

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



KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

CHUYÊN NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH – TRUNG

Sinh viên : Hoàng Thị Kim Ngân

HẢI PHÒNG – 2025

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**DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS OF
THE FIRST YEAR ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS
AT HAIPHONG UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT
AND TECHNOLOGY.**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY
CHUYÊN NGÀNH: Ngôn ngữ Anh-Trung**

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Tên đề tài: Difficulties in English listening skills of the First year English
Majored Students at Haiphong University of Management and Technology.

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

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

Đề tài “Difficulties in English listening skills of the First-year English Majored Students at Haiphong University of Management and Technology” tập trung nghiên cứu những khó khăn mà sinh viên năm nhất chuyên ngành Tiếng Anh gặp phải trong quá trình học kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết của đề tài bao gồm:

Trình bày cơ sở lý luận liên quan đến kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh, tầm quan trọng của kỹ năng nghe trong việc học ngoại ngữ và các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến khả năng nghe hiểu của người học.

Khảo sát thực trạng học tập kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh của sinh viên năm nhất chuyên ngành Tiếng Anh tại Trường Đại học Quản lý và Công nghệ Hải Phòng thông qua các công cụ nghiên cứu phù hợp.

Xác định và phân tích các khó khăn chủ yếu mà sinh viên gặp phải trong quá trình nghe tiếng Anh, bao gồm các yếu tố về ngữ âm, từ vựng, tốc độ nói, giọng nói, kiến thức nền, tâm lý học tập và môi trường học tập.

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2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết

Đề tài sử dụng các tài liệu và số liệu sau:

Tài liệu lý thuyết: sách giáo trình, bài báo nghiên cứu trong và ngoài nước về kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh, ngữ âm, từ vựng và các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến khả năng nghe.

Số liệu khảo sát thực tiễn: bảng hỏi, phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc với sinh viên và giảng viên, kết quả bài tập nghe thực hành.

Tài liệu bổ sung: audio, video bài giảng, báo cáo và thống kê liên quan đến trình độ nghe tiếng Anh của sinh viên HPU.

Các tài liệu và số liệu này sẽ phục vụ cho việc phân tích, đánh giá khó khăn và đề xuất giải pháp cải thiện kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh của sinh viên.

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1. Phần nhận xét của giảng viên chăm phản biện

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(Ký và ghi rõ tên)

DECLARATION

I hereby solemnly declare that the graduation thesis entitled “Difficulties in English Listening Skills of First-Year English-Majored Students at Haiphong University of Management and Technology” is my own independent research work, completed under the supervision of Ms. Tran Thi Ngoc Lien.

All contents, data, analytical results, and viewpoints presented in this thesis are derived from my own investigation, data collection, processing, and analysis. The research has been conducted with honesty, objectivity, and strict adherence to academic integrity and ethical principles.

I confirm that this thesis contains no plagiarism and does not duplicate any previously published research. All sources of information, including literature, theories, models, charts, and citations, have been clearly acknowledged in accordance with academic referencing standards. All survey data were collected through transparent procedures that fully respect participants’ privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

I take full responsibility before the university and the law for the accuracy and authenticity of all contents and findings presented in this thesis. Should any mistake, misconduct, or violation of regulations be identified during or after the completion of this thesis, I am willing to accept any actions or penalties imposed by the university or relevant authorities.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Ms. Tran Thi Ngoc Lien, for her valuable guidance and support throughout the research process. However, any shortcomings or limitations that may appear in this thesis are solely due to my own abilities and do not involve my supervisor or any other individual or organization.

I hereby affirm that all the statements above are entirely true.

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ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension is one of the most essential yet challenging skills for English-major students, especially first-year learners who are adapting to university-level English. This study, entitled “Difficulties in English Listening Skills of the First-Year English-Majored Students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology”, aims to identify the main difficulties students face in listening comprehension and the factors contributing to these challenges.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, including questionnaires administered to 20 first-year English-major students and semi-structured interviews with selected students and teachers. The findings reveal that students experience significant difficulties related to limited vocabulary, unfamiliar accents, fast speech rate, lack of background knowledge, and ineffective listening strategies. Psychological factors such as anxiety, low confidence, and poor concentration also negatively affect listening performance.

Based on the results, the study suggests several pedagogical implications, including increasing exposure to authentic listening materials, integrating listening strategy training into lessons, and encouraging autonomous listening practice. The findings provide useful insights for teachers and learners in improving English listening instruction and learning effectiveness.

Keywords: listening comprehension, listening difficulties, English-major students, first-year students, English learning

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PART 1 : INTRODUCTION

1. The Rationale of the Study

In the context of globalization, English has become an essential tool for communication among young people. However, in reality, many young learners, especially first-year English-major students, demonstrate weak listening comprehension skills. Although they are frequently exposed to English through social media, films, music, and online platforms, most students have not developed effective academic or communicative listening abilities. As a result, they often struggle to understand lectures, conversations, and authentic spoken English in real-life situations.

Moreover, the English learning habits of today's youth tend to be passive, with greater emphasis placed on vocabulary and grammar for examinations rather than on listening practice. Many students rely heavily on subtitles, listen without clear purposes, and lack appropriate listening strategies. These factors significantly reduce their ability to process natural spoken English, especially when dealing with fast speech, unfamiliar accents, or complex contexts.

Based on this reality, it is necessary to conduct a study on the difficulties in English listening skills of first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. This research aims to identify the main listening problems faced by students, explore the underlying causes, and propose practical solutions to improve listening instruction and learning effectiveness.

2. Aim and Objectives

2.1. Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study is to identify and analyze the difficulties in English listening skills experienced by first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. Through this investigation, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the listening challenges faced by students in their early stage of university learning.

2.2. Specific Objectives

To achieve the overall aim of the study, the following specific objectives are proposed:

To identify the main difficulties in English listening skills faced by first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

To examine the key factors contributing to these listening difficulties, including linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors.

To suggest practical solutions to help improve students' English listening comprehension.

3. Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

What are the main difficulties in English listening skills experienced by first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology?

What factors contribute to these listening difficulties?

What solutions can be proposed to improve English listening skills for first-year English-major students?

4. Scope of the Study

This study is conducted with first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. These students are selected because they are in the early stage of their university education and are in the process of adapting to new learning environments and academic requirements. At this stage, many students experience difficulties in developing effective English listening skills, which makes them an appropriate group for the present research.

The scope of this study is limited to English listening comprehension. Other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing are not investigated. Listening is chosen as the focus of the study because it is considered one of the most challenging skills for English learners and plays an important role in successful communication and language acquisition.

The research is carried out during the first semester of the academic year 2024–2025, which reflects the initial period of students' university learning. This time frame allows the study to examine listening difficulties that students commonly face at the beginning of their tertiary education.

In terms of content, the study mainly aims to identify common listening difficulties and explore the factors contributing to these difficulties, including linguistic, psychological, and learning-related factors. However, the study does not evaluate students' listening proficiency through tests or scores. Instead, it adopts a descriptive approach to better understand students' perceptions and experiences of listening difficulties in the learning context at HPU.

5.Methods of the Study

In order to achieve the objectives of the study and ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings, this study adopts a quantitative research approach. A questionnaire is employed as the primary instrument for data collection, as it allows the researcher to gather information from a relatively large number of participants in a systematic and efficient manner. This method is considered appropriate for identifying common listening difficulties and examining students' perceptions of English listening comprehension.

The questionnaire is designed in the form of a Google Form and distributed to first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. It consists mainly of closed-ended questions, including multiple-choice and Likert-scale items, together with a small number of open-ended questions. The questionnaire focuses on students' attitudes toward English listening, their listening habits, and the difficulties they commonly encounter during listening activities.

Before being officially administered, the questionnaire is carefully reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and suitability to the research objectives. After data collection, the responses are coded and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequencies and percentages. The quantitative analysis helps to identify the most common types of listening difficulties and to determine the extent to which these difficulties affect students' listening comprehension.

The findings obtained from the questionnaire serve as the main source of data for analysis, discussion, and recommendations in this study. By employing a quantitative approach based on questionnaire data, the research provides an overall and reliable picture of the English listening difficulties faced by first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

6.Structure of the Study

The thesis is organized into five main chapters.

Chapter 1 – Introduction presents the rationale, aims, objectives, scope, and research methods of the study.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Background reviews relevant theories, key concepts, and previous studies related to English listening comprehension.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology and Findings describes the research design, data collection procedures, and presents the analysis of the findings.

Chapter 4 – Solutions and Recommendations proposes practical solutions and recommendations to improve English listening skills based on the research findings.

Conclusion summarizes the main findings, discusses limitations of the study, and suggests directions for future research.

PART 2: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Theoretical Background of the Study

Listening comprehension is widely recognized as one of the most fundamental yet challenging skills in second and foreign language learning. In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), listening plays a central role in language acquisition because it provides learners with primary linguistic input and supports the development of other language skills. According to Rost (2011), listening is the foundation of spoken language competence, as learners must first be able to understand spoken input before they can respond appropriately or produce language.

From a theoretical perspective, listening comprehension is not a passive process of receiving sounds but an active and complex cognitive activity. Brown (2007) defines listening comprehension as the ability to identify and understand what others are saying, which involves understanding speakers' accent or pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and meaning. This process requires learners to simultaneously decode acoustic signals and construct meaning in real time, making listening particularly demanding for EFL learners.

One of the most influential theoretical frameworks in listening research is the bottom-up and top-down processing model. Bottom-up processing refers to the listener's ability to build meaning from the smallest units of language, such as phonemes, words, and grammatical structures (Richards, 2008). This process emphasizes linguistic knowledge, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. In contrast, top-down processing involves using background knowledge, contextual information, and prior experience to interpret meaning (Richards, 2008). Effective listening comprehension occurs when learners are able to integrate both bottom-up and top-down processes efficiently.

However, many EFL learners—especially first-year university students—tend to rely heavily on bottom-up processing. When they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech, reduced forms, or different accents, their comprehension often breaks down. Field (2008) argues that excessive dependence on bottom-up processing places a heavy cognitive load on learners' working memory, leaving insufficient capacity for higher-level meaning construction.

Cognitive theories of listening further emphasize the role of working memory and attention in listening comprehension. Listening requires learners to store incoming information temporarily while simultaneously processing new input. When learners struggle with decoding sounds or recognizing words, their working memory becomes overloaded, leading to listening difficulties (Field, 2008). This issue is particularly common in EFL contexts where learners have limited exposure to authentic spoken English.

In addition, Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis provides an important theoretical basis for understanding listening comprehension in language acquisition. Krashen argues that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly above their current proficiency level ($i+1$). Listening plays a crucial role in this process because it allows learners to receive meaningful input in natural communicative contexts. Without sufficient comprehensible listening input, learners may struggle to develop overall language competence.

In summary, the theoretical background of listening comprehension highlights its complexity and importance in EFL learning. Listening involves the interaction of cognitive processes, linguistic knowledge, and contextual understanding. Grounding this study in established theories of listening comprehension provides a solid foundation for examining the listening difficulties experienced by first-year English-majored students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology, as well as the strategies they employ to cope with these difficulties.

1.2. Listening in Language Learning

1.2.1. Importance of Listening in EFL Contexts

Listening plays a vital role in EFL learning, especially in contexts like Vietnam where opportunities to hear English outside the classroom are limited. Classroom listening activities serve as the main source of exposure, helping students internalize pronunciation, intonation, stress patterns, and natural speech features. Without sufficient listening practice, learners struggle to develop comprehension, participate in discussions, and acquire communicative competence (Rost, 2011; Richards, 2008).

However, many EFL learners face challenges because teaching practices often focus on comprehension testing rather than strategy development, such as predicting content, inferring meaning, or monitoring understanding. Students may feel anxious or discouraged when listening to authentic speech due to fast pace, unfamiliar vocabulary,

or lack of contextual knowledge. Recognizing the importance of listening in EFL contexts provides a strong theoretical basis for examining the listening difficulties of first-year English-major students at HPU and for proposing effective teaching strategies that enhance listening competence.

