

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO  
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG

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ISO 9001:2015

# **KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

**Sinh viên : Phạm Văn Vũ**

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn: ThS. Nguyễn Thị Hoa**

**HẢI PHÒNG 01– 2021**

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TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG

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**DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE SECOND-YEAR  
ENGLISH NON-MAJOR STUDENTS IN DOING  
PICTURE DESCRIPTION OF THE PET SPEAKING  
TEST AT HPU**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY  
NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

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## NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

**Sinh viên:** Phạm Văn Vũ

**Mã SV:** 1612751005

**Lớp:** NA2001

**Ngành:** Ngôn Ngữ Anh

**Tên đề tài:** Difficulties faced by the second-year English non-major students in doing picture description of the PET speaking test at HPU.

# NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

## 1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

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## 2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết

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## 3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp

Công ty TNHH Thương mại và Vận tải Du lịch Trường Lạc

**CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

**Họ và tên** : Nguyễn Thị Hoa

**Học hàm, học vị** : Thạc sĩ

**Cơ quan công tác** : Trường Đại học Quản lý và Công nghệ Hải Phòng

**Nội dung hướng dẫn:** Difficulties faced by the second-year English non-major students in doing picture description of the PET speaking test at HPU.

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày 12 tháng 10 năm 2020

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày 31 tháng 12 năm 2020

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

*Sinh viên*

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

*Giảng viên hướng dẫn*

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**TRƯỞNG KHOA**

**CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM**  
**Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc**

**PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP**

Họ và tên giảng viên: Nguyễn Thị Hoa

Đơn vị công tác: Khoa ngôn ngữ – Đại học Quản lý & Công nghệ Hải Phòng

Họ và tên sinh viên: Phạm Văn Vũ Chuyên ngành: Ngôn ngữ Anh

Nội dung hướng dẫn: Difficulties faced by the second-year English non-major students in doing picture description of the PET speaking test at HPU.

**1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp**

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**2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đồ án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T.T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp**

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm hướng dẫn

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn**

*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

**CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM**

**Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc**

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**PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIÁO VIÊN CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN**

Họ và tên giảng viên: .....

Đơn vị công tác: .....

Họ và tên sinh viên: Phạm Văn Vũ Chuyên ngành: Ngôn ngữ Anh

Đề tài tốt nghiệp: Difficulties faced by the second-year English non-major students in doing picture description of the PET speaking test at HPU.

**1. Phần nhận xét của giáo viên chấm phản biện**

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**2. Những mặt còn hạn chế**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên chấm phản biện**

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm phản biện

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**QC20-B19**

**Giảng viên chấm phản biện**

*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

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Haiphong, January 2021

Pham Van Vu – NA 2001



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## **PART A: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale of study**

English has become the international language used in business, technological and academic communication. This trend of English globalization, as a worldwide phenomenon, makes it necessary to communicate with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and in a variety of settings. Nowadays, the majority of English users can be found in countries where the language is employed as a foreign or second language. Effective use of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in oral communication is, without a doubt, one of the most common, but also highly complex activities people need to learn for their interpersonal communication.

There are 4 basic skills in learning English: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. These skills are relative and supporting each other. Each of them has its own importance in learning English but speaking skill is regarded as one of the most important skills.

It is not easy for all students to be good at speaking skill. English-majors in HPU have to overcome many difficulties like lack of practicing environment, fear of mistakes, and old-teaching method from high school in their studying speaking. At high school, they mainly focus on learning writing and reading, maybe a little of listening or speaking. However, English communication which requires much speaking and listening becomes more important in future. And it is very difficult for students to learn speaking without practicing environment. Students only learn theory at school but they need to practice more and especially speaking. When they practice at school or public, other people might think the students want to show off because they use English in public. That would make students feel unconfident about their skill so they can't improve their speaking.

However, there are some requirements for students at HPU to graduate including PET certificate, and there are a lot of students having problem with this test, especially speaking skill. This study will research the difficulties faced by the

second-year English non-major students in doing picture description of the PET speaking test at HPU. I do this study to find out the real difficulties the students are facing and suggest some solution in order to increase their chances to get better result in the PET exam. I really hope this study could help second-year English non-majors in particular and our English majors in general to improve their speaking skill.

## **2. Aims of the study**

The purpose of this study is to find out the difficulties and common mistakes made by second-year English non-major students in doing the picture description of the PET speaking test and to provide suggestions to help them really improve their speaking skills. Hopefully, this study will help them improve their speaking skills and can confidently take the PET exam as well as confidently communicate with foreigners.

## **3. Scope of study**

This study carried out based on the data collection from 30 second-year English non-major students of HPU. After one year studying English at university, some students still cannot deal with these errors in PET speaking test. Some difficulties and errors are pointed out but they still are some common difficulties and errors they could face when learning speaking English.

## **4. Method of study**

To carry out this study, I applied qualitative and quantitative method; I started with my process in learning English speaking skill when I was second year student and broaden to second year English non-major student with their learning speaking skill. The data of survey will help to find out the difficulties and errors that they face during their learning speaking process. Not only from their experiences, but also from mine, I broaden the survey and make in detail to suggest appropriate solutions to help them learn speaking more effectively. To

understand deeper this study, I also search more information and evidences from friends, books and Internet about speaking skill for my survey questionnaire.

## **5. Design of the study**

This study consists in four parts:

### **PART A: Introduction:**

In this part, I introduce rationale, the aim of the study, the scope of the study, the method of the study and the design of the study.

### **PART B: Development:**

This part is divided to 3 chapters:

#### **-CHAPTER I: Literature review**

This chapter introduces about speaking skill, its definition, difficulties in speaking, picture description's definition, the B1 certificate CEFR, and the structure of PET speaking test.

#### **-CHAPTER II: The study on the second year English non-major student at HPU**

This chapter mainly focuses on survey questionnaire by second year English non-majors at Haiphong Private University. It contains survey-questionnaire, data analysis as well as discussion.

#### **-CHAPTER III: Solutions to improve the picture description skill for the student at HPU**

Last chapter includes solutions and recommendation for second year English non-majors to improve their speaking skill in the future.

### **PART C: Conclusion**

In this part, some limitations and suggestions for further research are stated.

## **PART B: DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature review relevant to the issues under the study. The theoretical background includes four sections: section one is about the definition of speaking, section two deals with the difficulties faced by students, section three shows the structure of PET speaking test and section four is about the part 3 of PET speaking test.

#### **1.2. Speaking skills.**

##### **1.2.1. Definition of speaking skills**

Many researchers around the world have taken their attention and concern to definitions of speaking. There are some definitions on speaking presented in language methodology. Burns & Joyce (1997) defines that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participant themselves, their collective experience, the physical environment and the purpose of speaking.

Nunan and David (2001) say that speaking in a second language involves the developments of the particular type of communication skill. It has an important part in history of language teaching, and two past decades has it begun to emerge as a branch of teaching, learning, and testing its own right, rarely focusing on the production of spoken discourse.

Another definition of speaking is that “Speaking” is the delivery of language through mouth. To speak, we create sounds using many parts of our body, like lungs, vocal tract, vocal chords, tongue, teeth and lips. Speaking has two forms: formal and informal. Formal speaking is used in business or academy situation, or when meeting someone for the first time. Informal speaking is typically used with

family, friends or people you have known before. (<http://www.englishclub.com/speaking/what-is-speaking.htm>).

There forms relationship when someone speaks to other person. The relationship is reflected and built through the communication. Wilson (1983:5) expanded this by stating “speaking as development of the relationship between speaker and listener. In addition, speaking determines which logical linguistic, psychological and physical rules should be applied in a given communicate situation”. To show the purpose of the communication, the speakers need to express exactly what they are going to speak to other.

