

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

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# **KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH : NGÔN NGỮ ANH NHẬT**

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**Giảng viên hướng dẫn: TS. Trần Thị Ngọc Liên**

**HẢI PHÒNG 07- 2020**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
HAIPHONG MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY**

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**A STUDY ON DIFFICULTIES AND SOLUTIONS TO  
IMPROVE READING SKILL FOR FIRST-YEAR  
ENGLISH MAJORS STUDENTS AT HMTU**

**GRADUATION PAPER  
MAJOR: ENGLISH-JAPANESE**

**Student : Pham Thi Duyen  
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**HẢI PHÒNG 07 – 2020**

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**NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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**Tên đề tài:** Nghiên cứu về các khó khăn và các giải pháp để cải thiện kỹ năng đọc cho sinh viên năm nhất ngành ngôn ngữ Anh tại trường Đại học Quản lý và Công nghệ Hải Phòng

# NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

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

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## 2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết

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## 3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp

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## CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Họ và tên : .....

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*Sinh viên*

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

*Giảng viên hướng dẫn*

*Hải Phòng, ngày 01 tháng 07 năm 2020*

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

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm hướng dẫn

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

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn**

*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

**CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM**  
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**PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIÁO VIÊN CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN**

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

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**2. Những mặt còn hạn chế**

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

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm phản biện

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

**Giảng viên chấm phản biện**

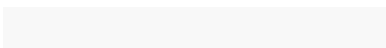
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Haiphong, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Duyen

Pham Thi Duyen

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HMTU	Haiphong Management and Technology University
ESL	English as a second language
EFL	English foreign language
L2	Second language
ADD	Attention deficit disorder

## **PART A: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale**

There is no doubt that the role of English in the life of any society in the world today has been becoming more and more important. The widespread need for English as an international language puts a considerable pressure on the education resources of any countries. In case of our country, since our government carried out the open door policy to attract foreign investment and co-operate with other countries, teaching and learning English become necessary. Moreover, it is the English that is used as an effective medium of international communication. It is the language of trade, science, technology, tourism, sport, music and many other fields of life. That is the reason why at present, learning English is not only the interest but also the great and practical demand for many people, especially for student who always want to assess the modern world. Therefore, English is now taught as a compulsory subject to all students at universities in our country. To master English, the students need to grasp all four skills that are closely related to one another: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Among these skills, reading is an important one because it does not only help student develop other language skills, but also provides them knowledge on the target language.

Reading is the window of the world because of the fact that people can get more knowledge and information from books, magazines, newspaper, etc. It helps readers to discover new words and phrases that they come across in everyday conversations. Many foreign language students often regard reading as one of the most important goals in learning process and social interaction. Firstly, reading is an indispensable communication tool in a civilized society. Secondly, that the reading materials produced in any period of time in history is the most influenced by social background. Thirdly, the development over the period of the recorded history of reading have led to two very different poles.

In the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Vietnam in general, and at Haiphong Management and Technology University

(HMTU) in particular, reading has always been paid a great deal of attention from both teachers and students. Like many other universities in Vietnam, English at HMTU is learned and taught in a non-native environment, therefore, reading is not only considered as a means to gain knowledge but also a means by which further study takes place.

This is especially true to the students at the HMTU, where learners are often future interpreters, translators, or teacher whose desires are to be able to handle subjects related to written material in English and to work with their English- speaking colleagues and partners. It is essential for them to acquire the ability to read English, effectively and efficiently. However, despite the teachers' and the students' effort, students still often claim to have a lot of difficulties in reading English textbooks or English material, and therefore, they sometimes read them inefficiently.

For the first-year students of English, although they have been learning English for at least several years, it is still often difficult for them to understand text or passage in English, since they still lack vocabulary, grammar, reading skill and poor background knowledge. Besides, the teachers sometimes have to face with difficulties in dealing with the students' learning demand and newly introduced sources of materials. In addition, teaching methods and teaching techniques in general, are still below the international standard of education. Identifying the areas of students' difficulty at HMTU and the cause of their unsuccessful reading comprehension is necessary. Therefore, these reasons have inspired the writing of a study on **DIFFICULTIES AND SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE READING SKILL FOR FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS STUDENTS AT HMTU** as well as some suggested solutions. It is hoped that the study will make some contributions to improve learning English in general, and reading in particular among the first-year English majors at HMTU. The author also hoped that it will be possible to make useful suggestions for the teachers to improve the situation of teaching and learning reading at HMTU.

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

As an English department student, the main purpose of this study is to identify the majors causes of difficulties reading skill by first-year English majors students at Haiphong Management and Technology University. Besides, the study is expected to suggest some solutions to improve reading skill for students. In

order to gain this aim, the specific objectives of the study are:

Firstly, the study focuses on the theory related to reading skill, the awareness of the importance of reading and learning reading methods.

Secondly, the study explores the real situation and problems which students have to encounter in learning reading.

Finally, the main purpose of this study is to suggest some effective and productive methods that can be applied and suited for first year English majors students at Haiphong Management and Technology University.

### **3.Methods of the study**

The study is carried out on the basic of qualitative and quantitative research methods including questionnaires and class observation.

Questionnaires are designed as a means to make the researcher's evaluation more objective. The questionnaires are given to the first year students at HMTU with the hope to find out the causes of difficulties in reading skill by them and some suggested solutions to their difficulties.

Analyzing statistics from the survey questionnaires on reading activities is conducted with the cooperation of both teachers and students at HMTU. All comments, remark recommendation assumptions, and conclusion provided in the study are based on the data analysis.

Besides, more information needed for the study is gathered through other methods such as informal interviews and discussions with teachers and students at HMTU.

### **4.Scope of the study**

There are many different material resources and researches while the author's personal experience is limited. Therefore, in this graduation paper, I would like to focus on finding the difficulties in studying reading of first year English majors students and some solutions for teaching and studying this skill.

### **5.Organization of the study**

The research work has three main parts:

Part A – Introduction provides rationale, the aims, scope, methods and organization of the study.

Part B – Development consists of three chapters:

❖ Chapter one is literature view which provides an overview of reading, difficulties in learning reading skill and factor affecting reading difficulties.

❖ Chapter two shows detailed explanation of the methodology.

❖ Chapter three indicates the cause of difficulties in reading skill experienced by first year English majors at HMTU and some suggested solutions to reading difficulties as well as implication for teaching and learning reading skill at HMTU.

Part C – Conclusion summarizes what is given in previous chapters and limitation of the study as well as recommendations for further study.

## **PART B: DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.1 Theoretical background of reading**

##### ***1.1.1. Definition of reading***

Reading is often referred to as the most important of the four language skills for EFL learners, as it enables students to gain exposure to the target language and receive valuable linguistic input to build up language proficiency (Erten & Razi, 2003). We cannot be sure when reading activity begins, but we have to admit that reading is essential activity that provides a great contribution in obtaining knowledge. It is obvious that in real life we usually spend much time reading all sorts of things like books, magazines, newspapers, novels, stories. However, sometimes we read but we do not understand what they mean, or cannot understand the text we read. In this case, it cannot be called reading. So what is reading?

There have been numerous definitions of reading each of them is the reflection of its author's view of the reading process. Anderson (1999: 1) explains this very neatly as follows: "Reading is an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning. Meaning does not reside on the printed page or occurs in reading, which combines the words on the printed page with the reader's background knowledge and experience."

According to Harmer (1989: 153), reading is a mechanical process that "eyes receive the message and the brain then has to work out the significance of the message". In his definition, Harmer focuses on both two actions dominated by the eyes and the brain as well as on the speed of the process "a reading text moves at the speed of the reader", which means that the readers themselves decides how fast he want to read the text.

Sharing the same opinion, Smith (1985: 102) defines "reading understands the author's thought". He also added that "understands print or even receiving communication can hardly be said to explain reading". The problem still remains how the reader understands the print or the message. "It means that we - the reader - read the author's mind not the author's words". Roe, Stood and Burns (1987: 2) describes reading in a more extensive way. In the opinion, "reading is thinking", or "reading comprehension is interpretation and evaluation of what author of written content means by using knowledge gained



from life experience.”

Another definition of reading was offered by Allen and Valletta (1977: 249). In their opinion, “reading is a developmental process”. We learn reading not only to know how to read, to master the symbols, the sound, the language, the grammar, that used in the text but also to understand the ideas, the information expressed in that text or to develop the ability of reconstructing its contents using our own words. One more researcher called Goodman (1971: 153) considers reading is “a psycholinguistic process by which the reader – a language user, reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display”.

Reading involves a reader, a text, and a writer. Reading skills are developed in an active process. This process involves the surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with interpretation of the written text and interchanges between the writer and the reader (Carrell 1988). If the writer is careless, the reader may not get the message. If the writer makes demands that the reader cannot fulfill, the message will not be received, even though to another reader it might be clear. If the reader is careless, reading will result in complete interpretation. The reader tries to interpret the text through his/her own experiences, but they many differ from the writer’s experiences. This explanation proves that reading is not just an active process, but also an interactive one. Reading is closely linked with meaning. For this reason, lack of shared assumptions presents the most difficult problem in reading.

To sum up, from all these opinions above, it is obvious that no definition can possibly capture all the ideas and feature of what reading is. Each linguist’s definition reflects what reading means as seen from his own point of view. However, they all have some features in common, they share the same ideas that reading means we – readers read the author’s mind not the author’s word, and that reading means comprehending written language and it employs a variety of skills. In addition, they all concentrate on the nature of reading.

