

# The Effect of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) on Performance in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) Listening Module

Nguyen Van Han<sup>1</sup> & Henriette van Rensburg<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> College of Finance and Customs, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup> School of Linguistics, Adult and Specialist Education, University of Southern Queensland, Australia

Correspondence: Nguyen Van Han, B2/1A, 385 Street, Tang Nhon Phu A Ward, District 9, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. E-mail: nguyenvanhan@tchq.edu.vn

Received: October 30, 2013 Accepted: December 4, 2013 Online Published: January 5, 2014

doi:10.5539/elt.v7n2p30 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n2p30>

## Abstract

Many companies and organizations have been using the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) for business and commercial communication purpose in Vietnam and around the world. The present study investigated the effect of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) on performance in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) listening module. Two groups of participants enrolled in the same major, had equivalent general English background and attended the TOEIC listening class twice a week with the same teacher – the researcher in 7 weeks at the College of Finance and Customs, in Vietnam. There were 25 students in the treatment group and the control group. The quasi-experimental method, questionnaire and post-test were used in this study. The material input was designed with the application of CALL introduced into the treatment group only whereas the control group still learned with the current textbook only. The results showed that there was difference in the performance on TOEIC listening test scores between two groups. The students in the treatment group used listening strategies more effectively than the students in the control groups. Moreover, CALL instruction and teaching method increased the students' TOEIC listening scores significantly.

**Keywords:** treatment group, control group, TOEIC, CALL, quasi-experimental

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Theoretical Considerations

Listening comprehension is an active and complex process, and is considered one of the four skills necessary for learners to develop language competence. Listening comprehension has been described as an “interactive, interpretive process in which listeners engage in a dynamic construction of meaning” (Murphy, 1991, p. 56). Underwood (1989, p. 1) defined listening as the following:

“Listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. To listen successfully to spoken language we need to be able to work out what speakers mean when they use particular words on particular ways on a particular occasions, and not simply understand the words themselves.”

In order to test learners' abilities of listening comprehension, there are a couple of international tests have come into being. One of these tests is the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) which was first developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) in 1979 in Japan. Gradually, TOEIC test has been used in many countries around the world and has become the global standard for assessing how well people can communicate in English with others in the global work place.

The TOEIC test covers a variety of vocabulary that meets demand of communication in work place. Test questions include different settings and situations such as health, offices, personnel... It consists of 100 questions divided into 4 parts comprised of Picture Description, Question-Response, Short Conversation and Short Talk.

However, there are some difficulties when learning listening comprehension in general and TOEIC listening in particular. Underwood (1989) lists seven obstacles in listening including (1) *lack of control over the speed*; (2) *not being able to get things repeated*; (3) *the listener's limited vocabulary*; (4) *failure to recognize the 'signals'*; (5) *problems of interpretation*; (6) *inability to concentrate*; (7) *and established certain learning habits*.

Therefore, it is very important to take into consideration the selection of appropriate method of teaching listening to enhance students' TOEIC listening performance.

### 1.2 Practical Concerns

Every year, the College of Finance and Customs (CFC) welcomes thousands of students of many majors. After passing the entrance examination, students have six semesters to be filled up with the specialized knowledge suitable for their future jobs. Unlike the training system of university – there are two distinct stages: general training stage and major training stage, the training program at CFC is somewhat divided into two stages. Students learn fundamental subjects in the first year such as Psychology, Physical Education, Math, Law, General English (GE) ... and specialized subjects in the last two years including Test of English as International Communication (TOEIC). The time for learning TOEIC is 75 periods per semester (one period equals to 45 minutes) from the third semester.

English is one of the compulsory subjects in the training system. It does not only meet the students' needs in learning, doing research and work but also enables them to come near to the top of managements also.

#### 1.2.1 The Teaching and Learning Materials

Before joining TOEIC course, students have to attend GE course with the duration of 75 periods in the first year. The book named *Business Basics* written by *David Grant and Robert McLarty* is used during the course. Students are equipped with basic words related to daily activities, trips, food, telephoning, etc. All skills are developed together with basic grammar and vocabulary. After finishing GE, students are required to attend a TOEIC course with another 75 periods in which the book of specialized field *Starter TOEIC* written by *Anne Taylor & Casey Malarcheris* used.

