

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO  
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH: TIẾNG ANH**

**HẢI PHÒNG 2013**

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO  
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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**GRADUATION PAPER**  
**MOTIVATION FOR THE 1<sup>ST</sup> - YEAR ENGLISH  
MAJOR STUDENTS IN LISTENING COURSES**

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

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**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO**  
**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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**NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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*Người hướng dẫn*

*Hải Phòng, ngày ..... tháng.....năm 2013*

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, English is one of the most widely used languages worldwide. People use English in various fields. The English learners face difficulties in study and communication with the foreigners. To study English well, the learners have to understand the target language and have effective learning methods. There are 4 skills to learn English: speaking, reading, writing and listening. Compared with other skills, listening is considered as the most difficult skill for students learning English, specially the first - year English major students. It is necessary to find out the motivation to enhance students' language competence. Therefore, this study was to identify some main factors affecting learners' listening comprehension, some common problems with listening competence of HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors and suggest the motivation for them in listening courses.

The study was conducted by tools of survey questionnaires. The participants were asked to complete the survey related to their English listening acquisition, which revealed the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors' attitude towards listening skill, main factors affecting their listening comprehension, some difficulties and effective motivation for their English listening courses. Through the research, it is hoped that they will realize the difficulties in English listening courses as well as apply truly effective methods of English listening so as to enhance their English listening proficiency and English listening is no more of their reluctance.

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# **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

## **1. Rationale**

Vietnam is a country which has a thickness of history and featured tradition. Nowadays, our life is changing with the development of information technology and science, and cooperation with other countries. Therefore, we have to learn their languages to understand their tradition and ethnic characteristics.

Today, English is one of the most widely used languages worldwide. It's used internationally in business, political, cultural relation and education as well. Thanks to widespread use of English, different countries come close to each other to work out problems and strive for a prosperous community. Vietnamese learners find the significance of English; they have been trying to be good at English. The study of English becomes easier because of communication with foreigners and using modern equipments. Besides, people still have difficulties in learning English. There are 4 skills to learn: speaking, reading, writing and listening. Compared with other skills, listening is considered as the most difficult skill for students learning English, specially the first year English major students. The reason for that is they don't have chance to practice frequently in upper schools.

Listening is how a baby first starts to become aware of language, so it is clearly important that for learners of any language. In a study in 1950, Wilt M.E. defined that: "which is still cited today, it was found that 45% of communication was listening, 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing".

Clearly, if these figures are correct, and people can judge from their own experience, then listening is a skill which has to be at the forefront of English language learning skills.

Combining this with another study, Rankin, Paul. T said that “which showed that 70% of waking time is spent communicating, only serves to underline how essential the skill of listening is”.

For learners of English, listening is vital because it is through this sense that they receive information on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spoken word order, as well as the stress patterns of words, phrases and sentences. Added to these is the effect that different accents, voice tone and pitch can have on their comprehension of the message.

Through listening, the learner picks up vital clues, some consciously, others subconsciously, about what constitute idiomatic spoken English? The learner may also register and retain words and phrases having heard them from a native speaker or their teacher, they know to be acceptable for their own use later on.

Listening is not only crucial for the learner to understand how to learn the language, for example via instructions in the classroom or via audio devices, but also because it is a core life skill. Sometimes called Active Listening, it involves not only the sense of hearing, but also being aware of body language and being able to empathize with the speaker to ensure that the message being transmitted is received correctly.

Without the skill of listening, there can be no language learning, and hence no communication – surely the most important interaction human beings are involved in.

However, the listening competence of Haiphong Private University’s 1<sup>st</sup> - year English majors is, as a matter of fact, not qualified enough. At high school they didn’t bear the chance to practice English listening frequently, they mainly

concentrate on grammar-related skills. This is because of traditional method in teaching and learning English at lower education. Students are trained to be good at doing grammar and reading exercises', not speaking or listening. However at higher education as universities and colleges, all language skills are focused, especially speaking and listening. Therefore, the majority of the first-year students at HPU find listening skill challenging to master. In other words, it is a common problem in HPU that most of the students are unable to comprehend spoken English required at the very beginning level. It is, therefore, assumed that they definitely encounter certain difficulties in listening acquisition.

In reality, every final listening exam has seen a high percentage of failure among the first – year English major students at HPU. The fact has caused them disappointment and stress during their beginning levels. All the above reasons have inspired the writer to choose the subject: “Motivation for the first year English major students in listening courses” with the hope to give effective tips to help the students overcome the difficulties in listening and improve their listening competence at the very beginning level.

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

In a nutshell, the research would seek the answers to the following questions:

1. What is the attitude of the HPU's first - year English majors towards listening skill?
2. What are the main factors influencing the competence of the HPU's first - year English majors?
3. What are difficulties in listening courses of the HPU's 1st – year English majors?
4. What is motivation is effective for English listening courses?

### **3. Scope of the study**

The informants' surveyed are all 38 students of NA1601 of HPU.

This study will explore the attitude of the HPU's first – year English majors on listening skill. Besides, the research focuses on factors that influence the listening skill and finds out some difficulties in listening courses of HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors. All the data will be analyzed in order to draw out the most effective motivation for the listening courses

### **4. Methods of the study**

The main method of this study is the quantitative one. All the considerations, remarks, interpretations, comments and assumptions given in the study are based largely on the analysis of statistic data with due reference to publications. The practical approaches are:

- Studying relevant publications.
- Conducting survey questionnaires.
- Analyzing the data
- Consulting with the supervisor

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

This study will be divided into three parts.

- ❖ Part 1: Introduction
- ❖ Part 2: Development
  - Chapter 1: Theoretical Background
  - Chapter 2: Research Methodology
  - Chapter 3: Data analysis, findings and discussion
- ❖ Part 3: Conclusion

## **PART II: DEVELOPMENT**

### **Chapter 1: Theoretical background**

#### **1. Definition of key terms**

##### **1.1. Listening**

###### **1.1.1. Definition of “listening”**

*"Listening"* is receiving language through the ears. Listening involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences. When we listen, we use our ears to receive individual sounds (letters, stress, rhythm and pauses) and we use our brain to convert these into messages that mean something to us.

(from <http://www.englishclub.com/listening/what.htm>)

According to Bulletin (1952), Listening is one of the fundamental language skills. It's a medium through which children, young people and adults gain a large portion of their education-their information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and appreciation.

In addition, Howatt and Dakin (1974) defined that listening is ability to identify and understand what others saying. This process involves understanding a speaker's accent and pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary and comprehension of meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

There are several distinct definitions of listening, and there is little agreement about which is the best; nor should there be. Each definition represents a different perspective of listening, and with the many approaches to listening there are bound to be a number of definitions. Ethel Glenn (1989) in the



Journal of the International Listening Association lists fifty different ways of describing listening. This list is not exhaustive. It indicates, however, that listening is conceived differently depending upon how people intend to apply the definition. For example, researchers who seek to predict listening behavior, versus those who interpret listening, versus consultants who provide listening skills training in the workplace may each employ a viable, albeit different definition of the term listening. Glenn's content analysis of the fifty definitions found that the concepts most often included in the definition of listening were: perception, attention, interpretation, response, and spoken and visual cues.

Throughout Western history we have assumed listening was automatic and needed no attention. We did not concern ourselves with study and training in the art of listening. Listening, however, is not automatic. To be better listeners we need to understand, and work with the components of the listening process. Listening is the process of making sense out of what we hear. Listening is an active process of receiving, processing, and interpreting aural stimuli. Firstly, listening involves taking in meaningful sounds and noises and in some way, retaining and using them. Just as we speak for different purposes, we also listen for different purposes. We listen for enjoyment, information, and evaluation.

Frank Tyger said that *"Hearing is one of the body's five senses, but listening is an art."*

Listening is part of the transactional process of communication. The receiver's responses have a direct impact on the direction of the conversation. The key is to become active listeners rather than passive ones. Active listening involves providing feedback that clarifies and extends a speaker's message. Effective listening relies as much on attitudes as well as knowledge and skill. Listening is a habit that requires knowledge, skills and desires. Knowledge plays

a role similar to that of methods and theories by describing what to do and why to do it. Skills represent how to do it.