### ***1.1.2 Definition of reading comprehension***

In teaching and learning a foreign language in general and teaching reading in particular, reading comprehension plays an important part, it can be understood as the ability to draw attention to the required information from the text as efficiently as possible. So what is reading comprehension?

According to Richard and Thomas (1987: 9), “Reading comprehension is best described as an understanding between the author and the reader”. This point of view concentrate on the reader’s understanding of the message based on the individual’s background knowledge. They stated that “reading is much more than just pronouncing words correctly or simply knowing what the author intends: it is process whereby the printed pages stimulate ideas, experiences and responses that are unique to an individual”.

In his book, Swan (1975: 1) pointed out that “a student is good at comprehension we mean that he can read accurately and efficiently, so as to get the maximum information of a text with the minimum of understanding”. For Roe, Stood and Burns (1987: 9): Reading comprehension is reconstruction, interpretation, and evaluation of what author of written content means by using knowledge gained from life experience.

Study the nature of reading comprehension, Francoise (1981: 3) indicated that “Reading comprehension or understanding written text means extracting the required information from it as effectively as possible”. This means that the student can show his understanding by re-expressing the content of the text in many ways such as summarizing the text, answering questions etc.

From these theories above, it can be understood that reading for comprehension is the primary purpose for reading; raising student’s awareness of main ideas in a text and exploring the organization of a text are essential for good comprehension. It is the process in which the readers – as they read, can recognize the graphic form and understand the relation between the writing and the meaning. It means that after reading, students can master grammar structures, words, pronunciation and can understand the content of the text and use it in their real life as effective as possible. Reading means comprehension written language so when understanding break down, reading actually does not occur.

## **1.2. The importance of the reading skill**

A student’s reading skill are important to their success in school as they will allow them to access the breadth of the curriculum and improve their communication and language skills. In addition, reading can be a fun and imaginative time for students, which opens doors to all kinds of new worlds for them, especially first-year English majors at HMTU because English at the HMTU is learnt and taught in non-native environment. Indeed, reading is not only

considered as a mean to gain knowledge but also a means by which further study takes place. Learning to read is about listening and understanding as well as working out what is printed on the page. Through the teacher's conversation, students are exposed to a wide range of words. This helps them build their own vocabulary and improve their understanding when they listen, which is vital as they start to read. It is important for them to understand what the teacher's opinion is and what he or she is talking about. Even if student do not understand every word, they will hear new sounds, words and phrases which they can then try out, copying what they have heard because of their desire to handle subjects related to written material in English and to work with their English-speaking colleagues and partners.

*Why is reading so important?*

Studies show that reading for pleasure makes a big difference to student's education performance. Likewise, evidence suggests that students who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who do not, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.

In fact, reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a student does well at school than their social or economic background.

### **1.3. Classification of reading skills**

It is necessary for the students to be aware of the purpose and goals for reading a particular piece of written text. The important notice for both the teachers and learners is that the purpose of reading related to the types of reading skills. The subjects will attain their goals quickly and efficiently if they apply appropriate reading skills. Kenneth Beare, an ESL trainer and developer, points out that there are 4 main types of reading skills.

- ❖ Skimming: reading rapidly for the main points.
- ❖ Scanning: Reading rapidly to find a specific piece of information.
- ❖ Intensive reading: reading a short text for detailed information.
- ❖ Extensive reading: reading a longer text, often for pleasure with emphasis on overall meaning.

#### **1.3.1 Skimming**

Skimming differs from general rapid reading in that the readers go

through the text extremely quickly, merely dipping into it or sampling it at various points. Skimming is the technique that is used widely in reading comprehension. Skimming may sometimes be the prerequisite of reading for full understanding.

There are many definitions of skimming, Grellet (1981: 19) states that “*when skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone or intention of the writer*”. It means that the purpose of skimming is simply to see what a text. Skimming occurs when the reader looks quickly at the contents page of a book, or at the chapter headings, subheading, etc. This is sometimes called previewing. Therefore, the key that actually encourages learners to skim is to give them a series of texts and ask them to select appropriate titles from groups of ones. Moreover, in order to teach skimming effectively, the teacher should have the students read the beginning or end of a text or a paragraph because it may provide students with a statement relating to the topic. Skimming gives students the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic or message, or possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. This gives them a “head start” as they embark on more focused reading. Skimming also helps students organize their thoughts and specify what information they can get from a book so that the subsequent reading will become more efficient.

In conclusion, skimming is understood as a necessary technique for reading comprehension which enables readers to get the main points of the text without being concerned with the details. Therefore, skimming should be applied at the first stage of teaching reading to help student have an overview of what they are going to read. And it is sure that they will understand the whole text later. However, skimming sometimes proves too difficult for younger learners, or beginners because they generally lack confidence and the knowledge of the language they are learning.

### ***1.3.2.Scanning***

Like skimming, scanning is also one of two most valuable reading strategies. However, scanning is far more limited than skimming since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose. Scanning occurs when a reader goes through a text very quickly in order to find a particular point of information. It is a useful skill worth cultivating for its own sake, if it has been

cultivated systematically from the earliest point in the course at which it can be attempted, co-operative work on the study of texts can be greatly expected and made easy. Francois (1981: 19) understands that “*when scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it is a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information*”. With the same opinion, Mabel states that “*Scanning is the speed technique that helps you locate a bit of specific information very rapidly. It could involve finding a name, date, place or statistic. Or it might involve identifying a general setting in a short story. Scanning is the technique you use when you read maps, charts, tables, or graphs. It is the main skill researchers use when they examine various to locate information about a specific topic*”.

Scanning requires two skills of the reader. One of them is that they recognize the specific type of word that identifies the item. The other is the use of a different eye movement pattern, vertical vision. Nearly all the background reading required for the presenting of a topic to the class by a group calls for proficiency in this type of reading. There is a great range of text suitable for scanning – indexes, dictionaries, maps, advertisements, labels, reference material, etc.

In short, the key to scanning is to decide exactly what kind of information we can look for and where to find it. The purpose of scanning is to extract certain specific information without reading through the whole text.

### ***1.3.3. Extensive reading***

Extensive reading is a fluency activity, mainly involving general understanding. It provides valuable reinforcement of the language already presented and practiced in the class as well as giving students useful practice in inferring meaning from the context of the text.

Lewis and Hill (1985: 109) state that “*extensive reading means students have a general understanding of the text without necessarily understanding every word*”. It is obvious that when reading extensively, readers do not need to have intense concentration on the content of a long text and total comprehension because the objective of extensive reading is to cover the greatest possible amount of text in the shortest possible time. In other words, extensive reading can be compared to the activity of ploughing through the text in a uniform fashion. Extensive reading is therefore regarded as means of entertainment and pleasure.

And the reason why this kind of reading is essentially needed is that it can promote reading out of class. Students can read directly and fluently in the foreign language for their own enjoyment without the aid of teacher. Furthermore, it is by pursuing the activity of extensive reading that the volume of practice necessary to achieve rapid and efficient reading can be achieved. It is also one of the means by which a foreigner may be exposed to a substantial sample of the language he may wish to learn without actually going to live in the country to which that language is native.

Basing on the importance of extensive reading, Nuttall (1982: 168) shows that *“the best way to improve one’s knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers: The next best way is read extensively in it”*.

The practice of extensive reading needs little justification. It is clearly the earliest way of bringing the foreign learner into sustained contact with a substantial body of English.

Broughton (1980: 111) suggests that *“there appear to be basically three ways the extensive reading may be encouraged, first by having class sets of title, second by operating a class library system, and the third by using the school library”*.

In short, the kind of reading is necessary for students at University because it actively promotes reading out the class and gives them opportunity to use their own knowledge of the language for their own purposes. Moreover, this kind of reading is regarded as pleasure and interest. That is why intensive reading is highly motivated.

#### ***1.3.4.Intensive reading***

The remaining two kinds of reading activity, content study reading and linguistic study reading are also often grouped together and called intensive reading.

Different from extensive reading – reading for fluency, readers can read without the aid of the teachers and without understanding the text in detail – extensive reading is regarded as reading for accuracy. It *“involves approaching the text under the close guidance of the teacher or under the guidance of a task which forces the students to pay great attention to the text in order to arrive at a profound to detailed understanding of the text not only of what it means, but also of how the meaning is produced. The “how” is as important as the “what”*,

*for the intensive reading lesson is intended primarily to train students in reading strategies”.* (Nuttall, 1982: 23)

Sharing this opinion, Lewis (1985: 109) states that “*intensive reading means students understand everything they read and be able to answer detailed vocabulary and comprehension questions*”. The concern of such reading is for detailed comprehension of very short texts. “*The objective of intensive reading is to achieve full understanding of the logical argument, the rhetorical arrangement or pattern of the text, of its symbolic, emotional and social overtones, of the attitudes and purposes of the author, and of linguistic means that he employs to achieve his ends*” (Broughton, 1980: 93). In other words, the aim of intensive reading is to obtain the fullest possible response in the student’s head to the black mark in his book. Response cannot be achieved by instruction about what he ought to see and feel, or by repetition of what others see and feel, although knowledge of what can be seen by others sometimes helps us to see for ourselves.

In general, in real life, our reading purpose constantly vary therefore we can use different ways of reading to obtain information. Teachers should be active and flexible in each situation to choose the type of reading to help students become independent and efficient readers.

#### **1.4. Difficulties in learning the reading skill**

Based on the author’s personal experience and on the basis of observation and gets opinion of friend and especially interviews a number of civilian freshmen at HMTU, I have found four common difficulties that students often encounter when reading and understanding English documents.