#### 1.2.2 The Teaching and Learning Situation

The students' aims of the TOEIC course are to be able to use the target language well for communication purpose and to get a higher score in TOEIC test. With this goal, language competence, which underlines all language performance or language use, is hence very important in language teaching and learning. Savignon (1983, p. 9) said that "communicative competence is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved".

The current TOEIC material and the teaching method are not interesting and have less interactive listening activities for students to enhance listening skills and language competence. In reality, students are stuffed with a large amount of new words. Many listening tasks are introduced day after day, so the students' only duty is to read and listen passively to choose the correct answers.

This inappropriate teaching method makes it difficult for both TOEIC teachers and learners to cover all listening skills. So, the TOEIC teaching and learning looks confusing. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 158) stated "teachers are often reluctant dwellers in a strange and uncharted land". Therefore, both the teachers and students need a sound syllabus that can facilitate the teaching and learning to make it accessible and real.

In addition, a very big class (from 50 to 80 students) also prevents TOEIC teachers from applying the communicative approach and CALL in teaching. In general, choosing an appropriate syllabus, suitable methods and somewhat reducing the number of students are the important things in order to make the TOEIC teaching better.

#### 1.2.3 The Learners

Students entering this college have virtually studied English for at least 3 years (from grade 10). Among them, 22% got national English certificate level A, or B. Their English background is enough for them to continue with the GE course in the first year of their study. During the GE stage, students take the advantage of reviewing the basic grammar points that they have studied before.

Coming to the TOEIC course, students have no chances to enhance their oral skills. They are stuffed with several new words in listening and reading comprehension tasks. This forms the habit of rote learning and there is no connection between what they have learned with what they activate their own language products. This seems to meet the short-term goals as being stated by Harmer (1991, p. 3), "... short-term goals might include such things as wanting to pass an end-of-semester test or wanting to finish a unit in a book".

#### 1.2.4 The Teachers

In addition to the normal functions of a classroom teacher, the TOEIC teacher will have to deal with needs analysis, syllabus design, materials preparation or adaptation and evaluation. They not only control but also

facilitate students' duties when they experience TOEIC listening tasks.

The English language teachers at CFC, who have over three years of experience in TOEIC teaching, are in charge of teaching TOEIC. They take many roles as facilitators to help students with their problems, participants to join group discussions and share ideas relating to TOEIC content or even students' language barrier. Some senior TOEIC teachers also take part in the process of compiling or adapting materials suitable for students.

The current TOEIC material may cause to teachers some problems. Because all of them are GE teachers, they have to update knowledge by self-studying. It is not easy for them to be qualified in such a new field with short time. Therefore, they do not think they are qualified enough when applying any CALL application except the grammar translation method. As a result, the teaching process does not bring any interesting activities so as to motivate the students. Although the teachers are enthusiastic and trying their best to apply new methods in suitable situations, the outcomes seem less satisfactory.

### *1.3 Objectives of the Study*

It is argued that foreign language learning process is most successfully acquired when students are engaged in meaningful use. CALL is supposed to allow for the integration and combination of language learning and content of subject matter. The objective of this study is to verify the effectiveness of the application of CALL instruction in the course of teaching TOEIC listening module. The study is based on:

- 1) A questionnaire administered twice: one before and one after TOEIC course to ask students of two classes (C11E2a and C11E2b) about their motivation, ways of learning, and learning needs for the TOEIC course.
- 2) Test results collected from the post-test experimented in class (C11E2a) who studied with the CALL approach.

The author posits that the outcome of this thesis will provide the evidence for advantages of CALL application in TOEIC listening teaching.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Key Studies Concerned with Teaching TOEIC Listening*

There are several studies done to investigate the methods to teach TOEIC effectively. Seong and Klemsen (2005) carried out a research to investigate Korean university students' perception of TOEIC courses taught by native English teachers. In their research, there were two groups including: (a) a control group that consisted of 80 freshman students, who studied TOEIC listening course during 15 weeks by a Korean English teacher; and (b) an experiment group that consisted of 80 freshmen students who received the same period of teaching by a female North American native English teacher. Pre-test, post-test and questionnaire were used in this research. The results showed that native teachers are not more effective than Korean teachers. There was no difference in terms of scores between two groups. Furthermore, the students' perception regarding the downfalls of "a native teacher for a TOEIC course was not statistically proven" (Seong & Klemsen, 2005, p. 93).

