BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO

TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG

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KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH: TIẾNG ANH

Sinh viên: Nguyễn Thị Hằng

Giáo viên hướng dẫn: Ths. Nguyễn Thị Huyền

HẢI PHÒNG – 2014

HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVESITY

FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

A STUDY ON COMMON PRONUNCIATION MISTAKES FACED BY FIRST YEAR ENGLISH MOJORS AT HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

By   **: Nguyen Thi Hang**

Class   **: NA1401**

Supervisor   **: Nguyen Thi Huyen, M.A**

HAI PHONG – 2014

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO

TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Sinh viên: ....Mã số:...........................

Lớp: ....Ngành:...

Tên đề tài: ....

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NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp (về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI

<u>Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:</u>

Họ và tên:..

Học hàm, học vị:...

Cơ quan công tác:...

Nội dung hướng dẫn:...

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<u>Người hướng dẫn thứ hai:</u>

Họ và tên:..

Học hàm, học vị:...

Cơ quan công tác:...

Nội dung hướng dẫn:...

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày   tháng   năm

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày   tháng   năm

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN   Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

    Sinh viên   *Người hướng dẫn*

Hải Phòng, ngày   tháng   năm 2014

HIỆU TRƯỞNG

GS.TS.NGƯT. Trần Hữu Nghị

PHẦN NHẬN XÉT TÓM TẮT CỦA CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN

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 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. **Cho điểm của cán bộ hướng dẫn (ghi bằng cả số và chữ):**

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Hải Phòng, ngày ….. tháng ….. năm 2012

Cán bộ hướng dẫn

(họ tên và chữ ký)

NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ

CỦA NGƯỜI CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

1.Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu, giá trị lí luận và thực tiễn của đề tài.

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2. Cho điểm của người chấm phản biện :...

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(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)

Ngày.......... tháng......... năm 2014

Người chấm phản biện

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

In recent years, English has become a very popular language in the world and in Vietnam as well. People use English for communication, travel, for culture and trade exchanges and so many other fields in life. Vietnam is one of the countries which use English as the second language and as a result, English has adopted as one of the most important subjects in many schools in Vietnam. Four English skills are essential for every English learners of all ages, nonetheless, learners seem to focus on reading and writing rather than speaking. They spend a lot of time on learning grammar for weekly tests and examination in each semester, meanwhile they are quite afraid of speaking English. In high school, speaking English seems to be less paid attention than the others. They do not spend much time practising speaking in class and that is the main reason why they get difficulties with speaking. Moreover, many students are weak on grammar, they lack vocabulary and feel so shy when communicating in English.

In fact, there are many other factors that affect speaking English such as intonation, grammar, linking, rhythm, context and so on … and pronunciation is considered the most important one. During my speaking periods in class and speaking tests, fact shows that there are many students who get trouble with pronunciation like I do, especially English beginners and making pronunciation in English speaking becomes a popular problem. After long time of observing and investigation, ending sounds seem to be the most common pronunciation mistake of first year English majors at Haiphong Private University.

As can be seen, if students want to speak English correctly and fluently, they need to pay attention to pronunciation. Vietnamese is kind of language which has single words with no ending sounds while those play an important role in English pronunciation. That is reason why Vietnamese learners have difficulties with English pronunciation, particularly ending sounds and that is also main problem of first year English majors at HPU.

Therefore, in order to study this problem in depth, the author has conducted the research entitled: "*A study on common pronunciation mistakes*

faced by first year English majors at Haiphong Private University". Hopefully, this study will help students understand deeply about the issues that they have not noticed before and suggest some solutions to solve the problems and help them improve their pronunciation.

2.   *Aim of the study*

This study is to help first year students at Haiphong Private University realize their ending sound errors. It also helps students have awareness of pronunciation problems and give some suggestions to deal with their ending sound errors. This study will focus on two issues. The first one is to find out the most common English ending sound errors. The second one is about some solutions for their pronunciation problems.

3.   *Research questions*

These followings are three research questions of this study:

1)   What is the most common pronunciation mistake that first year students at HPU tend to make when speaking English?

2)   What are ending sound errors that students are likely to face?

3)   What are solutions to help students avoid pronunciation mistakes and solve their problems?

4.   *Scope of the study*

There are many mistakes of English pronunciation that first years students encounter when speaking. However, this study will not cover all problems in learner's pronunciation and there are so many different material resourses that require a lot of time and effort while abilities and experiences of the author are limited. Therefore, this research will focus on the most common pronunciation mistakes of first year English majors at HPU, that is ending sound. The author will concentrate on five common ending sound mistakes from survey questionnaire chosen by 38 students from NA1701. The author hopes this study will be a useful material for every student who concern this issue and help to get rid of their pronunciation mistakes.

5.   *Design of the study*

This study consists of three parts:

Part 1: Introduction

In this part, rationale, aims, methods, scope and design of the study were provided to introduce and to become basis for next chapters. Theoretical background about English pronunciation and ending sound errors will be presented in second.

Part 2: Development

This part will consist of three chapters:

Chapter 1: Theoretical background provides the definition of English pronunciation, its importance and some opinions of pronunciation errors. Consonants is also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: The study of the most common pronunciation mistake: ending sound errors. Survey questionnaire will be carry out in order to find out the most common ending sound errors that first year English majors at HPU tend to make when speaking.

Chapter 3: Findings and discussion: Basing on the data collection from survey questionnaire, the issues will be analyzed in depth in order to provide realistic information about ending sound mistakes of first year English majors . This chapter also is about some suggestions to avoid student's pronunciation problems which are mentioned above and solutions in order to help students have good pronunciation.

Part 3: Conclusion

The results from the investigation about ending sound problems of first year English majors at Haiphong Private University in part 2 will be concluded in this part.

PART 2: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. *Introduction*.

The aim of this chapter is to review theoretical background which related to English ending sound errors. Basic knowledge will be provided in order to help students consolidate their knowledge and understand the issues deeper with definition of pronunciation, its importance, pronunciation error and so on.

1.2. *Pronunciation*
1.2.1. *Definition.*

To every English speaking learners, the first thing they need to learn is pronunciation. They have to know how to pronounce a word exactly before they learn the other things, so what is pronunciation? In this part, definition of pronunciation will be presented to provide more information for all students.

First of all, pronunciation is *"the way a word or a language is spoken, or the manner in which someone utters a word. If one is said to have "correct pronunciation", then it refers to both within a particular dialect"*, according to Wikipedia.

In the AMEP Fact sheets that have been funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs through the AMEP Special Project Research Program, pronunciation was defined as: *"The production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language. Each of these aspects of pronunciation is briefly outlined below, and references for further study are suggested."*

Wikipedia Dictionaries indicates another definition of pronunciation: *"Pronunciation refers to the ability to use the correct stress, rhythm, and intonation of a word in a spoken language. A word can be spoken in different*

ways by various individuals or groups, depending on many factors, such as: the area in which they grew up, the area in which they now live, if they have a speech or voice disorder, their ethnic group, their social class, or their education."

Besides, pronunciation was also put as "the way in which a language is spoken" (Oxford Advance Learner's Encyclopedic, 1992:718). The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8th end (2008) makes clear pronunciation is "the way in which a language or a particular word or sound pronounced".

There are so many different definitions of pronunciation, this one from Oxford Dictionary seems to be easier to understand: " *pronunciation is the way in which a word is pronounced".*

1.2.2. The importance of pronunciation.

As mentioned above, pronunciation is very important in speaking. Many people ignore pronunciation when speaking English, especially students. They take further notice of word meanings while pronunciation is considered as the most important factor in speaking. The others can not understand if words were pronounced wrong. Therefore, in order to speak English correctly, pronunciation should be paid more attention to. Furthermore, right pronunciation can help with the process of acquiring new vocabulary. Pronouncing words is often a part of memorizing them in second-language learning, so getting a strong, basic foundation in correct pronunciation early on will equate to more effective learning overall.

According to AMP Fact sheets of AMP Research Centre, " *learners with good pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect"* and "*Yet many adult learners find pronunciation one of the most difficult aspects of English to acquire, and need explicit help from the teacher (Morley 1994; Fraser 2000). Surveys of student needs consistently show that our learners feel the need for pronunciation work in class (egg Willing 1989). Thus some sort of pronunciation work in class is essential".*

From Higgs Graph of Learner Needs, pronunciation is something that is very important to beginners. It allows them to feel more comfortable when speaking. Obliviously, no one can deny the importance of pronunciation. It considered as one of the most significant factors in English speaking.

Hence, students should take pronunciation into account in order to have good speaking.

1.3. *What is English pronunciation error?*

When learning any language, making mistakes in pronunciation is unavoidable, especially for new English learners. In the research written by Pham Cam Chi, she gave out the definition of pronunciation basing on the definition of Jenkins (2006:36) in Nguyen (2007), *"pronunciation errors are variants of pronunciation which prevent one communicator from understanding the propositional content of the other's utterances"*. Error can be defined *"the flawed side of learner speech or writing"*, which *"deviates from some selected norm of mature language performance"* by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:138).

Richards (1971) acknowledges two different kinds of errors: performance errors, caused by, such as, fatigue and inattention, and competence errors resulting from lack of knowledge of the rules of the language. In another research, Ellis (1997) states that *errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what the correct one is. However, mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because in particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what she or he knows* (Ellis, 1997).

In short, every English learner would make pronunciation mistakes at least several times while learning speaking and each one has their own problem. However, students should recognize and solve their pronunciation problem as soon as possible.