##### ***1.4.1. Memory problem***

Short-term and long term problem can be another aspect of reading comprehension issues. When a student does not fully understand what he or she just read or learn, student will have difficulties remembering the information and new words. Teachers can identify students with memory problems before issue gets out of hand by using pop quizzes and mini-test after reading sections.

##### ***1.4.2. Issues with decoding***

Also known as sounding out words, decoding is when students are able to put sounds to letters in order to sound out written language. It’s common for

beginner readers to struggle when they meet new or unfamiliar terms, but typically decoding becomes easier with phonics instruction and repeated practice with reading out loud. If a student continues to struggle, there may be specific learning difficulties present, or a physical impairment that is preventing them from physically seeing the letters or hearing the sounds in spoken language.

### ***1.4.3. Poor comprehension***

There's a lot going on reading, from letter and word recognition to understanding meaning at the phrase, sentence, and paragraph level. When a beginner reader encounters vocabulary they do not know or do not recognize due to inaccurate decoding, they are likely to skip ahead. The more blanks in a line of text, the harder it is to make meaning and the more cognitively challenging and frustrating the reading task becomes. That's why poor comprehension can result when a student struggles with decoding, has a limited vocabulary or attempts to read a text that is at too high of a level.

However, reading also requires being able to pay attention to narrative. Students need to identify gist, main ideas, and specific details and even make inferences about what they are reading. If a student has problems staying focused, it can impact on comprehension.

### ***1.4.4. Speed***

The more students read, the more they encounter unfamiliar terms. Quite often the context in which these new words are found gives children all of the clues they need to guess at the meaning. As students expand their vocabulary, they recognize more words by sight and reading speeds up.

If speed is still an issue, there may be an underlying problem, such as slow processing. Reading is a cognitively demanding task and holding so much information in the mind while continuing to process text can exhaust children with slow processing. Strategy instruction may help but it's important that these students be allowed extra time to complete tasks that require extensive reading.

## **1.5. Factors affecting reading difficulties**

Richek, List and Lerner (1989) explained five key elements of the reading problems. Environment is the first factor which affected to. Different environment such as home, school, social groups, and cultural have strong impact



on their ability. Next is emotion, readers who are low self-esteem and depression, they will be lack of confidence and afraid of making a mistake. Third one is physical factor includes hearing problems, visual problem, as well as other physical problems. Intelligence is another factor. It depends on the level predicted by intelligence tests. Finally, language knowledge consisting of vocabulary and sentence structure is one factor which affected to read.

And according to Denis (2008), reading skill is a complex process between identifying symbols and interpreting the meaning behind the symbols. Some factors affect reading skill. There are complexity of the reading text, environmental influences, anxieties, during reading comprehension, interest and motivation, decoding or word recognition speed, and medical problems. In the following section, these factors are elaborated in detail.

The complexity of the texts is one of the factors that impacts learners' reading comprehension. This factor is influenced by the readers' strength and fluency in language and their comprehending of its applications and different meanings. Oral abilities have a significant part in identifying how skilled a reader can be because learners hear word and obtain a lot of vocabulary. A lot of vocabularies assist learners in explaining the unknown words through applying the opinions of context (Denis, 2008). The second factor related to the environmental conditions that impact the learners who try to read a passage. Readers may have a lot of problem to understand a text in an unorganized environment than those who read in a calm and controlled place. When they are in safe environments, their reading comprehension ability will better. Readers will lose their concentration in understanding a text when there are noises like televisions or radios.

The third factor is pertinent to the anxiety during reading comprehension. Examinations, class work, or homework situations can put more pressure on readers' reading than reading for enjoyment. Some learners react positively to examinations while others are overwhelmed by the pressure to carry out a reading activity. Learners who experience this anxiety may not completely understand the instructions and this may lead to confusion and poor comprehension of the reading task. The fourth factor is interest and motivation. According to Dennis (2008), learners' interest and motivation are very important in developing reading comprehension skill. If readers find the reading material monotonous, they will have a lot of problems in concentrating on their comprehension. This can lead to

a lowering of reading comprehension among readers. If the reading material is interesting for learner they can easily understand it and can remember it clearly. EFL teachers should motivate their learners through providing interesting reading materials during their class time. The fifth factor is related to decoding or word recognition speed. Readers who have problems in decoding and recognizing words read slowly and find it more difficult to understand the meaning of passages than those without decoding problems. She expressed that vocabulary influences the reading comprehension skill because readers apply decoding skills to understand the pronunciation and meaning of words they have not seen before. Persons who have enough vocabulary can clarify the meaning or reading passage faster than those who should guess the meaning of unfamiliar words according to the clues of context (Dennis, 2008). The last factor is concerned with the medial problems. Poor reading comprehension skill may be related to the medial difficulty that does not get address until the child is older. This involves undiagnosed ADD (attention deficit disorder), speech problems, and hearing impairments. Learners with speech and hearing difficulties are less likely to take part in oral reading and class discussions. These are the two activities that help learners improve their reading comprehension skill.

In addition, Mourtaga (2006) pointed out the problems these are three main types. The first problem is the misunderstanding of the reading process. Frequently, teacher uses bottom-up approach or the grammar translation method when teaching reading and lets the student read loudly in class and put their index finger on the words they are reading. That makes reading slow because it tends to create tunnel vision, overloads short term memory. Second problem is insufficient linguistic competence in general and use of English. Thus, the result of this problem is students have insufficient practice in reading and lack of exposure to English. The last is lack of vocabulary knowledge of struggling with unknown words is one the majors problem of the students. Using dictionaries to search the meaning also interrupt the reading process and destroy the chance to comprehend much of the texts. Furthermore, there are many factors which affect to the students' reading such as too difficult text, no time to read, lack of background knowledge, and face with technical term, phrase, idioms, unfamiliar words, grammars, contents. This section will explain more detail about some main factors follow:

**Motivation** can be seen a reason in which leads an individual to act in a

certain way. The phenomenon of motivation isn't limited to just humans, and occur in every organism living. The reasons might not always be the same between two individuals acting in a certain way, however, almost every action is directed by certain motivation. The following are motivation definitions offered by some researchers: "Motivation can be constructed as a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious to act, and which gives rise to period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals)" (William, 1997: 120).

According to Brown's point of view "*motivation is some kinds of internal drove which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something*".

And "*motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activities*" (Dornyei, 2001: 7).

Having researcher shared the view that "*motivation is an internal state that arouses directs and maintains behavior*". It's clear from above definitions that different scholars approach motivation definition differently. However, they all shared the same of view that motivation combines effort and desire plus favorable attitude and occur as a result of combination of external and internal influence.

Dornyei argues that motivation is a factor that determines "*the direction and magnitude of human behavior or, in other words, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, and the effort expended on it*" or, more precisely, it is responsible for "*why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it*". So that, it can be seen that reading motivation plays a role in second language reading process. Through reading the students can gain most academic knowledge so students must read often throughout their school years. Reading motivation refers to the desire to read even when not require to do so and involves seeking out opportunities to read for curiosity, involvement and lot of knowledge. In most case, reading and understanding a text is often a challenging task for learner during a reading process if you do not have full background knowledge, the topics are unfamiliar, or you do not enough read strategies in hand, all of those difficulties lead to decrease their reading motivation.

**Vocabulary and grammatical structure** is very important for people who learn both as foreign language and as second language. Many students who

have reading comprehension problems have problems with vocabulary and may fail after their peers. They often perform poorly on vocabulary tests as well as standard tests. These deficiencies can affect a student's self-esteem and make him tend to avoid speak out their weaknesses in the classroom in front of other students and teachers. Specifically, students find it difficult to understand and remember specialized words such as Library-Information, such as catalogs, microfiche, alphanumeric, etc. or words in Economy such as import-export, foreign currency, transnational corporation, etc. Moreover, the idioms, verb phrases or noun phrase are more difficult than single words. Most of the children do not know the meaning or can hardly guess the meaning of these phases in the text. Therefore, it is not easy to choose the meaning of words suitable for specialized text, especially when the vocabulary of amateur students is still very limited. In addition, too many new words in the reading are too confusing for students when most words need to checked through dictionaries. And when students do not understand accurately and fully the content of that text.

It is not only vocabulary but also grammar is a significant barrier for students to read reading materials. Sometimes students have difficulty understanding and using verb tenses, forms and verb phrases. Some students admit that they do not know how to identify verb or noun phrases. The problem of not mastering the grammatical characteristics of noun phrases or verb phrases causes many obstacles for students to learn to read because in English documents, especially specialize books of the Foreign Language Faculty.

Thus, it is necessary for a reader to know vocabulary and structures in order to get meaning from the texts. This is especially true to L2 or foreign language readers because it is not all readers to process enough vocabulary and grammar to read what they want. Therefore, when the reader's limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures they will be unwilling to explore the text.

**Lack of background knowledge:** When learners deal with a reading text, they often face with the problem is unfamiliar topic. The content of the text is new and difficult to the learners. This problem is lack of background knowledge. Alderson (2000:1-20) notes that the reader's knowledge affects what they understand. According to Rubin, background knowledge has a great impact on understanding the topic of the article. Learners understand the meaning of a text based on their social and linguistic knowledge and then guess its meaning based

on context. It can be said that having background knowledge of culture, understanding of many different topics is also a way to guess the context of the text. Someone asserts that students who do not have a sufficiently large amount of cultural knowledge may have difficulty understanding the hidden meaning of sentences and more importantly they will lose their interest in reading the text. Choosing reading materials also play important part to student in dealing reading text. Nuttall (1982: 70) shared the view that “*the texts that are considered suitable will tell the student things they do not know and introduce to new and relevant ideas*”. There are many other types of reading materials that students can use to practice their developing reading skills. But reading materials should have suitable topics and contents, this mean the text should interest the students. We can divide into two groups of reading outcome like out of school and school.