As the way of conclusion, in this paper it is concerned (1) listening can be learned, (2) that listening is an active process, involving mind and body, with verbal and nonverbal processes working together, and (3) that listening allows us to be receptive to the needs, concerns, and information of others, as well as the environment around us.

### **1.1.2. Types of listening**

\* Wolvin and Coakly (1988, 1993) have introduced a categorization of listening. They identified 5 types of listening:

- Discriminative Listening
- Comprehensive Listening
- Therapeutic Listening
- Critical Listening and
- Appreciative Listening.

*Discriminative listening* is where the objective is to distinguish sound and visual stimuli. This objective doesn't take into account the meaning; instead the focus is largely on sounds. In a basic level class, this can be as simple as distinguishing the gender of the speaker or the number of the speakers etc. As mentioned before the focus is not on comprehending; but on accustoming the ears to the sounds. If one thinks she/he can see that this is where L1 listening begins - the child responds to sound stimulus and soon can recognize its parents' voices amidst all other voices. Depending on the level of the students, the listening can be discriminating sounds to identifying individual words.

Then, there is *Comprehensive listening* which the focus is on 'understanding the message'. The writers consider this as the basis for the next three types of listening. However, the problem can come in the form of 'understanding'. Depending on many factors, (both individual and social) students can end up understanding the same message in different, different ways. Most of work in teaching listening in the classroom has to happen here in facilitating the students to develop their comprehension skills.

The third one - *Therapeutic listening* - is one kind of listening where the listener's role is to be a sympathetic listener without much verbal response. In this kind of listening the listener allows somebody to talk through a problem. This kind of listening is very important in building good interpersonal relations.

*Critical listening* is the fourth kind of listening, in which listeners have to evaluate the message. Listeners have to critically respond to the message and give their opinion.

The final one is *Appreciative listening* which the focus is on enjoying what one listens. Here, some students raised the point that when they listen to English music, even if they don't understand, they still enjoy thereby challenging the notion of comprehensive listening as the basis for other three types of listening. Then we reflected on the practice of listening to songs in the language lab. Generally those students listen to the songs once and try to make out the lyrics before listening a second time with the lyrics. Then they recalled that they appreciated the song better during the second time and were able to see the relation between how one would enjoy something that she/he is able to make sense of.

In this way, the discussion of the five types of listening turned out to be quite informative and thought provoking for all underscoring the adage when one teaches two learn.

Listening is comprised of seven essential components: (1) volition, (2) focused attention, (3) perception, (4) interpretation, (5) remembering, (6) response, and (7) the human element. These seven components are an integral part of the dynamic and active process of listening. That listening is dynamic means that while there may be essential components the act of listening itself is never the same twice. We must be constantly alert and open to improvisation as the elements of the listening situation change. Like a jazz musician's spontaneous and unrehearsed play, we must adapt to the communication of the other members of our social group. Listening is also active as opposed to passive. It is something that we consciously do; it does not simply happen. Rogers and Farson, in a classic article on active listening define "active" as meaning:

The listener has a very definite responsibility. He does not passively absorb the words which are spoken, but he actively tries to grasp the facts and feelings in what he hears, to help the speaker work out his own problems. (p. 149)

First, for an individual to be able to listen, he or she must want to listen. Thus, *volition*, or the will to listen is the initial component of effective listening. Even having willed ourselves to attend to the ideas of another, it sometimes takes courage to listen fully to another human being. To listen fully may mean we may have to change based upon what we hear. Nichols and Stevens recognized the difficulty in their 1957 book, *Are You Listening?: "Whenever we listen thoroughly to another person's ideas we open ourselves up to the possibility that some of our own ideas are wrong"* (p. 51–52).

Second, good listening requires focused *attention*. If our minds are wandering, or, if we are jumping ahead to what we think the speaker might say, we are apt to miss important information. The third component of the listening

process is *perception*. We need to be aware of all of the elements of message, speaker, and context. It also implies that we must be open and receptive to the messages of others. A critical part of communication is lost when individuals are unwilling to listen to others because of, for example, prejudicial or opposing viewpoints.

The fourth component of the listening process is *the capacity to interpret* the messages and meanings of the others. The process of interpretation includes understanding. In interpreting a message, we naturally make sense of that message in terms of our own experience. This means each message understood is a creative process; it also implies we are limited by our experience. A person may be highly motivated to listen to a message, for instance on contemporary physics. However, if the message is especially complex or technical beyond the listener's ability, then the likelihood for an accurate interpretation is greatly diminished.

Fifth, competent listening includes *remembering*. Often we remember without exerting any effort. In many critical listening situations, however, we need to consciously and actively include listening skills that help us retain what we have heard. Some basic skills for enhancing memory will be covered in the next chapter.

A sixth component is *the need for response* as essential to completing the process of good listening. Sometimes, our response is internal as we integrate what we have understood and internally comment upon it. Usually after understanding a complete thought, it is important that we give feedback to the speaker, or respond in such a way that the speaker has an idea of how we have understood and interpreted what he or she has said.

The last component is *the human being*. In listening we must always be receptive to the personal element. In both our personal and business lives people

are the most important resource. Listening should validate and empower people, thus enhancing relationships. We also listen for information, but we must keep in mind that information is colored and given meaning by a person's needs and concerns (the listener's as well as the speaker's). As students, doctors, lawyers, law enforcement officers, etc., we cannot "manage" without good information. Information is the lifeblood of our professions. Today organizations cannot function without a continuous flow of information. All information, however, is only meaningful as it describes and relates to a human condition.

The above components of the listening process focus not only upon the speaker's verbal message, but also upon the nonverbal message. The meaning may be grasped from what is said, as well as, what is unsaid. Birdwhistell's work in the early seventies, in fact, argued that perhaps the majority of a message derives from the nonverbal dimension (1970). Thus the listener must attend not only to what the speaker says, but also to how he or she says it (e.g., tone of voice, pitch, rate of speaking, etc.), and to the context in which the message is delivered (e.g., a formal auditorium, an informal gathering, a classroom, etc.). The how of what the speaker says includes feelings; for if we just listen to denotative meaning we miss the emotional content. Listening to feelings in a situation may tell us what is motivating the speaker, as well as other pertinent information. The listener who attends to both the verbal and the nonverbal communication will likely listen more accurately than the individual who is oblivious to these important cues.

(From [http://www.academia.edu/603612/What\\_is\\_listening](http://www.academia.edu/603612/What_is_listening))

## **1.2. Motivation**

### **1.2.1. The definition of "*motivation*"**

According to Oxford dictionary, "*motivation*" is desire or willingness to do something; enthusiasm. Routledge Encyclopedia (2000) also states that

“*motivation*” provides reinforcement to maintain the extensive and rarely repetitive process of learning ESL (English as a second language) (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In other words, ESL and foreign language learning students’ need or desire to make effort to acquire and learn are crucial factors of their motivation.

### **1.2.2. The motivation in English listening**

Brownell (1994) affirmed that a successful listening process either in the classroom or outside is primarily dependent on individuals’ need to understand spoken language drawing from their background knowledge of that particular language as they strive to improve their communicative competence.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) claimed that “*motivation is perhaps the only intake variable that has been consistently found, in various contexts and at various levels of L2 development, to correlate positively with successful ESL learning outcomes*” (p. 40). In interactive listening, learners are frequently engaged in communicative activities with a variety of learning opportunities so that they can express their ideas and feelings freely in order to feel competent and self-determining (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). As seen in this study, students are able to collaboratively identify their strengths and weaknesses to use ESL appropriately.

### **1.2.3. Types of the motivation in English listening**

It is undeniable that motivation in English listening are classified into 2 main types: *intrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation*.

*a. Intrinsic motivation* refers to motivation that comes from inside an individual rather than from any external or outside rewards, such as money or grades. The motivation comes from the pleasure one gets from the task itself or from the sense of satisfaction in completing or even working on a task.

An intrinsically motivated person will work on a math equation, for example, because it is enjoyable. Or an intrinsically motivated person will work

on a solution to a problem because the challenge of finding a solution is provides a sense of pleasure. In neither case does the person work on the task because there is some reward involved, such as a prize, a payment, or in the case of students, a grade.

*Intrinsic motivation* does not mean, however, that a person will not seek rewards. It just means that such external rewards are not enough to keep a person motivated. An intrinsically motivated student, for example, may want to get a good grade on an assignment, but if the assignment does not interest that student, the possibility of a good grade is not enough to maintain that student's motivation to put any effort into the project.