1.4. *Consonants*

There are so many mistakes of pronunciation that students often make when speaking English such as ending sounds, word and sentence stress or misunderstanding of vowels… but I would like to concentrate on the most common mistakes of students at HPU. That is ending sound.

Before studying about ending sounds, students have to learn about consonants first. In this chap, students will get some useful information about definition, classification and description of English consonants.

Figure 1: Consonants and vowels (Reprinted from Sound foundations 1994 by Adrian Underhill with kind permission of Macmillan Education, UK)

1.4.1. Definition

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic (1992:192), consonants are "*speech sounds made by completely or partly stopping the flow of air breathed out through the mouth*".

Consonants is also defined " *A speech sound that's not a vowel; a letter of the alphabet that represents a speech sound produced by a partial or complete obstruction of the air stream by a constriction of the speech organs*".

In English phonetics and phonology (Peter Roach, 2000:10), the term consonant can be defined as: "*sounds in which there is obstruction to the flow of air as it passes the larynx to the lips*". The production of sounds, consonant was defined: "*Consonant sounds are the sounds, in the production of which one articulator moves towards another or two articulators come together obstructing the air stream and the air stream can't get out freely.*"

1.4.2. Classification and description of consonants

Marianne, Donna and Janet (1996:42,43) presented that the consonants system was classified according to place and manner of articulation.
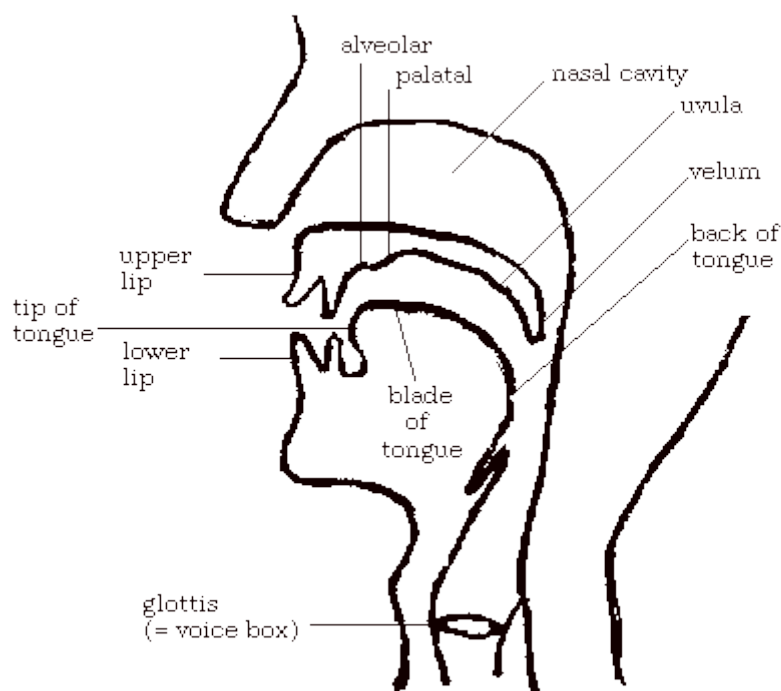
Figure 2: Diagram of the vocal tract showing the places of articulation

∗ According to **place of articulation**, consonants are classified into 9 types:

Bilabials: are the sounds made with the two lips pressed together or coming together. **/b, p, w, m/**

Labia-dentals: are the sounds which are produced with the lower lip touching the upper front teeth. **/f, v/**

Dentals: are the sounds which are produced with the tip or blade of the tongue touching the upper front teeth. **/ θ, ð/**

Alveolar: are the sounds which are produced with the tip or blade of the tongue touching or approaching the alveolar ridge. **/t, d, s, z, n, l/**

Retroflex: is the sound which is produced with the tip of the tongue curling back towards the back of the alveolar ridge. **/r/**

Palate - alveolar: are the sounds which are produced with the tongue tip or blade coming close to the area between the back of the alveolar ridge and the

front of the hard palate. /ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/

Palatal: is the sound which is produced with the front of the tongue coming close to the hard palate. **/j/**

Velars: are the sounds which are produced with the back of the tongue touching the soft palate. **/k, g, ŋ/**

Glottal: are the sounds which are produced without the active use of the tongue and other parts of the mouth. **/h/**

∗ According to ***manner of articulation***, consonants include 6 types:

Nasals: they are produced with the air- stream being stopped in the oral cavity but the soft palate is down so that the air can go out through the nose. **/m, n, ŋ/**

Plosives: are the sounds which are produced with the air-stream being stopped in the oral cavity and the soft palate is raised blocking off the nasal cavity. Then the two articulators come apart quickly and the air escapes through the oral tract. **/p, b, t, d, k, g/**

Fricatives: are the sounds in the production of which two articulators come close together but there is still a small opening between them so the airstream is partially obstructed and an audible friction noise is produced. **/f, v, ʃ, ʒ, θ, ð, s, z, h/**

Affricates: are the sounds which are produced when a stop is immediately followed by a fricative. **/ tʃ , dʒ/**

Lateral: is the sound which is made when the air-stream is obstructed at a point along the centre of the oral tract, with incomplete closure between one or both sides of the tongue and the roof of the mouth. **/ l /**

Approximants: are the sounds in the production of which two articulators come close together but without the vocal tract being narrowed to such an extent that a friction noise is produced. **/r, w, j/**

place manner	labial	labio- dental	dental	alveolar	palate- alveoral	palatal	velar	glottal
plosive	p b			t d			k g	
fricative		f v	q ð	s z	ʒ ʃ			h
nasal	m			n			ŋ	
liquid				r l				
semivowel	w					j		

Figure 3 : Classification of English consonants (Cawley, 1996).

1.5. English ending sounds.

1.5.1. Definition

To every English learners, the word " ending sound" is pretty popular in speaking. To understand easily, "ending sounds" are sounds that occur at the end of the word. It refers to the consonant sounds as the word can end with one or more consonant sounds (consonant clusters). Ending sounds are called Codas: *"The coda is the final consonant or consonant cluster."* (Barbara and Brian, 1997). According to Rachael-Anne Knight, 2003, University of Surrey– Roehampton (Understanding English Variation, Week 3).

There are 4 consonants in a coda. If there are no consonants at the end of the word, it has a zero coda. A single consonant is called the final consonant. Any consonant except "h, r, w and j" may be a final coda.

Example: Final consonant sounds in English are listed as below:

10

/p/ - sheep, stop, cheap

/b/ - transcribe, crab

/t/ - start, smart, seat, meat, wet

/d/ - ride, sad, bread, road,

/k/ - pick, speak, peak

/f/ - leaf, belief, roof, half, sniff

/v/ - leave, arrive, live, love, five

/θ/ - earth, health, worth

/ð/ - breathe, clothe, with

/s/ - stress, goes, rice, bus, six

/z/ - these, plays, buzz, prize

/tʃ/ - teach, watch, much

/dʒ/- bridge, large, village

/m/- come, some, warm, time

/n/ - than, man, sun, tin, cone

/ŋ/ - sing, spring, wrong, wing

/l/ - pool, smile, veil, call, girl

/ʒ/ - message, garage, massage

/g/ - beg, dog, clog, bag

/ʃ/ - crash , wash, rush

When there are two or more consonants standing at the end of the word, the terms "pre-final" and "post-final" consonants are used.

Pre-final includes: /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /s/

Post-final includes: /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /θ/

Two consonant clusters:

Pre-final: /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, s followed by a final consonant

Consonant plus post-final /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /θ/

Example: help, bank, books, blind etc.

Three consonant clusters:

Pre-final plus final plus post-final (e.g: stopped, speaks)

Final plus post-final plus post final /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /θ/ (e.g: next, thousands)

Four consonant clusters:

Most are pre-final plus final plus post-final (e.g. twelfths, prompts)

Occasionally there is one final and three post final consonants (e.g. sixths, texts..).

1.5.2. Ending sound errors

According to Mark (2008), ending sound errors can be defined as *"the inaccurate pronunciation of the final consonant in a word"*. In the previous research on ending sounds errors by *Pham Cam Chi* (*Errors 1*[st] *year students at E.D, Hulis*), the classifications of ending sounds errors were given out according to Treiman (1989). They are: *Cluster reduction, Cluster Simplification,*

Epenthesis, Coalescence, Omitting nasal and liquid sounds and phonetically possible spelling.

Hereunder is introduction about 6 types of ending sounds errors according toTreiman (1989):

Cluster reduction*:* This is the "deletion of one or more consonants from a target cluster so that only a single consonant occurs at syllable margins" (Grunwell, 1987: 217, as cited in Treiman (1989)).

Cluster Simplification: The error occurs when one/some elements of a cluster being is/are produced in a different manner from the target phoneme (Grunwell. (1987), as cited in Treiman(1989)) .

Epenthesis: This is the insertion of some vowel (normally a schwa) between cluster elements (Dyson & Paden (1983), as cited in Treiman(1989)) .

Coalescence: It occurs when the yielded pronunciation contains a new consonant composed of features from the original consonants. (Dyson & Paden (1983), as cited in Treiman(1989))

***Omitting nasal and liquid sounds*:** In consonants cluster consisting of prefinal+ final consonants with nasals (/n/,/m/) or liquids (/r/,/l/) as the first element, (/m, n, l, r/ + final consonant), nasals and liquid sounds are often omitted (Treiman, Zukowski & Richmond, Wetly, (1995)).