School materials: availability of teaching materials, English books, equipment and technology use to support learning and teaching, good teacher qualification. Out-of-school: comprising out-of-school exposure to English through taking private classes, watching foreign TV programs (films, cartoons, series, and shows), using the internet (watching videos, playing video games, listening to music in English), interacting with English-speaking people, reading English story books or comics, and practicing English with parents and older siblings.

**Teaching reading methods** Teachers play an important role in facilitating and in helping students achieve reading purposes and employ reading skill in reading process to make reading effective. Students usually do not know how to use the appropriate way to read. They just look at single word and read slowly. Moreover, with the advanced characteristics of the new course books, teachers should have appropriate teaching methods. It is the fact that teacher should provide students a variety of activities before learning reading. These activities can help students prepare facilities for reading lesson. Research points out that quality teaching is tends to necessarily be student-central. It aims to help most and for all students learning. Therefore, focus should not only be pedagogical skills, but also learning environment that must address the students’ personal needs. Students should also be aware as to why they are working so that they are able to relate to other students and receive help if required. Some students also frankly said that sometimes the teacher’s way of communicating is not interesting for them during specialized English reading classes. Perhaps the

use of the same method for a long time by teachers makes it boring in reading lessons. In addition, teachers do not teach students reading skills and rarely give students sufficient practice in vocabulary and grammar. In fact, because the length of the subject is not allowed, teachers cannot have the ambition to systematically present these language knowledge to students.

In conclusion, from all of the opinions above, each factor reflects what reading difficulties are seen from their point of view. In this study, the factors of difficulties in reading skill experienced by first-year English majors at Haiphong Management and Technology University were identified.

## CHAPTER 2: THE STUDY

In this preceding chapter, the literature was briefly reviewed for theoretical basic of the whole study. This chapter was carried out with the participant, the instrument, as well as finding and discussion in detail.

### 2.1. Participants

The population of the study consisted of 30 students from NA2301A, NA2301N and NA2301T who are in their first year of HMTU, aged between 18 and 23 years. All these participants are students from different regions in Vietnam.

They have been studying English as a school subject for more than 12 years from Primary to High school. They had to study many different subjects. Therefore, they don't spend enough time focusing on learning English. These students have just access to basic English, so they are generally at the elementary and pre-intermediate level of English. They could use English as a foreign language to communicate with their teachers and classmates in English classes.

Currently, their number of English periods taught in a semester is 40,5 periods with three periods per week in which the duration of each period is 50 minutes and their syllabus is "*effective reading*" a pre-intermediate level.

After this survey is completed, we will have a better understanding about the cause of difficulties in reading skill experienced by first-year English majors.

### 2.2. Instrument

In the study, questionnaire was used as a main instrument to collect the data needed in quantitative form because it is regarded as an easy tool to summarize, analyze, report the collected data and find out the causes of difficulties in reading skill because all participants answer the same questions.

It is clearly seen that a questionnaire is a data gathering tool designed to meet specific, needed information. It can collect data more than any other instruments because all the information receive the same questions in the same form. It involves a set of questions that are addressed to the research informants for data collection purposes. In this regard, Dornyei (2007: 101) states that: "The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily accessible".

In this study, the questionnaire consists of 10 questions, which covers two

main factors, namely, individual and contextual factors affecting students' difficulties in reading skill. Questions from 1 to 6 mainly aim at identifying individual factors influencing students; meanwhile, questions from 7 to 10 are designed to find out contextual factors leading students' difficulties.

### **2.3. Data collection procedure**

Step 1: Distribute the questionnaire to students

In order to collect data for the study, the questionnaire was distributed to 30 students at their recess. Students were given 10 minutes to fill in personal information in part one and select the best answer to ten multiple choice questions in part two, All the answers made by participants were kept confidentially to serve for the data analysis.

Step 2: Process the data

Data were processed by using the descriptive statistic so as to find out the percentage of each factor leading to students' difficulties in reading skill.

Step 3: Suggest possible solutions to students' problems

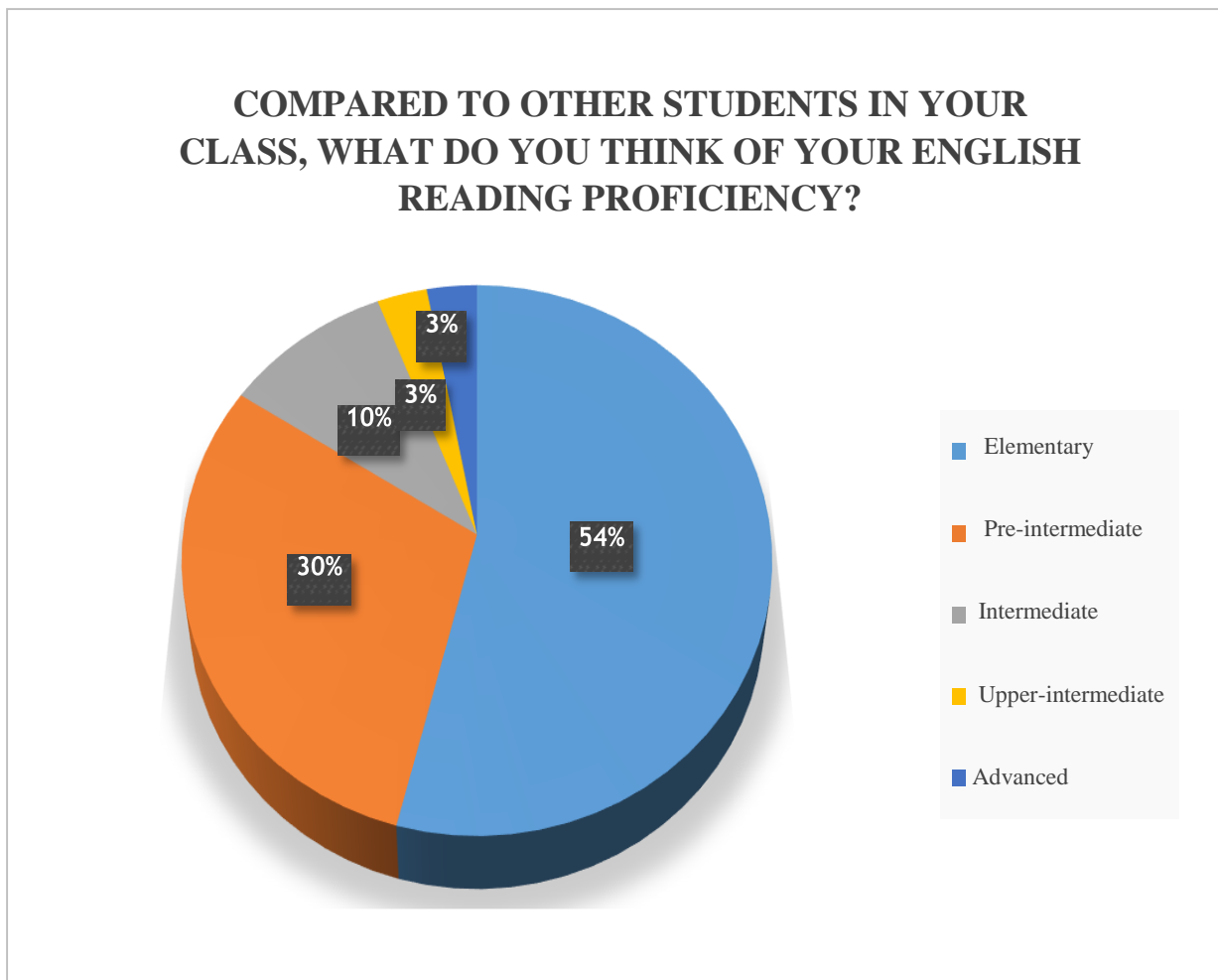
Based on the findings from data analysis, the researcher would give some useful pedagogical implications to help teachers especially teachers in charge of teaching reading subject to find appropriate ways to support their students in studying reading skills better. At the same time, students can improve their reading skills.



## CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

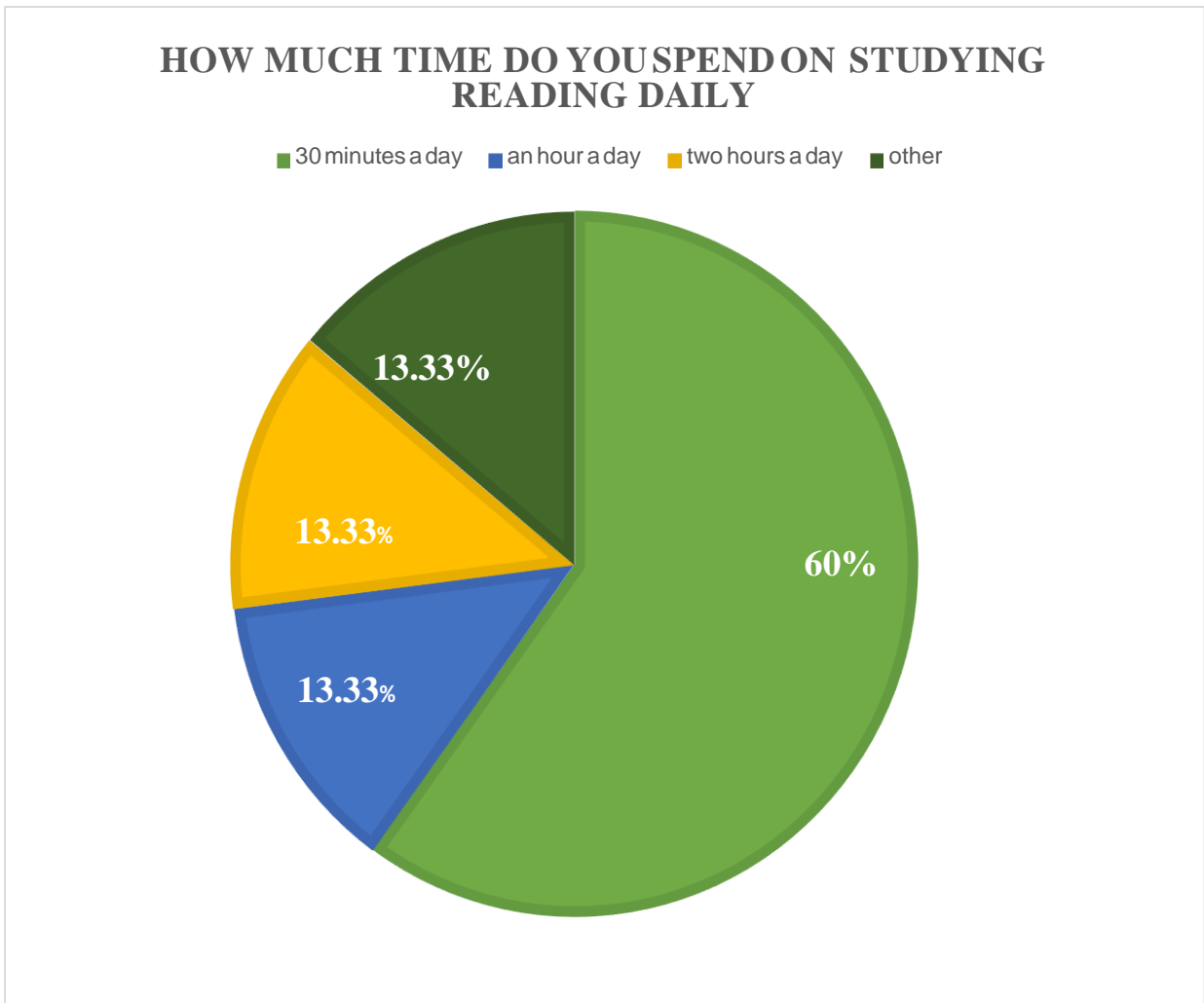
### 3.1. Causes of reading difficulties experienced by first-year English majors at HMTU

#### Question 1



This pie chart above shows the English reading proficiency of students in classes, namely, NA2301A, NA2301N and NA2301T are quite different. Some students, who rated their reading English skill at the intermediate level (10%), upper-intermediate level (3%). However, that's just a very small portion of Foreign Language Faculty. Because all of them are first-year students, they have just had access to basic English in a few years. Therefore, their reading English skill is at the level of elementary or pre-intermediate rather than intermediate or advanced. Apparently, students' limited English reading competency is one of the factors causing their difficulties in reading skill.

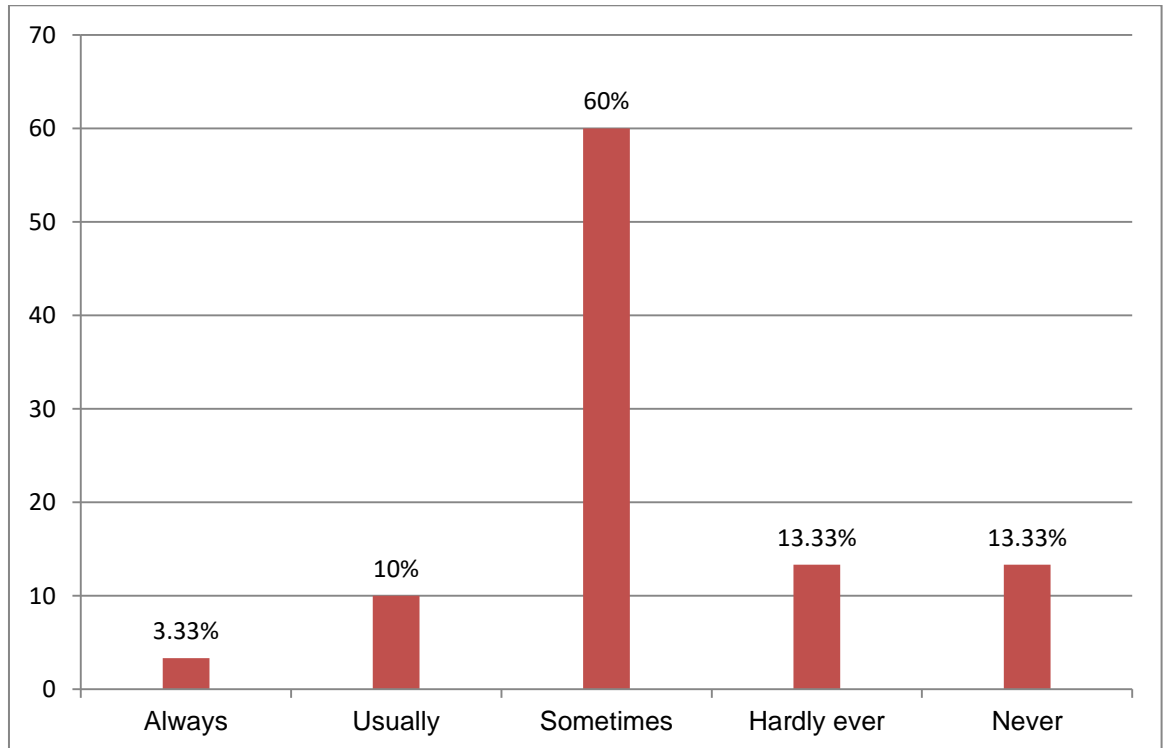
## Question 2



It is clearly seen from the pie chart that students seemed to pay less attention to study reading single day. Most of them spent 30 minutes on studying reading daily. The number of students who studied from an hour a day and more than an hour was very limited with the same figure of 13.33%. Spending too little time on studying reading has a profound influence on students' efficiency in reading skill.

### Question 3

## **ARE YOU IN HABIT OF LEARNING NEW WORDS & COMPLETING READING HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AFTER EACH READING LESSON IN CLASS?**

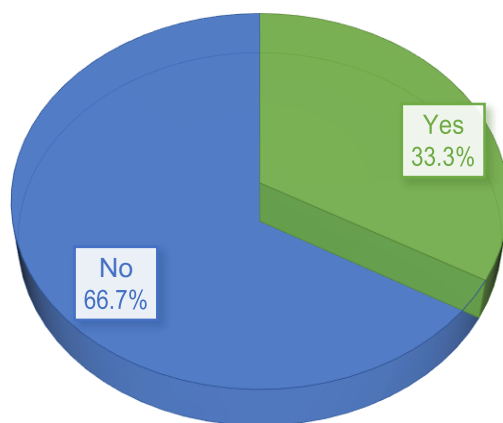


It is thought that a habit of learning new words and completing reading homework assignments after each reading lesson in class is good for practicing reading skills. The bar chart illustrates how often the students do this work. The number of hard working students who always learned new words and completed their reading homework assignments seemed to be the least with only 3.33% student. 60% students sometimes learned new words and did reading exercises while 13.33% of them never did it. There were 10% and 13.33% students who usually or hardly did this work.

This sad figure reflects one of the cause of difficulties in learning reading skill. As a matter of fact, limited vocabulary is one of the problems that make learners unable to understand the content in English reading texts. In addition, the lazier the learners are, the worse they are at reading skill.

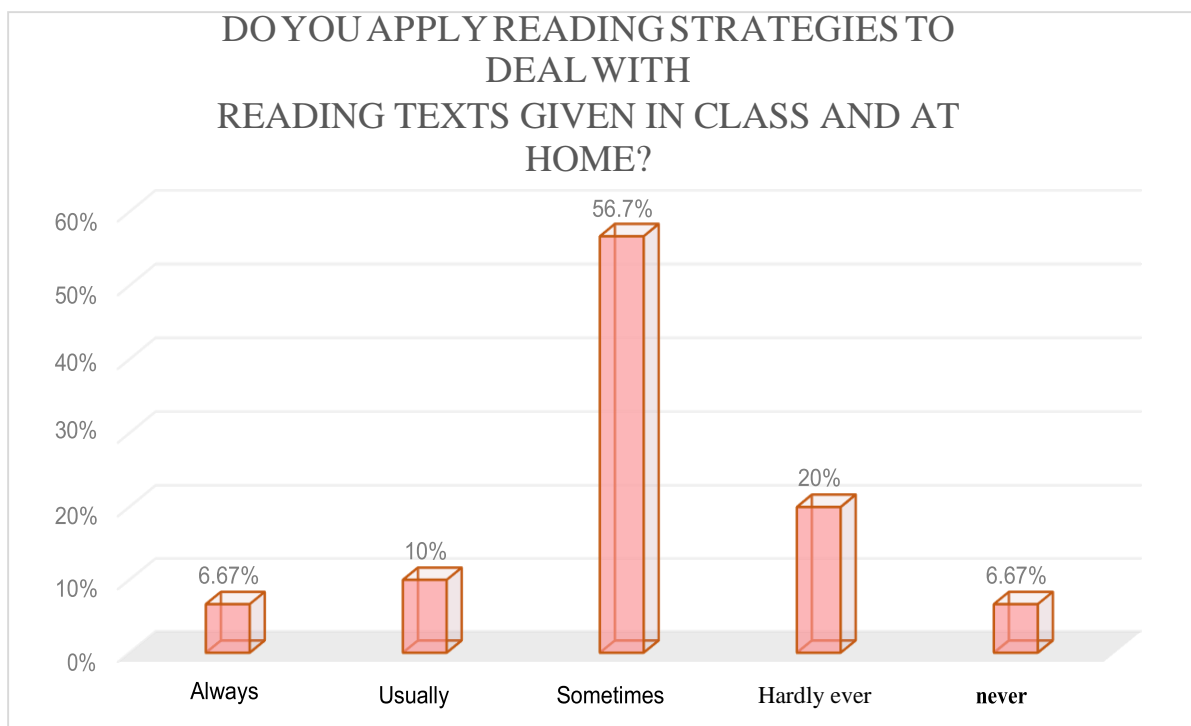
#### Question 4

### DO YOU FEEL CONFIDENT WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH FOREIGNERS WITH YOUR CURRENT VOCABULARY?