According to “Scholars like Csikszentmihalyi” (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006) and Van Lier (1988) defined intrinsic motivation as a true enjoyment that accompanies the experience of what they call dynamic, holistic and sensation of total involvement with the activity itself. As a result, intrinsically motivated activities are ends in themselves rather than means to an end (activities prompt students’ active engagement without any explicit encouragement from the teacher). Individual learners seek out and engage in intrinsically motivated activities in order to feel competent and self-determining. Interactive listening in an ESL classroom triggers motivation among learners since its activities are learner-centered. Kumaravadivelu (2006) posited that students have to let their natural curiosity and interest energize their language-learning endeavors and help them overcome even adverse pedagogic and environmental limitations.

***b. Instrumental motivation*** is derived from a pragmatic approach in which the emphasis is on practical and creative aspects of ESL usage. Learners with an instrumental motivation want to learn ESL for a practical reason. For example, college ESL learners have a clear instrumental motivation for ESL



learning because they want to fulfill a college language requirement. Student motivation tends to be stronger when the learner has specific rather than general goals for language learning.

It can be very helpful when teachers help learners develop more specific goals for language learning. Because instrumental motivation also depends on personal willingness the desire to achieve something and an individual student's desire to learn ESL (Engin, 2009). According to this view, integrative and instrumental motivations are positively correlated with one another. Instrumental motivation leads to the consideration of integrative motivation.

There is often a fine line between these two kinds of motivation which is drawn at the point where integrative motivation is characterized by a general curiosity about learning ESL. The curiosity to learn another language and culture inherent in integrative motivation often coincides with the convenient and advantageous use of language reflected by instrumental motivation. In other words, students who learn another language for integrative purposes generally will eventually recognize the significance of learning that language for instrumental purposes.

Therefore, this type of ESL learning will effectively demonstrate students' learning abilities and strategies throughout the learning process. In this situation, learners will be able to synthesize information by relating prior knowledge or already acquired information with novel experiences while the teacher facilitates the learning process in which active listening and speaking support ESL learning.

#### **1.2.4. Some strategies to motivate English listening skill**

According to Vandergrift (2003, 1997), Chamot (1993), Young (1997) and Oxford (1990), there are a lot of listening strategies: *Metacognitive Strategies*, *Cognitive Strategies*, *Social/Affective Strategies*. If the teachers can

find the problems in listening course, they can find the strategies to motivate student in listening skill. Below, the study mentions some typical strategies of each category so that it can help in teaching and learning English listening.

a. *Metacognitive Strategies* are management techniques employed by learners to have control over their learning through planning, monitoring, evaluating, and modifying (Rubin. 1987). For example, for metacognitive planning strategies, listeners would clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening activity and attend to particular aspects of the aural language input or situational details that facilitate the comprehension of aural input. According to Oxford (1990), the conscious use of metacognitive strategies helps learners get back their focus when they lose it. However, learners do not use metacognitive strategies very frequently despite the importance of self- monitoring and self-evaluation. Baker and Brown (1984) identified two types of metacognitive ability: knowledge of cognition (i.e., knowing what) and regulation of cognition (i.e., knowing how). The first type is concerned with the learners' awareness of what is going on, and the second type relates to what learners should do to listen effectively. Empirical studies have found that an important distinction between skilled and less skilled L2 listeners lies in their use of metacognitive strategies (e.g., Bacon, 1992; Goh, 1998, 2000; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1998, 2003). O'Malley et al. (1989) found that skilled listeners use more repair strategies to redirect their attention back to the task when there is a comprehension breakdown, whereas less skilled listeners give up and stop listening. Vandergrift (2003) found that skilled listeners used twice as many metacognitive strategies as their less-skilled counterparts. Among the metacognitive strategies, two strategies will be analyzed here. Focusing on what the speaker is saying is a strategy that enables the listener to focus his/ her attention on the speaker's message without being distracted by any distracters. This strategy is very useful in participating in the classroom, watching TV,

listening to the radio, or talking to other people. The second metacognitive strategy is deciding in advance what to pay attention to. Listeners employ selective attention as a technique to facilitate the comprehension process. For example, some listeners choose to focus on pronunciation and accents as a way to understand the spoken language with different accents. However, focusing too much on accents can have a negative impact on comprehension because it can be a distracter, leading to misunderstanding.

b. *Cognitive strategies* are problem-solving techniques that learners use to handle the learning tasks and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or skill (Derry & Murphy, 1986). An article which “presents findings from research into listening strategies of ESL learners” offers the following definition: Cognitive strategies are more directly related to a learning task and involve direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials (Brown and Palincsar, 1982; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990). Language learners use cognitive strategies text by the use of metacognitive strategies. to help them process, store and recall new information (Goh, 1998, p. 124). Two broad types of cognitive strategies have been the subject of second language listening research: bottom- up and top-down. Bottom-up strategies include word-for-word translation, adjusting the rate of speech, repeating the oral text, and focusing on prosodic features of the text. Top-down strategies, on the other hand, include predicting, inferencing, elaborating and visualization. Previous research has revealed that advanced learners employ more top-down strategies than beginners (Clark, 1980; Conrad, 1985; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; O’Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989). Among the cognitive strategies, four strategies will be analyzed here. The first cognitive strategy, trying to comprehend without translating, is used when the listener attempts to understand the learning second language input without translating to the first language. This strategy is useful because oftentimes, many words do not have equivalents in one of the

languages, tendering the comprehension process more difficult. This strategy, therefore, directs the listener's attention to the meaning and structure of the target language. The second cognitive strategy is focusing on the main words to understand the new words. The listener creates meaning by applying his/her knowledge of words from the target language to sentences. This strategy is very useful, especially for beginning listeners, who rely on their small vocabulary repertoire to build their comprehension. The third cognitive strategy is relying on the main idea to comprehend the whole text. This strategy helps the listeners locate the theme first and details later on. One of the techniques that this strategy involves is skimming. The learner who uses this strategy locates the main idea quickly and understands the second language aural input very rapidly. The fourth cognitive strategy is guessing the meaning by relying on any clues (contextual or linguistic). Listeners use this strategy when they do not know all the words, or they do not understand the overall meaning of the sentence. Both native and non-native speakers use this strategy either when they have not listened well enough or when the meaning is not clear.

*c. Social/Affective Strategies:* The last category of strategies is socio-affective, which encompasses the attempts to create and promote positive emotional reactions and attitudes towards language learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987). Vandergrift (2003) defined social affective strategies as the techniques listeners employ to collaborate with others, to verify understanding, or to lower anxiety. According to Gardner & MacIntyre (1992, 1993), the affective strategies used to control learning experiences are very important because the learning context and learners' social-psychological factors (i.e., how learners feel about the learning experience) are directly related. Aneiro (1989) found a significant correlation between low anxiety and high listening performance, which suggests that using affective strategies could facilitate and

enhance listening. O'Malley & Chamot (1987) found that among the four strategies of management, cognitive strategies, social strategies, affective strategies in listening comprehension, social and affective strategies influenced the learning context immediately.

## **2. Historical background**

### **2.1. State of HPU's 1st – year English majors in listening course**

Most of the first-year students encounter difficulties of various kinds that refer to many aspects of English listening. The most common ones are using their vocabulary and pronunciation in listening for connected speech including weak forms, contractions, elision and assimilation; understanding various and different accents; catching the rate of speech; understanding the structure, coping with hesitation, redundancy and noise in authentic listening texts; and taking notes for key words or main ideas.

The teachers and the first-year students do not equally view difficulties in various aspects of listening with the same rank; they share common conclusions about the difficulties that the students encounter in listening acquisition. The teachers definitely understand their students' difficulties in all aspects of listening like vocabulary, pronunciation, speech rate, connected speech, stress and intonation, structure of listening skills.

The main sources of difficulties in listening acquisition viewed by the students include: students' lack of linguistic knowledge, their limited background, the uncomfortable learning environment, and the unsuitable listening materials. The students' little practice outside classroom and their insufficient efforts also account for these difficulties in listening acquisition and comprehension.

Based on the students' perception and teachers' perception over the difficulties encountered by students in English listening acquisition and comprehension, some main factors affecting their listening competence will be investigated in the next chapter.

