture the viewer's attention, so they were exciting to watch. - The ads kept my attention and made me think about what 'idea' the ad was trying to sell.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The background music aroused our interest and set the mood and tone of the ads.
Relaxing	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For me, the messages were short, not too hard to listen to, and not stressful. - The images facilitated comprehension, making the spoken messages easier to interpret and therefore reducing stress. - For me, the background music made the listening less stressful, providing a relaxing atmosphere in the listening test and preparing me to listen to authentic texts.
Authentic/ Appropriate	Authentic = 22 Appropriate = 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With modern technology, we don't only hear sound but also see pictures; it is real-life listening. (authentic) - Video listening tests check our listening comprehension in a real-life situation. (authentic) - Because we have also learned to listen through ads in our class, video should be part of our listening test. (appropriate) - I found the ads better than listening to the news. They were short messages, and I watched only a few seconds, but I could understand a lot. When I watch the news for an hour, I only understand a few sentences. (appropriate)
Creative	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I really liked the way the ads promoted the ideas. I think those involved with designing the ads

		<p>work very hard to convince viewers in a creative way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ways in which they conveyed the messages were fantastic and each had a good effect.
Lasting (Increasing recall)	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The images helped me a lot to understand what the ads were trying to convey and helped me recall what I had heard. If I only listened to the audio recording, I couldn't recall much. - The images and sometimes written words appearing at the end of the ads confirmed what I had heard and helped me recall better when I answered the questions.
Enjoyable	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ads were real-life listening, fun, and relaxing although the speed was fast. - They are fun and not boring like the news.

* Based on the 43 students' comments (both on the questionnaires and in the interviews) on the use of TVCMs/PSAs in a listening test that could be classified into each category. Each student mentioned more than one feature. The maximum number of mentions possible for each feature was 43. (N=43)

** Here "the ads" refers to both TVCMs and PSAs.

Most student comments were related to the authenticity and appropriacy of the spoken input. Many students admitted they wanted this kind of test to check their real-life listening ability. Students seemed to appreciate the video listening test with TVCMs and PSAs because they perceived it as testing their ability to understand and comprehend natural, normal, and authentic speech they would encounter in daily life. One lower listening proficiency (LLP) student commented that this test made him realize he still needed more practice to listen more competently in the real world. In

terms of appropriacy, comments such as ‘...they were not too long,...’ and ‘...easier to understand and better than listening to the news...’ reflected students’ opinions on the appropriate level of the listening text for them. Students also perceived TVCMs and PSAs as a ‘positive washback’ as shown in their comments that video listening tests are motivating and promote good attitudes towards listening and that they make students want to practice on their own,...listening to ads on YouTube. As noted by several advocates of TV ads for pedagogy (e.g., Davis, 1997; Lynch, 1985; Picken, 1999; Sherman, 2003), students were highly motivated to do the task because this kind of video texts promoted fun in an assessment context and generated and maintained interest. Furthermore, as Davis (1997, p. 13) suggests “...key words and slogans ...stay imprinted in students’ minds for days...,” students commented that images and written words at the end of TVCMs and PSAs helped them recall the spoken input better when they answered the questions. This is because the rich “mental picture” embedded in the TVCMs and PSAs forms “a basis for recalling and retelling.” (Lynch, 1985, p.116)

Regarding the background music, most students admitted that they did not pay much attention to it, focusing either on the visual or audio input; i.e., they heard, but did not listen. Nevertheless, many students agreed that background music made listening less stressful, thereby providing a relaxing atmosphere in the listening test. Some higher listening proficiency (HLP) students even commented that background music opened their minds to the spoken input, determining the mood or tone of what is being said in the voice-overs. However, if the music (e.g. in PSA #10) is too loud, it may hinder comprehension because it prevents LLP students from being able to hear certain words clearly, particularly in a low-pitched voice-over.