1.2.2. Definition of Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension refers to the ability to understand, process, and interpret spoken language accurately. It requires active engagement with auditory input, including identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, inferring implied meanings, and integrating new information with existing knowledge (Brown, 2007). Listening comprehension is both a linguistic and cognitive activity: learners must decode sounds, apply knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, interpret discourse markers, and make inferences based on context.

The process is multi-layered and interactive, often involving rapid coordination of perception, parsing, and utilization of language input. Perception involves recognizing speech sounds and distinguishing meaningful signals from background noise. Parsing requires integrating linguistic knowledge with context to understand phrases, idioms, or sentence structures. Utilization involves interpreting overall meaning and applying it to prior knowledge or communicative context. Difficulties at any stage—such as unfamiliar vocabulary, complex grammar, or lack of background knowledge—can disrupt comprehension and increase cognitive load.

For first-year English-major students at HPU, listening comprehension is particularly challenging due to limited exposure to authentic English and high reliance on classroom-based instruction. By defining listening comprehension as an active, integrative process, researchers and educators can better understand the sources of listening difficulties and design targeted strategies to improve students' skills.

1.2.3. Listening as an Active Cognitive Process

Listening is an active cognitive process that requires learners to allocate attention, use working memory, make inferences, and monitor their comprehension (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Unlike reading, where learners can control the pace and revisit text, listening occurs in real time, creating time pressure and high cognitive demand. Spoken language is transient, and learners must process information rapidly to retain meaning, integrate new input, and respond appropriately (Field, 2008).

Students who struggle with basic decoding—such as recognizing sounds, words, or intonation patterns—often become overwhelmed, as cognitive resources are consumed by lower-level tasks, leaving fewer resources for higher-level comprehension. Moreover, learners must employ metacognitive strategies, including predicting content, monitoring understanding, and adjusting strategies when comprehension breaks down.

In Vietnamese EFL contexts, such as HPU, students often encounter fast speech, unfamiliar accents, or connected speech, which intensifies cognitive load. This perspective helps explain why listening is frequently perceived as the most difficult skill among English-major students and highlights the need for teaching strategies that support both linguistic decoding and cognitive processing.

1.2.4. Models of Listening Comprehension

Several theoretical models explain how listening comprehension occurs and why difficulties arise. The bottom-up model emphasizes processing language from sounds to words and sentences, relying on knowledge of phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. Challenges in this model arise when learners have limited vocabulary, weak pronunciation skills, or difficulty processing fast and connected speech.

The top-down model focuses on the role of background knowledge, context, and expectations. Learners use prior knowledge of topics, cultural context, and discourse conventions to predict and interpret meaning, even if they do not recognize every word. Limitations occur when learners lack sufficient context or experience, leading to misinterpretation.

Contemporary research supports an interactive model, integrating bottom-up and top-down processes. Effective listening requires continuous interaction between linguistic decoding and contextual interpretation. For HPU students, difficulties may arise from weaknesses in either process, including limited vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, insufficient exposure, or ineffective listening strategies. Understanding these models provides a theoretical framework for analyzing listening difficulties and designing pedagogical interventions that address both decoding and comprehension.

1.2.5. Listening Difficulties in Language Learning

Previous research indicates that listening difficulties are common among EFL learners, particularly at the university level, where academic demands and exposure to authentic language increase significantly. Listening difficulties may arise from a combination of linguistic, cognitive, psychological, and contextual factors (Goh, 2000; Field, 2008). For

first-year English-majored students, these challenges are often intensified as they transition from high school learning environments—typically characterized by teacher-centered instruction and exam-oriented listening tasks—to more demanding university-level instruction that requires greater learner autonomy.

From a linguistic perspective, many learners struggle with recognizing spoken words in connected speech, especially when native speakers use reduced forms, linking, and rapid speech rates. Limited vocabulary knowledge and insufficient phonological awareness further hinder learners' ability to decode spoken input accurately (Field, 2008). As a result, learners may fail to recognize words they already know in written form, leading to breakdowns in comprehension.

Psychological and affective factors also play a significant role in listening difficulties. Goh (2000) points out that learners often experience anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of failure during listening tasks, particularly when they are unable to control the speed of the input. These affective factors can reduce concentration, impair working memory, and negatively affect overall listening performance. Maintaining attention throughout extended listening tasks is another common challenge, especially for learners with limited listening stamina or low motivation.

In addition, unfamiliar accents, topics, and cultural references can further complicate listening comprehension. When learners lack sufficient background knowledge or prior experience with the topic, they may struggle to make appropriate inferences, even if they can recognize individual words (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). These difficulties are particularly evident in EFL contexts, where learners have limited exposure to diverse English accents and authentic spoken discourse.

Overall, listening difficulties in language learning are multidimensional and interconnected. The prevalence of such difficulties among first-year English-majored students highlights the importance of identifying effective coping strategies and instructional approaches that can help learners manage cognitive load, reduce anxiety, and improve listening comprehension. Understanding the nature and sources of listening difficulties provides a crucial theoretical foundation for the present study.

1.2.6. Coping Strategies in Listening Comprehension

Coping strategies refer to the techniques and approaches that learners use to manage and overcome difficulties during listening comprehension tasks. These strategies enable learners to deal with challenges related to linguistic processing, cognitive load, and

affective factors. Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as specific actions taken by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more effective. According to her classification, learning strategies can be broadly categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies.

In the context of listening comprehension, cognitive strategies involve direct manipulation of the listening input, such as guessing meaning from context, using prior knowledge, summarizing information, and focusing on key words. These strategies help learners process and interpret spoken language more effectively (Oxford, 1990). Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, relate to learners' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening performance. Examples include predicting content before listening, checking comprehension during listening, and reflecting on listening difficulties after completing a task (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Research suggests that successful listeners tend to use metacognitive strategies more frequently and more effectively than less successful listeners.

In addition, affective strategies play an important role in helping learners regulate emotional factors such as anxiety, stress, and lack of confidence during listening tasks. Listening anxiety is common among EFL learners, especially when they are exposed to fast speech or native-speaker accents. Affective strategies, such as positive self-talk, relaxation techniques, and motivation enhancement, help learners maintain concentration and confidence, thereby improving listening performance (Oxford, 1990).

Understanding the theoretical foundations of coping strategies in listening comprehension is essential for identifying how learners respond to listening challenges and which strategies contribute most effectively to improved comprehension. This theoretical background provides a valuable framework for analyzing the listening difficulties faced by first-year English-majored students and the coping strategies they employ in the current study.

1.2.7. Summary

Understanding listening from theoretical and practical perspectives is essential for analyzing difficulties encountered by EFL learners. Listening is a complex, active, and integrative skill that supports the development of other language abilities. By examining cognitive processes, models of comprehension, and EFL-specific challenges, educators and researchers can identify sources of difficulty and develop pedagogical strategies

tailored to students' needs, particularly for first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

1.3. Previous Studies on Listening Difficulties and Coping Strategies

Listening comprehension has long been recognized as one of the most challenging skills for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Unlike reading or writing, listening requires learners to process spoken language in real time, which involves recognizing sounds, understanding vocabulary and grammar, and interpreting meaning simultaneously. As a result, many EFL learners experience various difficulties when listening to English, especially in academic contexts. For this reason, a considerable number of studies have been conducted to investigate listening difficulties and the coping strategies employed by learners to overcome these challenges.

Previous international studies have identified a wide range of factors that negatively affect learners' listening comprehension. Researchers such as Underwood (1989) and Brown (2001) pointed out that fast speech rate, unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, and reduced forms of speech are major sources of listening difficulty. Other studies emphasized cognitive and psychological factors, including learners' lack of background knowledge, limited listening strategies, anxiety, and low concentration during listening tasks. Additionally, several studies suggested that the lack of exposure to authentic listening materials significantly hinders learners' ability to comprehend spoken English.

Regarding coping strategies, many international researchers have focused on the strategies that successful listeners use to deal with listening problems. These strategies are commonly categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies. For example, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) highlighted the importance of metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating listening processes. Other studies found that strategies such as predicting content, listening for gist, taking notes, and using contextual clues can help learners improve their listening comprehension. Moreover, socio-affective strategies, including reducing anxiety and maintaining motivation, have also been shown to play a significant role in effective listening.

In the Vietnamese context, several studies have explored listening difficulties faced by EFL learners at different educational levels. Many Vietnamese researchers reported that students often struggle with pronunciation, connected speech, limited vocabulary, and unfamiliar accents, especially those of native speakers. In addition, teaching methods that focus more on grammar and reading than on listening practice have been identified

as contributing factors to students' poor listening performance. A lack of authentic listening materials and insufficient opportunities to practice listening outside the classroom are also commonly mentioned problems.

With regard to coping strategies, Vietnamese studies indicated that learners tend to rely heavily on bottom-up strategies, such as translating word by word, which may not be effective for real-time listening. However, recent research has emphasized the need to train students in using more effective strategies, including top-down processing, predicting content, and developing metacognitive awareness. These studies also suggested that teachers play a crucial role in guiding students to apply appropriate listening strategies and in creating a supportive learning environment to reduce listening anxiety.

In summary, previous studies, both internationally and in Vietnam, have provided valuable insights into the nature of listening difficulties and the coping strategies used by EFL learners. However, most of these studies have focused on learners at secondary or higher proficiency levels, while research on first-year English majored students, particularly in the context of Haiphong University of Management and Technology, remains limited. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this research gap by investigating listening difficulties and coping strategies among first-year English majored students, thereby contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical implications for teaching and learning English listening skills.

1.3.1. International Studies

Many international researchers have explored the nature of listening comprehension difficulties among EFL learners. Underwood (1989) identified several common listening problems, including the speed of spoken language, lack of control over the speaker's delivery, limited vocabulary, and learners' inability to recognize words they already know in written form. These factors often cause learners to lose concentration and fail to understand the overall message.

From a cognitive perspective, Goh (2000) classified listening difficulties into three main stages: perception, parsing, and utilization. The study revealed that learners frequently experience problems at the perception stage, particularly in recognizing sounds and word boundaries, which subsequently affect higher-level comprehension. Goh also emphasized that many learners are unaware of their listening problems and lack appropriate strategies to address them effectively.

Focusing on listening strategies, Vandergrift (2007) examined the role of metacognitive strategies in listening comprehension. His research demonstrated that learners who actively plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening process tend to achieve better comprehension outcomes. The study highlighted the importance of explicit strategy instruction in helping learners become more effective and autonomous listeners.

In addition, Graham (2011) investigated the relationship between listening difficulties, anxiety, and learners' beliefs about listening. The findings indicated that high levels of anxiety and negative beliefs significantly hinder listening performance. Learners who perceive listening as an uncontrollable and difficult skill are less likely to employ effective coping strategies when facing listening challenges.

Overall, international studies suggest that listening difficulties arise from a combination of linguistic, cognitive, and affective factors. They also confirm that the use of appropriate coping strategies—particularly metacognitive strategies—plays a crucial role in helping learners overcome listening difficulties.

1.3.2. Vietnamese Studies

In the context of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vietnam, listening comprehension has increasingly attracted the attention of researchers, particularly at the tertiary level. With Vietnam's growing integration into the global community, English has become an essential tool for academic study and professional communication. As a result, the development of effective listening comprehension skills is considered a crucial goal in English language education. However, numerous studies have shown that Vietnamese learners, including English-majored students, continue to experience considerable difficulties in listening comprehension.

One of the most commonly reported causes of listening difficulties in Vietnam is learners' limited exposure to authentic spoken English. In many educational settings, English instruction is largely classroom-based and strongly influenced by examination-oriented curricula. Consequently, students have few opportunities to interact with natural spoken English used in real-life communication. This lack of exposure makes it difficult for learners to cope with fast speech rates, varied intonation patterns, and natural features of spoken language such as connected speech, elision, and assimilation.

Nguyen and Tran (2015) investigated listening difficulties among Vietnamese university students and found that fast speech, unfamiliar pronunciation, and insufficient vocabulary knowledge were the most significant obstacles to listening comprehension.