## **2.2. Main factors affecting learners' listening comprehension**

English language learners often think listening is easier than speaking and they may be right because listening is a receptive skill, not a productive one. Listening involves factors that can affect comprehension but this study only focuses on 4 main factors: Listener, Speaker, Stimulus and Context factors.

Listening is a complex active process in which learners decode and construct the meaning of the text by drawing on their previous knowledge about the world as well as their linguistic knowledge, these seems to be many factors that affect listening comprehension. Some researchers have classified these factor into different categories (River, 1981; Boyle, 1984; Dirven & oakeshott-Taylor, 1984; Samules, 1984; Power, 1986). After conducting an interview with thirty teachers and sixty students from Hong Kong universities, Boyle (1984) suggested the lack of practice as the most important factor. He also pointed out such factors as linguistic understanding, general background knowledge, while attitude and motivations may affect listening indirectly but more powerfully. Two other factors that were mentioned by the students but not teachers in Boyle's interview were "memory" and "attention/concentration". Generally speaking, the factors identified by Boyle can be divided into four categories, i.e., *listener factors, speaker factors, stimulus factors, and context factors*. In her study, Teng (1993) further divided these factors into a comprehensive list.

Firstly, *listener* factors include many components; this study only focuses on some components: language facility, including phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic knowledge; knowledge of the world and

physical condition. Listener's listening ability is also influenced by psychological factors. Sometimes, listeners' over-concentration on listening material leads to nervousness. "Anxiety has a negative effect on listening comprehension." Anxiety is a kind of fear, and it has been proved that anxiety has a negative effect on language learning. Psychological barriers mainly reflect in two aspects: the state of being too nervous or the state of being unable to focus one's attention during listening. In regular listening practice, some students can't concentrate on the listening content. Instead, they are absent-minded, wandering away, though they still wear their earphones, which, of course, will affect comprehension result. Some students are easy to be distracted because of being fatigued after listening for a long period. Anxiety often occurs in examination. Some students are too eager to get high marks but they are also afraid that they can't adjust themselves to the listening materials and the delivery rate. So they become too nervous and blank-minded. Continuity and accuracy of listening can't be assured in such kind of state. Language carries knowledge and cultural information and it reflects the substantial and particular ways of thinking of that people. Thus culture is embedded in even the simplest act of language (Hao, 2000; Kramsch, 1993); it is an inseparable part of the way in which we live our lives and the way we use language. In this regard, Kramsch (1993) maintains that every time we speak we perform a cultural act. Consequently, there is now, an emphasis in modern language teaching on cultural knowledge as a basis for language learning. An important requirement, then, for learning spoken English, is the acquisition of cultural knowledge. Therefore, if students' pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and cultural knowledge are to prosper, they must be grounded in a sound knowledge of the society in which the language is based.

Secondly, *speaker factors* consist of language ability: native speaker versus nonnative speaker; accent/ dialect and speech of delivery. English is a daily language; it is easier to listen for the native speaker than nonnative speaker.

Because native speakers usually use in their daily life. English is also a common language in all over the world. Many countries use English as the first language. They are many others English's form; such as: Britain English, American English and Australian English, so in each English form has other accent/dialect. Therefore the learner need understand the accent of these English forms. Moreover, the different contexts are various with other speech of delivery. The learners want to listen they have to catch up with speech of delivery.

Thirdly, *stimulus factors* also focus on 3 components: discussion topic, abstractness of material and presentation mode, audio only versus audio and visual. The discussion topic is important to listener. They can depend on this topic to listen or guess the main ideas. Sometimes, the students feel difficult to listen because the teachers use some abstractness of material. They should use some audio with visual aids so the learners can listen easier.

Fourthly, *context factors* are an important factor in listening comprehension. There are 3 components: distraction during listening, interval between listening and testing and note-taking. They can meet a distraction during listening because they don't concentrate on context. There are some outside factors can affect on your listening. Besides, they listening can disturb because of the interval between listening and testing. Note-taking is a difficult listening skill. If they listening skill is not good, they can face to difficulties in note taking. This skill acquires good abilities of listeners; they need note the information of all script.



## **2.3. Some common problems with listening competence of HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors**

In general, most of the HPU's first-year students encounter difficulties of various kinds that refer to many aspects of listening English. Listening skills are thought to be essential for the students in listening comprehension but the students do not seem to get familiar with employing them; thus the listening skills a great source of difficulties for them. This study only focuses on some common problems which students feel hard to listen to

### **2.3.1. They are trying to understand every word**

Despite the fact that we can cope with missing whole chunks of speech having a conversation on a noisy street in our own language, the great numbers of students don't seem to be able to transfer that skill easily to a second language. One method of tackling this is to show them how to identify the important words that they need to listen out for. In English this is shown in an easy-to-spot way by which words in the sentence are stressed.

### **2.3.2 They get left behind trying to work out what a previous word meant**

This is one aspect of the problem above that all students speaking a foreign language have experienced at one time or another. This often happens when they hear a word you half remember and find you have completely lost the thread of what was being said by the time you remember what it means, but can also happen with words they are trying to work out that sound similar to something in your language, words they are trying to work out from the context or words you have heard many times before and are trying to guess the meaning of once and for all. Finally, spending a lot of time revising vocabulary and doing

skills work where they come into contact with it and use it, and show students how to do the same in their own time.

### **2.3.3. They just don't know the most important words**

Again, doing vocabulary pre-teaching before each listening as a short term solution and working on the skill of guessing vocabulary from context can help, but spoken language they practice this with words that can actually be guessed from context and that they work on that with reading texts for a while to build up to the much more difficult skill of guessing vocabulary and listening at the same time.

### **2.3.4. They don't recognize the words that they know**

If they have a well-graded textbook for their class, this is probably a more common problem than not knowing the vocabulary at all. Apart from just being too busy thinking about other things and missing a word, common reasons why students might not recognize a word include not distinguishing between different sounds in English (e.g. /l/ and /r/ in "led" and "red" for many Asians), or conversely trying to listen for differences that do not exist, e.g. not knowing words like "there", "their" and "they're" are homophones. Other reasons are problems with word stress, sentence stress, and sound changes when words are spoken together in natural speech such as weak forms. What all this boils down to is that sometimes pronunciation work is the most important part of listening comprehension skills building.

### **2.3.5. They have problems with different accents**

In a modern textbook, students have to not only deal with a variety of British, American and Australian accents, but might also have Indian or French thrown in. Possibilities for making a particular listening with a tricky accent easier include rerecording it with some other teachers before class, reading all or

part of the tapescript out in your accent, and giving them a listening task where the written questions help out like gap fills.

### **2.3.6. They lack listening stamina/ they get tired**

The first thing they will need to bear in mind is to build up the length of the texts you use over the course in exactly the same way as you build up the difficulty of the texts and tasks. You can make the first time they listen to a longer text a success and therefore a confidence booster by doing it in a part of the lesson and part of the day when they are most alert, by not overloading their brains with new language beforehand, and by giving them a break or easy activity before they start. You can build up their stamina by also making the speaking tasks longer and longer during the term, and they can practice the same thing outside class by watching an English movie with subtitles and taking the subtitles off for longer and longer periods each time.

### **2.3.7. They have a mental block**

This could be not just a case of a student having struggled with badly graded listening texts in school, exams or self-study materials, but even of a whole national myth that student from their country find listening to English difficult. Whatever the reason, before they can build up their skills they need their confidence back. The easiest solution is just to use much easier texts, perhaps using them mainly as a prompt to discussion or grammar presentations to stop them feeling patronized. They can disguise other easy listening comprehension tasks as pronunciation work on linked speech etc. in the same way.

### **2.3.8. They can't cope with not having images**

Student nowadays, they just can't cope without multimedia! Although having students who are not used to listening to the radio in their own language can't help, most students find not having body language and other cues to help a particular difficulty in a foreign language. Setting the scene with some photos of the people speaking can help, especially tasks where they put the pictures in order as they listen, and using video instead makes a nice change and is a good way of making skills such as guessing vocabulary from context easier and more natural.