Based on these student comments, properly selected content video, such as TVCMs and PSAs, could be a good source of listening texts for listening tests in addition to their pedagogical value. They seem to be suitable video texts in terms of difficulty level and motivational interest in the assessment context. The fact that

students enjoyed TVCMs and PSAs may have contributed to the affective domain with the enjoyment of these video texts and the way the test tasks were presented helping reduce the stress students felt in dealing with the speed of the spoken language. This also might have helped lower their overall anxiety level, thus allowing them to be more actively involved in the listening process, i.e. to ‘engage in listening behaviors that were more metacognitive in nature’ (Vandergrift, 2007), and to perform better on the listening test.

Perceived strategy use during the process of video comprehension

It should be noted again here that this group of students were exposed to the use of videos (e.g., TVCMs, PSAs, movies) in their listening classes, but had never been taught about cognitive processes or given strategy instruction. Nevertheless, it turned out that 20 students reported common patterns of strategy use correlating with the metacognitive listening comprehension strategies proposed by Vandergrift (1997, 2003a) in their retrospective interviews.

Table 2: Students’ reports on the use of strategies in the video listening test

Test Task	Reported Use of Metacognitive Strategies	Examples*
Read the instructions for the test	Planning; advance organization – Developing an awareness of what needs to be done to accomplish the test task; proposing strategies for handling it.	Because I could watch the video three times, I decided when I should focus more on images and when I should focus harder on the audio input. (n= 14)
Watch the video the first time	Directed attention; prediction; hypothesis formation - Attending in general to the listening task and maintaining attention to images while	- I watched and listened to the ads; however, I focused more on the images for the gist and the context. (n= 10)

	listening; using visual clues to help predict the content of the message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I watched and listened; I started forming a hypothesis about what the ad was going to tell us and used the images to help me narrow my interpretation from other plausible meanings. (n=3) - I focused on the images to be sure I would be on the right track. So, the images worked like a topic preparation. (n= 3) - I used the images to help form a hypothesis and to retrieve my background knowledge. (n=2)
Preview the questions	Planning; advance organization –developing an appropriate action plan to overcome difficulties that may interfere with successful completion of the task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I read over the questions and options given and decided where I should focus when I watched the video the second time. (n= 19)
Watch the video the second time	Selective attention; monitoring: comprehension monitoring, auditory monitoring, -Attending to specific aspects of the spoken input that assist in understanding and/or task completion; checking, verifying hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I didn't pay attention to the images, but I focused on audio for details. (n=7) - I (closed my eyes and) tried to focus on the audio to get the answers to the questions. (n=6) - I tried to catch the words-matching them with those I saw in the test. (n=6)
Watch the video the third time	Monitoring: comprehension monitoring, auditory monitoring, and double-check monitoring; utilizing images to confirm interpretation;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I focused on the audio again to clarify and confirm my understanding. (n= 8) - I watched and listened to

	evaluation; problem identification	<p>confirm my understanding. (n=5)</p> <p>- I checked the answers the third time I watched. However, if I still didn't understand/where the questions are, I focused only on the audio. (n=4)</p> <p>- I watched and listened, but this time used images to confirm my understanding of the words that I couldn't hear clearly and the messages they conveyed. (n=3)</p>
--	------------------------------------	--

Source: Adapted from Vandergrift (1997, p. 392)

* Examples shown are from the interview data from the 20 students analyzed for commonalities relating to how the students used strategies, images, and question preview to facilitate comprehension. The maximum number of reported uses possible for each category of analysis is 20 ('n' indicates the number of the students who reported similar strategies used as in the examples shown even though they may have used different wording).