In the field of action, speaking is the action of: conveying information or expressing one’s feelings in speech, the activity of delivering speeches, communicating in a specified language, conveying meaning as though in words.

(<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/speaking>).

Furthermore, speaking is the use of language to communicate with other (Fulcher, 2003:23). It means that this activity involves two or more people in whom the participants are both listeners and speakers having to react whatever they hear and make their contribution a high speed, so each participants have intention or a set of intention that he wants.

From those theories, it can be concluded that speaking skill is related to communication. Speaking is a skill to use language appropriately to express someone’s idea, opinions, or feeling in order to give or get information and knowledge from other people who do communication.

### **1.2.2. Significance of speaking skills**

Speaking is the most important skill among all the four language skills in order to communicate well in this global world. As English is widely used all over the world, there is a need for learners to acquire the communication skills of it to get success in their respective fields. Most people will feel some level of foreign language anxiety, especially when starting out. But the good news is that after a few conversations, the idea of trying to be perfect often goes away. Even if you take some time to find your words, you eventually understand that there’s no need



for any anxiety. Speaking in a different language is a wonderful experience and it's likely what you are aiming for. The sense of accomplishment after completing a conversation in a different language is greater than you can imagine. Depriving yourself of that experience for months and months would be a shame. We highly encourage you to start speaking as soon as possible.

### **1.2.3. Stage of speaking**

According to Brown (2007), a perfect teaching speaking lesson has to follow three following stages

#### **1.2.3.1 Pre-speaking**

Pre-speaking begins before students actually speak. Pre-speaking activities help students to involve thought, reflection to the conversation then provide opportunities for students to plan and organize the speaking. Speakers talk to express ideas, emotions, and opinions, and to share information. Students must ask themselves "What is my purpose for speaking?"

#### **1.2.3.2 While-speaking**

While-speaking helps students to interact with each other. Student has been acquired knowledge and experience to have confidence to speak in public. Purposes of while-speaking are to express feeling, ideas, to tell stories. In order to communicate and interact with others, students need to engage in a variety of formal and informal speaking situations, depending upon their purpose for speaking

#### **1.2.3.3. Post-speaking**

Post-speaking stage is a time for reflection and setting goals. Following speaking experiences, both formal and informal, it is important to have students reflect up their performance. Their reflection, whether it is oral or written, should include the teacher, who can help them set personal goals for improving their speaking abilities.

### **1.3. Difficulties in speaking**

#### **1.3.1. Lack of motivation**

Speaking is one of the important tools for communication. Human beings can understand each other because they speak up their mind. When communicating one to another, it means people convey something-exchange information, news, ideas, etc. The way they understand others is through their languages. No matter what the language is, as long as they understand each other, it means they have already done the process of communication.

Motivation is much needed in doing everything, including in learning something. In learning language, a learner needs motivation because it will help him or her in trying and developing his or her understanding new language. With motivation, student wants to succeed. So, without it, he or she will certainly fail to make the necessary effort. Unmotivated students will give up easily when not instantly successful. So to get instantly success, unmotivated students often choose easy challenge. Motivated students always choose difficult challenge to improve their skill. They also are independence, unlike unmotivated students, they always depend on better students or teachers and never learn by themselves.

#### **1.3.2 Ineffective learning method**

The students report that they are unable to effectively manage their time (balance family, work, and studies) or estimate the time they need to devote to their studies. They mention being unaware of strategies for easily retaining the information they read in books or texts and for listening to teacher presentations, doing exercises to apply the procedures that they are required to learn, or problem solving. They also report difficulties with concentration and recall. Learning difficulties, lack of practicing environment, and thinking about dropping out are found to be positively related to study withdrawal. Gaps in information search strategies and feeling dissatisfied with results despite the effort expended negatively affect student academic performance and thus increase the likelihood of student withdrawal.

### **1.3.3. Lack of practicing environment**

Learning foreign language, especially English. The practicing environment is very important. It is very difficult to master speaking skills when student do not have practice environment. A common mistake in students while learning a foreign language is fear of making mistakes at communicating, which is prevents students from being better at speaking. And another common one is most student feel unconfident their skill while using English in public.

### **1.3.4 Interference by the indirect expression in Vietnamese**

Vietnamese is built on the Latin alphabet system. It is convenient for Vietnamese people to learn English because it is easier for studier to pronounce. In addition to the similarities, there are many differences between English and Vietnamese. However, in learning English, students are often influenced by their mother tongue. This is the thing that slow down the learning process by improperly applying pronunciations in the mother tongue to English learning process, making the use of English wrong with its standards.

### **1.4. Picture description**

A picture description is an ideal way of practicing your English vocabulary in all sorts of fields. And there's also a benefit for everyday life – imagine you want to show pictures of your family or home to your foreign friends.

Describing paintings or other art pictures (e. g. caricatures) is something for the advanced learner of English as you also have to talk about the artists' intention and the impression on the viewer.

### **1.5. B1 certificate CEFR**

English level B1 is the third level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a definition of different language levels written by the Council of Europe. In everyday speech, this level would be called “intermediate”, and indeed, that is the official level descriptor in the CEFR. At

this level, students are beyond the basics but they are still not able to work or study exclusively in English.

## **1.6. Structure of PET speaking test**

The PET speaking test including four parts:

### **PART 1: Personal information**

In this part you have to give personal information. Ask and answer questions about your family, studies, home town, free time, and job. You have to respond to question, giving factual or person information

### **PART 2: Simulated situation**

In this part you have to talk about a situation which is illustrated on a sheet of paper. Make suggestions and discuss alternatives. In this part of the test you will talk to your partner, not to the examiner. The examiner will explain to both candidates what they have to discuss to come to an agreement

### **PART 3: Picture description**

In this part you have to talk about a color photo. A color photograph is given to each student in turn and they have to talk about it for up to one minute, both pictures refer to the same topic.

### **PART 4: Discussion**

In this part you have to talk with the other candidate about a topic related to part 3. You give your opinion about something and explain what you prefer. Candidates talk together about their opinions, likes, dislikes, preferences, experiences, habits, etc. This part will be connected to the topic presented in part 3.

## **1.7. Describe of part 3: Picture description**

Picture description is the part that you will be asked to describe a picture to the examiner for approximately one minute. All pictures relate to the same topic. The topic of the pictures is clearly stated by the examiner, for example: 'I'm going to give each of you a photograph of people having a meal. Candidates are expected to give only a simple description of what they can see in the photograph. This will include some description of people, objects, actions and place. The test takes three minutes in total, with one minute given to talk about the photograph.

# **CHAPTER II: THE STUDY ON THE SECOND YEAR ENGLISH NON-MAJORS AT HAIPHONG UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY**

## **1. Research methodology**

This study was carried out by online surveys due to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. With the participation of 30 second-year English non-major students at HPU after taking the PET exam, so they had opportunities to get access to PET's speaking test. This step is very important to find out students' difficulties in taking the PET's speaking test and also help myself find out solutions to improve the speaking test for the students.

The survey question has 3 purposes:

- To understand students' perspectives on learning speaking English
- To know students' habits of practicing speaking skills
- To ask students for opinions about the difficulty of the PET speaking test and find out what difficulties students are face when taking PET speaking test

### **1.1. Subject**

The study subject of this study is 30 second-year English non-major students of the Haiphong Private University. Most of these students have taken the PET exam for at least once and had a chance to get access to PET's speaking test. Although there have been certain improvements in speaking skills with the help of teachers, but those students still make some mistakes that affect their speaking test result

### **1.2. Instrument of collecting data**

In this study, there are 8 questions included to ask students about their difficulties and errors when learning speaking and some activities they do to improve their skill.