Phonetically possible spelling: In representing the first consonant of a cluster, spellers tend to spell words in an inaccurate but phonetically plausible ways (Treiman &Bourassa. (2000).).

In her research, ending sound errors were divided into 3 groups:

Reduction is omitting the final consonant or one element of a cluster.

Insertion is inserting a consonant to the ending of word.

Substitution is replacing an English consonant by a phonetically similar of Vietnamese sound. In current study, the findings of students' tapes recorded and observation will be analyzed according to the three types of errors as mentioned above.

CHAPTER 2: THE STUDY

This chapter is the most important chapter in part 2. In this chapter, student's pronunciation mistakes will be given out and a survey questionnaire are conducted in order to collect information and data for the research. First of all, the author will present participants, purposes and design of the survey questionnaire. Then, student's pronunciation mistakes in reality also are analysed by result from the survey questionnaire.

2.1. Participants and purposes of the survey questionnaire

All related data which used to analyse for this study were collected from a first year English majors class, NA1701, at Haiphong Private University by survey questionnaire. These students were chosen for two main reasons. The first one is pronunciation's importance. As can be seen that first level is the most important one because it is the basis for moving the next level and pronunciation considered the first step of learning speaking any language. Therefore, it can not be denied that pronunciation plays the most important part in English speaking. The second reason is that the first year English majors seem not to have much knowledge of pronunciation so that they tend to make pronunciation mistakes.

There are two common mistakes that they often face: ending sound errors. The survey questionnaire is designed for 3 main following purposes:

- To find out the student's attitude about English pronunciation and its importance.
- To get information of student's pronunciation problems in reality.
- To inquire about student's opinions on suggested techniques in order to solve the problems.

2.2. Design of the questionnaire

In this study, survey questionnaire are conducted to collect student's opinions and information about common pronunciation mistakes that first year English majors at Haiphong Private University have to face. The survey questionnaire include 10 questions.

Question 1, question 2 and question 3 are about student's attitude toward English speaking skill in general and the importance of pronunciation in particular.

Question 4, question 5 and question 6 are designed to find out student's interest in pronunciation as well as their experience and frequency of making pronunciation mistakes when speaking English.

Question 7, question 8 and question 9 get information of some common pronunciation mistakes that first year students encounter when speaking. These questions bring specific and realistic data about their common ending sound mistakes and pairs of vowels which they tend to misunderstand.

Question 10 is conducted to inquire student's opinion about some suggested solutions which can help them avoid pronunciation problems.

2.3. Findings and discussion.

After conducting the survey questionnaire and observation, it is clear that pronunciation plays an important role in speaking English and ending sound is the most common pronunciation mistakes answered by first year English majors at Haiphong Private University. From the result of survey questionnaire, there are five common ending sound errors that NA1701students have to face every time speaking English. For further understanding the issue, collected data and information will be analyzed and discussed below.

2.3.1. Data analysis

2.3.1.1. Student's attitudes on English speaking skill in general and pronunciation in particular.

Question 1: What is English skill do you like most?
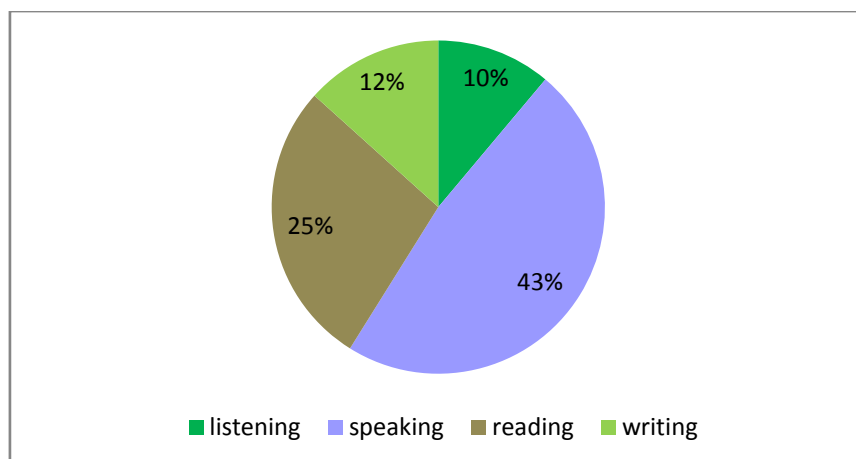
Chart 1: The most favorite skill of first year English majors students

The aim of first question is to find out which English skill students like most. The results given in chart 1 reveals the fact that four skills including listening, speaking, writing and reading all receive emphasis in language learning but the chart above shows that speaking is the most favorite skill of first year English majors with 43%. Their second favorite skill is reading with 25% and writing with 12% while listening represents only 10%. This proves that the number of students who likes speaking is the highest and they surely like speaking English although the rate of students who like reading is also pretty high. In order to communicate in English well, they should learn well both speaking and listening. However, amount of students who like listening is lower 23% than speaking.

Question 2: Which factor do you consider the most important in English speaking?

The author gives some factors that affect to English speaking and students will choose the most important one. From chart below, it can be seen that pronunciation is the most important factor in speaking answered by first year English majors. It holds 42% . Besides, the other factor also affect to speaking such as vocabulary (31%), grammar (12%), intonation (10%), spelling (3%) and 2% belongs the others. The result shows that pronunciation plays an importance role in English speaking and every student has awareness of this fact.
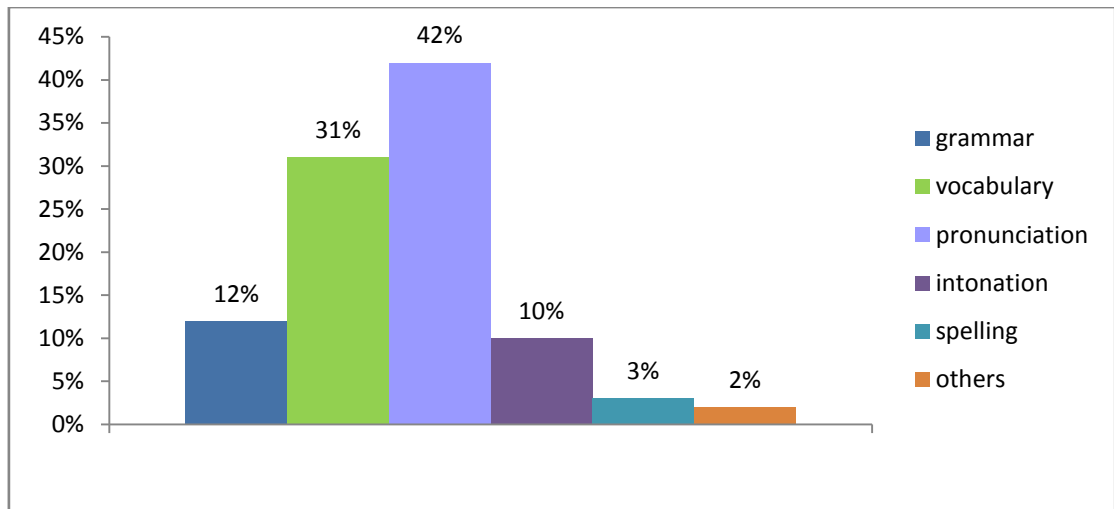
Chart 2: The percentages of important factors in speaking.

The next question is fulfilled to understand exactly student's attitude toward the importance of pronunciation in English speaking.

Question 3: How important pronunciation in speaking English?
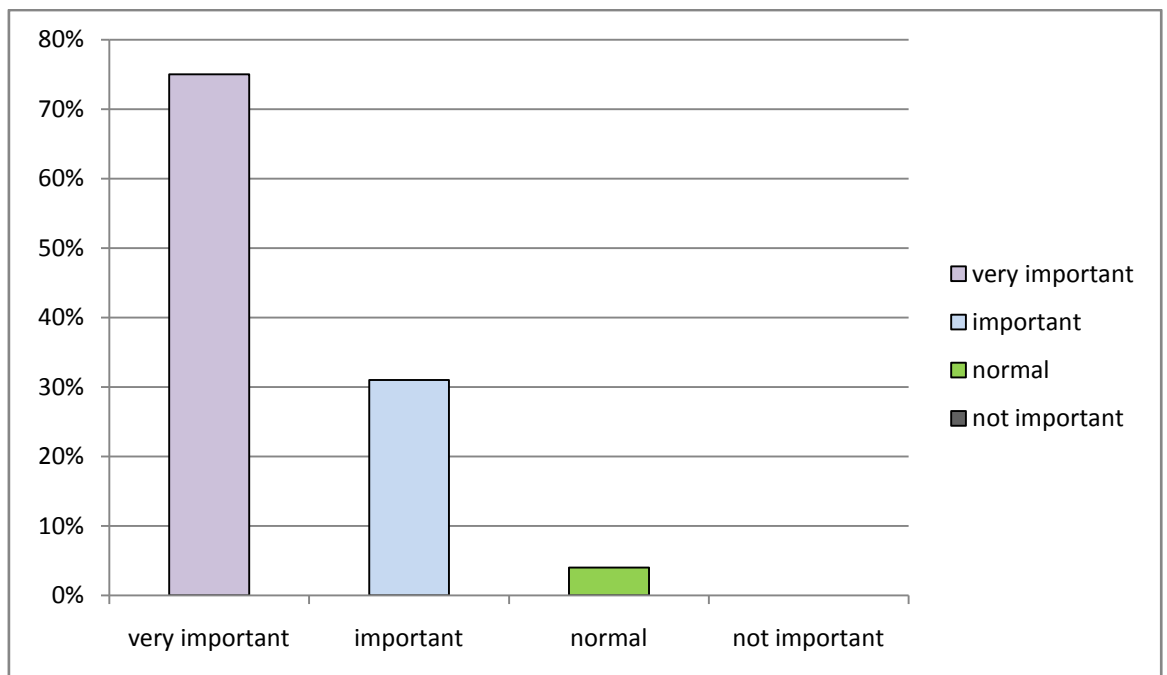
Chart 3: The importance of pronunciation in English speaking

The results from chart 2 reveals a positive point. It proves how much students care about English pronunciation. The result in this chart shows the

level of the importance of pronunciation which was answered by English majors students at Haiphong Private University.