### **2.3.9. They have hearing problems**

As well as people such as older students who have general difficulty in hearing and need to be sat close to the cassette, you might also have students who have problems hearing particular frequencies or who have particular problems with background noise. As well as playing around with the graphic equalizer and doing the other tips above for background noise, you could also try setting most listening tasks as homework and/ or letting one or more students read from the tapescript as they listen.

### **2.4. Motivation for HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors in listening courses.**

As mentioned above, listening is a necessary skill for learning and understanding English. Hlavisio Albert Motlhaka mentioned these motivations in term of students: positive atmosphere, teacher's role, student choice, positive feedback, learning autonomy, students' questions.

The first and foremost is *positive atmosphere*, central theme which emerges out of the research in the promotion of motivation is the importance of a positive atmosphere in the language classroom. A classroom with a more positive atmosphere can improve the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of students, thus positively affecting students' achievement. According to educational researchers like Shepard (2000), Stronge (2002), and Wilenetal.

(2004), creating a positive classroom atmosphere is primarily dependent upon the mutual respect and tolerance of everyone in the classroom while also promoting support for individual learning needs through a sense of common identity and community. For example, this can be achieved through the teacher's passion to actively involve students in the learning process, which fosters positive teacher-student relationship for successful ESL learning. Displaying of students' work. In this case, teachers should show that they have total confidence in each student's individual potential for progress. They should also treat them as individuals according to their academic needs and skills, and each one needs to feel the warm glow of inspiring confidence that their teachers show them.

The second one is *teacher's role*, a teacher has the greatest influence over the aspects which can either positively or negatively affect students' motivation. Therefore, a teacher's role is of the utmost importance in regard to students' motivation. One of the most important ways teachers can impact a students' motivation is through the way they interact with them. This viewpoint is supported by Ames (1992) who claimed that the manner in which teachers interact with their students in the classroom definitely plays a significant role on student motivation to learn ESL. In other words, teachers should create classroom environment which makes students aware that making mistakes in the learning process is part of a trial-and-error process which leads to successful learning as students discover their strength and weaknesses while teachers nurture students' abilities to succeed. Teachers can achieve this through cooperative learning and discouraging competition among students by providing transparent and comprehensive feedback geared towards the overall classroom outcomes that will improve student motivation.

Then, *student choice* as students' individual opportunity to make choices and assert ownership over their learning was an important aspect of exhibited

level of motivation. When students are given ample opportunities to choose how and what to learn in an ESL class, they become motivated and engaged because they develop a sense of ownership of their learning. In terms of instructional activities and techniques in interactive listening, several studies (Cavet et al., 2004; Katz & Assor, 2007; Lu & Julien, 2001; Myhill et al., 2009) found that giving students choices in ESL classes was a motivating factor to enhance their personal self-development and confidence building.

Next is *positive feedback*, can increase the intrinsic motivation of students, especially those students whose self-esteem is low and those who tend to doubt themselves. A supporter of positive feedback is Davis (1993) who states that teachers ought to give early and frequent positive feedback that enhances students' beliefs in their own capabilities in the classroom. This association between delivering positive strategies and improved performance highlights the value of simple teaching strategies that can have long-lasting positive effects. Positive feedback statements have been shown to provoke positive emotional reactions that have been suggested to increase motivation and goal-setting behaviors (Delin & Baumeister, 1994; Ilies & Judge, 2005). Beyond the positive verbal feedback commonly utilized by teachers, other types of positive feedback, such as simply looking a student in the eye and using physical contact like a high five are also effective. This means that ESL teachers should mainly concentrate on the students' positive aspects of their performance while encouraging them and offering necessary support for their negative aspects as an effort to acknowledge their effort and achievement which has an immense effect on their motivation (Davis, 1993).

*Learning autonomy* is a motivating factor for ESL learning which encourages students to become active participants in a learning process while teachers provide instructions and support to maximize learning opportunities to students experiencing difficulty to complete given tasks (Holec, 1981). This type of

learning paradigm is manifested by students' ability to be responsible and accountable for their own learning with the help from teachers where necessary. Scholars like Brownell (1994), Pearce, Johnson and Barker (1995), Jones, Llacer-Arrastia and Newbill (2009) and Wajnryb (1990) acknowledged the significance of motivation in ESL learning when teachers create an autonomous learning environment encouraging students to uncover their strengths and weakness and making it possible for teachers to teach in response to students' learning needs. In this case, teachers can promote students' autonomy by considering student choice and initiative as a cornerstone or fundamental factor for successful ESL learning and teaching in the interactive listening approach, which maximizes student motivation.

The last motivation is *students' questions*, are motivating tools which enable students to make sense out of what is being taught, confirm their understanding, and become active participants. King (1992) believed that having students ask and answer high-level questions facilitates their comprehension of the text material by engaging them in tasks that focus their attention on conceptualizing new knowledge with prior knowledge in order to maximize their understanding. Therefore, student questions become a motivating and significant ESL learning tool for students when teachers appropriately respond to students' questions; such responses encourage students to ask more questions. Moreover, student questions serve as an awakening tool for teachers to better understand students' involvement in the learning process because students will be able to express their understanding and teachers will become familiar with other parts of the lesson where they need to spend more time. Questions are an important part of the dialog between students and teachers because they allow two-way communication to occur (Marshall, 2011). Questions create a critical thinking environment in class that respects students' answers and interpretations in an

attempt to construct and process information (Brownell, 1994; Old father, 1993; Pearce, Johnson & Barker, 1995).

## **Chapter 2: Research Methodology**

In the previous chapter, the literature review reveals the key definitions of the research “*Motivation for the first - year English major students in listening courses*” as well as providing the ideas and opinions of some researchers on English learners’ listening-related issues and the motivation for listening courses, the reasons for this situation and their recommendations to the problem. More importantly, the author would like to contribute her own efforts on this issue by investigating the students’ conception, knowledge and attitude towards their listening comprehension to make recommendations and solutions in the most practical way. To address four research questions and achieve the aims mentioned, a study was conducted among the first - year English major students at HPU. Details of the population and sampling, the data collection instruments, the procedures of data collection and data analysis are discussed in this chapter-methodology.

### **1. Data collection methods**

To collect data for the analysis, the questionnaire is designed in English, then given to HPU’s 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors. The informants were directly and indirectly interviewed by the authors in an economical time to fulfill their task. The collected data were then analyzed toward academic approach.

### **2. Informants**

The survey was conducted with thirty-eight English major of the 1<sup>st</sup> year HPU, who have experienced nearly two semesters of English listening skill. The information about them is believed to be necessary for data analysis. Therefore,



they were requested to provide the following parameters: age, sex, duration of studying English and acquisition of English listening. As mentioned, the aim of the research is to find out the acquisition students' listening skill and the motivation for listening courses among freshmen in English major in HPU and then recommend some effective suggestion to the situation.

Below is the summary table:

Status Parameters		Informants
1. Age		1 <sup>st</sup> –year students (19 years old)
2. Sex	Male	8
	Female	30
3. Duration of studying English	Less than 5 years	3
	More than 5 years and less than 10 years	38
	More than 10 years	16
4. Acquisition of English listening	Excellent	0
	Good	22
	Fair	14
	Poor	2

**Table 1: Distribution of informants with their status parameters.**

### 3. Survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire is designed to investigate some factors affecting learners' listening comprehension, some common problems with listening competence of the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors and motivation for their listening courses. The survey questionnaire includes 2 parts:

**Part 1** is designed for general information about the of age, sex, duration of studying and acquisition of English listening

**Part 2** is designed to find out the English listening competence of the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors and some English listening – related issues.

**There are 4 questions:**

Question 1: How important is English listening skill?

Question 2: What are main factors affecting your listening comprehension?