In order to find out if focusing on teaching linguistic features can support TOEIC listening output, Carreira (2008, p. 201) raised a question "Does teaching reduced forms result in improving their TOEIC listening section scores?" The participants were 19 international students consisting of 4 males and 15 females. These participants studied reduced forms in English lessons that took place once a week for 90 minutes. The teaching content contained two parts. The first part included explanation regarding reduced forms such as reduction, contraction and assimilation. The second part provided dictation exercises of words, songs and conversations. Paired t-tests were used to compare the scores of TOEIC listening sections before and after the instruction. The comparison showed that there were significant differences between them as reduced forms is one of bottom-up processing but TOEIC listening sections require both bottom-up and top-down processing (Norris, 1975, p. 47, cited in Carreira, 2008, p. 204). Thus, TOEIC listening scores cannot be improved if only reduced forms are taught (Carreira, 2008, p. 204).

Kim (2010) wonders why many teachers who teach TOEIC in Korean just ask students to take notes without asking questions or interacting with other students. What the students do in class is that they focus on teacher's explanation about how to get high scores on the test. However, Korean is ranked 110<sup>th</sup> on global TOEIC (Kim, 2010, p. 39). In her reflection paper, Kim argues that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) should be applied in TOEIC listening class. In CLT, "language teachers should ultimately enable students to utilize the language to interpret and express real-life messages rather than only develop mastery of linguistic structure" even though teachers are responsible for improving TOEIC listening skills (Kim, 2010, p. 41). She suggests that games, role-plays and problem-solving tasks should be used in the test preparation TOEIC listening class because students feel eager and interested in joining communicative games and "the effectiveness of the

students' test will increase (Kim, 2010, p. 43).

Generally speaking, there are some studies addressing the methods of teaching TOEIC listening. These studies just focus on some previous results of other studies to carry out research related to TOEIC listening comprehension. However, the results do not have significant contribution to improving the TOEIC listening performance. Especially, very few studies investigated the connection between CALL and TOEIC listening module. Thus, it is still negotiable to find out the effect of CALL on TOEIC listening performance. Before doing this, it is necessary to present the information related to CALL in the following part.

## 2.2 *The Advantages of Using Call to Teach TOEIC Listening*

Dealing with vocabulary and working memory is always a crucial concern about the TOEIC listening performance (Chu, 2009, p. 45). CALL plays an essential role in dealing with this concern. As mentioned in the previous part, there is a wide variety of vocabulary in TOEIC listening test including different settings and situations. Gazzaniga, Ivry and Mangun (1998) confirm, "everyone agrees that a mental store of word meaning is crucial to normal language comprehension and production" and "the listener is confronted with enormous variability in input: the rate of speech, the dialect of the speaker, and the sex of the speaker, to name a few". So, how much vocabulary is necessary for foreign language learners to comprehend TOEIC listening? Chujo and Oghigian (2009) suggest that learners would need at least 95% coverage of the running words in the auditory input. So, learners need to require a minimum vocabulary size of 4000 words. In order to meet this requirement, the teaching vocabulary method needs to be changed.

There have been some studies addressing the effects of CALL on language vocabulary. Nishigaki and Chujo (2005) launched out university-level vocabulary CALL programs for TOEFL and TOEIC due to the fact that "vocabulary building is at the heart of language acquisition" (p. 40). They ask university students to evaluate the quality of the program after they get exposure to using it. Surprisingly, ninety-five per cent of the words can be remembered well in a period time of four months. Besides that, students gave positive comments, "the material was useful" and "I want to learn more vocabulary with this material" (p. 43).

Lin (2004, cited in Levy, 2006) implemented a study aiming at investigate how learners' incidental vocabulary is improved by video-based computer assisted language learning (VBCALL). In that research, after using an English proficiency test, eighty two university freshmen were divided into three groups: (a) high reading and high listening English proficiency, (b) high reading and low listening English proficiency, (c) low reading and high listening English proficiency. All members in three groups underwent five vocabulary follow-up tests, five English video-based lessons chosen from the 2006 CNN news and vocabulary pre- and post-tests. It required eight periods for data collection to come to the final findings. Lin (2004, cited in Levy, 2006) found out all three group's post-test vocabulary were higher than those of their pre-test. In other words, learners' vocabulary can be facilitated and promoted through video-based CALL activities.