Their study also revealed that students tended to adopt a bottom-up approach to listening by focusing excessively on individual words or attempting to translate the spoken text into Vietnamese while listening. This approach often disrupts the listening process and prevents learners from grasping the overall meaning of the message, thereby negatively affecting their listening performance.

In addition to linguistic factors, the use of listening strategies has been identified as a key factor influencing listening success. Tran and Duong (2020) examined listening strategy use among English-major students in Vietnam and reported that although learners employed certain cognitive strategies, such as guessing meaning from context or identifying key words, they rarely used metacognitive strategies. Strategies such as planning before listening, monitoring comprehension during listening, and evaluating performance after listening were not systematically applied. The authors emphasized that first-year students, in particular, lacked strategic awareness and tended to depend heavily on teachers for guidance during listening activities.

Affective factors have also been found to play an important role in listening comprehension. Hoang (2018) reported that many Vietnamese EFL learners experienced high levels of listening anxiety, especially when they were exposed to native-speaker accents or authentic listening materials. This anxiety often reduced learners' ability to concentrate and limited their willingness to apply appropriate coping strategies. For first-year students, listening anxiety may be intensified by their limited listening experience and their adjustment to the new academic environment at the university level.

Overall, previous studies conducted in the Vietnamese context suggest that EFL learners, particularly first-year English-majored students, face substantial challenges in listening comprehension. These challenges stem from linguistic limitations, insufficient training in listening strategies, and affective factors such as anxiety and lack of confidence. The findings of these studies provide important theoretical and empirical support for the present research and highlight the need for further investigation into listening difficulties and coping strategies among first-year English-majored students in Vietnamese universities.

1.3.3. Research Gap

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into listening difficulties and coping strategies among EFL learners, several research gaps remain. First, much of the existing research has focused on general EFL learners or non-English majors, whereas

studies specifically targeting first-year English-majored students are still relatively limited. This group of learners faces unique challenges as they transition from high school learning environments to the more demanding academic context of university education.

Second, few studies have examined listening difficulties and coping strategies within specific institutional contexts in Vietnam. Factors such as curriculum design, teaching methods, and learning environments may influence students' listening experiences; however, these contextual factors have not been sufficiently explored, particularly at institutions such as Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

Moreover, while many previous studies have concentrated on identifying listening problems, fewer have investigated how learners actively cope with these difficulties during listening tasks. Research that simultaneously examines listening difficulties and the coping strategies employed by learners remains limited in the Vietnamese EFL context.

Therefore, further research is needed to explore both listening difficulties and coping strategies among first-year English-majored students in a specific Vietnamese university setting. The present study aims to address these gaps by investigating the listening difficulties faced by first-year English-majored students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology and identifying the coping strategies they use to overcome these challenges.

1.4. Chapter 1 Summary

Chapter 1 has presented the theoretical background and a review of previous studies related to listening comprehension, listening difficulties, and coping strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Listening was discussed as a fundamental yet complex skill involving active cognitive processing, including perception, parsing, and utilization. Different definitions and models of listening comprehension were reviewed, emphasizing the interactive nature of bottom-up and top-down processing in understanding spoken language.

The chapter also highlighted the importance of listening in EFL contexts such as Vietnam, where learners have limited opportunities for real-life communication in English. Various types of listening difficulties commonly experienced by EFL learners were identified, including linguistic problems, fast speech, unfamiliar accents, lack of concentration, and psychological factors such as anxiety.

In addition, coping strategies in listening comprehension were discussed, with particular attention to cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies. These strategies were shown to play an essential role in helping learners manage listening challenges and improve their listening performance.

Furthermore, a review of international and Vietnamese studies revealed that although listening difficulties have been widely investigated, limited research has focused specifically on first-year English-majored students within particular institutional contexts. Research examining both listening difficulties and coping strategies at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology remains scarce.

Based on the theoretical framework and research gaps identified in this chapter, the next chapter will present the research methodology used to investigate listening difficulties and coping strategies among first-year English-majored students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. The Setting

This study was conducted at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology (HPU), a higher education institution that offers English-major programs at undergraduate level. The research setting is the English language learning environment in which first-year English-major students study listening skills as a compulsory component of their curriculum.

At HPU, first-year English-major students are introduced to academic English listening through classroom instruction, audio materials, and multimedia resources. Listening courses typically focus on developing students' ability to understand spoken English in different contexts, accents, and speech rates. However, many students encounter difficulties during this early stage of their university studies due to limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, fast speech, and a lack of effective listening strategies.

This academic setting provides a suitable context for investigating listening difficulties and coping strategies, as first-year students are still adapting to university-level English learning requirements. Understanding their challenges at this stage can help improve teaching practices and support students' listening development more effectively.

2.2. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach to investigate the listening difficulties and coping strategies of first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology (HPU). A quantitative design is considered appropriate for this study because it enables systematic collection of measurable data from a group of participants and allows the analysis of general patterns, frequencies, and tendencies related to listening comprehension problems as well as the strategies students use to overcome these difficulties. By applying a quantitative approach, the research can provide a comprehensive overview of students' experiences and identify trends in listening challenges and coping mechanisms among the target population.

The primary focus of this study is on describing the current situation rather than testing formal hypotheses or establishing causal relationships. Therefore, a descriptive research design is employed to identify and categorize the types of listening difficulties experienced by students and to examine the coping strategies they adopt while performing listening tasks. This design allows the presentation of data in a structured and detailed manner, highlighting patterns that may be used to inform pedagogical practices and improve the teaching and learning of listening skills. By emphasizing description, the study seeks to provide clear and evidence-based insights into the actual listening experiences of students, rather than generalized assumptions.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire was carefully designed to include a combination of closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items. Closed-ended questions aim to gather specific

information about students' experiences with listening difficulties and the frequency with which they encounter such challenges. Likert-scale items allow participants to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with statements related to listening challenges and the coping strategies they employ. By combining these types of questions, the study ensures that the collected data are both quantitative and reliable, enabling systematic statistical analysis and facilitating comparisons across participants.

The use of a questionnaire in this study provides several advantages. First, it allows efficient data collection from a large number of participants, saving time and resources while ensuring anonymity and reducing potential biases. Second, the quantitative nature of the questionnaire supports statistical analysis, which can identify the most common listening difficulties and preferred coping strategies among students. Third, by using a descriptive approach, the research can present a detailed snapshot of students' listening experiences, providing a clear picture of their challenges and responses. Such insights are essential for designing targeted interventions or future studies aimed at enhancing listening competence.

In addition, the questionnaire design was tailored to the specific context of first-year English-major students at HPU. The items were formulated based on literature on listening difficulties in EFL contexts, as well as observed challenges in classroom settings, ensuring relevance and accuracy. The questions focused on several aspects, including comprehension of spoken language, recognition of vocabulary and grammar, understanding of pronunciation, and the use of strategies such as note-taking, prediction, and contextual inference. This approach allows the study to collect comprehensive and meaningful data, directly aligned with the research objectives.

Overall, the quantitative descriptive research design provides a practical and appropriate framework for this study. It enables the researcher to systematically collect, analyze, and interpret data regarding listening difficulties and coping strategies. By presenting the findings in a clear and structured manner, the research offers evidence-based insights into students' listening experiences, which can inform teaching practices and contribute to a better understanding of listening challenges in EFL contexts, particularly for first-year English-major students at HPU.

2.3. Participants

The participants of this study are first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology (HPU). These students were chosen

deliberately because they are at the initial stage of their university education, a period during which they are developing foundational English skills, particularly listening competence. Investigating their listening difficulties at this stage is crucial, as it can provide valuable insights for designing effective teaching methods and learning strategies, helping students to build strong listening skills early in their academic journey.

A total of 20 students participated in the questionnaire survey, which served as the main tool for collecting quantitative data regarding their listening experiences, perceived challenges, and coping strategies. The questionnaire aimed to gather structured information on the types of listening difficulties students frequently encounter, the factors influencing these difficulties, and the strategies they employ to overcome them. This sample size is considered adequate for a descriptive study of this nature, as it allows for the identification of common trends and patterns within the group while maintaining manageability for detailed analysis.

In addition to the questionnaire, a smaller subgroup of 5–7 students participated in semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted to gain deeper qualitative insights into students' personal experiences and perceptions, which cannot be fully captured through structured questionnaires alone. Through these interviews, the researcher was able to explore nuances such as the emotional and psychological aspects of listening, specific challenges encountered in different listening contexts, and students' self-reported strategies for coping with difficulties. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data ensures a more comprehensive understanding of the listening issues faced by first-year English majors.

The selection of participants was guided by specific criteria to ensure the reliability and relevance of the collected data:

Enrollment in the first year of the English major program: Participants had to be officially registered as first-year students in the English major at HPU to ensure that the study focused on learners at a comparable stage of language development.

Similar level of English proficiency: Participants were selected based on the university's placement tests or entrance examination scores, ensuring that differences in listening difficulties were not primarily due to wide variations in language proficiency.

Voluntary participation: Students were invited to participate voluntarily and provided informed consent for both the questionnaire and, if selected, the interview. This criterion was important to ensure ethical standards and encourage honest, thoughtful responses.

In summary, the participants of this study represent a targeted and carefully selected group of first-year English-major students whose experiences provide a valuable basis for examining listening difficulties and coping strategies. By focusing on this specific population, the research can generate practical insights and recommendations that are directly relevant to improving English listening teaching and learning at HPU.

2.4. Research Instruments

The main research instrument employed in this study is a questionnaire, which was designed to investigate first-year English-major students' perceived listening difficulties and the coping strategies they use in English listening comprehension. A questionnaire was selected as the primary data collection tool because it allows the researcher to gather data from a relatively large group of participants efficiently and to identify general patterns and tendencies in students' perceptions and strategy use.

It should be noted that this study does not aim to measure listening difficulties objectively through performance-based listening tests. Instead, it focuses on students' self-reported perceptions of their listening difficulties, which are considered an important aspect of listening comprehension research in the field of applied linguistics. Learners' perceptions provide valuable insights into how they experience listening problems and how these difficulties affect their learning process.

2.4.1. Theoretical Framework for Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was developed based on established theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies on English listening comprehension. Specifically, the items measuring listening difficulties were informed by common listening problems identified in earlier research by Underwood (1989), Brown (2001), and Goh (2000, 2010). These studies highlight key sources of listening difficulty such as fast speech rate, unfamiliar vocabulary, varied accents, reduced forms, lack of concentration, and listening anxiety.

The section on coping strategies was constructed based on Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies, which categorizes strategies into cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies. In addition, research on listening strategy use by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Vandergrift and Goh (2012) provided further guidance in designing items related to planning, monitoring, evaluating, and managing emotional factors during listening tasks. Basing the questionnaire on these well-established frameworks helps ensure that the instrument is theoretically grounded and consistent with previous research.

2.4.2. Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of three main parts:

Part 1: Background Information

This section collects basic demographic and educational information, including students' gender and the number of years they have been learning English. Although these variables are not the central focus of the study, they provide important contextual information that may help explain differences in students' perceived listening difficulties and their use of coping strategies. For example, students with longer exposure to English learning may report fewer listening difficulties or use strategies more effectively.

Part 2: Listening Difficulties

This section focuses on students' perceived difficulties in English listening comprehension. The items address common listening problems reported in previous studies, such as difficulty understanding fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, lack of concentration, and anxiety during listening tasks. All items in this section are presented in a closed-ended format using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This format allows students to express the degree to which they experience each difficulty and enables the researcher to quantify and compare responses statistically.

Part 3: Coping Strategies

The third section investigates the strategies students use to cope with listening difficulties. Based on Oxford's (1990) framework, the strategies are grouped into three categories: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and affective strategies. Similar to Part 2, most items are measured using a five-point Likert scale. In addition, one open-ended question is included to allow students to describe, in their own words, the listening difficulty they find most challenging. This open-ended item provides qualitative insights that complement the quantitative data and help deepen the understanding of students' listening experiences.