For question 1, students were asked about their length of time they study English. Questions 2 and 3 are about their attitude to the speaking skill and the frequency they speak English. Questions 4 to 8, students were asked about their difficulties and errors they often faced with while doing PET speaking test.

## **2. Data analysis**

### **2.1. Difficulties related to speaking skills**

#### **2.1.1. Difficulty in correct pronunciation**

While learning a foreign language, the most important thing is how to pronounce a word correctly so that the word can be heard and understood by the other person. However, most Vietnamese people don't pronounce English correctly, which is the biggest reason causing difficulties in practice speaking skills. Moreover, many people when studying English is not focusing on pronunciation skill. At lower levels of education, students are directed to focus on learning grammar, vocabulary without learning pronunciation.

#### **2.1.2 Difficulty in listening - understanding**

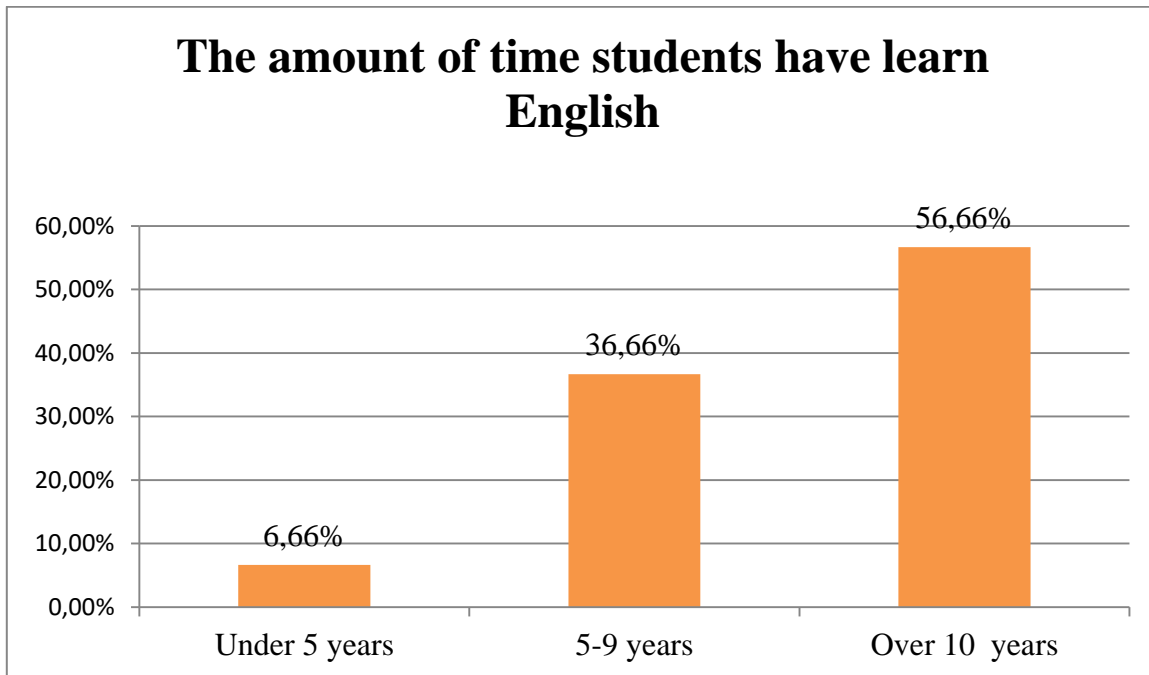
Because of difficulty in pronunciation, it is the main reason leading to difficulties in learning English communication. Because of the lack of standard pronunciation, when listening to native speakers correctly, you cannot recognize to understand that what they mean. And in contrast, the native speakers do not understand what you are trying to say. Therefore, when listening to native speakers, you will not be able to catch up with the speed of speaking, the ending sound, slang used in everyday communication.

### **2.2. Opinions from the research questions**

After conducting the survey and collecting students' answers, the statistics were aggregated and displayed in the chart below. Each chart shows us the number of students who choose the most suitable answer for them in each question.

To find out students' attitudes towards learning speaking English. I made an online survey with 30 second-year English non-major with these 8 following question:

### 2.2.1 How long have you learned English?

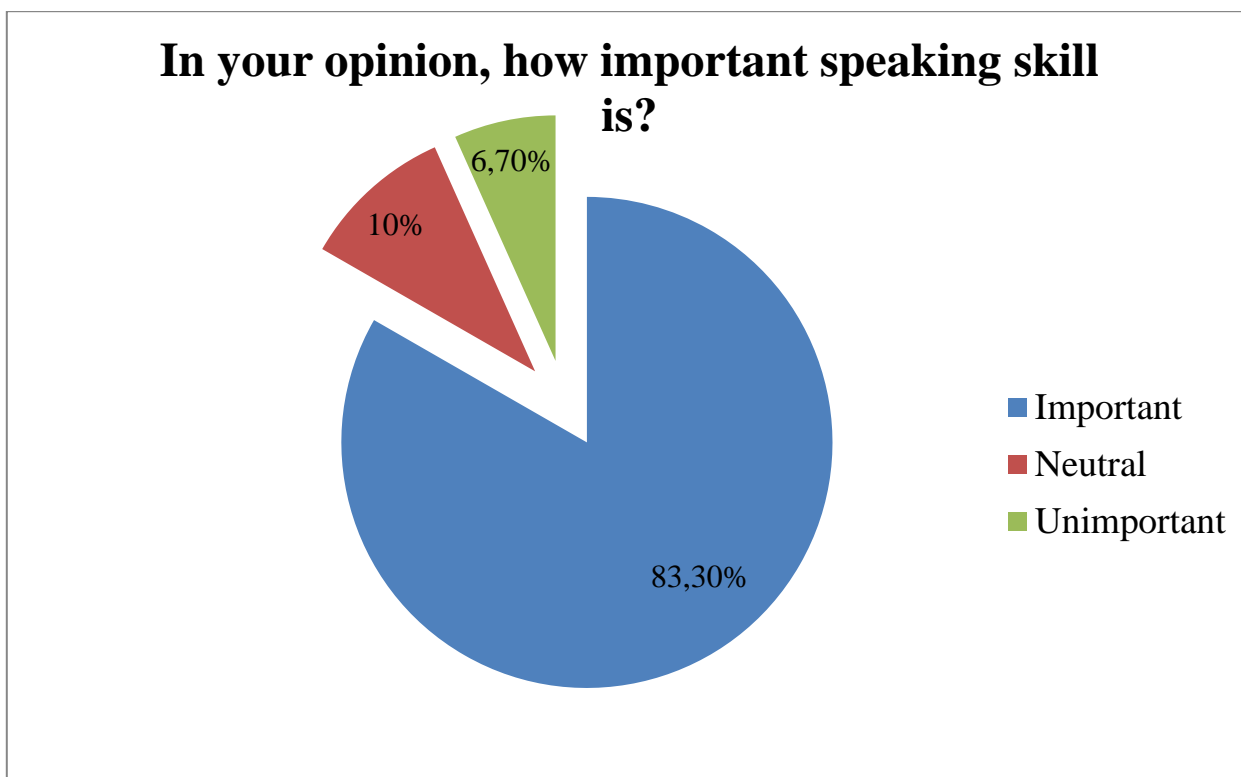


**Figure 1: The amount of time students have learned English**

This chart shows the length of time learning English of 30 English non-major students. By looking at this chart, we can see that the number of students have learned English for over 10 years take the highest proportion with 56,66% compared to 36,66% of 5 - 9 years and 6,68% of under 5 years. From the data, we can see that most student have studied English for a long time, mainly start learning English at primary school. But there are also a few people who realize the importance of learning English quite late, so there is some people start learning English quite late.