On the same direction, Lee (2008, p. 84) carried out a study to investigate how Taiwanese students' learning English pronunciation is assisted by two CALL programs including *MyET* and *Issues in English*. 153 college students joined this research and they were supposed to use two computer software programs and answer 6 open-ended questions, for example, (1) *what are the characteristics of this program?* (2) *What are the advantages of this program?* (3) *What kind of improvement does it need to meet your needs?* (4) *What are the differences between a real teacher and this program?* The results indicated that the students found two programs interesting and helpful for them. However, they liked the one with 'explicit correction feedback, and with repetition and other specific functions, as well as the facility for self-paced and self-directed learning' (Lee, 2008, p. 2).

After looking into research on CALL and vocabulary learning, Son (2001, p. 33) commented that educators lack important studies which need to be comparative and evaluative even though they have done several researches on the benefits of computer dictionaries for vocabulary acquisition. He suggested more studies should be done to investigate "the effects of lexical CALL on manifold aspects such as implicit and explicit learning of vocabulary and comprehension". Additionally, he said "these research activities would provide better understanding of how software can be developed and used best in CALL environments; and of what students learn from computer-assisted vocabulary activities".

Working memory is considered to play an important role in the cognitive operation controlled processing (Ortega, 2009). On the other hand, working memory is necessary for listening comprehension. Colflesh and Conway (2007) explored the relationship between working memory capacity and controlled attention in listening comprehension. The result showed that students with greater working memory capacity performed better than students with lower working memory. Therefore working memory is really useful for listening comprehension in general and for TOEIC listening in particular.

From the above findings, one may believe that CALL may be a contributing solution of the issues related to vocabulary and working memory that are two important elements to get high scores in four parts of TOEIC listening module. Besides that, computer assisted language learning may make students get involved in listening activities and get over listening difficulties mentioned in the previous section. It should be worthwhile to conduct this study to investigate the effects of CALL on listening comprehension regarding TOEIC listening skills. By doing so, it would be useful to see whether students taught with CALL have better TOEIC listening skills than those taught with traditional methods. As a result, English teachers at CFC may get useful information on the effects and advantages of CALL so that they can use appropriate method to enhance students' listening TOEIC listening skills.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses*

The research is designed to answer the most important question and some sub-questions that follow:

Do students taught with CALL have better listening skills at TOEIC level than those taught with the traditional methods?

The sub-questions are:

- 1) Is there any difference in the performance on TOEIC listening test between students who are taught with CALL and those who are taught with more traditional method using textbook only?
- 2) Does CALL instruction increase/decrease students' TOEIC listening scores?
- 3) Do learners who are taught with CALL use listening strategies more effectively than learners who are taught with currently used textbook only?

#### *3.2 Research Design*

With the aim of studying the effectiveness of the CALL approach, the material input used in the treatment group was the main research instrument. Besides this, there were the students' feedbacks towards the newly-designed material through part 2 in the questionnaire. Hereafter, the participants, the instruments, and the data collection process are described below in detail.

##### *3.2.1 Participants*

There were 25 students in each group including control group and treatment group. The target students of this study were enrolled in class C11E2a and C11E2b, who were in the same year of learning and major. They were from 18 to 20 years old. Students of class C11E2a were chosen to be the treatment group to learn TOEIC listening with the CALL approach conveniently. Class C11E2b was the control group who was taught with the current textbook and traditional teaching method by the same teacher.

##### *3.2.2 Instruments*

Instruments for carrying out the research are questionnaire, the material input for CALL application in the treatment group and the post-test.

###### *3.2.2.1 The Questionnaire*

Each student was given a copy of the questionnaire and expected to write his or her responses right on the paper. Because of the sensitiveness of the issue accessed in the study, the students were not required to write their names on the questionnaire. For avoiding misunderstanding and ambiguity, the researcher gave direct guide, administered the process and collected the questionnaire right after the informants finished their answering.

The questionnaire had two parts covering 9 questions concerning about the following points:

In the first part of the questionnaire, there were three questions asking students about their background as well as their important skills and four parts in TOEIC listening test when learning English before officially joining TOEIC listening course. In each question, the students were asked to tick one of the four spaces provided.

When the students went through the quasi-experimental period, they were asked to join the second part of the questionnaire. In this part, questions 4 & 5 were given to the students of the two classes asking about CALL application in their study as well as their future jobs. The information would help specify whether or not the course met the students' learning needs. For question 6, this was the chance for the students to express their learning style by ticking one of the provided spaces to fulfill their participation.

For the last three questions 7, 8 & 9, only students of the treatment group were asked to fill out the form. The rest of this questionnaire mentioned the students' opinions about the selected material input with the CALL

approach, their motivation, and the teacher's method.