The pronunciation importance is acknowledged by most of the questionnaire respondents and the good result is that everyone understands the significant role of pronunciation in speaking with 68% of whom consider it to be very important and 28% of them find pronunciation important. Anyway, there are still some students do not appreciate the role of pronunciation in speaking with 4%.

2.3.1.2. Student's interest in pronunciation and their frequency of making pronunciation mistakes.

Question 4: How do you like learning pronunciation?

The collected data is presented in chart below:
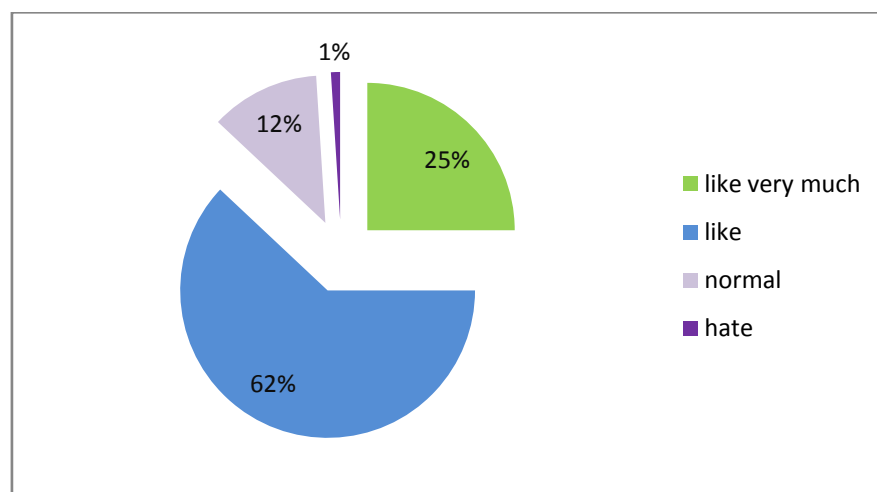
Chart 4: Student's interest in pronunciation

As can be seen from chart 4, most of first year students like pronunciation and it comprises 62% of total. There are 25% of students like it very much and 12% of them feel pronunciation normal and just only 1% of them hate it. Many first year English majors are interested in English pronunciation and it is a good result.

Question 5: Have you ever learnt any pronunciation lesson?

This question aims to know experience of first year English majors about pronunciation. The result from the survey questionnaire makes clear that the number of students who has learnt pronunciation lessons is quite low. It represents around 30% meanwhile the number of students who has not yet attended any pronunciation course comprise more than 70% of total. It means that first year students have not much knowledge and experience of English pronunciation, that is reason why they tend to encounter pronunciation mistake, even the basic mistakes.
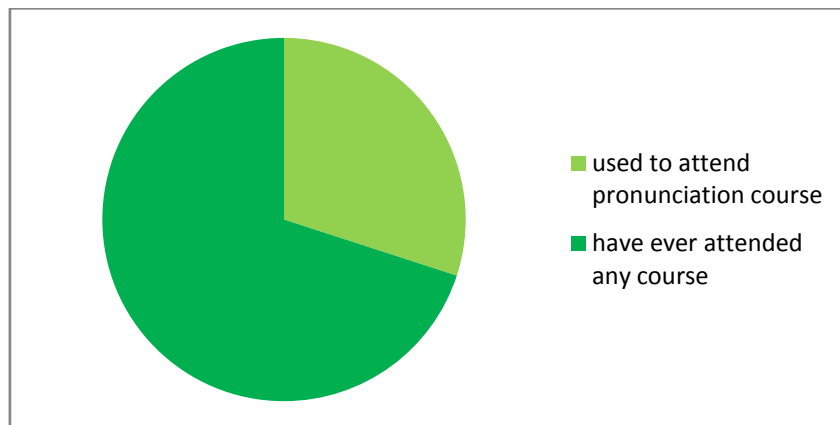
Chart 5: Student's experience in English pronunciation.

Question 6: How often do you make pronunciation mistakes when speaking English in class?
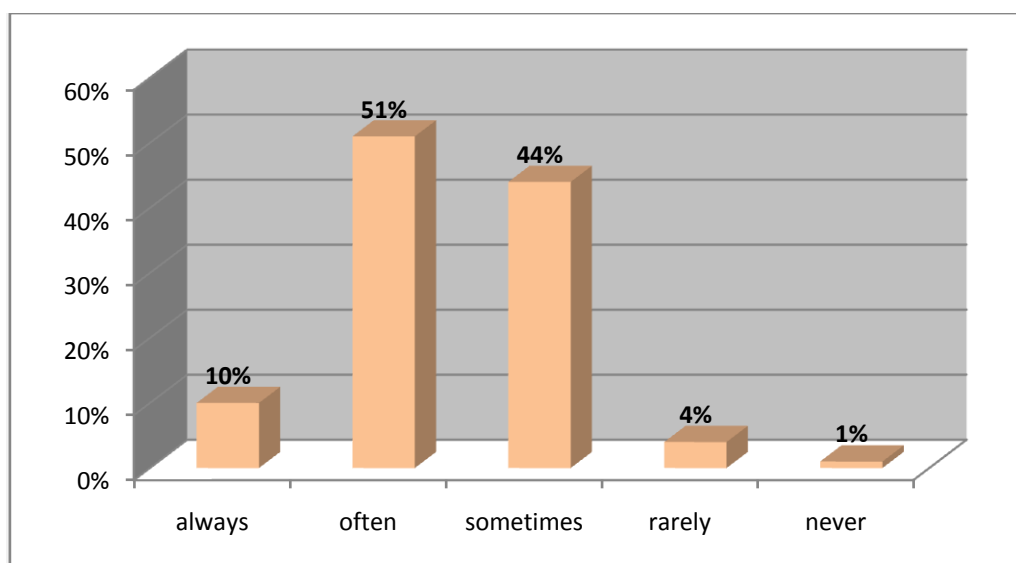
Chart 6: Student's frequency of making pronunciation mistakes

From chart 6, it is clear that first year students often encounter pronunciation mistakes when speaking English in class. As mentioned above, because knowledge and experience about pronunciation of first year students are limited and they seems not to concentrate on practicing pronunciation when learning at high school, therefore, they tend to make more pronunciation when speaking English. Most of them (51%) often face to pronunciation mistake and there is 44% of them sometimes get problem with pronunciation and 10% of students who always do that. Meanwhile, just 4% of students rarely avoid pronunciation mistakes and only 1% of them never face up to pronunciation problems.

2.3.1.3. Student's ending sound errors.

Question 7: Which pronunciation mistakes do you tend to encounter when speaking English?

There are many kind of pronunciation mistakes including word and sentence stress, the misunderstanding between short vowels and long vowels or others, but ending sounds seems to be the most common pronunciation mistake that first year English majors have to face when speaking English. The chart below will reveal that result:
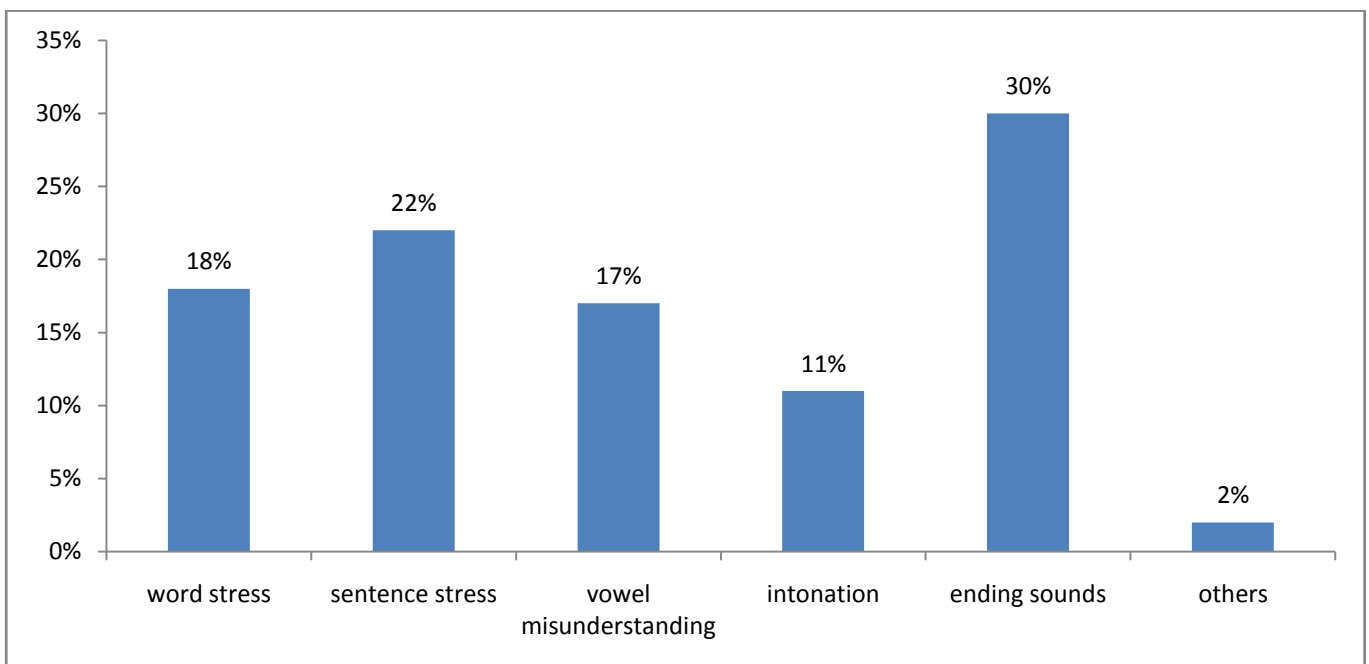
Chart 7: Student's common pronunciation mistakes.