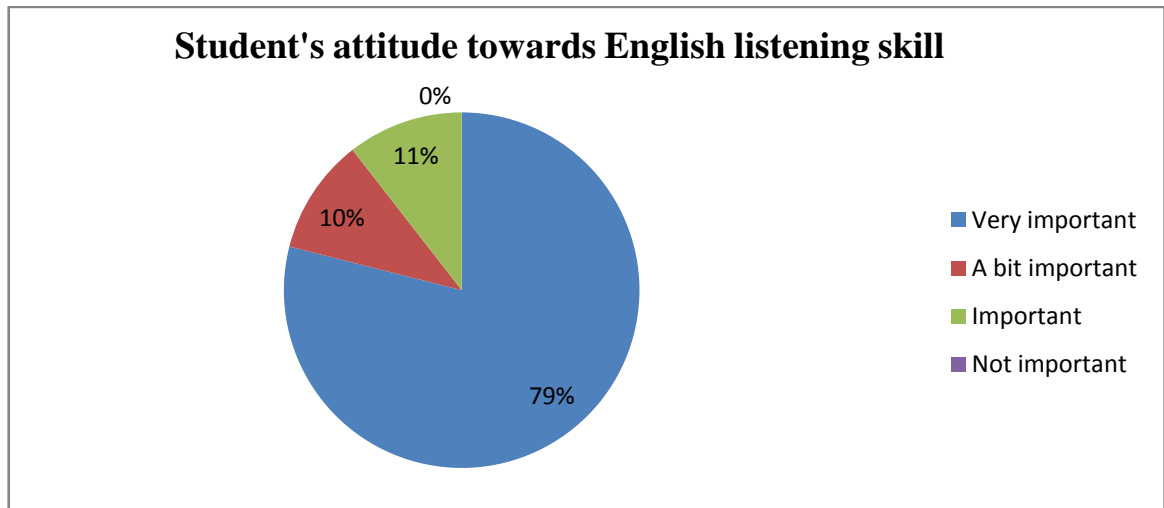
Question 3: What difficulties do you have in English listening courses?

Question 4: What motivation is effective for English listening courses?

Thirty-eight completed questionnaires were selected to analyze the data and conduct the research.

### Chapter 3: Data analysis findings and discussion

*Research question 1: What is the attitude of the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> - year English majors towards listening skill?*



*Chart 1: Student's attitude toward English listening skill.*

It is essential to have a close look at the students' points of views towards the importance of English listening skill. The chart reveals that 79% of the informants consider listening skill a very important language skill, 10% thinks it is a bit important and 11% considers it important. No one postulates that it is not important. The percentages show that students do realize the importance of listening skill in their language development. It cannot be denied that English listening skill is one of the four core skills of language acquisition. It helps students improve their pronunciation and conversational skills.

The listening competence of the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> -year English majors is, as a matter of fact, not qualified enough because when they studied at high school they didn't bear the chance to practice English listening frequently, they mainly concentrated on grammar-related skills. They had difficulties in English learning; especially the students seldom practiced English listening skill.

Students are only trained to be good at doing grammar and reading exercises. However, at higher education as universities and colleges, all language skills are focused, especially speaking and listening. As a result, the majority of the first-year students at HPU finds listening skill challengeable to master. In other words, it is a common problem in HPU that most of the students are unable to comprehend spoken English required at the very beginning level. Those are reasons why student supposed that English listening skill is important. They think that when they learn listening skill well, they can also learn other skills well.

***Research question 2: What are the main factors influencing the listening competence of the HPU's first- year English majors?***

It is admitted that listening is a complex active process in which learners decode and construct the meaning of the text by drawing on their previous knowledge about the world as well as their linguistic knowledge, there seems to be many factors that affect listening comprehension. However, this study only focuses on four main factors: Listener, Speaker, Stimulus and Context factors. The informants' attitude towards the factors impacting on their English Listening is clearly given in table 1.

<b>Main factors</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>A. Listener factor</b>	
1.Language facility, including phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic knowledge	21%
2. Knowledge of the world	3%
3. Physical condition	5%
<b>B. Speaker factors</b>	
1. Language ability: native speaker vs. nonnative speaker	11%

2. Accent/ dialect	7%
3. Speech of delivery	9%
<b>C. Stimulus factors</b>	
1. Discussion topic	15%
<b>T. Abstractness of material</b>	1%
3. Presentation mode; audio only vs. audio and visual	5%
<b>D. Context factors</b>	
1. Distraction during listening	13%
2. Interval between listening and testing	3%
3. Note-taking	7%
Other factors:	

**Table 1: The main factors influencing the listening competence**

According to the above table, no more factors influencing the listening competences are supplied by the informants and the highest percentage of the students' answers falls into "language facility" with 21%. It is clear that "language facility" is important factor including phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic pragmatic knowledge. Any time the students listen to any recordings, their phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic knowledge is not good enough, it is very difficult for them to catch the main points of the lessons. Because a chain of incoming sounds trigger schemata hierarchically organized in the listener's mind-the phonological, lexical, syntactical and semantic knowledge, the listener makes use of his knowledge of words, syntax, and grammar to work on form in the bottom-up processing (Rubin, 1994, p. 210). This process is closely associated with the listener's linguistic knowledge. The students also guess the content of lesson depending on the pragmatic knowledge.

The second highest percentage is option “discussion topic”, occupying 15%. It is suggested to let students discuss the topic before listening or even one time again after the listening to enhance their vocabulary. They will feel more confident and easier to listen to what the speakers say as well as guess or catch the main ideas of the listening tasks. Without pre-listening topic discussion, the students seem to be passive and get frustrated during and after the listening courses. That is the reason why topic discussion plays an important role in listening courses.

The option “distraction during listening” is the third highest percentage with 13%. For a short time listening task, most students can manage to concentrate on their duty, however, it may cause big trouble for a series of listening tasks during three periods. Distraction is unavoidable in such cases. Being neglected by the surrounding noise or other outside element can cause bad influence on their listening result.

On the contrary, the informants do not pay much attention to the “abstractness of material” (1%). Most of them are aware that listening is their main target, not the bulk of materials in front of them. It is hard to listen if the students use the abstract materials as abstract words or complex structures are unsuitable for the basic listening level, the first-year students. Therefore, simple and easy-to-understand materials are required to practice listening step by step.

The proportion of students choosing “knowledge of the world” and “interval between listening and testing” are equally low, standing for 3%. It is obvious that knowledge of the world is not really necessary. It is the words, structures, main points of the listening tasks that they need to clarify, not the world around. Practice makes perfect, thus, the knowledge of the world can be accumulated through each unit of listening. Also, the interval between listening and testing does not affect the listening comprehension, conversely, it bring

listeners pauses and refreshment to prepare for the next part. Their listening results, thanks to it, become better.

In conclusion, out of the main factors influencing the listening competence of the HPU's first- year English majors: Listener, Speaker, Stimulus and Context factors, listener factor, which includes language facility, physical condition and the world knowledge, occupies the highest percentage reaching 29%. A listener, who is an active participant in a conversation, generally has more background knowledge to facilitate understanding of the topic. The support is given to listeners as they listen. The more the support they get, the more possibility they have to create comprehension. Listeners need practice in recognizing these speech habits as clues to deciphering meaning. Interest in the topic increases the listeners' comprehension; the listener may tune out topics that are not of interest.

The second factor that affects students' listening proficiency is speaker factors, accounting for 27%. It is also a main factor in listening comprehension. The speed at which the foreigners produce words, the degree of overlapping in their speech, the variation in accents, colloquial language and reduced forms they use much intervene the process of listening. Then come to the context factor and stimulus factor, 23% and 21% respectively.

In short, the above are the main factors influencing the listening competence of the HPU's first- year English majors. Being aware of the rate of the listening interruption will help students find out the suitable methods for their listening process.

***Research question 3: What are difficulties in listening courses of the HPU's 1st – year English majors?***

<b>Difficulties</b>	<b>Results</b>
1. They are trying to understand every word	27%
2. They get left behind trying to work out what a previous word meant	19%
3. They just don't know the most important words	11%
4. They don't recognize the words that they know	15%
5. They have problems with different accents	12%
6. They lack listening stamina/ get tired	9%
7. They have mental block	0%
8. They can't cope with not having images	5%
9. They have hearing problems	2%
Other difficulties:	

Listening skills are thought to be essential for the students in listening comprehension but the students do not seem to get familiar with employing them. Most of the HPU's first-year students encounter difficulties of various kinds that refer to many aspects of listening English.

The chart reveals the percentage of the difficulties in listening courses of the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> - year English majors. In the findings, the students jot down no



other difficulties for they are the first students, having less experience of listening skill.