### 3.2.2.2 The Input Used in the Treatment Group

#### *The quasi-experimental design*

The key difference in quasi-experimental design is the lack of random assignment. Anyway, where experiments are not possible, a well-conceived quasi-experimental design, if executed with statistical sophistication and in recognition of its limitations, will provide better information than no impact evaluation at all. (Kumar, 1996, p. 88).

Due to some limits in the setting of the study, the researcher applied the quasi-experimental design in the study. Following this design, the selection of two groups including C11E2a and C11E2b would work as the treatment group and the control one.

These two groups had the same major, equivalent general English background and attended the TOEIC course two times in a week with the same teacher – the researcher. The material input designed in the CALL approach was authentically selected and introduced into the treatment group only whereas the control group still learnt with the current material and traditional teaching method.

#### *The input used in the treatment group designed in CALL*

In the TOEIC course, the students were trained to be able to comprehend contents and enhance the competence for using the language appropriately in real communication.

With the above specified objectives, the input was authentically collected from many sources including websites, software, courseware, DVDs and CDs. This input carried out authentic contents and “content can provide a motivational and cognitive basis for language learning since it is interesting and some of value to the learners” (Brewster, 1999, p. 84).

As a rule, teaching material and teaching method are always in couple. As being mentioned above, the students in the treatment group would learn with CALL. This required the teacher to apply methodology in such a manner that could help the students integrate all language listening skills, comprehend contents of the field and enhance their capability for using the language appropriately in communication.

It has been accepted that defective learning material will fail to bring the interesting atmosphere to the insiders in the course. With the current TOEIC material and teaching method, the students were only able to be equipped with a vast amount of new words and listening tasks passively.

Although the researcher tried his best to integrate all listening activities in the control group, the results attained seemed to be less satisfactory.

### 3.2.2.3 The Post-Test

When the quasi-experimental course finished, the researcher implemented the summative evaluation. The researcher designed the final listening test given at the end of the course. Its details are as follows:

The test consists of 100 questions divided into 4 parts.

Part 1 (one picture) comprises 20 four-choice questions. Students are required to listen to four statements for each picture and they have to choose the statement that best describes the picture.

Part 2 (Question- Response) comprises 30 three-choice questions. Students listen to one question and three statements followed. They need to select the statement that best responds to the question.

Part 3 (short conversation) has 30 questions. Candidates hear a short conversation between two people and choose the correct answer regarding that conversation.

Part 4 (short talk) includes several short, spoken monologues. Candidates listen to each talk and answer the number of multiple choice questions

### 3.2.3 Data Collection Procedures

TG and CG were asked to answer three questions relating to their background, attitudes, and motivation when learning English in the first part of the questionnaire. At the same time, the students of the two classes were given a pre-test to confirm their equilibrium in GE knowledge before they participated in TOEIC course officially. Data collected from the first three questions were illustrated through tables 1, 2, and 3. In addition to data from questionnaire, GE test scores were also summarized and shown in figure 1.

Both TG and CG took part in post-test after the quasi-experimental stage completed. TG were asked to answer

the second part of the questionnaire. Data collected from the questionnaire and results of the post-test were shown in tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and figure 1.

#### 4. Findings and Discussions

##### 4.1 Questionnaire before the Quasi-Experimental Stage

Some of the students proved their achievements through some certificates authorized by prestigious institutions. Among 50 students of the survey, 10% of them had A certificate whereas the percentage of students who got level B was higher. For this case, the students appreciated the value of higher level. So they chose to take B level if they could without holding A level first. Meanwhile, 4% of students gradually got familiar with TOEIC course. However, number of the students who did not get any certificates seemed fairly high. 72% of them did not recognize the vital role of English in their study and future work (See table 1).

Table 1. English certificate

English Certificate	
A level	10%
B level	14%
TOEIC	4%
No certificate	72%

In addition, the students were asked to express their opinions freely about the TOEIC parts they found to be weak at so that the syllabus would be modified and designed to improve their weak parts and meet the students' learning needs. The results showed that 46% of the students encountered difficulties when doing tasks of part IV. In the TOEIC listening course, the longest part and the most difficult one is part IV, which requires from the students much effort to focus on and understanding of the content. Furthermore, 34% of the students felt that Part III was not an easy task in TOEIC listening. A minor percentage of the students (12% and 8%) had trouble with part II and part I, respectively. So, these results considerably helped the concerned syllabus designers for composing an appropriate syllabus with CALL application, which could satisfy students with all parts in the test (See table 2).