### 2.2.2. In your opinion, how important speaking skill is?



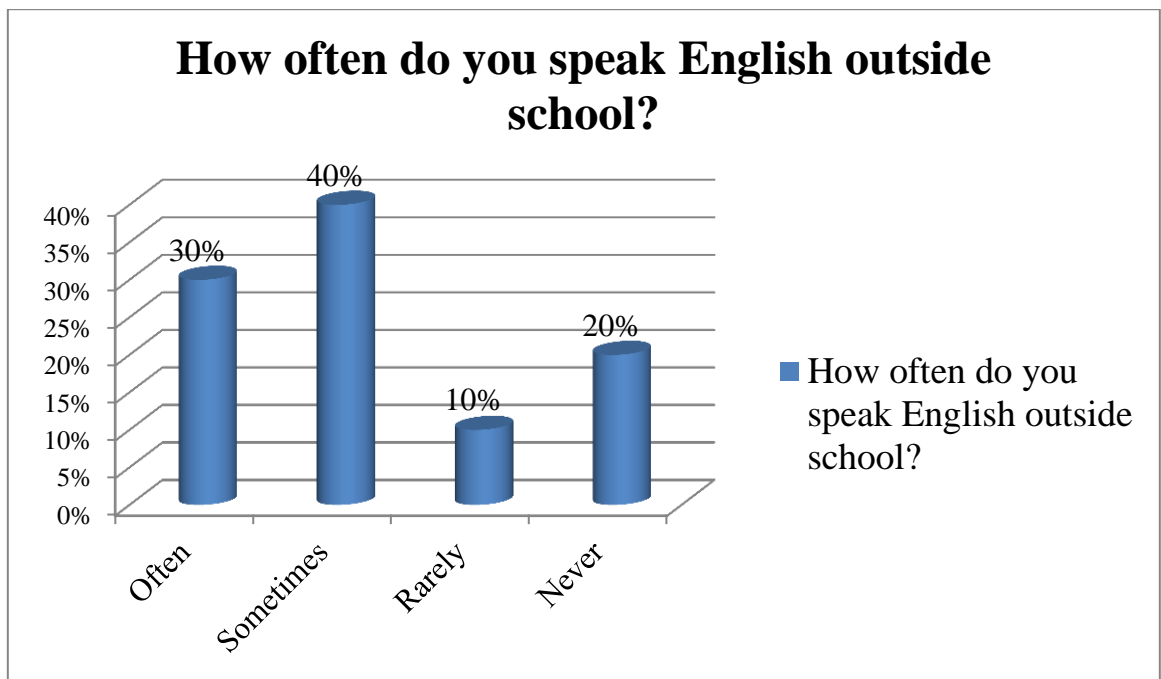


**Figure 2: Students’ opinion on the importance of speaking skills**

Chart 2 shows that most of students agree that speaking is a really important skill with 25 students think that speaking is the most helpful skill for real life and their future jobs. After years of learning English, most of them realize that speaking skill is the one they need to pay more attention to this than other skills. Meanwhile, some students said that they are neutral with speaking skill with 3 of 30 students, they think that speaking is the one that is the same with the other skills and nothing special at all. Only 2 of 30 students think that speaking is unimportant. To explain this, these students said that speaking skill is not necessary for their future jobs and the other one is more important.

This question helps us to show that there are some different points of view about the role of speaking.

### **2.2.3. How often do you speak English outside school?**

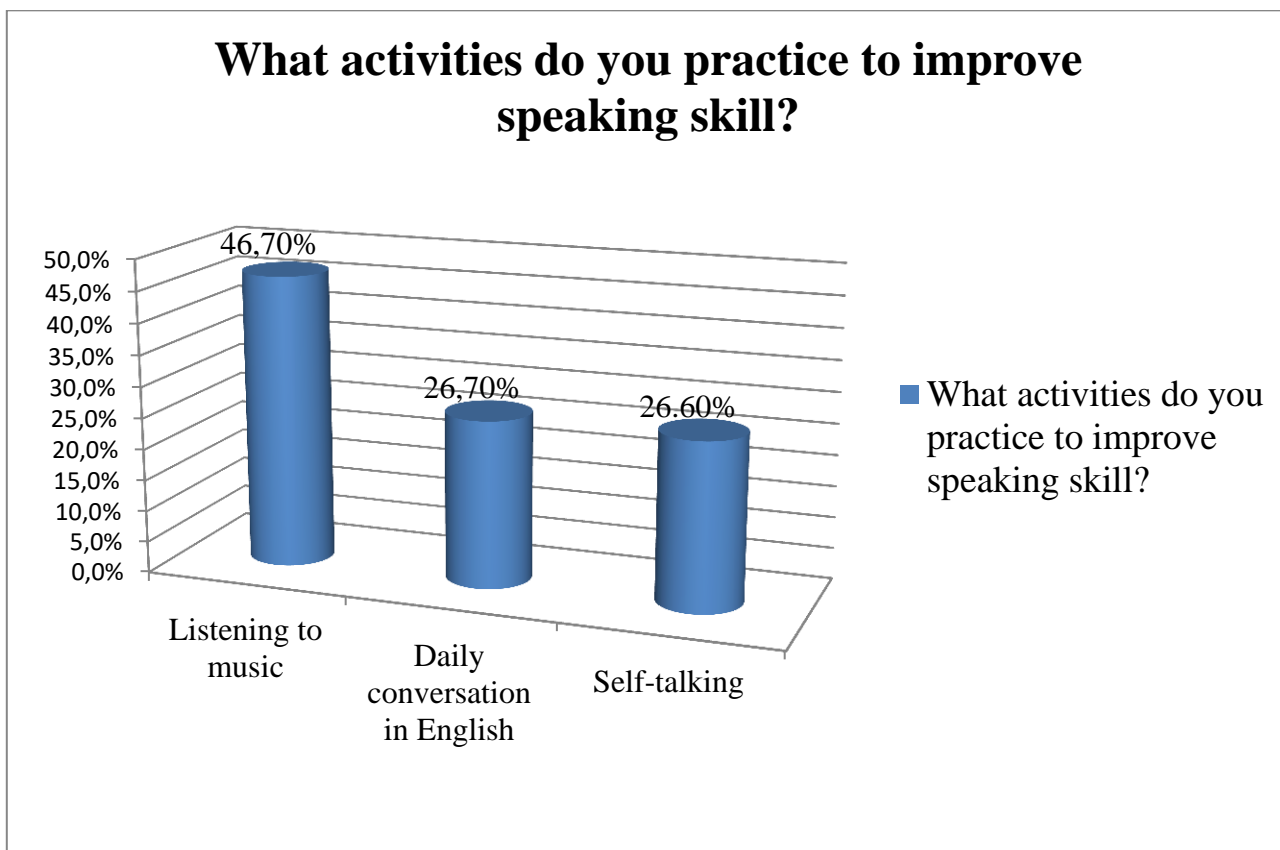


**Figure 3: Frequency of students in speaking English outside school**

This chart shows the students' frequency of speaking English outside school. First of all, all the students confirm that they did not have many chances to speak English outside class. The answer "Sometimes" take the highest percentage of students with 40% stand for 12 of them. This is the result of limitation of English practicing environment outside school. Meanwhile, 6 students who said that they feel impossible to speak English outside class, especially with native speaker. It is understandable when they said that it was difficult for them to overcome their unconfident. As I have mentioned before, unconfident is the thing that prevents students from improving their speaking skills. We still can see that there are 3 students who speaking English rarely outside the school, they confirmed that they only speak English when they meet foreigners asking for their directions. In contrast, there are 9 students can confidently speak English outside school. All these students feel really confident when speaking with native speakers even they have never met them before.