19

The chart above indicates that ending sound is the most common mistake with highest percentage of 30%, then is sentence stress with 22% and vowel misunderstanding with 18%. Word stress accounts for 17% of common pronunciation mistakes, intonation with11% and 2% belongs others. When some questions for further information are given by author, students answered that they often omit or pronounce wrong ending sounds when speaking English. It is because they find some ending sounds difficult to pronounce and question 7 and 8 are conducted to find out student's most common ending sounds.

Question 8: What are your ending sound mistakes that you often make when speaking English?

The collected data about student's ending sound mistakes will be presented clearly in table below:

Ending sounds	Percentage
/p/	20%
/b/	18%
/t/	32%
/d/	20%
/k/	28%
/g/	16%
/v/	27%
/l/	46%
/m/	17%
/dʒ/	**85%**
/ð/	**78%**
/θ/	**82%**
/s/	45%
/z/	52%
/tʃ/	57%
/ʒ/	**75%**
/ʃ/	**80%**
/ŋ/	58%

Table 1: Percentage of ending sounds faced by first year students .

The table includes all enwinding sounds that was given out and there are five ending sounds with highest percentages chosen by students. They are /dʒ/,

/θ/, /ʃ/, /ð/ and /ʒ/. The sound /dʒ/ accounts for highest percentage (85%), then the sound /θ/ with 82%, next is the sound /ʃ/ with 80% , 78% is the percentage of the sound /ð/ and 75% belongs to the sound /ʒ/. This means most of students having the same problem of pronouncing these ending sounds, especially ending sound /dʒ/. For instance, students often get trouble when pronouncing these words: passenger, large, edge, village or damage…

For reasons, students find these sounds difficult to pronounce, then they have a tendency to omit these ending sounds or produce them in uncorrected way.

Question 9: What are your reasons for difficulties when pronouncing ending sounds?

In order to find out the reason why students having difficulties with ending sounds, the author continues to carry out question 9. The answers will be stated by chart 8.
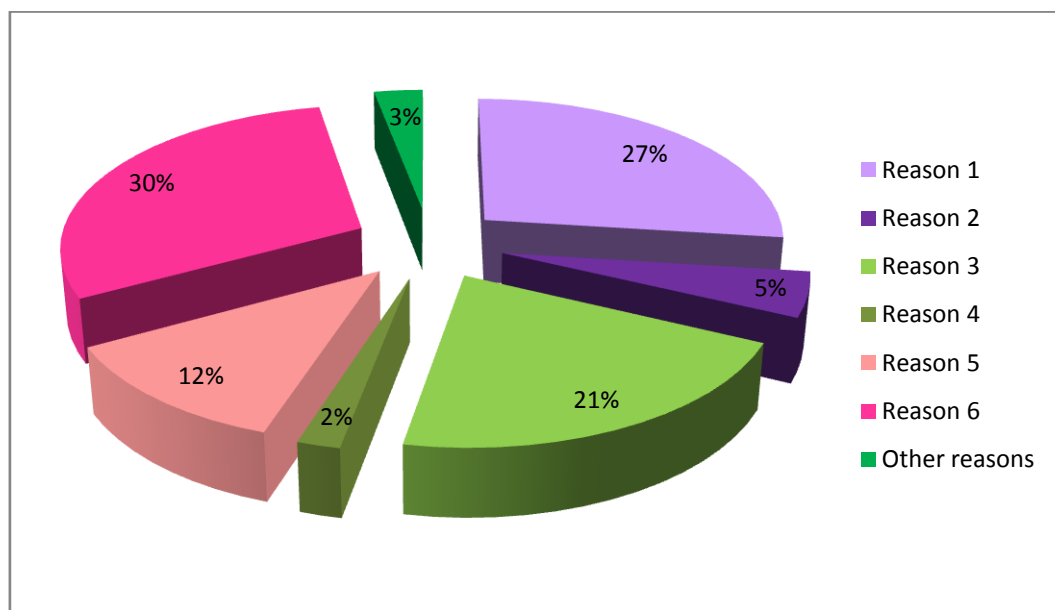
Chart 8: Student's reasons for difficulties when pronouncing ending sounds

Reason 1: There are no ending sounds in mother tongue.

Reason 2: I have not heard about ending sound when learning at high school.

Reason 3: I have not attended any pronunciation course.

Reason 4: It is not important to pronounce ending sounds.

Reason 5: I have no habit of pronouncing these sounds.

Reason 6: It is difficult to pronounce ending sounds.

Finding out the reason why first year students get trouble with pronouncing ending sounds is considered as a key to give out the solution for this problem. According to the result of survey questionnaire, there are around 6 specific reasons chosen by students. Chart 8 reveals that the main reason of making ending sound mistakes is reason 6 (30%). All asked students agree that ending sounds are very difficult to pronounce. They do not know how to produce that sounds in correct way. For example, with word "finish", students sometimes pronounce /ˈfinis/ instead of /ˈfiniʃ/.

It is obvious that reason 1 takes second rank with fairly high percentage (27%) of total. As mentioned in part 1, Vietnamese is one of languages having no ending sounds, so that students get difficult when pronouncing those. In question 5, the number of students who has not attended any pronunciation course comprising very high percentage (21%). Hence, that students can not produce exactly ending sounds and it is not surprising. Not practicing ending sounds every time speaking English becomes a bad habit to many students and it accounts for 12%. Lower percentages belong to reason 2 with 5%, reason 4 with 2% and other reasons occupy 3%.

2.3.1.4. Student's opinion on pronunciation solutions.

Question 10: Which solution do you agree to use in order to avoid pronunciation mistakes?

Solutions	Agree		Disagree
	Interesting	Not interesting	
Playing games	100%		
Practicing tongue twisters	45%	35%	20%
Transcribing words when learning vocabulary	50%	35%	15%
Reading pronunciation books	40%	52%	8%
Singing English songs	100%		
Doing pronunciation exercises in text books	43%	45%	12%
Recording yourself when speaking English	60%	18%	22%

Table 2: Student's opinion about solutions to deal with pronunciation mistakes.

The table above presents that playing games and singing English songs are the most student's favourite solutions. 100% of students like playing games and sings the songs. It means these solutions are the best suggestions in order to avoid pronunciation mistakes. It helps students deal with their pronunciation problems as well as interest them in learning.

Besides, there are many other great solutions agreed by students. They are praising tongue twisters , doing exercises, self- recording, reading books or transcribing words and so on. To tongue twisters, 45% total of 80% students feel them interesting and 35% of them find tongue twister not interesting and 20% of them disagree. From student's view, many admit that they disagree with doing exercises in text books, it makes up 12%. Some students think it is not interesting (43%), some ones do not (45%). According to the table, students seem to like self- recording with 60% and 22% of them disagree with this suggestion. Although there is 92% of students who agree reading books, 52% feel it is not interesting. Students nowadays tend to prefer such activities: dancing, singing, playing games… than reading books. That is reason why just

40% of students like reading. It is undeniable that transcribing words when learning vocabulary is necessary for every English learners. It is an important step if the learners want to study a new word. Therefore, amount of students, who feel interested in transcribing words, comprise 50% and 15% of students disagree with this solution.

In short, students can use a lot of solutions for their pronunciation problems and each ones have their own ways in order to get rid of the issues.

CHAPTER 3: SUGGESTIONS TO DEAL WITH STUDENT'S PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS.

After conducting the survey questionnaire and analyzing the collected data, the most difficult ending sounds is pointed out. It can be seen that pronunciation mistakes need to be solved as soon as possible. If they face that problems long time, it can become bad habit and it is really hard to change. Therefore, first year English majors at HPU need to find out solutions for this situation. In this chapter, the author will provide some suggestions in order to avoid student's pronunciation mistakes, especially ending sound mistakes.

3.1. Suggestions to accurately pronounce 5 common ending sounds /dʒ/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /ð/ and /ʒ/.

Of five common ending sound errors: /dʒ/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /ð/ and /ʒ/, the sound /dʒ/ seems to be the most difficult sound because students find it is difficult to pronounce. These five common ending sound errors account for the highest percentages (85%), (82%), (80%), (78%) and (75%) and students often omit them when speaking English. It means students tend to ignore final sounds that they find difficult to pronounce. When the final sounds are not pronounced in correct way, it is hard for other people understand, particularly native speakers.