2.4.3. Questionnaire Administration

The questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms to ensure convenience, accessibility, and efficiency in data collection. Online distribution allows participants to complete the questionnaire at their own pace and respond anonymously. Anonymity is

expected to encourage honest and accurate responses, thereby reducing potential response bias and increasing the reliability of the data collected.

2.4.4. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire items were developed based on well-established theoretical frameworks and findings from previous studies on listening difficulties and listening strategies. In addition, the questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor to ensure that the items were clear, relevant, and appropriate for first-year English-major students. Minor revisions were made based on this feedback before the questionnaire was officially distributed.

The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the items. A pilot study was conducted prior to the main data collection to test the reliability of the instrument. The results indicated acceptable reliability values, suggesting that the questionnaire items consistently measured students' perceived listening difficulties and coping strategies.

2.5. Research Procedures

This study was conducted following a systematic research procedure to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected. The research process consisted of several sequential stages, from instrument development to data collection and analysis.

First, a thorough review of relevant literature on English listening comprehension, listening difficulties, and coping strategies was conducted. This step provided the theoretical foundation for the study and guided the development of the research instrument. Based on established frameworks and previous studies, a questionnaire was designed to investigate first-year English-major students' perceived listening difficulties and the strategies they employ to cope with these difficulties.

Second, the questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the research objectives and target participants. A pilot study was then conducted with a small group of first-year English-major students to test the clarity of the items and the overall structure of the questionnaire. Feedback from the pilot study was used to make minor revisions before the questionnaire was officially administered.

Third, the revised questionnaire was distributed to first-year English-major students at Haiphong University of Management and Technology. The survey was administered online via Google Forms to facilitate convenient access and efficient data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would remain anonymous and be used solely for academic research purposes.

After the data collection process was completed, the collected responses were screened and coded for analysis. Quantitative data from the closed-ended questions were analyzed using statistical methods to identify common patterns and trends in students' perceived listening difficulties and coping strategy use. Responses to the open-ended question were reviewed and categorized to provide additional qualitative insights that supported the quantitative findings.

Finally, the results of the data analysis were interpreted and discussed in relation to the research questions and existing literature. Based on the findings, conclusions were drawn, and pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research were proposed.

2.6. Research Materials and Tools

The research materials and tools used in this study were carefully selected to ensure accurate, reliable, and comprehensive data collection. The primary research material is the data collected from first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology, while the main research tool is a questionnaire administered online via Google Forms.

The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data on students' perceived listening difficulties and the coping strategies they employ during English listening comprehension tasks. A total of 20 first-year English-major students participated in the survey. Google Forms was chosen as the data collection platform because it allows easy access via computers and mobile devices, facilitates efficient data management, and ensures participant anonymity.

The use of a questionnaire enables the systematic collection of data from multiple participants within a short period of time. It also allows the researcher to examine the frequency of listening difficulties and the extent to which different coping strategies are used. As a result, the data obtained are suitable for statistical analysis and provide a reliable basis for identifying common listening problems and strategy patterns among first-year English-major students.

In summary, the questionnaire administered via Google Forms serves as the primary and sole research instrument for this study. Its structured design, which combines closed-ended Likert-scale items with an open-ended question, makes it appropriate for addressing the research objectives. The data collected from this instrument provide valuable insights into students' listening challenges and coping strategies, thereby supporting the development of pedagogical implications for improving English listening instruction for first-year students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

2.7. Data Analysis Methods

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Responses from the Google Forms were first exported and organized for analysis. The data were then coded and processed to calculate frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations for each questionnaire item.

Descriptive statistics were used to identify common patterns and trends in students' perceived listening difficulties as well as the coping strategies they employed. The analysis focused on determining which listening problems were reported most frequently and which strategies were most commonly used by first-year English-major students.

Responses to the open-ended question were analyzed qualitatively by grouping similar answers into common themes. These qualitative findings were used to support and enrich the quantitative results, providing a more comprehensive understanding of students' listening experiences.

The results of the data analysis were then interpreted in relation to the research questions and discussed with reference to previous studies in the field of English listening comprehension.

2.8. Summary

In this study, the questionnaire is employed as the primary research instrument to ensure reliable and comprehensive data collection. The questionnaire provides quantitative data on first-year English-major students' listening difficulties and the coping strategies they use in English listening comprehension. In addition, academic references are used to establish the theoretical framework and to support the interpretation and comparison of the research findings. This approach enables an effective analysis of listening difficulties and the proposal of appropriate coping strategies to improve English listening skills for

first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology (HPU).

3. Data Collection Procedure

3.1.Purpose

The purpose of this stage is to obtain reliable and valid data on first-year English-major students' perceived listening difficulties and the coping strategies they employ during English listening comprehension at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology (HPU). By using a questionnaire administered via Google Forms as the sole research instrument, the study aims to collect data efficiently while ensuring accessibility, consistency, and participant anonymity. This approach is appropriate for investigating students' perceptions, as it allows respondents to reflect on their listening experiences and report difficulties and strategies in a structured manner.

3.2.Procedure

The data collection procedure was conducted through a series of carefully planned steps. First, the questionnaire was designed based on established theoretical frameworks of listening comprehension and coping strategies, as well as findings from previous studies. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items aimed at identifying common listening difficulties, including unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech, different accents, unclear pronunciation, and complex sentence structures. These items were intended to measure the extent to which students experienced each difficulty. In addition, one open-ended question was included to provide students with an opportunity to describe their personal listening experiences and explain the strategies they used to cope with listening challenges in their own words.

Before official administration, the questionnaire was reviewed and refined with the guidance of the research supervisor to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for first-year English-major students. Necessary revisions were made to improve wording and eliminate ambiguity. After finalization, the questionnaire was distributed to 20 first-year English-major students at HPU via Google Forms. Participants were informed of the research purpose and were assured that participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential. The online format enabled students to complete

the questionnaire conveniently using computers or mobile devices, thereby increasing response accuracy and reducing time constraints.

Following the completion of data collection, all responses were automatically recorded and downloaded from Google Forms. The data were then organized and prepared for analysis. Closed-ended responses were arranged for quantitative analysis, while open-ended responses were carefully reviewed and grouped according to common themes to provide qualitative insights. Throughout the data collection process, ethical considerations were strictly observed, including maintaining participants' anonymity, allowing participants to withdraw at any time, and using the collected data solely for academic research purposes.

3.3. Summary

In summary, the systematic data collection procedure and the use of a well-designed questionnaire enabled the study to gather accurate, reliable, and comprehensive information on first-year English-major students' listening difficulties and coping strategies at HPU. This procedure ensured the quality of the collected data and provided a solid foundation for subsequent data analysis, discussion of findings, and the development of pedagogical implications for improving English listening teaching and learning.

4. Qualitative Data Analysis

This study employs qualitative data analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of students' listening difficulties and the coping strategies they adopt in English listening comprehension. Qualitative data are derived from students' open-ended responses in the questionnaire, which allow participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, and personal strategies.

The qualitative analysis follows a thematic approach. First, students' responses are carefully read multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data. Relevant statements related to listening difficulties and coping strategies are then identified and coded. These codes are subsequently grouped into broader themes that reflect common patterns in students' experiences, such as difficulties related to vocabulary limitations, fast speech, unfamiliar accents, unclear pronunciation, and psychological factors including anxiety and lack of confidence.

Through thematic analysis, recurring patterns and trends are identified to highlight key factors influencing listening comprehension. This process enables the researcher to

interpret not only what difficulties students face, but also why these difficulties occur and how students attempt to cope with them in real learning situations. As a result, qualitative analysis provides rich, descriptive insights that cannot be fully captured through quantitative data alone.

***Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of first-year English-major students' listening difficulties and coping strategies, this study integrates findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data obtained from multiple-choice questions are used to identify general trends, frequency of difficulties, and commonly reported coping strategies among students. These results provide an overall picture of the listening challenges faced by the participant group.

Qualitative data from open-ended responses are then used to explain and enrich the quantitative findings by offering detailed descriptions and concrete examples from students' perspectives. This integration allows the researcher to compare numerical patterns with students' personal experiences, thereby strengthening the interpretation of results.

By combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth, the study ensures that its conclusions and recommendations are grounded in both measurable evidence and in-depth insights. This mixed approach enhances the reliability and validity of the research findings and provides a solid basis for pedagogical implications and suggestions for improving English listening teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Overview of the Research Findings

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the data collected from the questionnaire survey administered to first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology (HPU). The main purpose of this chapter is to analyze students' perceived listening difficulties and the coping strategies they employ in English listening comprehension, based solely on data obtained from the survey.

As stated in Chapter 2, the questionnaire was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were gathered through closed-ended items using a five-point Likert scale, while qualitative data were obtained from an open-ended question that allowed students to express their personal experiences and opinions regarding listening difficulties. The combination of these two types of data enables the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' listening challenges and strategy use.

This chapter is organized into four main sections. Section 3.2 presents the findings related to students' perceived listening difficulties. Section 3.3 reports the findings concerning the coping strategies used by students when facing listening problems.

Section 3.4 discusses the relationship between listening difficulties and coping strategies. Finally, Section 3.5 provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions and previous studies.

3.2. Findings on Students' Listening Difficulties

This section presents the findings related to first-year English-major students' perceived difficulties in English listening comprehension. The analysis is based on responses to the closed-ended questionnaire items, which focus on common listening problems identified in previous studies, including linguistic, psychological, and contextual factors.

3.2.1. Linguistic Difficulties

The findings indicate that linguistic factors are among the most significant sources of listening difficulty for first-year English-major students at HPU. A large number of students reported difficulty understanding listening texts due to unfamiliar vocabulary. When encountering unknown words, students often fail to grasp the overall meaning of the listening passage, which negatively affects their comprehension.

Fast speech rate was also identified as a major difficulty. Many students agreed that native speakers or audio materials spoken at a natural speed are challenging to follow. This problem is particularly common among first-year students, who have limited exposure to authentic listening materials. As a result, students struggle to process information in real time and often miss important details.

In addition, different accents and unclear pronunciation were reported as significant obstacles. Students indicated that they find it difficult to understand speakers with unfamiliar accents, especially when the pronunciation differs from the standard accents commonly used in textbooks. Reduced forms, linking sounds, and weak forms further increase the level of difficulty, making it hard for students to recognize individual words in continuous speech.

3.2.2. Psychological Difficulties

Besides linguistic factors, psychological difficulties also play an important role in students' listening comprehension. The data show that many students experience anxiety and nervousness during listening tasks, particularly in test-like situations. This anxiety often leads to a loss of concentration, which in turn affects listening performance.

Some students reported a lack of confidence in their listening ability. When they fail to understand the beginning of a listening passage, they tend to feel discouraged and stop

paying attention to the remaining content. This negative emotional response prevents them from actively engaging with the listening task and reduces their overall comprehension.

3.2.3. Contextual and Environmental Difficulties

Contextual factors were also identified as contributing to listening difficulties. Background noise, poor audio quality, and unfamiliar topics were commonly reported problems. When the listening topic is unfamiliar, students find it harder to predict content and activate background knowledge, which makes comprehension more challenging.

In summary, the findings reveal that first-year English-major students at HPU face a range of listening difficulties, with linguistic and psychological factors being the most prominent.

3.3. Findings on Students' Coping Strategies

This section presents the findings related to the coping strategies students use to deal with listening difficulties. The strategies are categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies, based on Oxford's (1990) framework.

3.3.1. Cognitive Strategies

The results show that cognitive strategies are commonly used by students during listening tasks. Many students reported that they focus on key words rather than trying to understand every word in the listening text. This strategy helps them grasp the main idea even when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary.

Another frequently used strategy is guessing meaning from context. Students attempt to infer the meaning of unknown words based on surrounding information, tone, or the general topic of the listening passage. Some students also take notes while listening to help them remember important points and organize information more effectively.

3.3.2. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies were also reported by students, although to a lesser extent. Some students indicated that they prepare for listening tasks by previewing questions or predicting possible content before listening. During listening, they monitor their understanding and try to adjust their focus when they realize they are losing track of the content.