The result of this question points out that many students are still quite passive and not confident in their speaking skill.

## 2.2.4. What activities do you practice to improve speaking skill?

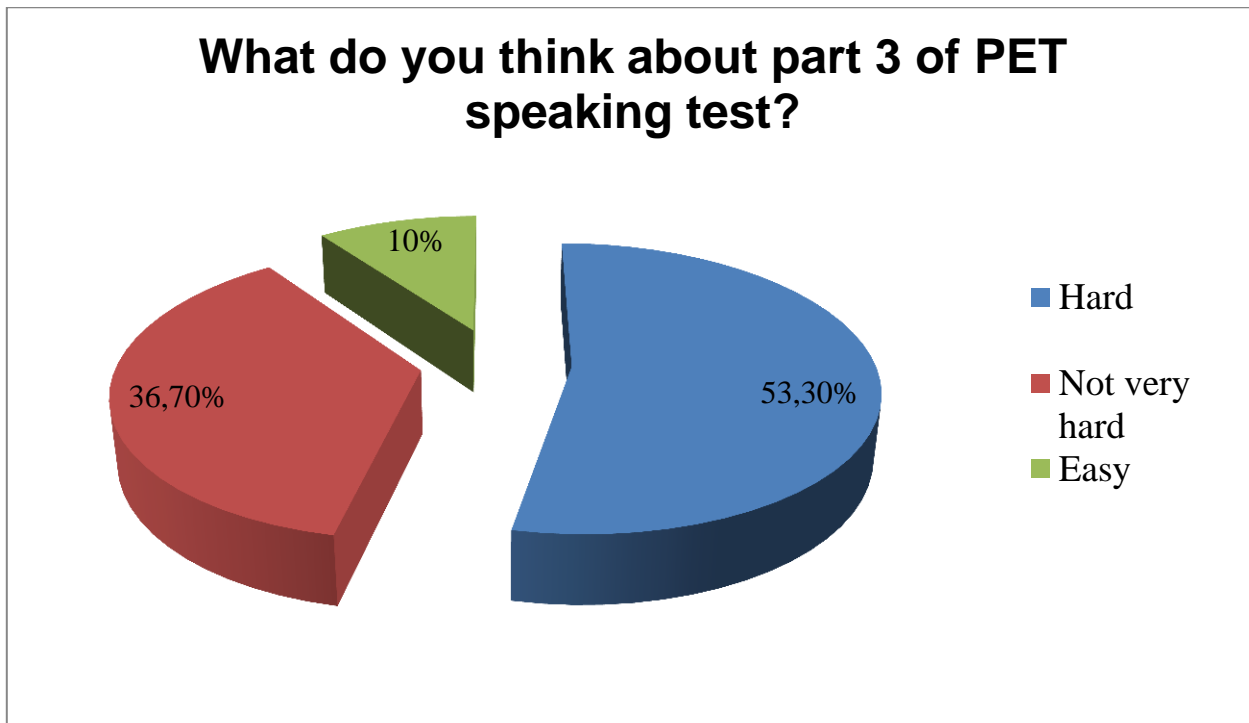


**Figure 4: Students' activities to improve speaking skills**

On looking this chart, most students with 46.7% of student think that listening to music is really effective in improving speaking. They think that when listening to music they can practice both speaking and listening skills. But the limitation of this method is that most of the songs' lyrics are not focus on grammar, most singers skip the grammar for better melody. 26.7% of student said that daily conversation with lectures or friends can improve their speaking skills and confident. Most students feel shy to speak English in front of the other, but with this method, they can be more confident, it is the key of English communication. At the end, we can see that 26.6% of student think self-talking is very effective in speaking. I myself also apply this method in practicing speaking skills. This method motivates them to speak without the fear of making error.

According to this chart, students expect more activities in school in order to help them get better practicing environment.

### 2.2.5. What do you think about part 3 of PET speaking test?



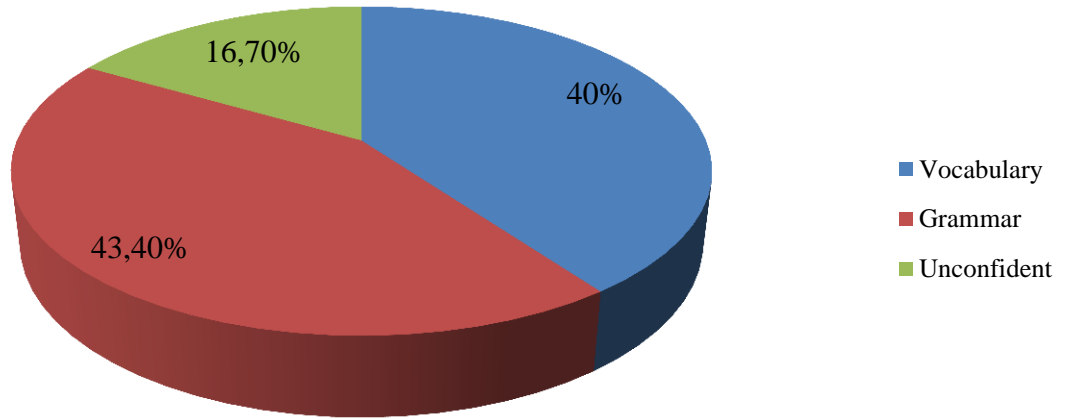
**Figure 5: Students' thoughts about difficulty of PET speaking test part 3**

This chart shows that most of students think that PET speaking test part 3 is really hard with 53.3% of student which stand for half of them. These students said that describing a picture is really hard for them and kind of impossible to do that. 36.7% of student thinks it not really hard by choosing “Not very hard”, they said that it is the same difficulty with other skills. And only 10% of student thinks it easy. Explain to this fact, they said to me they have a really good knowledge, vocabulary and grammar.

The result of this question shows us what students think about this part.

### 2.2.6. What do you think is the reason that makes it difficult for you to take the part 3 of PET speaking test?

## What do you think is the reason that makes it difficult for you to take the part 3 of PET speaking test?



**Figure 6: Reason that makes it difficult for students to take the part 3 of PET speaking test**

Purpose of question 6 focus on what makes the PET speaking test part 3 difficult that students often meet when taking the PET exam. We can see that 13 students think they often speak with grammar mistakes. Many students are really good at writing with good grammar but when they speak, they only use simple sentences instead of compound sentences. It is the result of focusing too much at theory but practicing. 40% of student thinks it is hard for them to apply the grammar that they have learned in speaking.