Following are some suggested techniques to accurately pronounce 5 ending sounds will be presented. First, the consonant /dʒ/, is produced by pressing the front part of the tongue against the front part of the roof of the mouth as is shown in the figure. The air is released slowly after the blockage is removed. This is a voiced sound and vocal cords vibrate in producing this sound. See the figure given below and practise this sound.
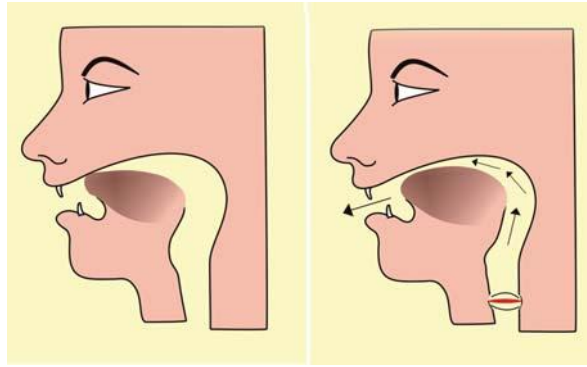
Figure 4: Production of the sound /dʒ/

Following are some examples to illustrate the sound /dʒ/: Orange, bridge, jelly, juice, jug, vegestables, jam, charge, giant…

The second difficult sound is /θ/. There are may students who get trouble with pronouncing this sound. Therefore, suggested technique below will be useful for students when produce this sound. The first step to pronounce this sound, you should their tongue between your teeth, then blow air without using your voice.
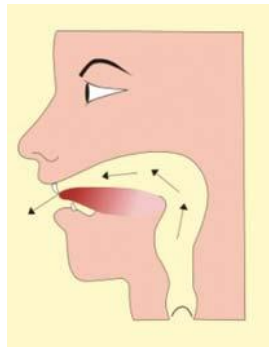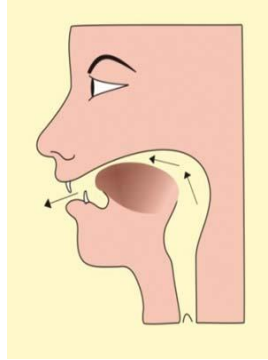

Figure 5: Production of sound /θ/.

Some examples to practise this sound: Teeth, path, with, breath, bath, thumb, three, theatre, month, health, thick…

The next sound that students finding difficult to pronounce is /ʃ/. In order to pronounce this sound, you need to first practise sound /s/. It means you have

to touch your upper teeth with the tip of the tongue, then blow out the air between the teeth and the tongue without using voice. Next, move the tip of the tongue further back to pronounce sound /ʃ/. See picture below and practise this sound.

Figure 6: Production of sound /ʃ/.

For instance: Shoes, crush, shell, finish, fish, show, shoot, wish, emotion, fashion, mission…

The fourth difficult ending sound is /ð/. In order to pronounce this sound, you should practise the sound /θ/ first. Then add voice to it to produce the target sound. You can see image below to know more about how to pronounce this sound:
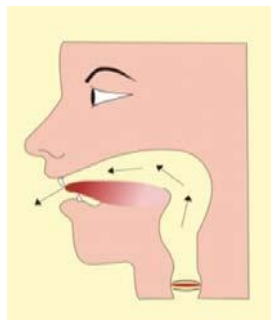
Figure 7: Production of sound /ð/.

Here are some words to practise this sound: Father, clothes, feather, brother, mother, without…

The final sound /ʒ/ has lowest percentage (72%). This sound seems to be easier than four sounds above. If you want to produce this sound, you need to first practise the sound /ʃ/, then use your voice to make /ʒ/.
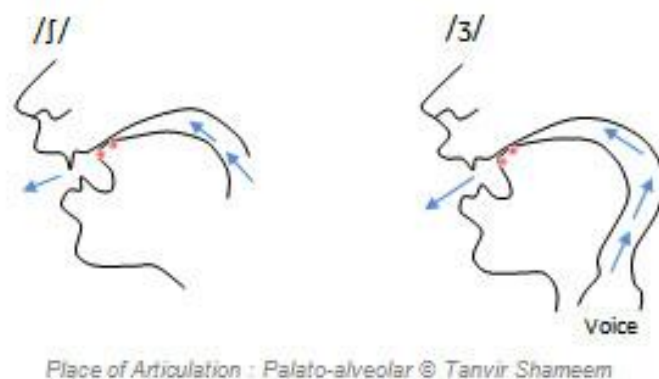
Figure 8: Production of sound /ʒ/.

Some suggested to practise this sound: Television, garage, measure, treasure, casual, collision, pleasure…

3.2. Suggested solutions to avoid ending sound errors and have good pronunciation.
3.2.1. Suggested tips

As mentioned above, many students at are afraid to speak English, even they spent many years for learning grammar at schools. They just learn for passing the regular tests and examinations while they can not use English in reality. In fact, there are many students have good results from tests and examinations, they can only write grammatical sentences while they are bad at communicating in English. That is problem of not only students at HPU but also many other Vietnamese students. They are bad at speaking because they are afraid of making mistakes, especially with pronunciation or stress. Therefore, in order to help students with this problem, some suggested tips would be provided for improving their pronunciation and speaking skill.

First tip: Listen to yourself

If you can not hear your pronunciation problem, it is hard to correct it. Therefore, recording your speech and comparing it to native speakers, you will recognize your problem and change it.

Second tip: Learn to talk like a baby.

In order to pronounce ending sounds, you need to following three stages: initial, intermediate and final stage. For example:

With the word "look", you should pronounce it "lúc kờ" as two individual sounds in initial stage. Then you could pronounce first sound louder than the second one. Finally, you would pronounce "u" consonant longer and to second sound, " ờ" in "kờ" would disappear and "look" should be pronounced as " lu k".

Third tip: Copy native speakers

One of the greatest ways to have good pronunciation is copy native speakers. Listen foreigner's programs, movies and repeat what you are hearing even if you are not sure what they are saying yet. You can also sing a song in English. What you need to do is imitate the lyric which you are hearing. Singing a song helps you relax as well as improving your intonation and your rhythm.

Fourth tip: Speak slowly.

Many English learners say that speaking too quickly reinforces their bad habits. Practice a few basics each day. Start with single sounds, then move on to words, and finally, string several words together.

Fifth tip: Be poetic.

Good pronunciation is more than just mastering individual sounds. It's also understanding intonation (the rise and fall of the voice) and stress (some sounds in words and some words in sentences are louder or clearer than others). Reading poems, speeches and songs aloud, concentrating on the word stress and intonation will help you improve your pronunciation and speaking.

3.2.2. Games and exercises.

In order to have good pronunciation, students should not only remember the suggested techniques mentioned above, but also practise pronouncing ending sounds and vowels many times. However, if they just pronounce without passion, they will feel bored and disappointed little by little. Therefore, playing pronunciation games is a perfect solutions for this problem. It can help students have better pronunciation and also makes them feel interesting and animated. Indeed learning and playing games usually create a exciting atmosphere for students. They will have motivation to learn more. These following games are provided to have better pronunciation and English speaking also.

Game 1: Rhyming Pairs

This is one kind of pronunciation game. Many words are prepared and mixed up. Students need to find the words that rhyme and drag them side- by- side. It is another fun way to improve English pronunciation and spelling.
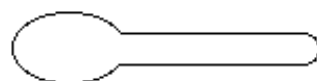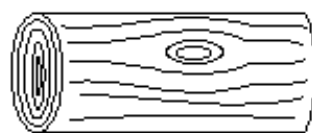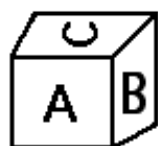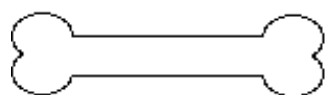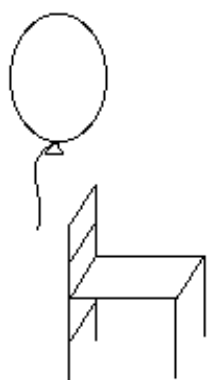
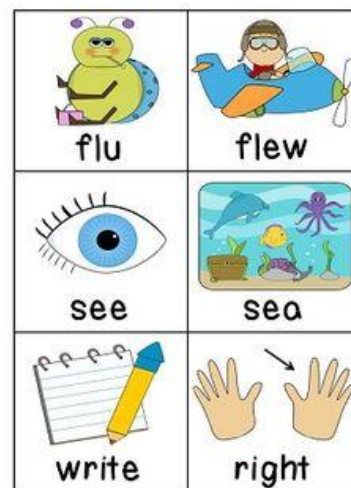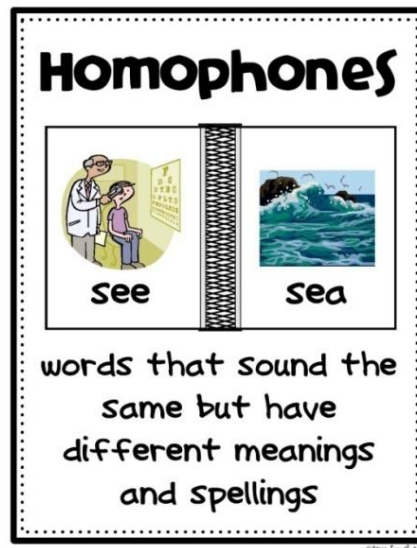For instance: some- sum, mouse- house, lake- break, cook- book….
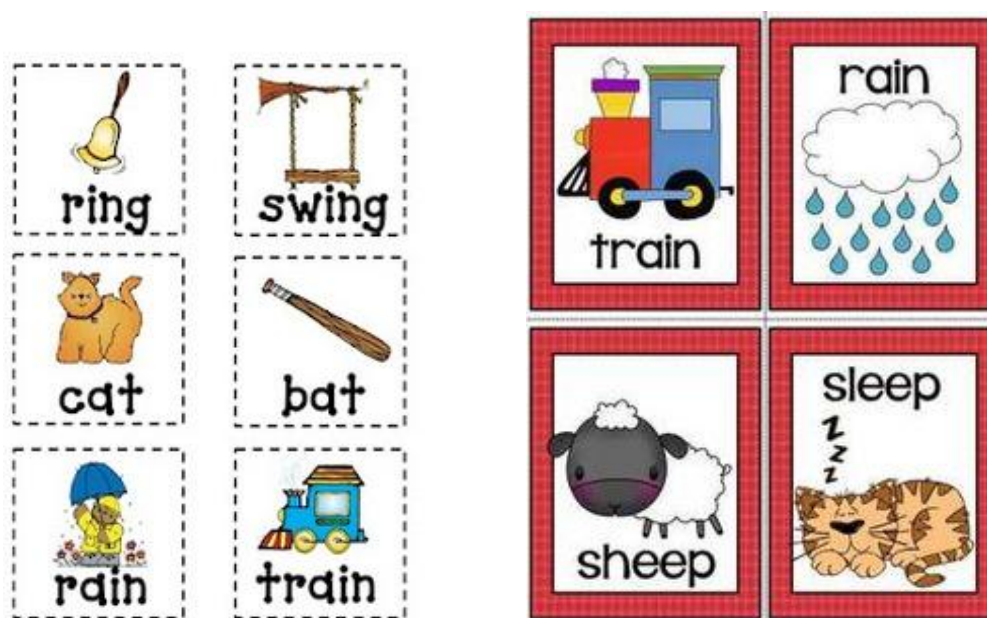
This is an rhyming pairs exercise for students. With this exercise, they can practise pronunciation, especially vowels and they also learn more new words via pictures.