As shown in Table 2, after learning from the instructions that they could watch the video three times, most students reported that they planned when they would focus on the visual input and on the audio input. It seems that only metacognitive strategy (planning-advance organization) was used while students read the instructions. However, when students watched the video the first time, metacognitive strategies were not used in isolation, but rather in combination with cognitive strategies. Most of the students focused more on images to help them get the general idea of the message (directed attention- metacognitive strategy; predicting the content based on visual clues and background knowledge-cognitive strategy). While previewing the questions, metacognitive strategy, i.e. planning

(advance organization) was used again. When students watched the video the second time, metacognitive strategies such as selective attention and comprehension monitoring were reported. And the third time they watched the video, students reported either focusing on the audio or using the images to check and verify their comprehension of the spoken texts.

The study shows that particular strategies are employed depending on the nature of the test task, so they recur when helpful. As Macaro (2006) points out, effective learners use strategies in clusters appropriate to contexts and tasks. The findings also suggest that metacognitive strategies such as advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, comprehension monitoring, and double-check monitoring were frequently used with repeated video input and question preview. These patterns were revealed in both HLP and LLP students which means both could benefit from the test tasks provided, although LLP students reported different selective attention strategies (trying to catch the words-matching them with those seen in the test questions, for example) and more reliance on the images in the last viewing.

Visual images helped the learners with hypothesis formation and predicting the content of the message, as well as confirming interpretation. This corresponds with Gruba's framework (2004) in regard to the facilitative roles of visual elements during video comprehension. Also, this finding appears to be in accord with Baltova's report (1994) that visuals enhanced comprehension of gist. In addition, images in TVCMs and PSAs also play a role in helping students solve some processing problems during the first two phases (perception and parsing) of comprehension (see Goh, 2000); for example, helping them recognize the words they hear and form a mental representation from the words heard. Two students with higher scores on the test even mentioned a Chinese proverb, *a picture is worth a thousand words*. They reported they could recall the words more quickly because they did not need to form a mental picture of the words they heard like they usually do when only listening to an

audio. For them, the images provided a 'short-cut' to their memory, resulting in quicker vocabulary recall and faster background knowledge activation. As Schnotz (cited in Chun & Plass, 1997, p. 64) points out, "the use of images provides the possibility of a relatively direct construction of a mental model." In fact, "images are simply visual representations of mental models" which represent the contents of a text and these mental models play another important part in the cognitive environment that helps listeners interpret the spoken message (Buck, 2001).

Additionally, it can be hypothesized that the medical students who were participants in the study would be considered successful learners since they were required to have higher entrance exam scores in all academic fields to enter this field of study, and based on their test results and strategy reports. This suggests that they might be more competent in terms of overall knowledge and possess a greater information processing capacity, enabling them to use more metacognitive strategies or, as noted by Vandergrift (2003a), to orchestrate these strategies in a continuous metacognitive cycle. Their reported use of strategies is also supported by Perkins' claims (cited in Vandergrift & Goh, 2012) about the roles of multiple intelligences in metacognitive knowledge and use. Moreover, they were science-oriented and may have a high spatial ability on average. When presented with visuals, students with high spatial ability may perform better in the listening task because comprehension and recall of spoken input can be enhanced by spatial processing (in the form of mental imagery)(Chun & Plass, 1997; Kirby, 1993; Vandergrift, 2007).

Furthermore, it appears that the test task could elicit this group of test-takers' best performance, as it helps promote their 'feelings of comfort or safety' (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). In other words, the video test task for low intermediate or intermediate EFL learners, if embedded with question preview and repeated input, could be a 'haven for testing' in addition to Rubin's (1995) 'haven for learning.' Results also suggest that when the affective domain is

enhanced and opportunities are given in the testing situation, as Buck (1995) contends, students can learn how to use metacognitive strategies and work out cognitive processes which optimize their listening performance for themselves. Though an analysis of the students' self-reported strategies from retrospective interviews points to a number of metacognitive strategy uses, it does not indicate if the individual test-taker could use each strategy competently and appropriately. This might be considered a limitation of the study.