After listening, a number of students reported checking their answers and reflecting on their mistakes. However, the frequency of metacognitive strategy use suggests that many first-year students have not yet developed strong self-regulation skills in listening comprehension.

3.3.3. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies were used by students to manage emotional factors such as anxiety and stress. Some students reported that they try to relax and stay calm during listening tasks. Encouraging themselves and maintaining a positive attitude were also mentioned as ways to cope with listening difficulties.

Despite the use of affective strategies, the findings suggest that anxiety remains a significant issue for many students, indicating a need for further support and training in managing listening-related stress.

3.4. Relationship between Listening Difficulties and Coping Strategies

The findings suggest a close relationship between students' listening difficulties and the coping strategies they employ. Students who experience difficulties related to fast speech and unfamiliar vocabulary tend to rely more on cognitive strategies such as focusing on key words and guessing meaning from context.

Similarly, students who report high levels of anxiety are more likely to use affective strategies to manage their emotions during listening tasks. However, the limited use of metacognitive strategies indicates that many students lack awareness of effective planning and monitoring techniques, which could help them overcome listening difficulties more efficiently.

This relationship highlights the importance of teaching students not only listening skills but also appropriate strategies to cope with different types of listening problems.

3.5. Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and previous studies on English listening comprehension.

Regarding the first research question, the findings confirm that first-year English-major students at HPU face significant listening difficulties, particularly related to fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, and psychological factors such as anxiety.

These results are consistent with previous studies by Underwood (1989) and Goh (2000), which identify similar sources of listening difficulty among EFL learners.

In response to the second research question, the findings reveal that students employ a range of coping strategies, with cognitive strategies being the most commonly used. This result aligns with Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies and suggests that students tend to rely on surface-level strategies rather than deeper metacognitive regulation.

The limited use of metacognitive strategies indicates that first-year students may lack sufficient training in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their listening processes. This finding supports Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) argument that explicit instruction in listening strategies is necessary to improve learners' listening competence.

Overall, the discussion highlights the need for pedagogical interventions that focus on both reducing listening difficulties and enhancing students' strategic awareness.

3.6. Summary

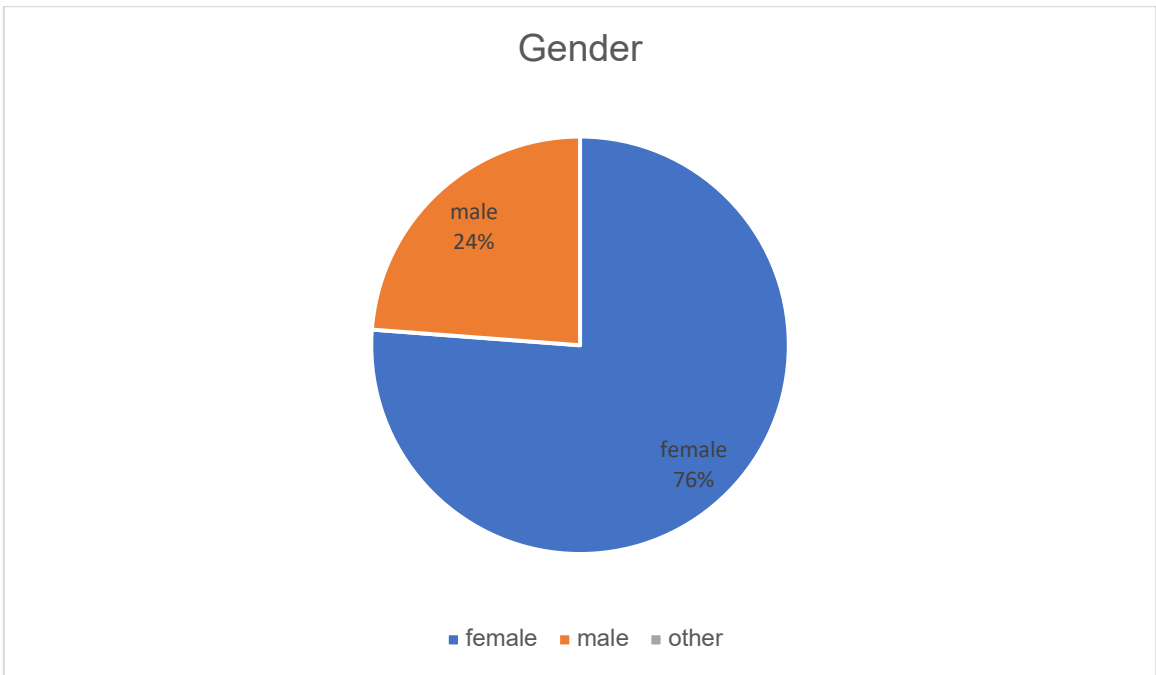
This chapter has presented and analyzed the findings from the questionnaire survey conducted among first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. The results indicate that students experience a variety of listening difficulties, with linguistic and psychological factors being the most prominent.

In response to these difficulties, students employ various coping strategies, particularly cognitive strategies. However, the limited use of metacognitive strategies suggests a need for greater emphasis on strategy training in English listening instruction.

The findings of this chapter provide a solid foundation for the next chapter, which will present conclusions, pedagogical implications, and suggestions for improving English listening teaching and learning for first-year English-major students at HPU.

3.7 .Chart analysis

3.7.1. Gender Distribution of First-Year English-Majored Students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology



The survey of 20 first-year English-major students shows a predominance of female students (76.2%) compared to male students (23.8%), reflecting a common trend in language programs. Gender composition is relevant because it may influence listening difficulties and coping strategies, as research suggests female students often demonstrate higher attention, persistence, and use of metacognitive and affective strategies. While the sample is gender-imbalanced, the data still provide valuable insights into students' listening challenges and strategy use, which will be further analyzed in Chapter 3.

3.7.2 Duration of English Learning Among First-Year English-Majored Students

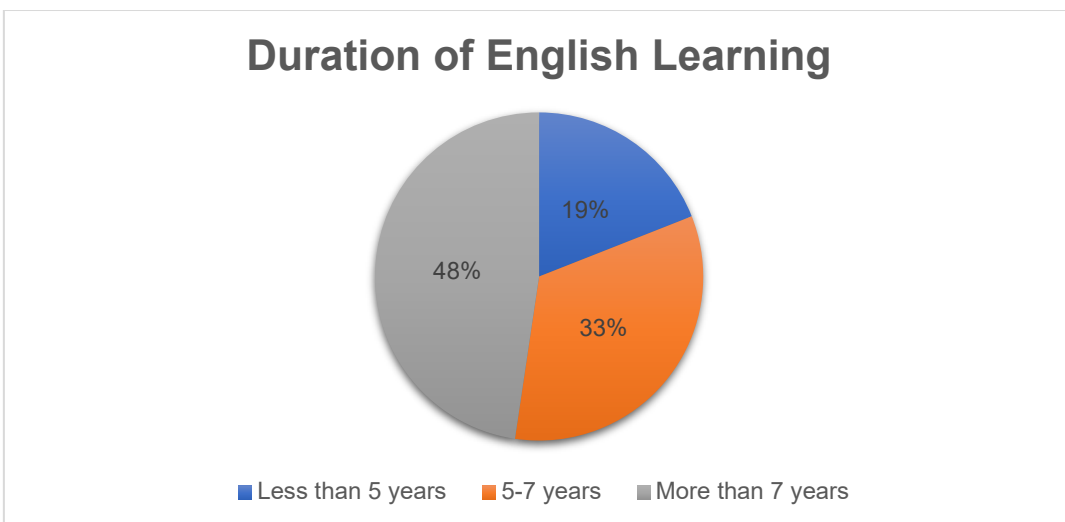


Figure 3.7.2 shows the English learning experience of the surveyed first-year English-major students at HPU: 19% have studied English for less than 5 years, 33.3% for 5–7 years, and 47.6% for more than 7 years. Students with longer learning experience

generally have stronger foundations in vocabulary, grammar, and listening skills, while those with less experience may face more difficulties with fast speech, unfamiliar accents, or complex listening tasks. Understanding learning duration is important for interpreting listening difficulties and coping strategies, as prior experience influences comprehension, strategy use, and listening confidence.

3.7.3 Frequency of Practicing English Listening Outside the Classroom

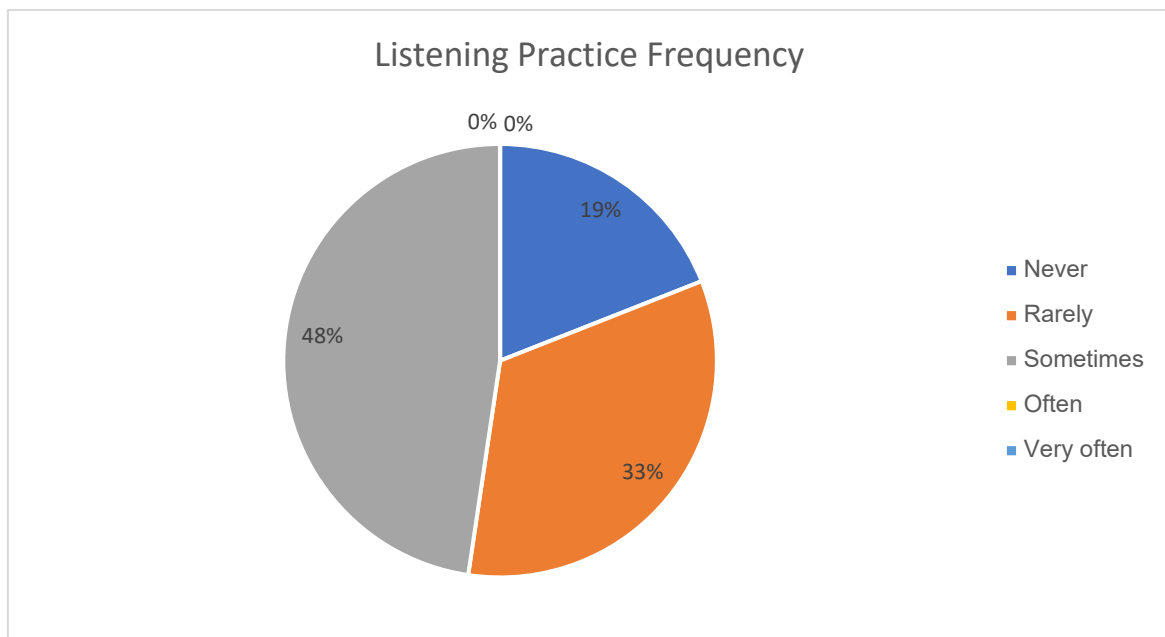


Figure 3.7.3 presents data on how often the surveyed first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology practice English listening outside the classroom. The results show that 19% of students reported never practicing listening, 33.3% practice rarely, and 47.6% practice sometimes.

The data indicate that nearly half of the participants engage in listening practice outside class occasionally, which suggests that these students have some exposure to English listening beyond the formal classroom setting. This level of practice may help them

reinforce vocabulary, familiarize themselves with different accents, and improve comprehension of intermediate listening materials. However, occasional practice may not be sufficient to fully develop their listening skills or to cope with authentic, fast-paced spoken English.