Exercise : Match the pictures that rhyme.
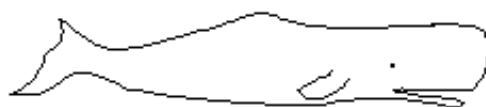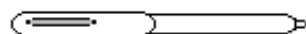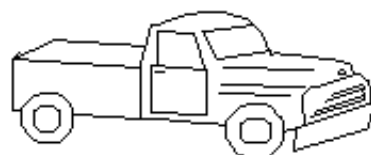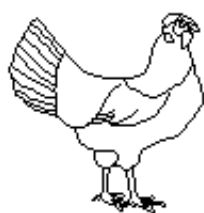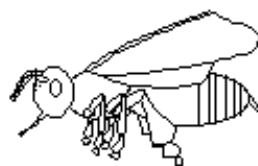
Game 2: Homophones Matching Game.

This game also aims to develop student's pronunciation skill. In order to proceed this game, teacher need to prepare homophone cards, then mix them up. Finding the homophones that match each other, and drag them side-by-side are all things students need to do in this kind of game. It is a really fun way to improve your English pronunciation and your spelling at the same time.

Match the picture to the correct homophone.

be
boar
signet
ate
ewe
I
bee
deer
shoe
acts
eight
bare
eye
cygnet
shoo
you

8

Match the words with the pictures.

Tornado

Sleet

Freezing Rain

Sunny

Partly Cloudy

Thunder

Hurricane

Thunderstorm

Lightning

Hail

Snow

Rain

Wind

Temperature

Game 3: Bingo game

Another kind of pronunciation game is bingo. It helps students learn more vocabulary and reaction.

To play this game, first of all, teacher will prepare some words, about 30-35 words and write each word on cards. Then, class can be divided into two groups and cards are given for each group. When the teacher speaks a word, which group finding out correctly that word in shortest time will become winner.

Game 4: Spelling game

This game is easy to play and useful. It helps students practise not only their pronunciation but also their listening.

In order to play this game, firstly, class is divided into 3 groups with 3 columns on the board. Then, three students in each group will be chosen to be the first players. Teacher will prepare some words and when the teacher start the game and speak words out. First students will run to the board and write the words on letter. Members of group will alternate their turns until the game finishes. After completing the game, which group having more correct the answers would be the winner.

3.2.3. Tongue twisters

Tongue twister is a sentence or phrase that is difficult to articulate clearly and quickly, such as *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper…*

Here are some tongue twisters to practise:

"Betty Botter bought a bit of butter.
The butter Betty Botter bought was a bit bitter
And made her batter bitter.
But a bit of better butter makes better batter.
So Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter
Making Betty Botter's bitter batter better".

"Swan swam over the pond,
Swim swan swim!
Swan swam back again -
*Well swum swan!".*

"How much wood would a woodchuck chuck
If a woodchuck could chuck wood?
He would chuck, he would, as much as he could,
And chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would
If a woodchuck could chuck wood".

3.2.4. Good books for pronunciation.

Book 1: Ship or sheep by Ann Baker.

The first book which students should have is " ship or sheep" by Ann Baker. This one will help students to recognize and produce English sounds, and includes work on stress and intonation. Students may be change their pronunciation in a good way. This book is a perfect choice for every English learner.
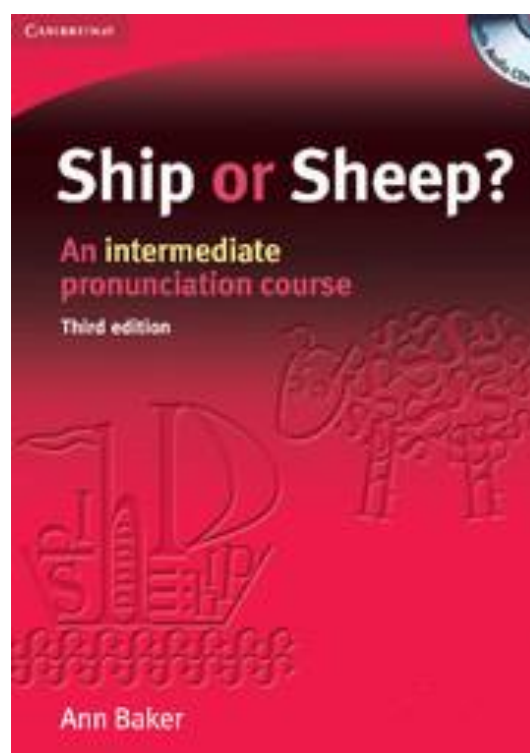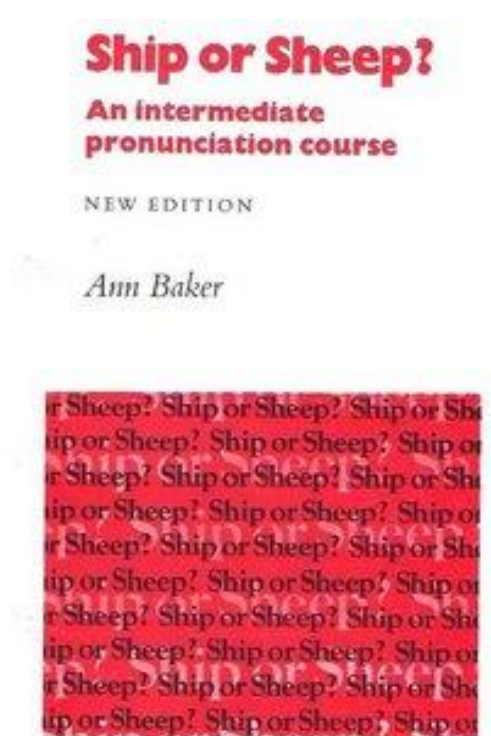
Book 2: New Headway Pronunciation Course- Pre-intermediate by Bill Bowler, Sue Parminter (Cornelsen & Oxford University Press | 2001-12-01)
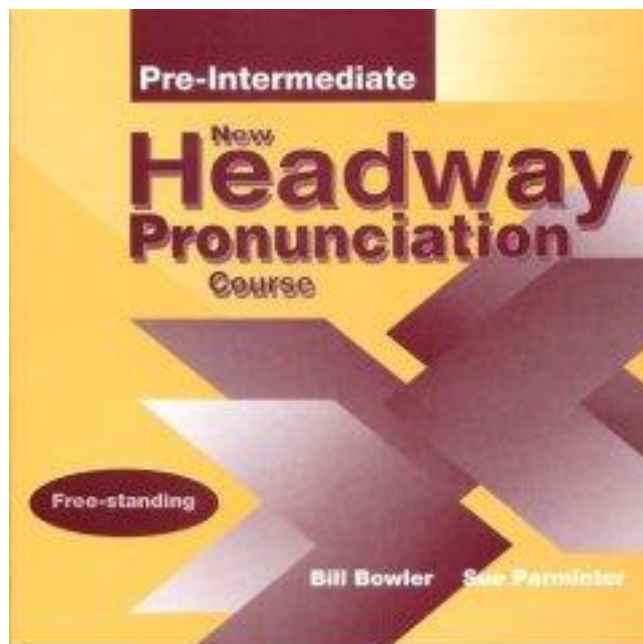
The book is a mixture of phonemes that different nationalities find difficult; and a range of Stress, Rhythm and Intonation subjects all covered in a very practical way and including times and dates. This is a practical and imaginative addition to the New Headway.