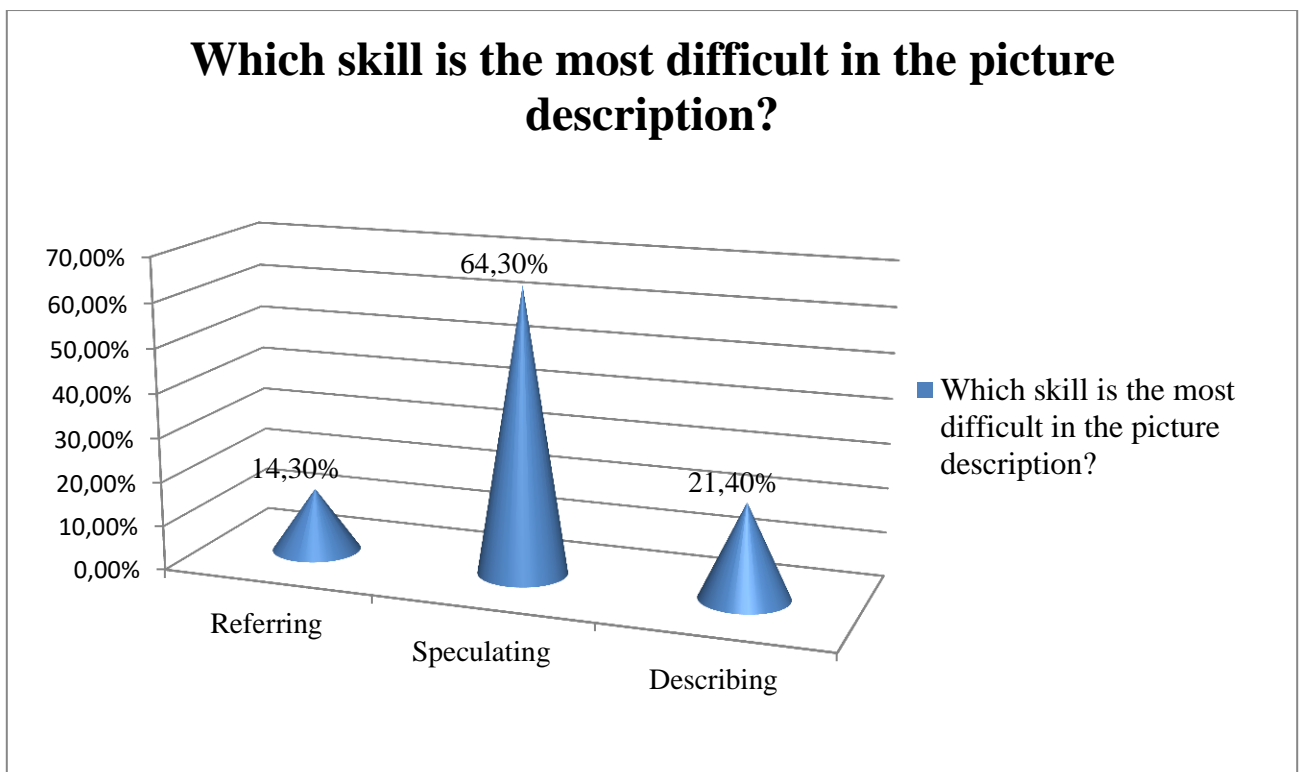
Meanwhile, 43.4% of them have some problem with their vocabulary. It is understandable that they are always having trouble with new words. There are many topics in PET speaking part 3, you have to know a lot of word and the way how to pronounce it to make a better picture description.

At last, we will talk about confidence in speaking. There is some student still feel unconfident while taking the speaking test, it is the result of lack of practicing environment. As I mentioned before, you cannot master a foreign

language without practicing it, knowing its theory and grammar is never enough. You need to practice at real life, outside of school to broaden your knowledge and make you more confident.

The result of this question helps us find out the problem student often meet and figure out the solution to improve their speaking skills.

### 2.2.7. Which skill is the most difficult in the picture description?



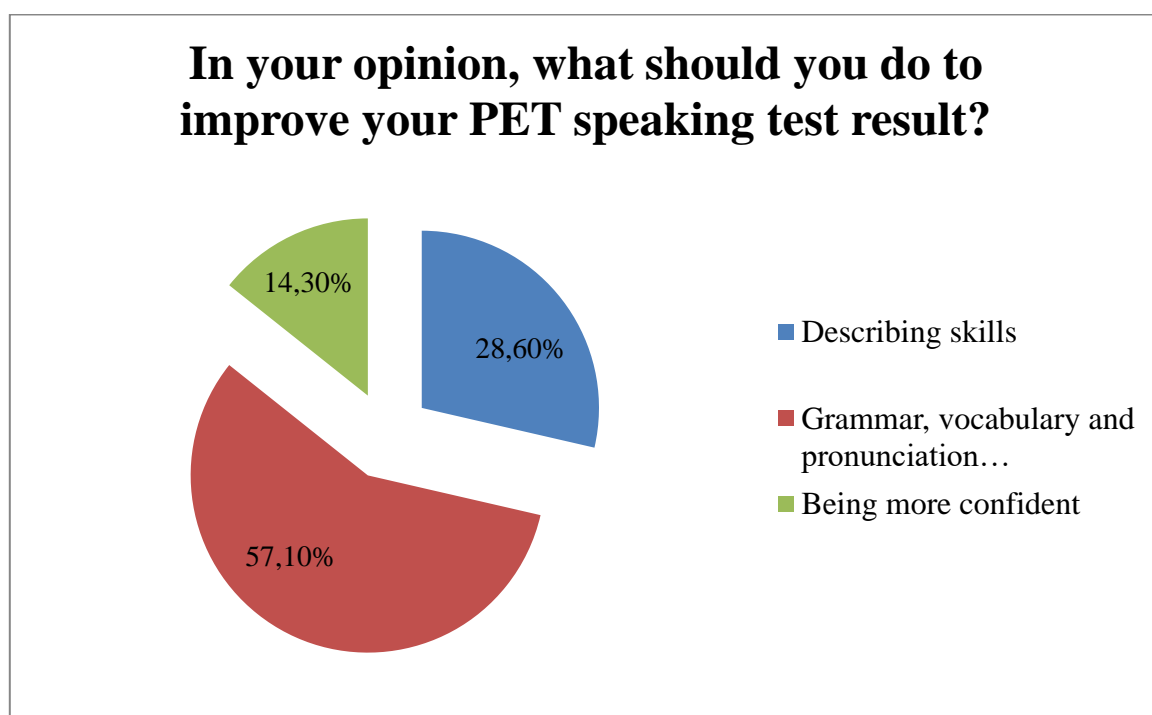
**Figure 7: Students' comment about the hardest skill in the picture description**

On looking at the chart, we can see that student think speculating skill is the most difficult skill with 64.3% of student choosing it. It is really hard to speculating a picture without real life experience, you have to be practice it daily to build your own knowledge, it is understandable that you cannot speculate it because lack of real life experience. Most students do not know what to say about the picture. 21.4% of them think that describing is difficult. These students do not know how to talk about the scene, object in the picture, and guess the action of

them. This skill will take a long time to practice, student have to try to practicing using English to describe pictures they see it online or in newspapers. Meanwhile, 14.3% of student thinks that referring is difficult because they do not know how to say what they can see in different parts of the photo.

In general, there are certain difficulties that each student faces when they learn how to describe a picture, however a high percentage of difficulty mostly comes from their subjective factors.

### 2.2.8. In your opinion, what should you do to improve your PET speaking test result?



**Figure 8: Students' opinion on what should they do to improve their PET speaking test result**

By looking at this chart above, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation is the thing that student want to focus on the most to improve their PET speaking test result with 57.1% of student choosing it. They said that vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation is the hardest part in any exam, if you do not have a really good

vocabulary, grammar and especially good pronunciation you cannot get a good result.

On the other hand, describing skill is the second most important. 28.6% of student who participant this survey said that describing skill is the most difficult thing they ever meet before, while doing PET speaking test you have to do a lot of thing such as: Referring, Speculating and Describing the picture at the same time. Not only good vocabulary, grammar and good pronunciation but also good describing skills are needed to get a good result at PET speaking test.

After all, if you already get a really good theory foundation, good describing skill, you also need to be confident while doing any speaking test, especially PET speaking test. It is very important that you speak for as long as possible and do not worry at all if the examiner interrupts you and asks you to stop. That is a good thing. It shows you are extending your speaking. The examiners just need to keep to the timings, though.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE PICTURE DESCRIPTION SKILL IN PET SPEAKING TEST**

#### **1. About PET speaking test**

In this part, candidates take the Speaking test with another candidate or in a group of three. They are tested on their ability to take part in different types of interaction: with the examiner, with the other candidate and by themselves, by themselves.