Table 2. Students' TOEIC part weakness

Students' TOEIC part weakness	
Part I: Picture Description	8%
Part II: Questions and Responses	12%
Part III: Short Conversations	34%
Part IV: Short Talks	46%

The next question mentioned the students' skills of four parts in TOEIC listening module important to their future jobs. Results from this question also help syllabus designers think about the compilation of a suitable teaching method and CALL input which match with the students' needs through authentic language and texts. As being observed, 56% of the students needed all part skills when attending an English TOEIC listening course because the skills of these four parts all assisted learners to improve their listening skills in communication.

In contrast, 18% and 14% of the students showed great concerns towards the skill of part IV and part III, respectively because they were useful for them to understand the talk and the conversation supporting them with effective communication in their real work life. Only 4% of the students thought part I skill was necessary for their job (See table 3).

Table 3. TOEIC parts necessary for future job

TOEIC parts necessary for future job	
Part I	4%
Part II	8%
Part III	14%
Part IV	18%
All parts	56%

The analysis from the tables illustrated above infer that the students' English background and their desire of parts obtained in the TOEIC listening course. Students from these two classes benefit the same status of English knowledge before taking the TOEIC course.

#### 4.2 Questionnaire after Quasi-Experimental Stage

In parallel with the post-test, students of the treatment group were asked to join the rest of the questionnaire survey. It consists of six questions relating to CALL approach including students' learning style, material input and finally teacher's method.

In CALL approach, all the activities designed to help learners study interactively and actively so that they can improve their listening. The majority of the students (76%) agreed that the course helped them a lot and 16% of them thought the course could be good enough to assist them in listening performance. This showed that the course could meet students' requirement in terms of usefulness to help them enhance listening skills (See table 4).

Table 4. The usefulness of TOEIC listening course

The usefulness of TOEIC listening course	
A lot	76%
Enough	16%
A little	4%
Not the least	4%

In today conditions, whether an employee works in a state-owned enterprise, joint-venture, or foreign company, he/she needs English of communication. In this case, the language of TOEIC proves its primary role for this purpose. For those people who work in the speaking English organization, English for communication is the key factor which helps them be near to the top of management. Acknowledging the importance of TOEIC learning through the authentic content they acquired, most of the students (84%) quite agreed with its useful application for their future jobs (See table 5).

Table 5. TOEIC listening with future job

TOEIC listening with future job	
Helpful	84%
None	16%

TOEIC listening with CALL required the students to take part in communicative and interactive activities in each lesson so that the students can experience the authentic knowledge and content of language. As being collected from the statistics, 16% of the students showed their interest in learning with the traditional method (listen to the teacher or CD player to do the listening tasks). On the other hand, 36% of them preferred communicative tasks with CALL. Surprisingly, 48% of the students felt eager to take part in the tasks organized with two methods at the same time. This inferred the roles of teacher as a negotiator, facilitator and organizer of class activities (See table 6).



Table 6. Students' learning style

Students' learning style	
Listening to the teacher or CD player to do listening tasks	16%
Engaging in communicative tasks with CALL	36%
Both	48%

The lessons taught in treatment group designed with application of CALL. A variety of activities and tasks with CALL were integrated in each unit. 76% of the students (40% of the students strongly agree and 36% of students agree to some extent) thought that the content in the lessons were relevant and comprehensive. Contents were considered as the contexts from which the students had a chance to learn language skills. Therefore, the tasks with CALL must be authentic and appropriate so that the students could master the language and improve their listening skills. However, there was still 8% of the students who praised their objections towards the interrelation between the content and CALL. This might result from the reason that they found it a little confused when using computers and doing tasks on computers (See table 7).

Table 7. Contents in CALL approach

Contents in CALL approach	
Strongly disagree	8%
Disagree to some extent	16%
Agree to some extent	36%
Strongly agree	40%

The priority purpose of this study is to seek the answer for the question if the students in treatment group experiencing the CALL lessons can have better listening. After the course finished, they were asked to show their opinions on how their listening skills were enhanced. Most of the students recognized the benefits of the course towards their listening skills. 84% of them (40% of them agreed to some extent and 44% strongly agreed) admitted that their TOEIC listening had been improved significantly. However, there were still 16% of the students who did not consider the course helpful to them in terms of listening skills improvement (See table 8).