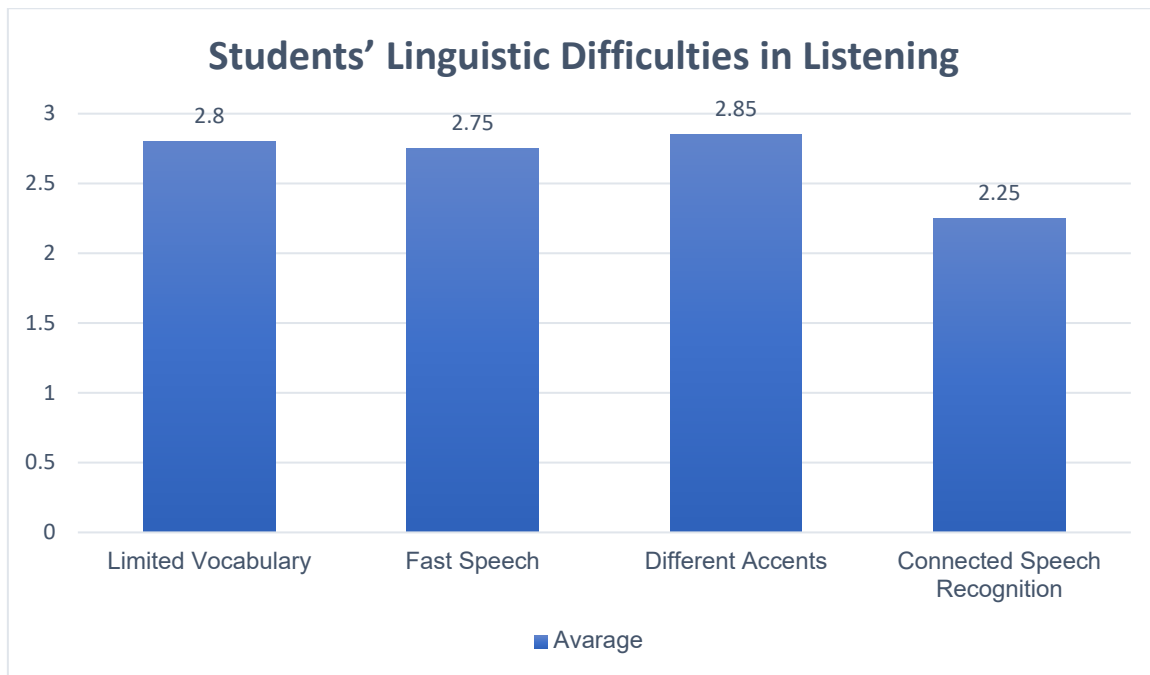
A significant proportion of students (33.3%) reported practicing listening rarely, reflecting limited engagement with English listening outside of class. This group may struggle to maintain concentration and comprehension when faced with longer listening texts or unfamiliar accents. Their listening difficulties could be attributed to insufficient exposure and lack of regular practice, which highlights the importance of promoting more consistent listening activities among students.

The smallest group (19%) indicated that they never practice listening outside the classroom. This lack of additional practice can hinder their overall listening competence and make them more dependent on classroom instruction. Such students are likely to experience higher levels of anxiety and face more challenges in understanding authentic English speech.

Understanding students' frequency of listening practice outside the classroom is crucial for interpreting the listening difficulties reported in the survey. Students who practice more regularly may be better equipped to employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies effectively, while those with minimal practice may rely heavily on word-for-word translation or experience difficulty inferring meaning from context.

In conclusion, the distribution of listening practice frequency highlights the variation in students' exposure to English outside the classroom. This information provides a valuable context for analyzing their listening difficulties and the coping strategies they adopt, which will be further explored in the following sections of Chapter 3.

3.7.4 Linguistic Difficulties in English Listening Comprehension



Analysis:

The data indicate that linguistic factors pose considerable challenges to first-year English-major students in listening comprehension. Among the identified difficulties, understanding different English accents records the highest average score (2.85), suggesting that accent variation is the most problematic aspect for the participants. This may be explained by students' limited exposure to diverse accents such as British, American, Australian, or other non-native varieties, as most listening materials in secondary education tend to focus on standardized pronunciation.

Limited vocabulary also emerges as a significant difficulty, with an average score of 2.80. This result implies that insufficient lexical knowledge prevents students from fully comprehending listening texts, especially when encountering unfamiliar words in authentic spoken contexts. When learners lack vocabulary, they are more likely to miss key information and struggle to infer meaning, which negatively affects overall listening comprehension.

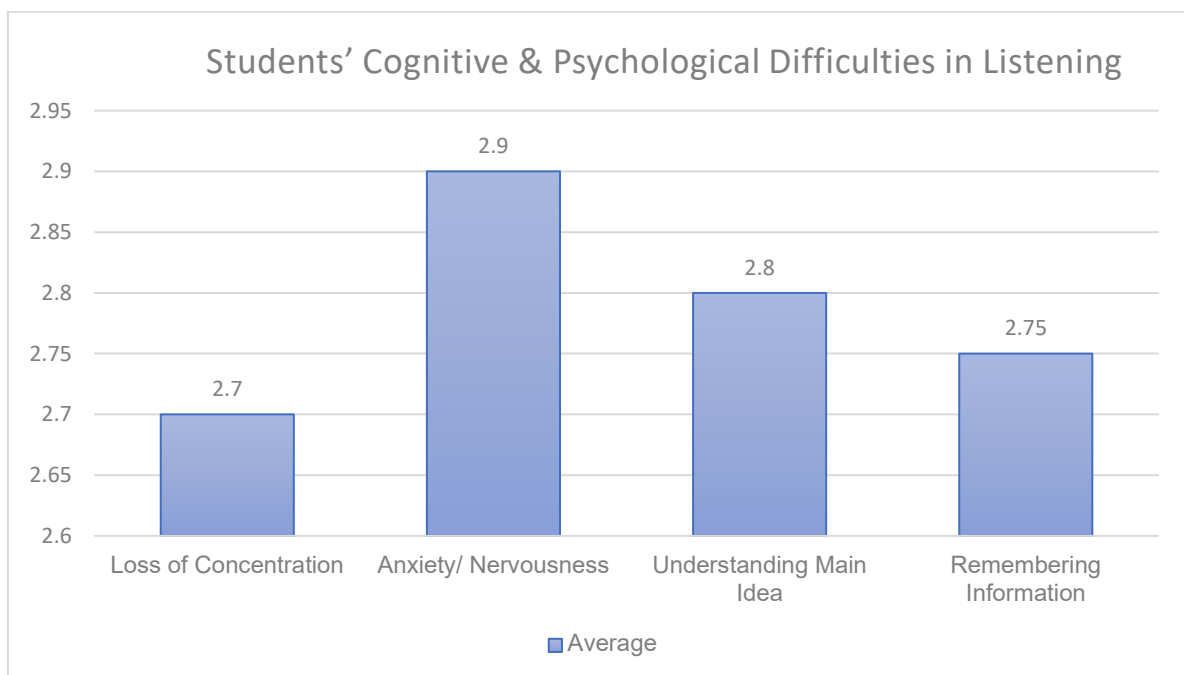
Fast speech is another major challenge, with an average score of 2.75. The relatively high score suggests that students find it difficult to process information when speakers talk at a natural speed. This difficulty may stem from limited listening practice and insufficient training in processing connected speech, reduced forms, or natural rhythm and intonation in English.

In contrast, recognizing familiar words in connected speech receives the lowest average score (2.25), indicating that although this remains a difficulty, it is less severe compared

to other linguistic factors. This may suggest that some students have gradually developed basic awareness of linking and sound reduction through classroom instruction, though the skill is not yet fully mastered.

Overall, the findings are consistent with previous studies which identify vocabulary limitation, speech rate, and accent variation as major obstacles in EFL listening comprehension. These linguistic challenges highlight the need for increased exposure to authentic listening materials, diversified accents, and targeted instruction focusing on vocabulary development and natural speech features to improve students' listening competence

3.7.5. Cognitive Strategies



This section analyzes the cognitive and psychological difficulties faced by first-year English-major students in English listening comprehension, including loss of concentration, anxiety, difficulty in understanding the main idea, and difficulty in remembering information. These factors are considered internal challenges that directly affect learners' listening performance.

As illustrated in the figure, anxiety is reported as the most prominent psychological difficulty, with an average score of 2.9. This indicates that many students feel nervous or stressed during listening activities. Anxiety may arise from fear of misunderstanding the content, pressure to answer questions correctly, or lack of confidence in listening ability. Such emotional tension can negatively affect students' ability to process spoken input effectively, especially in time-limited listening tasks.

The difficulty in understanding the main idea ranks closely behind, with a mean score of 2.8. This result suggests that students often struggle to grasp the overall message of a listening passage, even when they may understand some individual words or phrases. This problem may be related to limited background knowledge, insufficient use of top-down listening strategies, or an overreliance on word-by-word listening rather than focusing on general meaning.

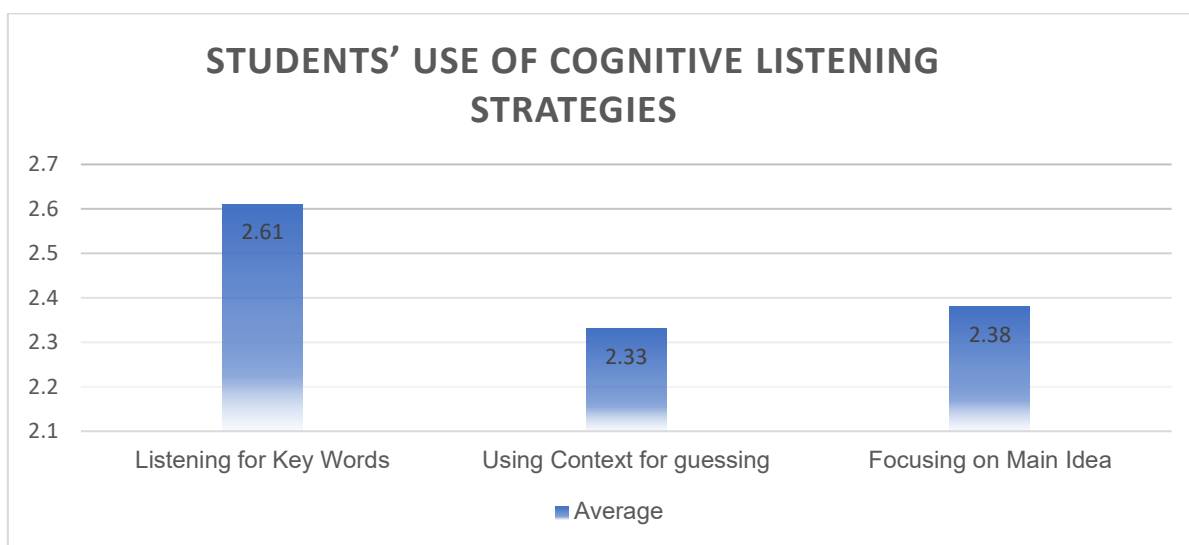
Another notable difficulty is remembering information while listening, which has an average score of 2.75. This indicates that students find it challenging to retain details such as key points, numbers, or specific information after listening. This issue may be caused by weak short-term memory, fast speech rate, or the cognitive load of processing unfamiliar vocabulary and structures simultaneously.

Loss of concentration, with a mean score of 2.7, is also a common problem among the participants. Long listening texts, lack of interest in the topic, or fatigue may cause students to lose focus during listening tasks. When concentration decreases, learners may miss important information and fail to follow the progression of the listening passage.

Overall, the findings reveal that cognitive and psychological factors pose considerable challenges to first-year English-major students' listening comprehension. Anxiety, difficulty in identifying the main idea, memory limitations, and loss of concentration interact and negatively influence listening performance. These results highlight the need for listening instruction that not only develops linguistic competence but also addresses

psychological factors by creating a supportive learning environment, training effective listening strategies, and helping students build confidence in listening activities.

3.7.6. Students' Use of Cognitive Listening Strategies



The data presented in Figure 3.7.6 illustrate the extent to which first-year English-major students apply cognitive strategies in English listening comprehension, including listening for keywords, using context to guess meaning, and focusing on the main idea.

Among the three cognitive strategies, listening for keywords has the highest average score at 2.61. This result suggests that students tend to rely relatively more on identifying key words when listening, rather than attempting to understand every word in the listening text. This strategy may help learners capture essential information and reduce the cognitive load during listening tasks, especially when they encounter fast speech or unfamiliar vocabulary. However, the moderate score indicates that this strategy is not consistently or effectively applied by all students.

The strategy of focusing on the main idea receives an average score of 2.38, showing that students have some awareness of the importance of global understanding in listening comprehension. Nevertheless, the relatively low score implies that many students still struggle to distinguish between main ideas and supporting details. This difficulty may stem from limited listening experience or a tendency to focus excessively on individual words instead of overall meaning, which can hinder effective comprehension.