Implications for Classroom Listening Tests

In this study, the qualitative data from the interviews with students reflects a highly positive attitude toward listening tests augmented with visuals. If one of the goals of EFL teaching is to develop as much 'real-life' or 'authentic' listening ability as possible, as well as raising students' motivation to learn to listen in English, then it could be argued that visuals should be included in listening tests. Using visual media would also make the assessment parallel current pedagogical practices. As Gruba (1997) notes, video-based assessment can be improved so that it would work well methodologically in the process of "reverse washback" (suggested by Lynch and Davidson in 1994); that is, teaching having an influence on testing, rather than vice versa. The implementation of video for high-stakes assessments (such as TOEFL, IELTS, etc.) brings about test validation concerns. However, would content video be a better option in a low-stakes listening test? If the test developer defines the listening construct as including visuals present in the 'cognitive environment' for low-stakes assessments (for example, part of a class grade), then content video suitable for test-takers' level of proficiency would be a good choice. Additionally, a video listening test with listening support as used in the study could be part of a formative assessment focusing on the process of learning. For instance, they could be tests or quizzes used as part of an ongoing assessment process during the course of metacognitive instruction. The result of the tests can enhance learning by providing students with feedback

on their progress toward the learning outcomes. Moreover, it would help inform the teacher and students about strengths and weaknesses, suggest avenues for improvement, and help students develop effective listening strategies.

Pedagogical Implications

The value of employing authentic materials has been recognized as essential in an EFL listening class (Buck, 1995; Vandergrift, 2007; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). EFL learners themselves want to be able to better understand the language used in network based multimedia materials, such as on-line audios and videos, YouTube, etc (Vandergrift, 2007). Teachers must choose materials carefully from the types of authentic video available and the nature of the images they contain. As Vandergrift and Goh (2012) suggest, it is important to consider how closely the content of the images parallels the spoken text, particularly with learners at lower proficiency levels, so as to allow them the opportunity to predict the content and develop strategies to compensate for their limited linguistic knowledge. Because these learners are only able to automatically process a small amount of what they hear, they have to concentrate intently on what they are listening to. This in conjunction with the rapid pace of natural speech and limitations in their working memory and time to process the input may prevent much of what is heard from being understood (Vandergrift, 2007). To help them cope with these limitations, students should be taught how to make use of all the available resources (e.g. contextual, visual or paralinguistic information, and world knowledge), as well as the available strategies, so that they are able to interpret the spoken input. Besides raising students' metacognitive awareness of the listening process, the use of the pedagogical sequence can help them learn how to listen and guide them through the stages that characterize real-life listening (see Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Using this approach,

teachers can help lower-level students develop more effective skills and strategies to enable them to comprehend short, authentic texts in relation to their comprehension levels, needs, and interests.

Conclusions

The results of this study are limited by using one form of authentic, transactional video material (TVCMs and PSAs), and the number of participants, their proficiency levels and field of study. Thus, generalizations are apparently impossible; that is, the results cannot be assumed to represent anything other than this group's self-perceptions of their participation in the particular video listening test tasks described in this study. However, the study illustrates the potential of using content video, such as TVCMs and PSAs, and applying current knowledge about developing metacognitive strategies in an EFL listening test context. The nature of the test tasks in the study led this group of test-takers to use metacognitive strategies. Nevertheless, the existence of common patterns of strategy use by these participants suggests that teaching and instilling the cognitive and metacognitive strategies employed by such high achieving, well versed, and accomplished learners could benefit students with lower learning skills by improving and strengthening their learning skills.

With the increasing discussion and use of video texts in the assessment context and metacognitive instruction in L2 listening, the effects of using different genres of video input and various test tasks on the strategies used by EFL learners with different proficiency levels and backgrounds need to be further explored. It is anticipated that the results of these studies would provide links between listening research, theory, and classroom practice with regard to assessment and pedagogy. Eventually, a classroom video listening test could be designed so that the test result would provide information, not only about the students' abilities to develop real-life listening skills, but also about whether and how they could become more independent and efficient listeners.

Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude for their continued support and encouragement goes to Professor Dr. Kanchana Prapphal, Professor Dr. Suwimon Wongwanich, and Associate Professor Dr. Supanee Chinnawongs. My appreciation also goes to Assistant Professor Dr. Chonlada Laohawiriyanon and Gerald Ivan Waxman for their comments on the design of the instruments, to Kent Dale Hamilton for acting as an independent coder and editor, to Charan Bunwiboon for technical support, to Prathum Wiriyaajitrat and Rossukon Kokul for their help with acquiring the materials for the literature review, and, last but not least, to the medical students at PSU who participated in the study.

The Author

Sukanya Tanewong is currently an assistant professor of English at Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Trang Campus. She holds an M.A. in TESL from The Pennsylvania State University and has taught English at Chulalongkorn University and PSU. Her primary interests are L2 listening research and pedagogy, language testing, and materials development.

References

- Alderson, J. C., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language test construction and evaluation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baltova, I. (1994). The impact of video on the comprehension skills of core French students. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 50(3), 507-531.
- Buck, G. (1991). The test of listening comprehension: An introspective study. *Language Testing*, 8(1), 67-91.
- Buck, G. (1995). How to become a good listening teacher. In D. J. Mendelsohn & J. Rubin (Eds.), *A guide for the teaching of*

- second language listening* (pp. 113–131). San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.
- Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chang, A. C.-S., & Read, J. (2006). The effects of listening support on the listening performance of EFL learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(2), 375-397.
- Chang, A. C.-S. (2008). Listening strategies of L2 learners with varied test tasks. *TESL Canada Journal*, 25(2), 1-26.
- Chun, D. M., & Plass, J. L. (1997). Research on text comprehension in multimedia environments. *Language Learning & Technology*, 1(1), 60-81.
- Coniam, D. (2001). The use of audio or video comprehension as an assessment instrument in the certification of English language teachers: A case study. *System*, 29(1), 1-14.
- Cross, J. (2011). Metacognitive instruction for helping less-skilled listeners. *ELT Journal*, 65(4), 408-416.
- Davis, R. (1997). TV commercial messages: An untapped video resource for content-based classes. *The Language Teacher*, 21(3), 13-15.
- Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (2000). *Stimulated recall methodology in second language research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ginther, A. (2001). *Effects of the presence and absence of visuals on performance on TOEFL® CBT listening-comprehension stimuli* (TOEFL Research Report No. 66). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Ginther, A. (2002). Context and content visuals and performance on listening comprehension stimuli. *Language Testing*, 19(2), 133-167.
- Goh, C. (2000). A cognitive perspective on language learners' listening comprehension problems. *System*, 28(1), 55–75.
- Goh, C., & Taib, Y. (2006). Metacognitive instruction in listening for young learners. *ELT Journal*, 60(3), 222–232.

- Gruba, P. (1993). A comparison study of audio and video in language testing. *JALT Journal*, 15(1), 85-88.
- Gruba, P. (1997). Video media in listening assessment. *System*, 25(3), 335-345.
- Gruba, P. (1999). *The role of digital video media in second language listening comprehension*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved April 22, 2009, from <http://repository.unimelb.edu.au/10187/1520>
- Gruba, P. (2004). Understanding digitized second language video text. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 17(1), 51-82.
- Hasan, A. (2000). Learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 13(2), 137-153.
- Kintsch, W. (1998). *Comprehension: A paradigm for cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirby, J. R. (1993). Collaborative and competitive effects of verbal and spatial processes. *Learning and Instruction*, 3, 201-214.
- Lynch, A. (1985). The 'unreality principle': One use of television commercials. *ELT Journal*, 39(2), 115-120.
- Lynch, B. K., & Davidson, F. (1994). Criterion-referenced language test development: Linking curricula, teachers, and tests. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(4), 727-743.
- Macaro, E. (2006). Strategies for language learning and for language use: Revising the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(3), 320-337.
- Mac William, I. (1986). Video and language comprehension. *ELT Journal*, 40(2), 131-135.
- Mendelsohn, D. (1998). Teaching listening. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18, 81-101.
- Ockey, G. J. (2007). Construct implications of including still image or video in listening tests. *Language Testing*, 24(4), 517-537.
- Parry, T., & Meredith, R. (1984). Videotape vs. audiotape for listening comprehension tests: An experiment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services ED 254 107).