It is clear that the proportion of student choosing the options “trying to understand every word” and “getting left behind trying to work out what previous meant” are fairly high with 27% and 19% respectively. It is a common phenomenon among the first-year English majors. Not surprisingly, the lack of experience of English listening comprehension and less listening practice have caused the problem. In other words, it is a common problem in HPU that most of the students are unable to comprehend spoken English required at the very beginning level. Besides, students can cope with missing whole chunks of speech having a conversation on a noisy street in our own language; many people do not seem to be able to transfer that skill easily to a second language. Another is to give them one very easy task that they can do even if they don't get 90% of what is being said to build up their confidence, such as identifying the name of a famous person or spotting something that is mentioned many times. This often happens when they hear a word they half remember and find that they have completely lost the thread of what was being said by the time they remember what it means.

Moreover, the listener do not recognize the word you that they know (15%). Student can face the difficulties when they are listening. Although they are concentrating on listening, they get troubles because of their false pronunciation or stress. What the English native speaker's pronoun sometimes is quite different from the way students speak or practice every day. The misunderstood or missing the words therefore takes place rather often.

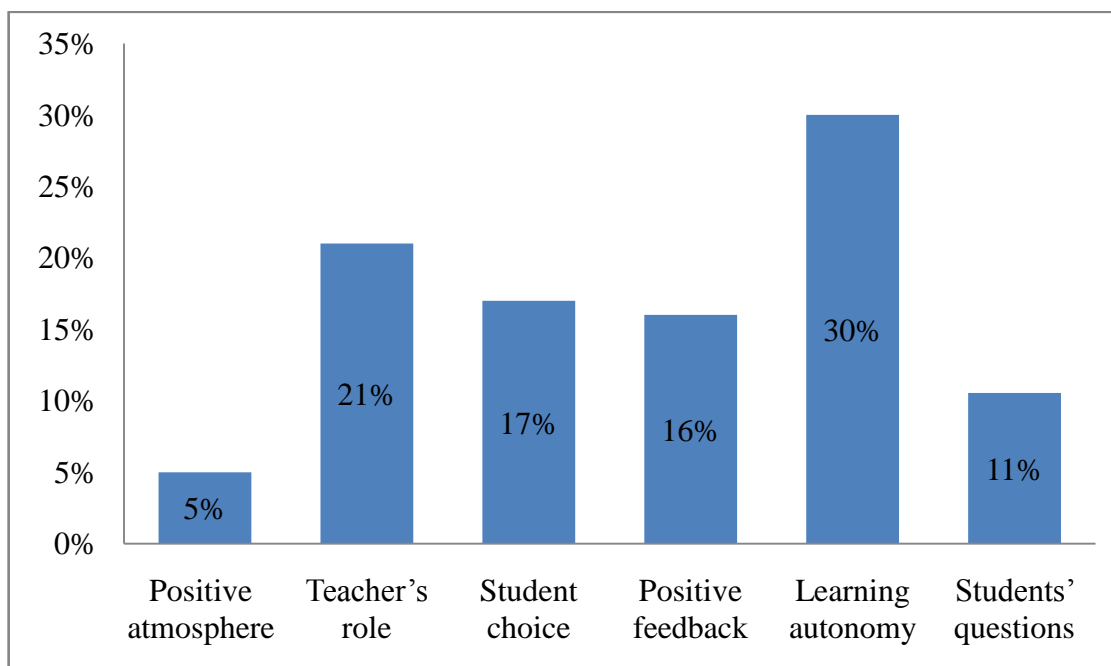
It is surprised to find that no one has mental block (0%). All of them try their best to listen to the tape. The percentages of both options “can't cope with not having images” and “having hearing problems” are then low at 2% and 5%

respectively. In reality, there are some students having difficulties with hearing problem and coping with not having images. Thanks to the development of technology, the use of advanced techniques in teaching and learning especially in listening skill such as listening software, references and special programs, English listeners can gain much benefits and improvement in their learning courses.

What can be seen here is that the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> -year English majors have to face the difficulties in English listening comprehension. They desire a great help from their teachers of listening skill to overcome difficulties in listening acquisition. They lack of sufficient listening strategies, thus they need to be provided with more listening strategies to become effective listeners. It is hoped that teachers are supposed to be instructors that need to be flexible in teaching techniques so that they can help students overcome difficulties in language learning, specifically in listening acquisition.

Consequently, teachers of listening should invest time in helping learners improve their listening skills and encouraging them to successfully use strategies so as to become better listeners.

**Research question 4: What motivation is effective for your English listening courses?**



**Chart 2: The motivation in listening courses of HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors**

The purpose of this study is to understand and find out motivation for the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors. Certainly, teaching and learning English are dependent upon positive motivation. In addition, the main purpose of using interactive listening is to create a critical learning environment where learners have ample opportunities to share and express their ideas and take control of their own learning as a way of enhancing their listening and motivation. As a result, a number of communication factors between teachers and their learners in this study relate to sub-categories which include: positive atmosphere, teacher's role, student choice, positive feedback, learner autonomy, students' questions which emerge from the analysis of this study and answering my research questions.

The chart shows that the learning autonomy takes highest percentage of 30%. Learner autonomy plays a significant role in motivating English learners. Many educational psychologists have found that students' need to be autonomous is a fundamental aspect of motivation in an English classroom by many educational psychologists in addition to the above-mentioned aspects. Without doubt, students whose initiative and creativity are valued in the learning and teaching process become more motivated and competent as compared to those who do not have the same privilege. This makes responsibility and freedom two concepts to be embraced if teachers want students to participate in a democratic and autonomous learning environment. This can be seen in a learning environment where teachers understand and let their students be in control of their own learning while providing necessary help where possible to achieve the learning and teaching outcomes.

The teacher role is also important in English listening (21%). Teachers can utilize learning tools which focus on positive motivation techniques that promote student participation and influence the students' ability to succeed. The teacher will give the guidance and tasks help students practice their skill. Students can have difficulties without teacher directions. It is observed that few students are sometimes absent and sleep in listening courses as they have no idea what they should begin with and what they can achieve. Therefore, the teacher should give some activities before starting listening, they feel relax and excited with the lesson more. The teachers should apply certain teaching strategies that attract the students' attention, curiosity in learning as well as stimulate their students in listening acquisition. It is hoped that teachers are supposed to be instructors that need to be flexible in teaching techniques so that they can help students overcome difficulties in language learning, specifically in listening acquisition.

Moreover, teachers' flexible professional practice nurtures autonomous environment which advances students' English listening courses acquisition and practice in and outside the class. This study suggests that successful learner autonomy is primarily dependent on how content in the classroom is related to everyday communication outside the classroom and how it is presented to students. This means that teachers should engage students in practical learning activities and examples so that students can continuously learn on their own either in class or outside. For this purpose, this study suggests that teachers should enlighten students about the purpose of learning English listening beyond the school premises than emphasizing it as a required course to fulfill the school curriculum in order to promote their motivation and interest for English listening.

5% is the lowest rate of the positive atmosphere. Although it occupies a small percentage, positive atmosphere is also a bit important. A classroom with a more positive atmosphere can improve the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of students, thus positively affecting students' achievement. The students cannot concentrate on listening because of noise and stressful atmosphere. It is, therefore, notable that the students expect a more relaxing or comfortable learning environment in which they feel comfortable and easy to develop their listening skill to their fullest.

With the given motivation, the students have no other motivation for English listening learning. The findings of this study indicate that instructional activities and techniques in the interactive listening approach student choice, learner autonomy, student's questions, positive atmosphere, positive teacher roles and positive feedback are motivational factors to enhance English listening learning and promote equal participation. In final consideration, the results suggest that the interactive listening approach serves as a crucial vehicle that

exposes students to varied learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom. This helps students to build confidence when they interact in culturally diverse situations and provides them with a new language to discuss issues or topics of interest to them.

## **PART THREE: CONCLUSION**

### **1. Conclusion**

This concluding chapter will summarize and evaluate the findings of the whole paper by summing up the results.

This research paper aims at investigating the students' attitude towards English listening skill, the main factors influencing the English listening competence of the HPU's first - year English majors, the difficulties in listening courses and suggesting motivation for their listening courses

The research was conducted with 38 HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> - year English majors from NA1601. The data collected from the survey questionnaires was illustrated and analyzed in details. Major findings regarding the research questions are presented as following:

***Research question 1: What is attitude of the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors on listening skill?***

The results are illustrated in the pie chart revealing the attitude of the HPU's first - year English majors towards listening skill. Almost students as high as 79% considered English listening skill is an important one. They realize the importance of listening skill in their language development because the listening competence of Haiphong Private University's 1<sup>st</sup> -year English majors is, as a matter of fact, not qualified enough. Listening comprehension is also a basic skill in English learning because of its influence on other skills: speaking, listening and writing. No informants think that listening is not important at all.