Using context to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words records the lowest average score at 2.33. This finding indicates that students are least confident in applying contextual

clues during listening. Many learners may lack sufficient vocabulary knowledge or background knowledge to infer meaning from context, leading them to rely heavily on direct word recognition or translation. As a result, when encountering unfamiliar words, students may lose concentration or fail to follow the listening content.

Overall, the findings reveal that cognitive listening strategies are applied at a relatively low to moderate level among first-year English-major students. Although students demonstrate some awareness of these strategies, their limited and inconsistent use may contribute to ongoing listening difficulties. This suggests a need for explicit instruction and practice in cognitive listening strategies, particularly in training students to focus on overall meaning and effectively use contextual information to enhance listening comprehension.

3.7.7. Analysis of Metacognitive Listening Strategies

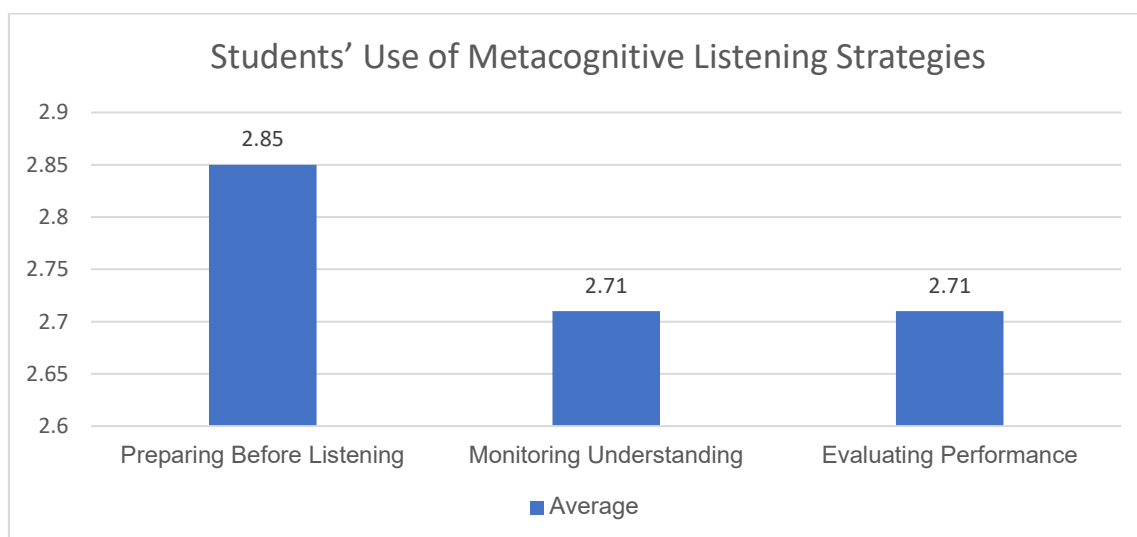


Figure 3.7.7 illustrates the extent to which first-year English-majored students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology employ metacognitive strategies in English listening comprehension. These strategies include preparing before listening,

monitoring understanding during listening, and evaluating listening performance after completing a listening task.

Among the three metacognitive strategies, preparing before listening records the highest mean score at 2.85. This indicates that students tend to show a relatively higher level of awareness of the importance of preparation prior to listening activities. Preparing before listening may involve thinking about the topic, predicting possible content, or activating relevant background knowledge. Such preparation can help learners build expectations and reduce anxiety during listening. However, although this strategy has the highest mean score, the result still suggests that it is not applied consistently or systematically by all students.

Both monitoring understanding while listening and evaluating listening performance after listening share the same mean score of 2.71. These findings suggest that students only moderately engage in self-monitoring and self-evaluation during the listening process. Monitoring understanding requires learners to check whether they are following the listening text and to adjust their listening strategies when comprehension breaks down. Similarly, evaluating performance involves reflecting on what has been understood, identifying mistakes, and considering ways to improve future listening tasks. The moderate mean scores indicate that many students may lack the habit or skills necessary for effective self-regulation during listening.

The relatively low and similar mean scores of monitoring and evaluation strategies reveal a common issue among first-year English-majored students: limited metacognitive awareness. Many students focus primarily on obtaining correct answers rather than reflecting on how they listen and how their listening can be improved. This may be due to insufficient strategy instruction in previous learning experiences or a lack of opportunities to practice reflective listening in the classroom.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while students show some awareness of metacognitive strategies, their actual use remains at a moderate level. This suggests a need for explicit instruction and training in metacognitive listening strategies. Teachers should guide students in planning before listening, monitoring comprehension during listening, and evaluating performance after listening in order to help them become more autonomous and effective listeners.

3.7.8. Affective Strategies

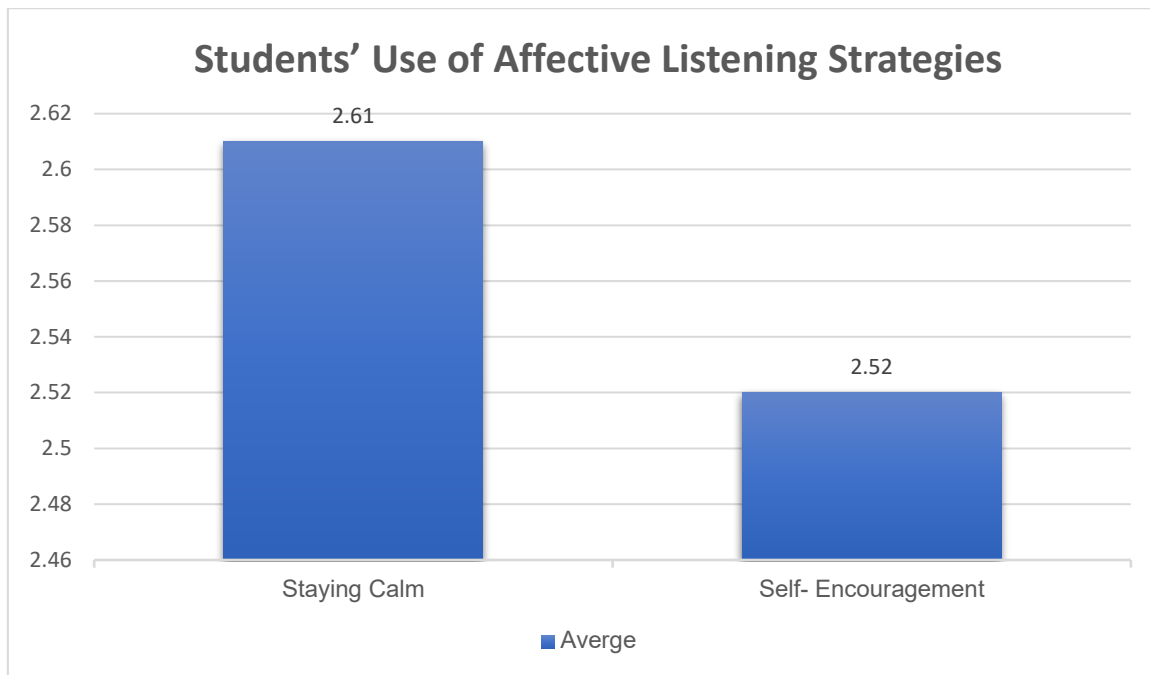


Figure 3.7.8 illustrates the extent to which first-year English-majored students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology employ affective strategies in English listening comprehension. The affective strategies examined include students' ability to remain calm when they fail to understand parts of a listening text and their tendency to encourage themselves to continue listening despite difficulties.

The findings show that the strategy staying calm when not understanding part of the listening text obtained a mean score of 2.61. This result indicates a moderate level of emotional control among the participants. In practice, when students miss important information or fail to follow the listening content, many of them tend to feel anxious or frustrated. Such negative emotional reactions can significantly interfere with their ability to maintain concentration and continue processing incoming information effectively, especially during long or challenging listening tasks.

Meanwhile, the strategy self-encouragement to keep listening even when the listening text is difficult recorded a slightly lower mean score of 2.52. This suggests that many students lack the habit of motivating themselves when encountering listening difficulties. Instead of maintaining a positive attitude and persevering through challenging sections, students often become discouraged when they fail to understand the content immediately. This lack of persistence can lead to decreased listening effectiveness and reduced confidence, particularly among first-year students who are still adjusting to the academic demands of university-level English learning.

A comparison of the two affective strategies reveals that staying calm is used somewhat more frequently than self-encouragement, although both strategies remain underutilized overall. The relatively low mean scores indicate that students have not yet developed strong affective control skills during listening activities. Psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of misunderstanding, and low self-confidence may intensify listening difficulties, even when students possess an adequate linguistic foundation.

In general, the results suggest that first-year English-majored students demonstrate limited use of affective strategies in listening comprehension. This highlights the importance of incorporating affective strategy training into listening instruction. Teachers should help students develop emotional regulation skills, encourage positive self-talk, and foster resilience when facing listening challenges. Enhancing students' affective strategy use can contribute significantly to improved listening performance, greater confidence, and more effective engagement with authentic spoken English.

3.7.9. Analysis of the Open-ended Question

In addition to the close-ended questions, the questionnaire included one open-ended question asking students to identify the biggest difficulty they face in English listening. The responses collected from first-year English-majored students reveal several recurring themes, which provide deeper insights into their listening challenges and support the quantitative findings presented earlier.

The most frequently mentioned difficulty is fast speech and connected speech. Many students reported that native speakers often speak too quickly and link words together, making it difficult to distinguish individual words. As a result, students struggle to recognize word boundaries and cannot clearly identify where one word ends and the next begins. This problem is especially serious when listening to authentic materials, where speech is natural and unplanned. Several students emphasized that blended sounds prevent them from understanding the overall message, even when the vocabulary is relatively familiar.

Another major difficulty reported by students is understanding different English accents and pronunciation styles. Many respondents stated that they are accustomed to standard accents used in textbooks or classroom materials, such as American or British English. When encountering unfamiliar accents or varied pronunciation patterns, their comprehension decreases significantly. This issue becomes more challenging when

accent variation is combined with fast speech, leading to confusion and misunderstanding.

Limited vocabulary and unfamiliar expressions also emerged as a common problem in the open-ended responses. Students mentioned that unknown words, idioms, and colloquial expressions often prevent them from understanding listening texts. When encountering new vocabulary, students tend to focus excessively on individual words instead of the overall meaning, which causes them to miss important information. This finding aligns with earlier results showing that vocabulary limitation is a major linguistic barrier in listening comprehension.

In addition, some students pointed out background noise and multiple speakers as factors that negatively affect their listening ability. Noise, overlapping voices, or unclear audio quality make it difficult for learners to obtain a clear and accurate representation of what is being said. These external factors further increase the cognitive load during listening tasks.

A smaller number of responses mentioned difficulties related to understanding implied meaning and context, as well as problems associated with grammar, speaking confidence, and psychological factors. Some students expressed feelings of shyness, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence, which indirectly influence their listening performance. When students feel anxious or insecure, their ability to concentrate and process spoken information is reduced.

Overall, the open-ended responses confirm that English listening difficulties among first-year English majors stem from a combination of linguistic factors (fast speech, connected speech, accents, vocabulary), environmental factors (noise, unclear input), and psychological factors (anxiety, lack of confidence). These qualitative findings strongly support the quantitative data analyzed earlier in this chapter and provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' listening challenges. The results highlight the need for increased exposure to authentic listening materials, varied accents, and explicit training in listening strategies to help students improve their listening comprehension.

3.7.10. Summary of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 presented the data analysis and findings of the study, which aimed to investigate English listening difficulties and coping strategies among first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

The chapter began with background information about the participants, including gender distribution and the length of time students had been learning English. The results showed that the majority of participants were female and that most students had more than five years of English learning experience, providing an important context for interpreting the subsequent findings.

Next, the analysis focused on students' English listening habits, particularly the frequency with which they practiced listening outside the classroom. The findings indicated that although some students practiced listening regularly, a considerable number practiced only occasionally or rarely, which may contribute to their listening difficulties.