66.7% students asked said – No. Most of them were often afraid of communicating with native speakers. They left awkward and shy when they met foreigners because they were afraid that their English vocabulary was not enough to express ideas and their pronunciations not accurate, resulting in the misunderstanding among speakers. Obviously, students' unconfidence in communication skills with foreigners becomes an obstacle for their difficulties in reading.

## Question 5



The chart above reflects the frequency of using reading strategies to deal with reading texts given in class and at home by students. Only 6.67% students always applied it and the same figure never did. 56.7% students said they sometimes applied reading strategies. Besides, there are 10% and 20% students for usually, hardly ever.

Students who are sometimes, hardly ever or never not interested in applying reading strategies, often cope with a lot of problems during the reading English text such as:

- ✓ Read and try to translate word by word, only interested for vocabulary without having a deep understanding of the reading text.

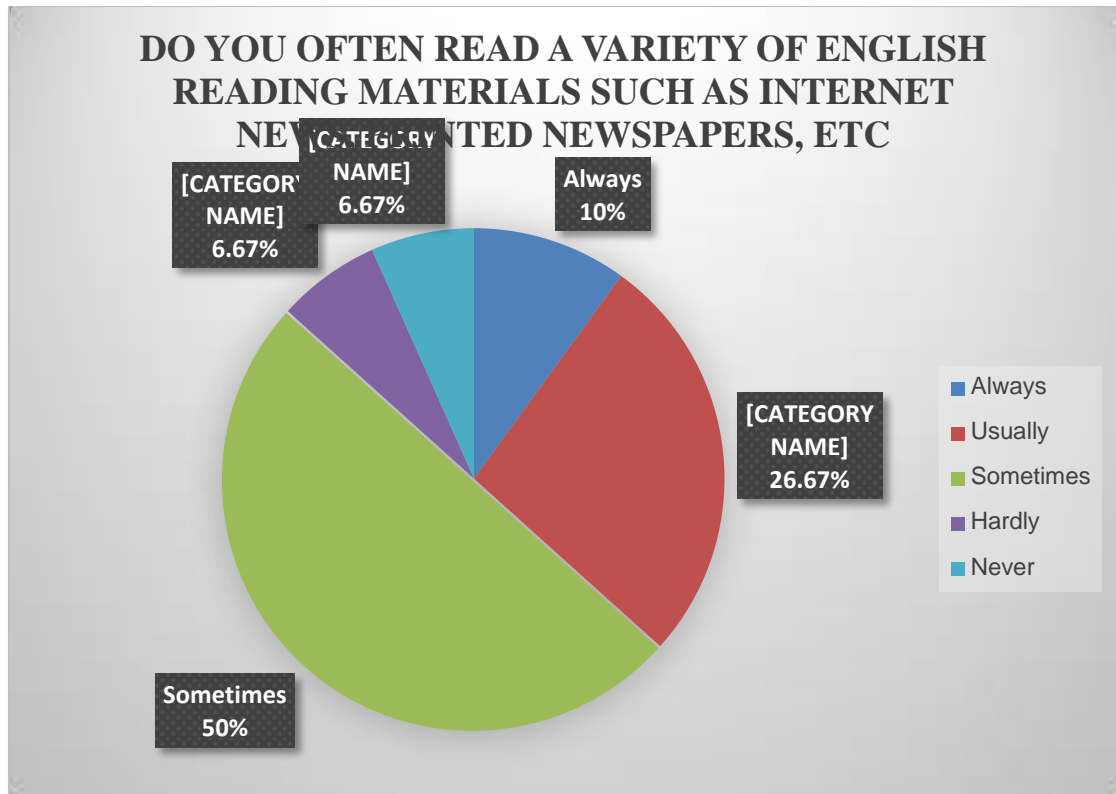
- ✓ Pay attention to small details leading to ignoring main ideas in the reading

- ✓ Waste a lot of time

- ✓ Psychology of fear: long readings and a lot of new words

This leads to a situation of feeling bored during the process of reading comprehension causing passive-aggressive psychology as well as difficulty in absorbing information in the reading text.

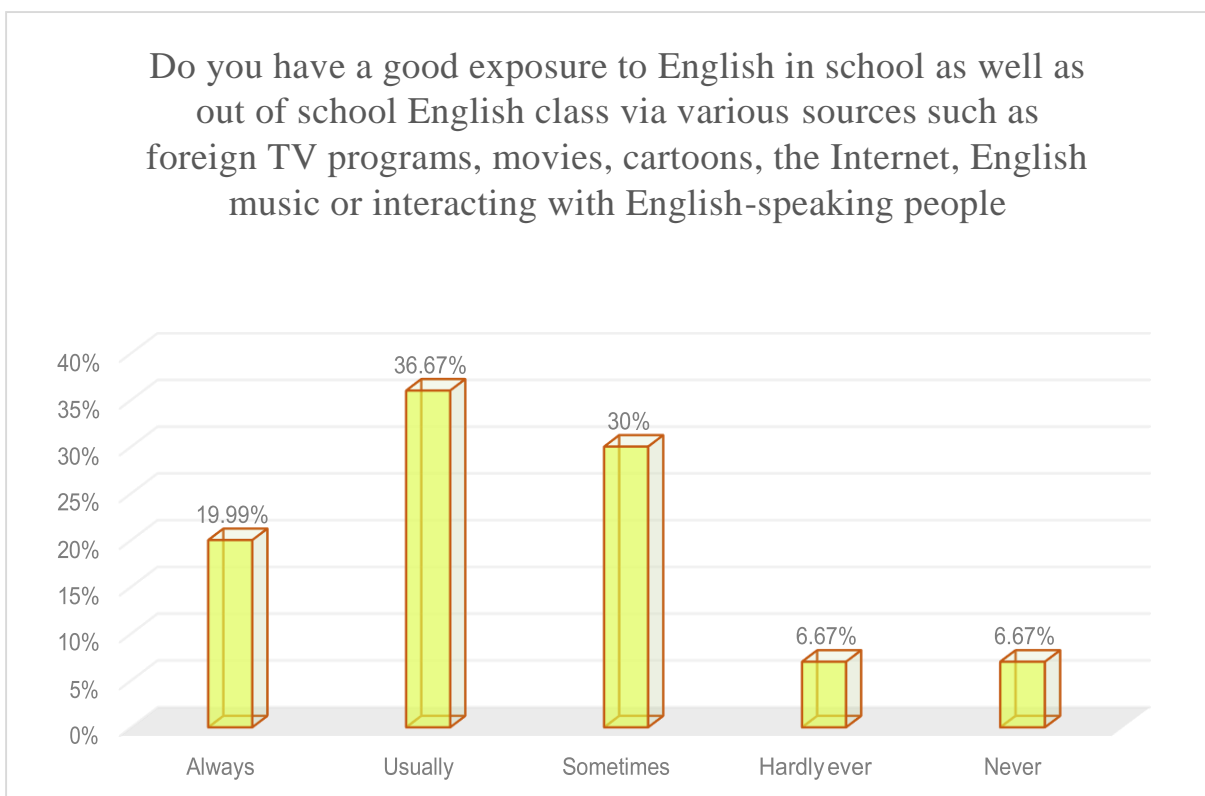
### Question 6



It is clearly seen that the percentage of students who always or usually read English materials accounts for a very small proportion making up only 10% and 26.67% students in turn and most of them were sometimes in the habit of reading English materials with the figure of 50%. The same number of students hardly ever or never read materials at 6.67%.

If the students do not have the habit of reading materials, internet news, stories or comics in English, their vocabulary and structures will be limited because when reading English, the words and phrases will be repeated many times. Images of English phrase will help them remember longer and learn a variety of new words. However, first-year English majors at HMTU seem to consider reading various materials unimportant for them. It is their low frequency in reading different materials that makes them face a lot of difficulties in reading skill.