#### **1.1. The knowledge range of the speaking test in PET**

The PET speaking test covers a lot of speaking skills, for example : Greeting skills, describe people, write diary ( letter, mail ), describe a person's actions, make a prediction, ... It also includes a lot of vocabulary on topics : Clothes and Accessories, Communications and Technology, Entertainment and Media, Places,... And test their communication skills by asking and answering questions and then talking about their hobbies, favorite, etc.

#### **1.2. The possible topics for PET speaking test part 3**

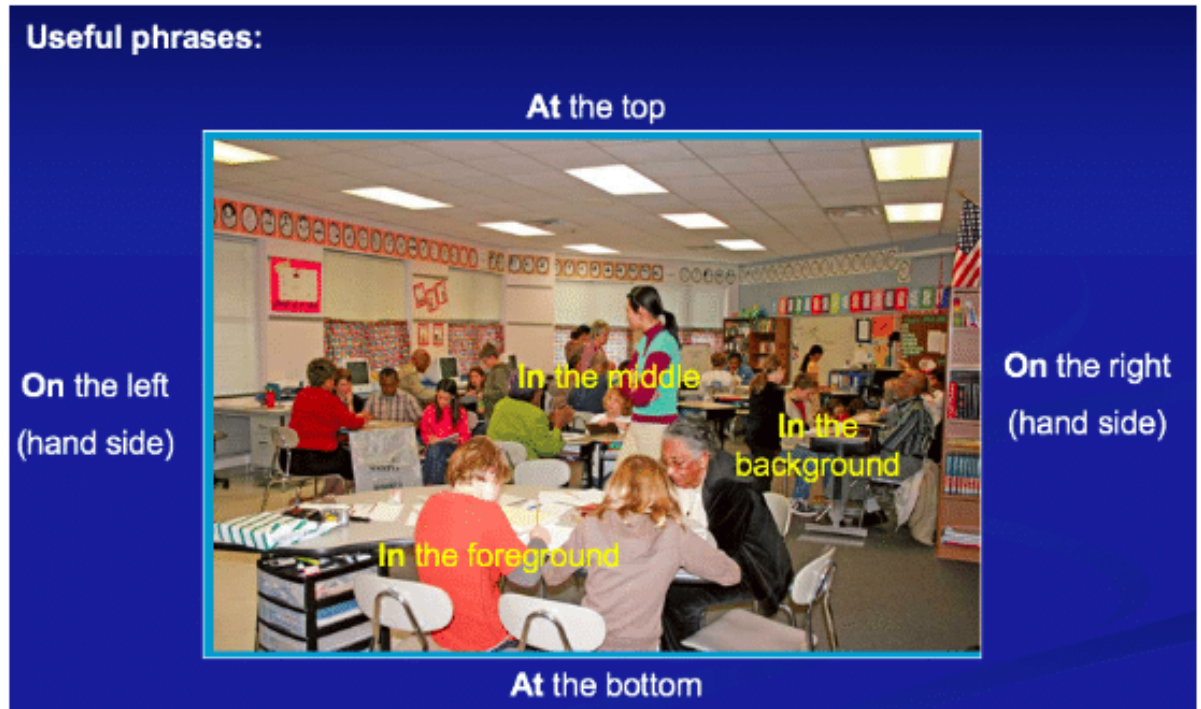
As specified in the official Cambridge Preliminary (PET) handbook, there are certain topics that are expected at this level. Here are the ones which are most likely to come up in this part of the exam:

- Eating out
- Free time
- Family
- Cooking
- Outdoor activities

#### **2. How to do part 3 of the speaking test in PET (Describing a picture)**

## 2.1. Referring to the picture

To refer to the photo you will need to say what you can see in different parts of the photos like this:



Some example sentences would be:

- In the middle there is a woman, who might be a student, looking for a seat.
- In the background is a group of students are studying in groups
- In the foreground, we can see two children who are studying under the guidance of a teacher

## 2.2. Describing the picture

You need to describe everything you see in the picture for up to 1 minute.  
You can talk about:

- The scene. For example: “It’s a picture of a very busy library.”
- What they are doing

- What objects you can see in the picture
- What they are doing and how the people are using them.

### 2.3. Speculating

We need to speculate the picture about the thing that we are not sure of it.  
For example:

*It could be* a classroom or a conference room

*They might be* studying for a test

*It must be a* classroom

*Maybe* they are studying for semester exam

*She looks like* a student but could be a teacher

### 2.4. Examples and solutions

- Based on the official PET handbook, we can divide the pictures into these following topics: **Eating out**

Vocabulary for this topic:

- Relationship	-Boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, folks, mother, father, daughter, son, etc.
- Activities	- Have breakfast, have lunch, have dinner, etc.
- Scene	- At the park, at the restaurant, at the yard, etc.
- Stuff	- Fork, dish, plate, table, chair, etc.



- Description of the picture:

By looking at this picture, we can see a scene of a park and it looks really large. There are four people in the picture, so I guess they are classmate. At the background we can see that the park is kind of quiet. I think they are having lunch, maybe it is a picnic because there are a lot of dishes on the ground with food like watermelon, orange juice. Besides, they look young so I guess they are



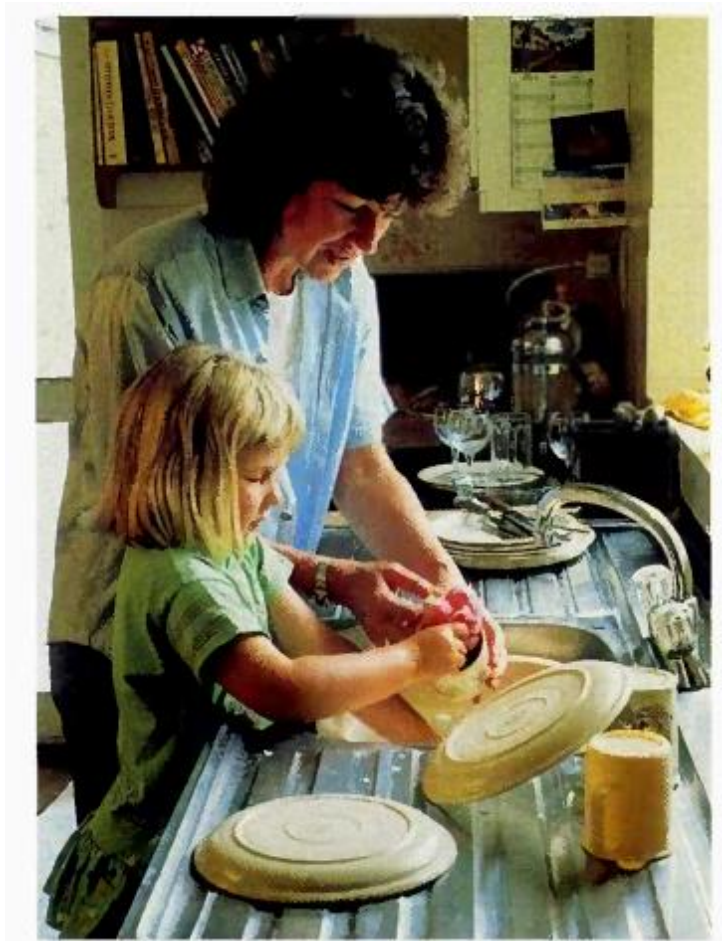
at the same age of twenty five. In short, I love this picture because I love eating out with my friends.

- **Family:**

Vocabulary for this topic:

- Relationship	- Husband, wife, grandmother, grandson, uncle, aunt, cousin, nephew, etc.
- Activities	- Have breakfast, hang the clothes, watching TV, read the news, etc.
- Scene	- At living room, kitchen, backyard, etc.
- Stuff	- Table, book, television, newspaper, etc.