- Picken, J. (1999). State of the ad: The role of advertisements in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal*, 53(4), 249-255.
- Progosh, D. (1996). Using video for listening assessment: Opinions of test takers. *TESL Canada Journal*, 14(1), 34-44.
- Rost, M. (2007). *I'm only trying to help: A role for interventions in teaching listening*. *Language Learning and Technology*, 11(1), 102-108.
- Rubin, J. (1994). A review of second language listening comprehension research. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(2), 199-221.
- Rubin, J. (1995). The contribution of video to the development of competence in listening. In D. J. Mendelsohn & J. Rubin (Eds.), *A guide for the teaching of second language listening* (pp.151-165). San Diego, CA: Dominic Press.
- Secules, T., Herron, C., & Tomasello, M. (1992). The effect of video context on foreign language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 76(4), 480-490.
- Seliger, H. W., & Shohamy, E. (1989). *Second language research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sherman, J. (1997). The effect of question preview in listening comprehension tests. *Language Testing*, 14 (2), 185-213.
- Sherman, J. (2003). *Using authentic video in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sueyoshi, A., & Hardison, D. (2005). The role of gestures and facial cues in second language listening comprehension. *Language Learning*, 55(4), 661-699.
- Thompson, I. (1995). Assessment of second/foreign language listening comprehension. In D. J. Mendelsohn & J. Rubin (Eds.), *A guide for the teaching of second language listening* (pp. 31-58). San Diego, CA: Dominic Press.
- Thompson, I., & Rubin, J. (1996). Can strategy instruction improve listening comprehension? *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(3), 331-342.

- Vandergrift, L. (1997). The strategies of second language (French) listeners: A descriptive study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 30(3), 387-409.
- Vandergrift, L. (1998). Successful and less successful listeners in French: What are the strategy differences? *The French Review*, 71(3), 370-394.
- Vandergrift, L. (2002). It was nice to see that our predictions were right: Developing metacognition in L2 listening comprehension. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 58(4), 555-575.
- Vandergrift, L. (2003a). Orchestrating strategy use: Towards a model of the skilled L2 listener. *Language Learning*, 53(3), 461-494.
- Vandergrift, L. (2003b). From prediction to reflection: Guiding students through the process of L2 listening. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 59(3), 425-440.
- Vandergrift, L. (2004). Listening to learn or learning to listen? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, 3-25.
- Vandergrift, L. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research. *Language Teaching*, 40(3), 191-210.
- Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. (2012). *Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action*. New York: Routledge.
- Vandergrift, L., & Tafaghodtari, M., H. (2010). Teaching L2 learners how to listen does make a difference: An empirical study. *Language Learning*, 60(2), 470-497.
- Vanderplank, R. (2010). A decade of research on language laboratories, television and video in language learning. *Language Teaching*, 43(1), 1-37.
- Wagner, E. (2007). Are they watching? Test-taker viewing behavior during an L2 video listening test. *Language Learning & Technology*, 11(1), 67-86.
- Wagner, E. (2008). Video listening tests: What are they measuring? *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 5(3), 218-243.

- Wagner, E. (2010a). The effect of the use of video texts on ESL listening test-taker performance. *Language Testing*, 27(4), 493-513.
- Wagner, E. (2010b). Test-takers' interaction with an L2 video listening test. *System*, 38(2), 280-291.