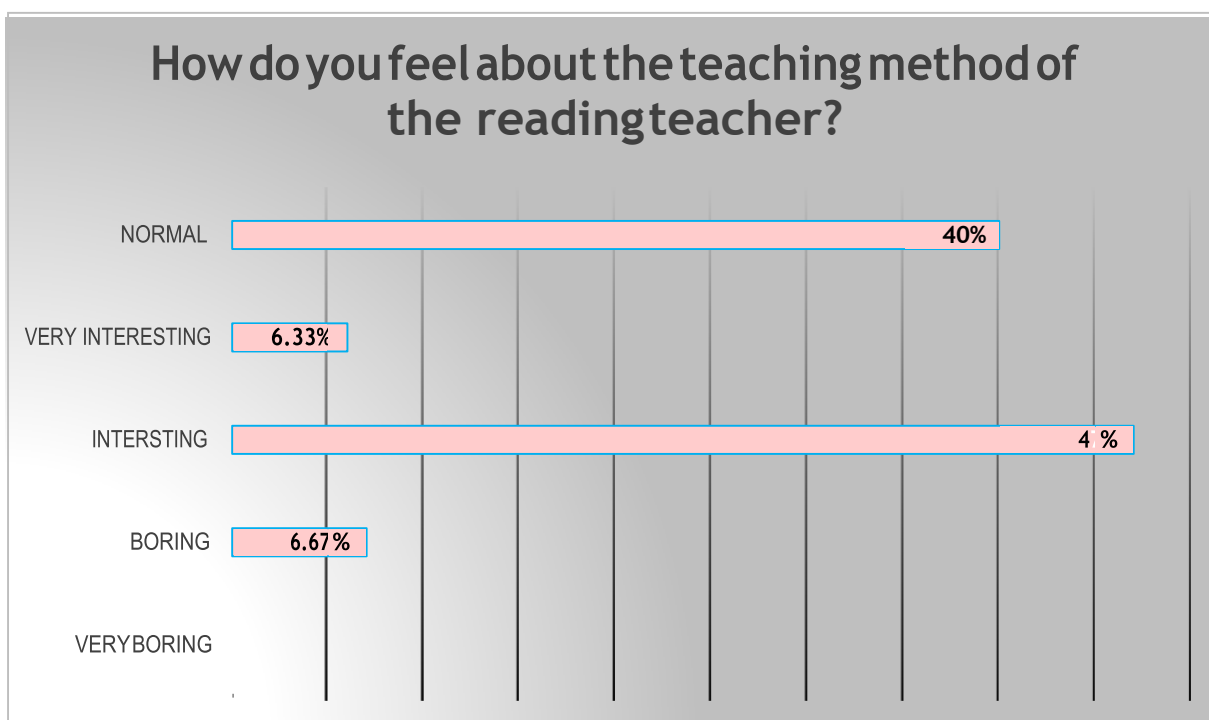
## Question 7



According to the result of survey questionnaire, the percentage of students who is self-aware of learning English was higher. There were nearly half of students who usually or always practice English via different ways. However, half of students were still unaware of ways to learn English suitably for themselves.

After a tiring day at school, most of the students want to entertain themselves through foreign TV programs, movies, cartoons, the internet or English music. Although students have a good exposure to a variety of sources to study reading skill, they do not take advantage of those means for their study, mainly for their entertainment. As a consequence, those useful tools become useless in supporting their study in general and their reading skill in particular.

## Question 8



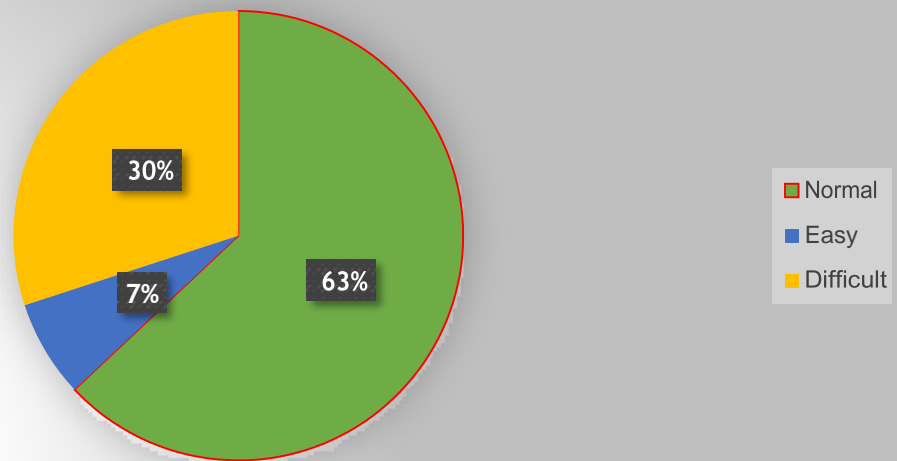
Nearly half of the students found the teaching methods of the teacher interesting whereas 40% and 6.67% students felt teaching method normal and boring respectively.

The teaching method of the reading teacher is an important factor to improve reading skill of students. The more fascinating the teacher's teaching methods are, the more motivated students feel to study reading subject.

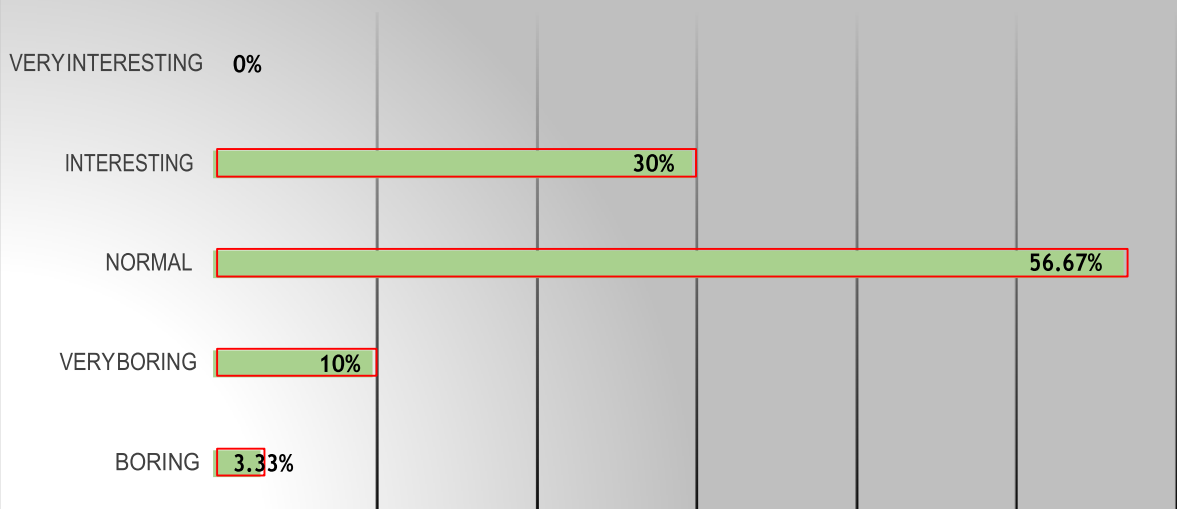


Question 9 and Question 10

What do you think about extra reading materials given by your teacher with a view to improving your reading skill in class as well as at home?



What do you think about the textbook and the curriculum being used for teaching reading?



The charts show the impact of textbook, curriculum and extra reading materials on the students' effectiveness in reading skill. Obviously, only a small proportion of students found those factors interesting (30%) and find it easy to learn (7%). In the second chart, most students (56.67%) thought that the textbook, the curriculum and extra reading materials were normal. The rest of the students admitted that they were boring and difficult.

Undoubtedly, if the content is too hard to understand, the students will become lazy or show their rebellious behavior. These factors make reading periods become ineffective and bring about a lot of troubles for students in learning reading skills.

In summary, the cause of difficulties in reading skill experienced by first-year English majors at Haiphong Management and Technology University include many different factors from individual causes to contextual ones. In terms of individual causes, it is apparent that students have just had access to basic English in a few years so it leads to students' limited English reading competency and it is one of the factors causing their difficulties in reading skill. What is more, students do not spend much time on studying reading and they never learn new words as well as read materials, internet news, stories or comics in English, because of the fact that limited vocabulary makes them unable to understand the content in English reading texts. In addition, the lazier the learners are, the worse they are at reading skill. Furthermore, students have a good exposure to foreign TV programs, movies, cartoons to study reading skill. Nonetheless, they do not take advantage of those means for their study, mainly for their entertainment. Consequently, those useful tools become useless in supporting their study in general and their reading skill in particular. Additionally, they do not know how to apply reading strategies to deal with reading texts. This leads to a situation of feeling bored during the process of reading comprehension causing passive-aggressive psychology as well as difficulty in absorbing information in the reading text. With regard to contextual causes, extra reading materials seem to be not straightforward for learners and the teaching methods applied by the teacher do not draw the student's attention. These factors make reading periods become ineffective and result in students' difficulties in learning reading skill.

### **3.2 Some suggestions to improve reading skill for first year English majors students of HMTU**

Basing on the survey, it is clearly seen that the first-year students need to be aware of learning English at their early stage, which will help them have a solid English background before becoming sophomore. They have to be well-oriented about the importance of learning reading. In addition, vocabulary is one of the problems that help them understand the content in English reading texts. Instead of spending time on playing games and going out with friends, they should find a book to read or listen to some English songs which both helps them relax and learn more new words. Moreover, they should spend a lot of time on learning reading skill and form a good habit of reading materials, internet news, stories or comics in English because reading has always been said to be a great way to expand vocabulary. If they are still new to English, they can start by reading something more easily, like an online book or ever a children's book. Everyone has to start somewhere. Of course, when they come across a word they do not know when reading, write it down and look it up. Similarly, in Mojca's view (2017) on learning reading, it can bring learners some advantages such as:

#### **Reading helps us build a better vocabulary**

It has been proven that book readers have a richer vocabulary, so for them easier to find the best expression for all that they want to tell others. In general, the more you read, the richer your vocabulary gets. Furthermore, books are definitely a treasure trove of knowledge.