***Research question 2: What are the main factors influencing the listening competence of HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> - year English majors?***

It is easy to see that there is a great number of factors influencing the listening competence of the HPU's first-year English majors. This study only

focuses on four main factors: Listener, Speaker, Stimulus and Context factors. The survey shows that “language facility”, including phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic pragmatic knowledge, is the most highly influenced factor of listening courses (21%). To a broader extent, listener factor and speaker factor are two elements with a large impact on students’ English listening skill, 29% and 27% respectively.

***Research question 3: What are difficulties in listening courses of HPU’s 1st – year English majors?***

The research also clarifies nine problems in listening courses of HPU’s 1st – year English majors. Their biggest problem in listening is that they often try to understand every word (27%), as the result; they fail to catch the main ideas of the listening tasks. Then they get left behind trying to work out what a previous word meant (19%). They do not recognize the words that they know (15%) are also another challenge to the students. It can be explained that they have no experience and effective method in listening learning, as well as their inadequate English listening ability. Therefore, teachers of listening should spend more time on improving the students on their listening skills and encouraging them to successfully use strategies so as to become better listeners.

Research question 4: What motivation is effective for your English listening courses?

The pie chart illustrates the motivation for English listening courses. The main purpose of using an interactive listening approach for promoting greater student motivation and developing listening skills is to create a classroom environment where learners have optimal opportunities to communicate. The results of this study show that the learner autonomy has a significant influence on student motivation (30%). This means that teachers should create a learning environment that student can study themselves. That is the reason why the teacher role is the second effective solution to the students’ listening skill (21%).



Teachers can utilize learning tools which focus on positive motivation techniques that promote student participation and influence the students' ability to succeed.

## **2. Implication for ELT**

The results of this study reveal meaningful motivation for HPU's 1st – year English majors and they are also elements to contribute to the development of greater ELT, especially listening skill. Therefore, this study recommends that teachers should explicitly construct conditions for authentic usage of ESL. In this situation, classroom activities provoke students' motivation and attention when they are directly related to their interests outside of the classroom. In order to form the connections between what is taught in class and what they wish to do with ESL knowledge outside of the classroom, teachers should utilize a variety of inquiry tools to students at the beginning of the class to list their individual goals. This allows a teacher to provide students with communicative tasks that are geared towards their goal attainment. Due to these reasons, teachers should utilize students' goals as a point of departure in designing communicative activities to increase student motivation. To develop students' listening skill, students are encouraged to use ELT spontaneously to describe feelings and share ideas and opinions in order to improve their levels of practical proficiency. Therefore, learning strategies that student choices should be regarded as important tools to improve student motivation and ELT listening skills. Thus, teachers should build on strategies students already use and provide choices by negotiating with them in deciding, which communicative materials and activities work best for them in a positive atmosphere and community building activities. Also teachers should democratically involve students in class decisions. Finally, since we live in a technologically advanced society, it is recommended that teachers should utilize technology where possible to improve their students'

motivation and ELT listening courses. This could be achieved by using social constructivist approach where the learning and teaching objectives are manifest in interactive activities that are co-constructed by teachers and students. In this situation, teachers adopt a student-centered approach in which students are given the opportunity to learn from one another instead of primarily depending on their teacher. For example, students are presented an activity where they have to listen to a song or a radio show in the classroom and as a group present a summary of the song or the show for class discussion. The incorporation of these types of media into the classroom stimulates students' curiosity and desire for deeper understanding of ESL learning beyond the classroom because they are learning through an educational tool which is not typical in the classroom and which is more identifiable with their culture (Lumsden, 2005). However, it is worth-noting that this method alone is not sufficient when attempting to motivate students because a teacher's rapport with his or her students also plays a significant role on their motivation.

### **3. Suggestion for further study**

Due to time limitation, the study only presents the HPU's first-year English major students' main factors and difficulties in learning English and some relevant motivations for students. For further study, much work would be done on other 3 language skills including reading, writing and speaking. Hopefully, the research would not be restricted to the HPU's 1<sup>st</sup> – year English majors but be conducted among the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> – year English majors as well.

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**1.How important is English listening skill?**

- Very important
- Important
- A bit important
- Not important

**2.What are the main factors influencing the listening competence of HPU’s first –year English majors?**

Main factors	Results
<b>A. Listener factor</b>	
1. Language facility, including phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic knowledge	
2. Knowledge of the world	
3. Physical condition	
<b>B. Speaker factors</b>	
1. Language ability: native speaker vs. nonnative speaker	
2. Accent/dialect	
3. Speech of delivery	
<b>C. Stimulus factors</b>	
1. Discussion topic	
2. Abstractness of material	
3. Presentation mode; audio only vs. audio and visual	
<b>D. Context factors</b>	
1. Distraction during listening	
2. Interval between listening and testing	
3. Note-taking	
Other factors:	

### 3. What difficulties do you have in English listening courses?

Difficulties	Results
1. You are trying to understand every word	
2. You get left behind trying to work out what a previous word meant	
3. You just don't know the most important words	
4. You don't recognize the words that they know	
5. You have problems with different accents	
6. You lack listening stamina/ get tired	
7. You have mental block	
8. You can't cope with not having images	
9. You have hearing problems	
Others difficulties	

### 4. What motivation do you think it has most influence on your English listening courses?

Student motivation	Results
1. Positive atmosphere	
2. Teacher's role	
3. Student choice	
4. Positive feedback	
5. Learning autonomy	
6. Students' questions	
7. Others motivation	





## 1. Kỹ năng nghe tiếng anh quan trọng như thế nào đối với bạn?

Rất quan trọng

Quan trọng

Ít quan trọng

Không quan trọng

## 2. Những tác nhân chính nào ảnh hưởng tới việc nghe hiểu của bạn?

Những nhân tố chính	Kết Quả
<b>A. Đối với người nghe</b>	
1. Điều kiện thuận lợi về ngôn ngữ: ngữ âm, từ vựng, cú pháp, ngữ nghĩa và hiểu biết thực tế.	
2. Hiểu biết về thế giới	
3. Điều kiện về thể chất	
<b>B. Đối với người nói</b>	
1. Năng lực ngôn ngữ: người bản ngữ và không phải người bản ngữ	
2. Trọng âm	
3. Tốc độ nói	
<b>C. Tác nhân kích thích</b>	
1. Chủ đề thảo luận	
2. Tài liệu trù tượng	
3. Cách trình bày: giữa việc chỉ có âm thanh với việc có âm thanh và cả minh họa	
<b>D. Ngữ cảnh</b>	
1. Sao lãng trong khi nghe	
2. Khoảng thời gian giữa nghe và soát lại thông tin	
3. Nghe và ghi lại	
Tác nhân khác:	

### 3. Những khó khăn nào mà bạn gặp phải trong quá trình học nghe?

Những khó khăn	Kết Quả
1. Bạn đang cố gắng để hiểu mọi từ trong bài nghe	
2. Bạn cố gắng tìm nghĩa của từ đã nghe trước đó mà bỏ qua những từ đang nghe	
3. Bạn không biết những từ quan trọng trong bài	
4. Bạn không nhận ra những từ mà bạn đã biết	
5. Bạn gặp khó khăn về giọng điệu của người nói	
6. Bạn không có khả năng nghe/ bạn thấy mệt mỏi	
7. Bạn có vấn đề về thính giác	
8. Bạn không thể nghe được nếu không có ảnh minh họa	
9. Bạn có vấn đề về nghe	
10. Khó khăn khác:	

**4. Theo bạn, động lực nào dưới đây sẽ tác động tốt tới kỹ năng nghe của bạn?**

<b>Những động lực</b>	<b>Kết Quả</b>
1. Không khí tích cực	
2. Vai trò của giáo viên	
3. Lựa chọn của sinh viên	
4. Phản hồi tích cực	
5. Tự giác học	
6. Những câu hỏi của sinh viên	
7. Những động lực khác:	

Xin chân thành cảm ơn.