Table 8. Listening skills enhanced through authentic materials

Listening skills enhanced through authentic materials	
Strongly disagree	4%
Disagree to some extent	12%
Agree to some extent	40%
Strongly agree	44%

Motivation and interest are crucial in supporting students' success. When students are motivated and interested in the CALL teacher's method, they make greater connections between the listening activities and tasks. If a teacher's method in TOEIC listening with CALL is a learner-centred approach, students will be highly motivated as they are provided the opportunities for cooperative and interactive learning. In CALL lessons, the teacher acted as a facilitator and negotiator in the course. Thus, 72% of the students found that the teacher's method was interesting and motivating. Whereas, 28% of them did not like the teaching method because they were not familiar with the new CALL-based method (See table 9).

Table 9. CALL teacher's method

CALL teacher's method	
Strongly disagree	12%
Disagree to some extent	16%
Agree to some extent	32%
Strongly agree	40%

#### 4.3 Data from Pre-Test and Post-Test

The results of the experiment are summarized in figure 1.

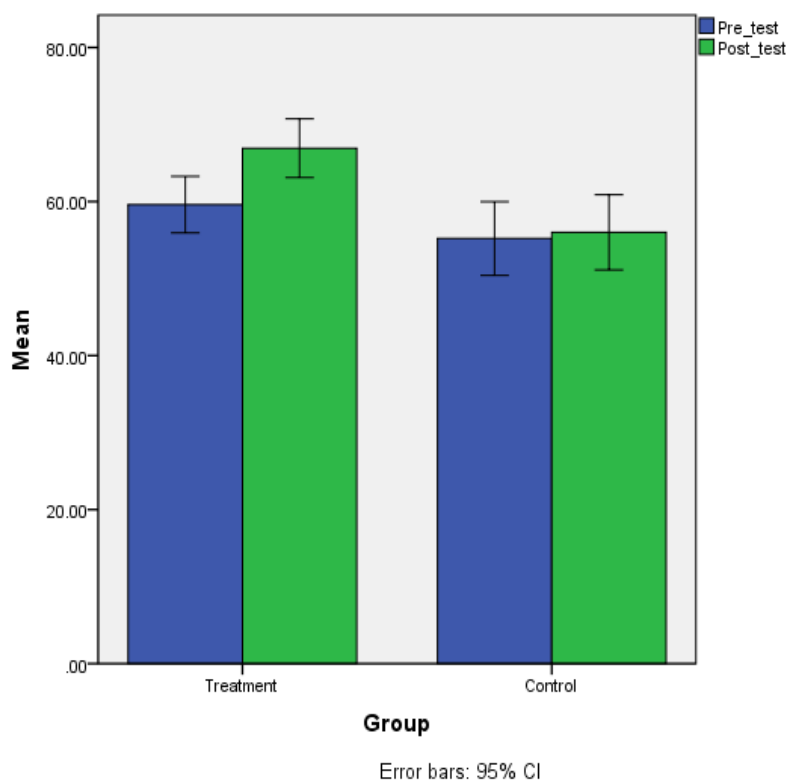


Figure 1. Mean scores for each group on each test

It was found out that the performance of each group improved, but the performance of the treatment (= CALL) group improved significantly better than that of the control (= traditional) group. A two-way mixed between-within ANOVA examined the effect of CALL instruction on English language proficiency. It revealed statistically significant effects for test type (pre- vs. post-) ( $F = 14.452, p = 0$ , partial eta-squared = .231), group (treatment vs. control) ( $F = 7.681, p = .008$ , partial eta-squared = .138) and the interaction between these two variables ( $F = 9.318, p = .004$ , partial eta-squared = .163). Thus, the results of this experiment confirmed the prediction that, for Vietnamese learners of English in general, a CALL methodology would be more effective than a traditional one.

#### 5. Conclusions

Teaching TOEIC with the current material by traditional methods seems less effective and fails to meet the students' needs for the course. Findings collected from the control group reveal the unsatisfactory results in both language competence and content acquisition. When learning with this teaching method, students do not feel interested and motivated because conversations and talks are somehow long and above their capability of understanding. In addition to this, their involvement in class activities is switched off due to their lack of the

specialist knowledge.

Moreover, this type of material and teaching method just require students to give the correct answer for 4 parts in TOEIC listening format. This results in the low scores in the post-test because this learning style cannot satisfy all parts in the test. So the current teaching method with the current textbook seems to be ineffective.