In addition, the first-year students need to have more contact with foreigners and should ignore thoughts and feeling about issues such as:

- Afraid of communicating with native speakers
- Awkward and shy when they meet foreigners
- Pronunciation, grammar is not accurate

- English vocabulary is not enough to express ideas, resulting in the misunderstanding among speakers.

Undoubtedly, practicing English with native speakers will teach authentic and practical use of vocabulary. They will be practicing English with native speakers, they will be exposed to more idioms, dialect, slang and a generally more extensive vocabulary than with a non-native speaker. Too much slang is, of course, not a good thing, but exposure to this side of the language is always useful to understand what people really mean.

As they hear their native English partner use different vocabulary depending on what topics they discuss and what opinions partner have, they can ask about and highlight new words to use by themselves. Also, if they are struggling to find the word for something they can try and describe what they mean to their native conversation partner and native English partner can identify the correct word for them.

Besides, in order to read a paragraph or even a long text become easily, they should apply reading strategies to deal with reading texts.

As first-year students at HMTU, they are asked to read increasingly complex informative and graphical texts in their courses. The ability to understand and use the information in these texts is the key to a student's success in learning. So it is believed that successful students have a repertoire of strategies to draw upon, and know how to use them in different contexts

### **Reading reduces stress**

When we read, we are still. We get comfortable. Most people sit while reading. Our bodies do not carry any special movements, they rest. The breathing slows down. We calm down. We imagine ourselves the word or situations described by words in the book. While reading we cannot think of other tasks or worries. Because of all this reasons, reading does reduce stress.

### **Struggling readers need**

- Knowledge of different types of texts and the best strategies for reading them.
- Multiple and meaningful opportunities to practice reading in subject specific contexts.
- Opportunities to practice reading with appropriate resources.
- Opportunities to talk about their reading and thinking.
- Background knowledge in subject areas.
- Expanded sight vocabularies and word-solving strategies for reading subject-specific texts.
- Strategies for previewing texts, monitoring their understanding, determining the most important ideas and the relationships among them, remembering what they read, and making connections and inferences.
- Strategies for becoming independent readers in any context.

And in this respect, Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) stated that effective readers use strategies to understand what they read before, during, and after reading.

#### **Before reading, they:**

- Use prior knowledge to think about the topic
- Make predictions about the probable meaning of the text
- Preview the text by skimming and scanning to get a sense of the overall meaning

#### **During reading, they:**

- Monitor understanding by questioning, thinking about, and reflecting on the ideas and information in the text.

#### **After reading, they:**

- Reflect upon the ideas and information in the text.
- Relate what they have read to their own experiences and knowledge
- Clarify their understanding of the text
- Extend their understanding in critical and creative ways

What is more, to take reading become easier and more interesting. The foreign TV programs, movies, and foreign cartoons are good options for students' free time because these tools help them to have a variety of vocabulary and English sentences structures. Additionally, the words and phrases are often repeated many times in combination with lively, which will help learners

remember new words longer.

As a matter of fact, most of the students at HMTU have a good exposure to a variety of sources to study reading skill, however they do not take advantage of those means for their study, mainly for their entertainment. Thus, they need to limit their time on entertainment or they can combine between playing and learning by participating in games such as: Word Bingo, Game hangman, Game Concentration, Prepositions of Place Game and Scattegories,... or they can listening to English songs.

Besides, the teaching method of reading teachers is an important factor to improve reading skill of students. First, the teachers must how to help students get the right understanding about the importance of learning English in general and learning reading skills in particular.

Lectures in class must be suitable for all students. In other words, they must be appropriate methods, inspiring students to study. The more fascinating the teacher's teaching methods are, the more motivated students feel to study reading subject.

As students have a void of knowledge, the teacher must organize tutoring for them. During summer vacations, schools should organize extra classes and classify weak, medium, and good students into separate classes.

It has been suggested that evaluating reading comprehension inside the classroom should compose three phrases: pre-reading activities, while-reading activities and post-reading activities (Williams 1996). Classroom activities are important for a better achievement in teaching reading skill.

❖ **Pre-reading Activities:**

✓ Guessing the story from the chapter headings and predicting what will happen from the pictures.

✓ The teachers should choose new and difficult vocabulary from the story and would write them on the board and pre teach them or review it with the students. After explaining the vocabulary words teachers must ask questions about the chosen words. Students will be asked to use vocabulary in their sentences.

✓ The teachers will choose random sentences from the story and will write the sentences on the board not in the order they appear in the story. Learners will be asked to discuss in groups how they think that these sentences will be placed in the correct order.

❖ **While-reading Activities:**

✓ While reading teachers would like to ask questions based on text and will ask them to predict what will happen next.

✓ When learners are reading the story they should be asked to find information from the paragraphs. While reading the text, it is recommended that the teachers should ask students to identify previously discussed vocabulary words.

✓ Teachers should ask learners to read the text in pairs.

❖ **Post-reading Activities:**

✓ After reading the text teachers would ask questions based on the text and will ask them to predict what will happen next.

✓ Once students read the text they will be asked to think of different endings in group and each group will be asked to share their endings in class.

✓ Students will be asked to summarize the story in their own words.

✓ Students will be divided into pairs and each pair will be asked to talk about their favorite character in the story.

In addition, teaching materials are also of great significance in learning reading skill. Hence, the teacher should choose materials which are easy for their learners to understand about the content. Only by doing so, do students feel more excited about learning reading subject.

## **PART C: CONCLUSION**

### **1. Summary**

It can be clearly seen that the research paper was carried out with the view to helping the first-year English majors students at Haiphong Management and Technology University to realize the causes of their difficulties in reading skill. At the same time the research also gave some solutions for both students and teachers in order to tackle all their problems related reading skill. Based on the findings and interpretations in the data analysis, the following conclusion could be drawn. Undoubtedly, students' difficulties in reading are originated from both individual and contextual factors. Concerning individual factors, students spend too little time on studying reading. Additionally, they never learn new words and even are not in the habit of reading materials, internet news, stories or comics in English. Moreover, students have a good access to foreign TV programs, movies, cartoons,... to study reading skill. However, they do not make full use of those means to study, but to entertain. Besides, they do not know how to apply reading strategies in handling reading texts. Regarding contextual factors, teaching method and extra reading materials are too hard for learners to understand. As a consequence, the students show their rebellious behavior. These factors make reading periods ineffective and lead to a lot of troubles for students in learning reading skills. All the individual and contextual factors considered inspired the researcher to give some useful suggested solutions to reading difficulties faced by first-year English majors at HMTU.

### **2. Limitations**

Although this research was carefully prepared, I was still aware of its limitations and shortcomings. Due to the shortage of time and knowledge, the study could not cover three other skills, namely, listening, speaking, and writing and in a variety of participants such as sophomore, junior or senior at HMTU. This study only focused on the causes of difficulties in reading skill experienced by first year English majors at HMTU.

### **3. Recommendations for further study**

From the limitations of this study, the researcher would like to give some suggestions for further study. First, there exists a limitation concerning the data collection for the study. Due to the limited time and a small number of students,



the designed exercises were only administered to a small population of first-year (30), which had a great influence on the reliability and accuracy of the collected data to some extent. Therefore, other studies can be carried out on other subjects such as second-year, third-year or final-year students. Second, within the scope of minor research, the study mainly aims at finding out the causes of difficulties in reading skill experienced by first-year English majors at HMTU and gives some solutions. Hence, the forthcoming researches may be conducted in other skills like speaking, listening, writing and assess more aspects of students' language competency. In brief, it is hoped that the study will be of great help in enhancing the teaching and learning quality and become an invaluable reference source for both teachers and students at HMTU.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire for students

This questionnaire is meant for a study on the causes of difficulties in reading skill experienced by first-year English majors at Haiphong Management and Technology University. Your answers will be strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of the research. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

#### Section 1: Questions

**1. Compared to other students in your class, what do you think of your English READING proficiency?**

- a. Elementary
- b. Pre-intermediate
- c. Intermediate
- d. Upper-intermediate
- e. Advanced

**2. How much time do you spend on studying reading daily?**

- a. 30 minutes a day
- b. An hour a day
- c. Two hours a day
- d. Other:.....

**3. Are you in a habit of learning new words completing reading homework assignments after each reading lesson in class?**

- a. Always b Usually
- c. Sometimes
- d. Hardly ever
- e. Never

**4. Do you feel confident when communicating with foreigners with your current vocabulary?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**5. Do you apply reading strategies to deal with reading texts given in and at home?**

- a. Always
- b. Usually
- c. Sometimes
- d. Hardly ever
- e. Never

**6. Do you often read a variety of English reading materials such as Internet news, printed newspapers, English storybooks and comics, etc to improve your reading skill?**

- a. Always
- b. Usually
- c. Sometimes
- d. Hardly ever
- e. Never

**7. Do you have a good exposure to English in school as well as out- of- school English class via various sources such as foreign TV programs, movies, cartoons, the internet, English music or interacting with English-speaking people?**

- a. Always
- b. Usually
- c. Sometimes
- d. Hardly ever
- e. Never

**8. How do you feel about the teaching method of the reading teacher?**

- Very Interesting
- Interesting
- Normal
- Boring
- Very boring

**9. What do you think about the textbook and the curriculum being used for teaching reading skill at HMTU?**

- a. Very Interesting
- b. Interesting
- c. Normal
- d. Boring
- e. Very boring

**10. What do you think about extra reading materials given by your teacher with a view to improving your reading skills in class as well as at home?**

- a. Difficult
- b. Easy
- c. Normal

**Thank you for your cooperation!**