- Description of the picture:

In the picture we can see that this is the view of a kitchen and it looks small. There is a sink with plates and glasses on it and a microwave. There is a bookshelf next to the door, it might be cookbook. There are two persons, I guess they are mother and daughter. They are standing next to the sink and washing the dishes. It looks like the little girl is helping her mother washing the dishes or maybe her mother teaching her how to wash the dishes. The mother is tall and had a short black hair. She is wearing blue T-shirt and a black trousers. The little girl is short and had a short blonde hair. She looks young so I guess she is about 6 years old. In conclusion, I like this photograph because it shows that the mother is doing the house work with her child.

- **Cooking**

Vocabulary for this topic:

- Activities	- Bake, boil, cook, fry, steam, etc.
- Scene	- At kitchen, restaurant, yard, etc.
- Stuff	- Coffee maker, knife, pan, etc.





- Description of the picture:

This picture shows a scene of a big kitchen with a lot of stuff around. There are two persons in the picture. I think they are cooking some salad by looking at the dish. These two girls look young so I guess they are friends. The girl on the right is teaching the other how to make the food. The girl on the left looks young, I guess she is twenty years old. She has a long brown hair and she is wearing a purple long sleeve. The other girl looks older. I think she is twenty five years old. She had a long blonde hair, she is wearing a white T-shirt and a glasses. I love this picture because I love cooking and sharing my experience to my friend.

- **Outdoor activities**

Vocabulary for this topic:

- Relationship	- Boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, folks, mother, father, daughter, son, etc.
- Activities	- Dance, skateboarding, hangout, playing card, etc.
- Scene	- Park, walking street, school yard, etc.
- Stuff	-Glove, skateboard, bag, speaker, guitar, etc.







- Description of the picture:

By looking at this picture, we can see it is an outdoor concert. There are two guys with guitars on the stage, I think they are on the same music band. The guy on the left is singing, I guess he is the vocal of the band. The guy on the right got a bass guitar in his hand and he is also singing but I think he maybe a chorus man. The stage looks small and the sound system looks very modern. The man on the left is slim and has a short black hair. He is wearing purple shirt, denim trousers and a red sunglasses. The other guy had a short blonde hair. He is wearing blue shirt, jeans and also wearing sunglasses. Both of them look pretty old, I think they are around 40 years old. I really like this picture because music is a part of everyone's life.

- **Free time**

Vocabulary for this part:

- Activities	- Do the laundry, do homework, play with friends, play the guitar, clean the floor
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- Scene

- Bed room, living room,  
backyard, etc.



- Description of the picture:

Take a look at this picture, we can see that this is a scene of a bedroom. There are two girls in the picture and they look close to each other so I think they are friends. One of them came to the other's house to play on the weekend. I think they have the same interest of music by seeing this picture. The girl on the right are playing the guitar for the other to sing. They both look young I guess they are 13 years old. Looking at the girl on the right, she has a long blonde hair, she is wearing a pink long sleeve shirt and a light blue jean. The other girl has a long brown hair, she is wearing a brown jacket and also a jean too. The room looks pretty small, we can see a lot of pictures on the wall. On the left of the picture, we can see a skate board while on the other edge we can see an acoustic guitar. This picture is very lovely because it shows us what friendship is.

### **2.5. Extra tips and preparation for PET speaking test part 3**

- Try speaking in front of the mirror, which will help you being more confident in public communication when you want to prepare for a presentation.
- Try recording yourself on your phone and listen to hear your answer. Or try this with your friend. Share your recording and talk about how could make them better.
- Start with a general idea of the subject of the picture before going into the detail.
- Talk about the situation as well as the physical things you can see in the picture
- Give some personal reaction to the picture

#### ***- Preparation for PET speaking test part 3***

#### **+ Preparation of grammar**

-Tense: Present simple, present continuous, present perfect, simple future

#### **+ Preparation of Vocabulary**

Common and high-frequency words:

-Nouns: girl, boy, woman, man, waiter, student, chef, children, etc.

-Adjectives: beautiful, handsome, old, young, busy free, interesting, etc.

-Verbs: swim, sunbathe, eat, drink, take photos, study, relax, cook, etc.

-Prepositions: in on at, behind, in front of, on the left, on the right, in the middle, etc.

### **+Describing from general scene to specific details**

Ex:

In the photo, I can see 4 students having a meal at the restaurant. The boy on the left is drinking ..., the girl in the middle is talking ..., etc.

### **+Making predictions**

-I am not sure but I think they've passed their exams, so they are smiling happily.

-I do not know exactly how old they are, but I guess they are about 25.

### **-What needs describing?**

-People: age, job, appearance, action, mood.

-Time: morning, afternoon, summer, winter, holiday, etc.

-Place: at the park, at the sea, in the kitchen, etc.

-Activity: swimming, cooking, eating, etc.

-Atmosphere: noisy, quiet, peaceful etc.

-Scene: trees, mountains, hills, field, grass, etc.

## **PART C: CONCLUSION**

### **1. Conclusion remark**

In conclusion, this graduation papers is conducted to investigate the learning situation at Haiphong Technology and Management University in English non-major Department and to find out students' common mistakes as well as difficulties when taking the speaking skills test in PET test. Then provide suggestions for solving student problems and motivate them to take PET test.

The aim, scope and reason of this study were presented in chapter 1 for introduction part. Then some theoretical definitions such as: Definition of speaking, some difficulties in speaking English, the structure of PET speaking test and the description of the PET speaking test part 3: describe a picture were put in chapter 2. Especially, in order to find out students' difficulties to take the part 3 of PET speaking test, a survey was carried out and analyzed to find the best solution to improve students' speaking skills in general and describing a picture in particular. Therefore, some suggestion to help students improve their picture describing skills at home as well as at class. Then give practical examples with pictures to create strategies for students when learning speaking skills especially picture describing skills. In this study, due to the researcher's limitation of time, knowledge and other factors, it can cover the scope to improve picture describing skill only.

However, due to limited time and ability, there are a number of related areas which the researcher cannot cover in the study. First, subjects of the study are only the small number of students at HPU. Second, the researcher merely concentrates on studying students' techniques in speaking skill; do not focus on some related skills such as speaking, writing and listening. Furthermore, in the English language teaching and learning in general, the above suggested techniques are only small part which should be creatively and flexibly applied in each class. With the above limitations, I hope the further research on the topic

Hopefully, in the next research I can broaden my knowledge to deal with many further problems related not only to speaking skills but also other skills such as pronunciation, listening. Finally, I hope that my study might be somehow an encouragement for anyone interested in speaking skills.

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## APPENDIX

### Part 3 of PET speaking test

**Survey about common difficulties faced by second-year English non-major students of Haiphong T&M University when doing the speaking test part 3 (picture description) of PET**

**1. How long have you learned English?**

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**2. In your opinion, how important speaking skill is?**

- A. Important
- B. Neutral
- C. Unimportant

**3. How often do you speak English outside school?**

- A. Often
- B. Sometimes
- C. Rarely
- D. Never

**4. What activities do you practice to improve speaking skill?**

- A. Listen to music
- B. Daily conversation in English
- C. Self-talking

**5. What do you think about part 3 of PET speaking test?**

- A. Hard
- B. Not very hard
- C. Easy

**6. What do you think is the reason that makes it difficult for you to take the part 3 of PET speaking test?**

- A. Vocabulary
- B. Grammar
- C. Unconfident

**7. Which skill is the most difficult in the picture description?**

- A. Referring



**B. Speculating**

**C. Describing**

**8. In your opinion, what should you do to improve your PET speaking test result?**

**A. Describing skills**

**B. Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, etc.**

**C. Being more confident**