Contrary to the current teaching method with textbook used in the control group, the teaching method and input designed in the CALL approach used in the treatment group brings it more effectiveness. The lessons reflect the purpose of enhancing listening skills and using the input to which listening activities are authentically selected and language is simplified to the students' right level. Students learning with CALL have chances to expose themselves to interactive activities in class via webs, games, puzzles and powerpoint. Therefore, their involvement, interest as well as motivation are enhanced gradually. In addition to their feeling of interest in the course, one of the vital factors for success, their scores in the post-test are also better. In short, the CALL approach can be both challenging and demanding for the teacher and students, however, it is very stimulating and rewarding.

### References

- Brewster, J. (1999). *Teaching English Through Content: Supporting Good Practice*. In C. Kennedy (Ed.), *Innovation and Best Practice*. Longman.
- Carreira, J. M. (2008). Effects of teaching reduced forms in a university preparatory course. In K. B. Watts, T. Muller, & M. Swanson (Eds.), *JALT 2007 Conference Proceeding*. Tokyo: JALT.
- Chujo, K., & Oghigian, K. (2009). *Discovering grammar in the beginning-level DDL EFL classroom*. Paper presented at the Seventh International Conference on Teaching and Language Corpora, Paris, France.
- Chu, H. Y. (2009). *Stakes, needs and washback: An investigation of the English benchmark policy for graduation and EFL education at two technological universities in Taiwan* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan).
- Colfesh, G. J. H., & Conway, A. R. A. (2007). Individual difference in working memory capacity and divided attention in dichotic listening. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 14, 669-703.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purpose*. UK: CUP.
- Gazzaniga, M. S., Ivry, R. B., & Mangun, G. R. (1998). *Cognitive neuroscience: The biology of the mind*. New York: Norton.
- Kim, J. (2010). Effective communication language teaching in a test-preparation class: Is it possible? *Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series*, 8(1/2), 39-43.
- Klemsen, K. M., & Seong, M. H. (2005). Students's Perception of TOEIC Classes Taught by Native English Teachers. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 16(2), 69-87.
- Lee, S. T. (2008). *Teaching Pronunciation of English Using Computer Assisted Learning Software: An Action Research Study in an Institute of Technology in Taiwan* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Institute of Technology in Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan).
- Levy, M. (2006). *CALL Dimensions: Options and issues in computer-assisted language learning*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Murphy, J. M. (1991). Oral communication in TESOL: Integrating speaking, listening and pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(1), 51-74.
- Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.
- Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and Classroom Practice*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc.
- Son, J. B. (2001). Reading & Dragging: The development and use of courseware. *On-CALL*, 12(3), 10-19. Retrieved from <http://www.usq.edu.au/users/sonjb/papers/oncall98.htm>
- Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching Listening*. London: Longman.

### Appendix

#### Questionnaire

Please answer this questionnaire to the best of your knowledge. Your answers will be confidential completely, and used for research purpose only. Thank you for your time and help.

Please answer either by ticking ✓ the appropriate box, circling the number or by writing in the spaces provided.

*Part 1: Before the pre-test*

1. Which certificates or degrees have you obtained?

National certificates: A [ ] B [ ] C [ ]

TOEIC [ ]

TOEFL [ ]

IELTS [ ]

Others

2. In your English TOEIC listening study , which part are your weakest?

Part I [ ] Part III [ ]

Part II [ ] Part IV [ ]

3. According to you, which of the following parts are important to your communication in your future job?

Part I [ ] Part III [ ]

Part II [ ] Part IV [ ]

All of the above [ ]

*Part 2: After the quasi-experimental period*

4. According to you, how does TOEIC listening course help you in your listening?

A lot [ ] Enough [ ] A little [ ] Not the least [ ]

5. Do you think TOEIC listening is useful for your future job?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

6. When attending TOIEC listening course, which of the following styles do you prefer to learn?

Engage in communicative tasks [ ]

Listening to the CD player (played by teacher) [ ]

Both these two above [ ]

Your own ideas:

*The input used with the treatment group:*

Please circle the choice that is closest to your personal beliefs mentioning the material input designed with CALL:

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree to some extent 2	Agree to some extent 3	Strongly agree 4
------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------

7. Contents are relevant and comprehensible. 1 2 3 4

8. Listening skills are enhanced through authentic materials. 1 2 3 4

9. CALL teacher's method is interesting and motivating 1 2 3 4

**Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).