It helps students to express themselves clearly and confidently by training them in the key areas of pronunciation. There is practice of individual sounds, ith a guide to suitable exercises for speakers of particular languages. Training is given in stress and intonation patterns for accurate, functional use. Help is provided with the features of connected speech.

Book 3: English Pronunciation Made Simple by Paulette Dale and Lillian Poms.
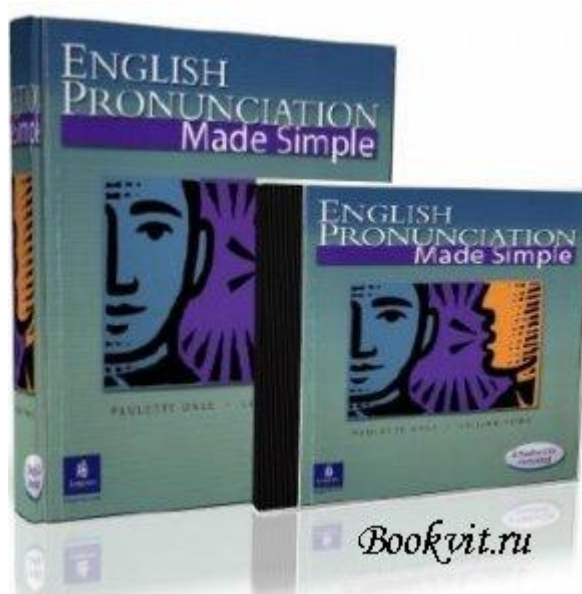
This book explains each individual sound in standard American English, as well as all the other elements of spoken English: rhythm, stress, intonation, consonant clusters, plurals, contractions, past tense verbs, etc. This is a great book for teachers to use as a classroom textbook as there are a lot of exercises teachers will find useful in the classroom. It is better for teachers than for students, as the 2 included CDs don't say all the words and exercises. This book also helps to learn the IPA as it uses the IPA symbols to help explain American English pronunciation.

3.2.5. English songs.

Obviously, students of all ages have strong interest in music and nobody can deny how powerful music is or that it affects our feelings and energy levels.

Music creates desired moods- to make us feel happy, enjoy movements and dance, to help us relax and focus. Therefore, it is a resource that should be taken into account.

Songs have become an integral part of our language experience, and as such are a very useful tool in the foreign language classroom. They provide an excellent way to improve language skills, especially speaking skill. Hence, learning and singing English songs is a perfect way to practise pronunciation as well as learn more vocabulary and structures. In addition, singing songs will make students feel interested in lessons.

There are some activities based on song's lyrics that help students focus on sounds and improve pronunciation.

Activity 1:

Firstly, we replace some of the rhymes in the song, with a gap. Students listen and fill the gaps, using the song to guide them. More analytically minded students can then categorise the words according to sounds. Alternatively, we highlight differences between sounds, using the lyrics to show how changing one sound can alter meaning (minimal pairs).

For example:

/ ɔː/ : talk – New York – walk

/ eɪ /: day – say

/ʌ/ : one – sun – run

(From *An Englishman in New York* by Sting)

Activity 2:

We choose six words from a song from which minimal pairs can be created. We write the pairs separately on cards and give out one set per group of four or five students. The students then match the pairs. They then listen to the song and 'grab' the correct one. Choices are then checked against the lyrics.

For instance:

o   heaven - even

o   hunger - anger

o   man- mad

(From *Imagine* by John Lennon)

In short, using English songs to practise pronunciation is a good way and receive many supports from students. Therefore, the song below will be a perfect example to practise pronunciation including sounds /dʒ/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /ð/ and /ʒ/.
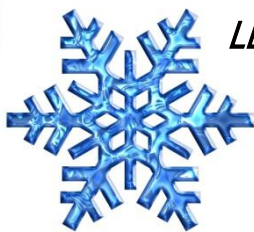
LET IT GO BY DEMI LOVATO (FROZEN OST)
Let it go, let it go
Can't hold you back anymore
Let it go, let it go
Turn my back and slam the door

The snow blows white on the mountain tonight
Not a footprint to be seen

A kingdom of isolation and it looks like I'm the queen
The wind is howling like the swirling storm inside
Couldn't keep it in
Heaven knows I try

Don't let them in, don't let them see
Be the good girl you always had to be
Conceal, don't feel, don't let them know
Well now they know

Let it go, let it go
Can't hold you back anymore
Let it go, let it go,
Turn my back and slam the door
And here I stand
And here I'll stay
Let it go, let it go
The cold never bothered me anyway

It's funny how some distance makes everything seem small
And the fears that once controlled me can't get to me at all
Up here in the cold thin air I finally can breathe
I know left a life behind but I'm to relieved to grieve

Let it go, let it go
Can't hold you back anymore
Let it go, let it go,
Turn my back and slam the door
And here I stand
And here I'll stay
Let it go, let it go

The cold never bothered me anyway

Standing frozen in the life I've chosen
You won't find me, the past is so behind me
Buried in the snow

Let it go, let it go
Can't hold you back anymore
Let it go, let it go,
Turn my back and slam the door
And here I stand
And here I'll stay
Let it go, let it go
The cold never bothered me anyway.

PART 3: CONCLUSION

To summarize, this graduated paper has been conducted with the aim to investigate the English common pronunciation problem faced by first year English majors at Haiphong Private University.

The rationale, the aim of the research, the scope of the study and the design of the paper are present in Part 1.

In Part 2, some related background such as definitions of English pronunciation, consonants, ending sound errors… are presented. Especially, in order to find out what common pronunciation mistakes of first year students are, the survey questionnaire is carried out. Finally, ending sound mistakes are the answer. There are 5 common ending sounds that students tend to make when speaking English in class. The author analyzes the information and data from survey questionnaire for further understanding. Besides, some suggestions to deal with problems are also provided in this part.

However, due to limitations of time, experience and knowledge, the research can not cover all problems and it concerns a small part of English pronunciation mistakes, it is ending sound. Besides, some solutions are provided for further practise English pronunciation. Therefore, the author is glad to receive comments from readers. Finally, the author hopes this study can be useful material for students who concerns ending sound and suggested solutions to encounter with pronunciation problems as well.

APPEDIX 1: THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Dear NA1701 students,

This survey questionnaire is designed to find out your attitude and awareness toward importance of pronunciation in English speaking as well as some common pronunciation mistakes that you have to face when speaking English in class. Your answers will be collected and used for my research with title: "A study on some common pronunciation mistakes faced by first year English majors at Haiphong Private University". Thank you for your cooperation in completing my survey questionnaire.

Please answer these following questions:

1) Which English skill do you like most?
   - ☐ Speaking
   - ☐ Listening
   - ☐ Reading
   - ☐ Writing

2) Which factor do you consider the most important in English speaking?
   - ☐ Grammar
   - ☐ Vocabulary
   - ☐ Pronunciation
   - ☐ Spelling
   - ☐ Intonation
   - ☐ Others

3) How important is pronunciation in speaking English?
   - ☐ Very important
   - ☐ Important
   - ☐ Normal
   - ☐ Not important

4) How do you like learning pronunciation?
   - ☐ Like very much
   - ☐ Like
   - ☐ Normal
   - ☐ Hate

5) Have you ever learnt any pronunciation lesson?
   - ☐ Yes, I have
   - ☐ No, I haven't

6) How often do you make pronunciation mistakes when speaking English in class?
   - ☐ Always
   - ☐ Often
   - ☐ Sometimes
   - ☐ Rarely
   - ☐ Never

7) Which pronunciation mistakes do you tend to encounter when speaking English?
   - ☐ Word stress
   - ☐ Vowel misunderstanding
   - ☐ Others
   - ☐ Sentence stress
   - ☐ Ending sounds

8) What are your ending sound mistakes that you often make when speaking English?

Ending sounds	
/p/	
/b/	
/t/	
/d/	
/k/	
/g/	
/v/	
/l/	
/m/	
/dʒ/	
/ð/	
/θ/	
/s/	
/z/	
/tʃ/	
/ʒ/	
/ʃ/	
/ŋ/	

9) What are your reasons for difficulties when pronouncing ending sounds?

☐ There are no ending sounds in mother tongue.

☐ I have not heard about ending sound when learning at high school.

☐ I have not attended any pronunciation course.

☐ It is not important to pronounce ending sounds.

☐ I have no habit of pronouncing these sounds.

☐ It is difficult to pronounce ending sounds.

☐ Other reasons.

Your other reasons:

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

10)   Which solution do you agree to use in order to avoid pronunciation mistakes?

☐ Playing games

☐ Practising tongue twisters

☐ Transcribing words when learning vocabulary

☐ Reading pronunciation books

☐ Singing English songs

☐ Doing pronunciation exercises in text books

☐ Recording yourself when speaking English

Your other opinions:

……………………………………………………………….............................

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Thank you for your cooperation!

APPEDIX 2: INFORMAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Why do you like speaking English?
2. What are your other factors that affect to English speaking?
3. Did you often find out how to pronounce a word before learning a new word?
4. Did your high school teachers teach how pronounce a word?
5. Which activities do you want to do in learning English speaking?
- Playing games
- Singing English songs
- Reading books
- Working in groups
- Question and answer exchanges
- Story telling
- Doing exercises in text books
- Others

6. What is your expectation on dealing with pronunciation problems?

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