The study then examined linguistic difficulties in listening comprehension. The results revealed that fast speech, limited vocabulary, and difficulty understanding different accents were the most common linguistic challenges faced by students. In contrast, recognizing words in connected speech was perceived as a less serious difficulty.

Psychological difficulties were also analyzed, including loss of concentration, listening anxiety, difficulty understanding the main idea, and problems with remembering information. Among these factors, anxiety and difficulty identifying the main idea were reported as relatively significant obstacles to effective listening comprehension.

Furthermore, the chapter analyzed students' use of listening strategies. Cognitive strategies, such as listening for keywords and guessing meaning from context, were used at a moderate level. Metacognitive strategies, including preparing before listening, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating listening performance, were employed slightly more frequently. Affective strategies, such as staying calm and self-encouragement, were used at a relatively lower level.

Finally, the open-ended question provided deeper insights into students' listening difficulties. Students frequently mentioned fast speech, different accents, unknown vocabulary, background noise, and anxiety when listening or speaking English. These qualitative findings supported and enriched the quantitative results presented earlier in the chapter.

In conclusion, Chapter 3 provided a comprehensive analysis of the data collected in this study, offering clear evidence of the major listening difficulties faced by students and the strategies they employ to cope with these challenges. These findings serve as a foundation for the discussion and pedagogical implications presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to investigate the difficulties in English listening comprehension experienced by first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology, as well as the coping strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. By adopting a quantitative descriptive approach supported by qualitative insights from open-ended responses, the study aimed to provide a clear and realistic picture of students' listening experiences during the initial stage of their university education.

The findings of the study reveal that first-year English-major students face a wide range of listening difficulties. Linguistic factors such as limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, fast speech rate, and varied accents were identified as the most significant obstacles to effective listening comprehension. In addition, cognitive and psychological

factors, including lack of concentration, listening anxiety, and low confidence, were found to negatively affect students' listening performance. These difficulties are further intensified by students' limited exposure to authentic English listening materials and their heavy reliance on bottom-up listening processes, such as word-by-word translation.

Regarding coping strategies, the results indicate that students tend to use basic cognitive strategies, such as listening for key words or focusing on the main idea. However, the use of metacognitive strategies—such as planning before listening, monitoring comprehension during listening, and evaluating performance after listening—remains limited. Affective strategies aimed at reducing anxiety and improving concentration are also not consistently applied. This suggests that while students are aware of their listening difficulties, they lack sufficient strategic awareness and training to manage these challenges effectively.

Based on the findings, the study highlights several important pedagogical implications. English instructors at HPU should place greater emphasis on developing students' listening strategies alongside linguistic knowledge. Integrating explicit instruction in metacognitive and affective strategies, increasing exposure to authentic listening materials, and creating a supportive learning environment can significantly enhance students' listening competence. At the same time, students should be encouraged to adopt more autonomous listening practices and actively reflect on their listening processes.

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The sample size is relatively small and limited to first-year English-major students at a single university, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the study relies mainly on self-reported data rather than objective measures of listening proficiency. Future research could involve a larger and more diverse participant group, incorporate listening tests, or examine the effectiveness of specific listening strategy training programs.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the listening difficulties and coping strategies of first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. By identifying key challenges and highlighting the need for strategic listening instruction, the research contributes to improving English listening teaching and learning in the EFL context. Ultimately, enhancing listening competence will help students build confidence, improve academic performance, and develop effective communication skills for future academic and professional success.

4.2. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of the study is relatively small, consisting of only 20 first-year English-major students at HPU. Although this number is adequate for a descriptive study, it limits the generalizability of the findings to a wider population of English-major students in Vietnam or other educational contexts.

Second, the study mainly relies on self-reported data collected through questionnaires and interviews. As a result, the findings may be influenced by students' subjective perceptions, attitudes, or willingness to report their actual difficulties and strategies accurately. The absence of objective measures, such as listening test scores or classroom observations, may limit the depth of analysis.

Third, the study focuses exclusively on listening difficulties and coping strategies without examining the effectiveness of specific teaching methods or instructional interventions. Therefore, it does not provide direct evidence of which pedagogical approaches are most effective in improving listening comprehension.

Recognizing these limitations is important, as it helps clarify the scope of the findings and provides direction for future research.

4.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several practical recommendations are proposed to help improve English listening comprehension for first-year English-major students. These recommendations are directed at teachers, students, and future researchers.

4.3.1. Recommendations for Teachers

Firstly, teachers should increase students' exposure to authentic listening materials. Instead of relying solely on textbook recordings, teachers are encouraged to incorporate real-life listening sources such as podcasts, news broadcasts, interviews, movies, and videos featuring different English accents. This exposure can help students become more familiar with natural speech, connected words, and varied pronunciation.

Secondly, listening strategy instruction should be integrated into listening lessons. Teachers should explicitly teach students how to apply cognitive strategies (listening for keywords, focusing on main ideas), metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, and

evaluating listening), and affective strategies (reducing anxiety, maintaining confidence). Strategy training should be systematic and accompanied by guided practice.

Thirdly, teachers should create a supportive and low-anxiety learning environment. Encouraging students, allowing mistakes, and emphasizing comprehension over perfection can help reduce listening anxiety. Teachers may also use pre-listening activities to activate background knowledge and build students' confidence before listening tasks.

Finally, teachers should design listening tasks that are appropriate to students' proficiency levels. Gradual increases in difficulty, clear instructions, and follow-up discussions can help students improve their listening skills more effectively.

4.3.2. Recommendations for Students

Students are encouraged to take an active role in improving their listening skills. Regular practice outside the classroom is essential. Students should listen to English daily through songs, videos, podcasts, or movies to increase exposure to natural language use.

In addition, students should develop effective listening strategies. Instead of trying to understand every word, they should focus on key information and overall meaning. Using context to guess unfamiliar words and accepting partial understanding can help maintain concentration and reduce anxiety.

Students are also advised to practice metacognitive strategies, such as setting listening goals, reflecting on listening performance, and identifying personal weaknesses. Keeping a listening journal may help students monitor their progress and become more autonomous learners.

Furthermore, managing emotional factors is important. Students should learn to stay calm when facing difficulties, encourage themselves, and view listening challenges as opportunities for improvement rather than obstacles.

4.3.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study provides valuable insights, it has some limitations. The sample size is relatively small and focuses only on first-year English-major students at one university. Therefore, future studies could involve a larger number of participants from different universities or include students at different academic levels.

Future research may also adopt experimental or longitudinal designs to examine the effectiveness of specific listening strategies or teaching interventions over time. In addition, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or classroom observations could be used to gain deeper insights into students' listening processes and strategy use.

4.3.4. Recommendations for the University

Based on the findings and discussions presented in this study, several recommendations are proposed for Hai Phong University of Management and Technology to help improve English listening comprehension among first-year English-major students.

1. Enhancing Listening Curriculum Content

The university should consider revising and enriching the listening curriculum to include a wider variety of authentic listening materials. These materials may consist of real-life conversations, interviews, podcasts, news broadcasts, and videos featuring different English accents such as British, American, Australian, and other international varieties. Increased exposure to authentic and diverse listening input can help students gradually adapt to fast speech, connected speech, and accent variation, which were identified as major difficulties in this study.

2. Increasing Practice Opportunities in Listening Classes

Listening classes should allocate more time for regular listening practice rather than focusing solely on testing comprehension. Teachers are encouraged to design pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities that guide students in predicting content, identifying keywords, and summarizing main ideas. Repeated listening and task-based listening activities can help students improve concentration, reduce anxiety, and enhance overall listening confidence.

3. Integrating Listening Strategies Instruction

The findings indicate that many students do not consistently use effective listening strategies. Therefore, the university should encourage teachers to explicitly teach listening strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies. Training students to prepare before listening, monitor their understanding, evaluate their performance, and remain calm during listening tasks can significantly improve listening comprehension and learner autonomy.

4. Improving Learning Facilities and Resources

The university should invest in improving learning facilities to support listening instruction. This includes providing well-equipped language laboratories, high-quality audio systems, and access to online learning platforms. Reducing background noise and ensuring clear audio quality are essential for effective listening practice, especially for beginner and intermediate learners.

5. Organizing Extracurricular Listening Activities

In addition to classroom instruction, the university may organize extracurricular activities such as English listening clubs, movie nights, podcast discussion groups, or interaction sessions with native or proficient English speakers. These activities create a low-anxiety environment where students can practice listening naturally and develop familiarity with different speaking styles.

6. Supporting Teacher Professional Development

Finally, the university should support professional development programs for English teachers, particularly in the area of listening instruction. Workshops and training sessions on innovative listening teaching methods, use of technology, and assessment of listening skills can help teachers better address students' listening difficulties and adopt more effective teaching practices.

4.4. Summary of chapter 4

Chapter 4 presents the conclusion of the study on English listening comprehension difficulties and coping strategies of first-year English-major students at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. The chapter synthesizes the main findings, discusses the study's limitations, and offers practical recommendations for teachers, students, the university, and future research.

The findings indicate that first-year English-major students experience a variety of listening difficulties. Linguistic factors such as fast speech rate, unfamiliar pronunciation, different English accents, limited vocabulary, and difficulty recognizing connected speech are the most prominent challenges. In addition, psychological and cognitive factors, including listening anxiety, lack of concentration, and low confidence, significantly hinder students' listening performance. These difficulties are further exacerbated by limited exposure to authentic listening materials and an overreliance on bottom-up listening processes.

Regarding coping strategies, the study reveals that although students use some basic cognitive strategies, their application of metacognitive and affective strategies remains limited and inconsistent. This highlights a gap between students' awareness of listening strategies and their actual strategic behavior during listening tasks.

The chapter also acknowledges several limitations, including the small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and the absence of objective listening proficiency measures. These limitations suggest caution in generalizing the findings and provide directions for future research.

Based on the results, the chapter proposes practical recommendations to improve English listening teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to integrate authentic listening materials, explicitly teach listening strategies, and create a supportive, low-anxiety learning environment. Students are advised to practice listening regularly, apply effective strategies, and manage emotional factors. Recommendations are also made for the university to enhance the listening curriculum, improve facilities, organize extracurricular activities, and support teacher professional development.

Overall, Chapter 4 reinforces the importance of strategic listening instruction and institutional support in improving students' listening competence. The chapter concludes that addressing both linguistic and psychological factors will help students develop confidence, improve academic performance, and enhance their communicative competence in English.

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Appendices

My full name is Hoàng Thị Kim Ngân .During my study in the English Language major, I have realized that listening skills still pose many challenges for first-year students. Therefore, a survey was conducted to collect data for this study.

PART 1: Background Information

Q1. Gender

Male

Female

Other

Q2. How long have you been learning English?

Less than 5 years

5–7 years

More than 7 years

Q3. How often do you practice English listening outside the classroom?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Very often

PART 2: Listening Difficulties

(Please choose one option for each statement)

Scale:

1 – Strongly disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly agree

Linguistic Difficulties

| Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I find it difficult to understand listening texts because of limited vocabulary. | | | | | |
| 2. Fast speech makes it difficult for me to follow the listening content. | | | | | |
| 3. I have difficulty understanding different English accents. | | | | | |
| 4. I cannot recognize familiar words when they are spoken in connected speech. | | | | | |

Cognitive & Psychological Difficulties

| Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I lose concentration when listening to long listening texts. | | | | | |
| 2. I feel anxious or nervous during listening activities. | | | | | |
| 3. I find it difficult to understand the main idea of a listening passage. | | | | | |
| 4. I find it difficult to remember information while listening. | | | | | |

PART 3: Coping Strategies in Listening

(Use the same scale as above)

Cognitive Strategies

| Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I try to listen for key words instead of understanding every word. | | | | | |
| 2. I use context to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. | | | | | |
| 3. I use context to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. | | | | | |
| 4. I focus on the main idea rather than details when listening. | | | | | |

Metacognitive Strategies

| Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I prepare myself before listening by thinking about the topic. | | | | | |
| 2. I check my understanding while listening. | | | | | |
| 3. I evaluate my listening performance after completing a listening task. | | | | | |