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KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH: NGOẠI NGỮ

Sinh viên : **Quách Thùy Linh**

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

HẢI PHÒNG – 2013

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

GRADUATION PAPER

PRE – LISTENING ACTIVITIES TO MOTIVATE THE FIRST YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS IN LISTENING AT HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY
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HẢI PHÒNG – 2013

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

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

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

   (về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:

Họ và tên:...

Học hàm, học vị:..

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Nội dung hướng dẫn:...

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Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày 25 tháng 03 năm 2013

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày 29 tháng 06 năm 2013

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN   Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên   *Người hướng dẫn*

Hải Phòng, ngày ...... tháng........năm 2013
Hiệu trưởng

GS.TS.NGƯT *Trần Hữu Nghị*

PHẦN NHẬN XÉT CỦA CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN

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

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

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

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Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm 2013
Cán bộ hướng dẫn
(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ
CỦA NGƯỜI CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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

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

(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)

Ngày.......... tháng......... năm 2013

Người chấm phản biện

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Hai Phong, June, 2013

Quach Thuy Linh

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PART I – INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

If you want to understand clearly about costume and culture of any country, first of all, it is necessary to know about the language that country. As you know, today about 2/3 countries in the world use English as their mother tongue. So English does not only become popular but it is also a main international language.

Like students from different universities, the writer has faces many difficulties in listening. With four-year experiences in learning the skill and from what I observed in practicing listening of other classmates, it can be found that many students failed in practicing listening skill. Some of them complained that they felt unconfident with listening tasks so they could hardly understand spoken messages

In real life it is unusual for people to listen to something without having some idea of what they are going to hear. When listening to a radio phone-in show, they will probably know which topic is being discussed. When listening to an interview with a famous person, they probably know something about that person already. A waiter knows the menu from which the diner is choosing their food.

In our first language we rarely have trouble understanding listening. But, in a second language, it is one of the harder skills to develop - dealing at speed with unfamiliar sounds, words and structures. This is even more difficult if we do not know the topic under discussion, or who is speaking to whom. So, simply asking the students to listen to something and answer some questions is a little unfair, and makes developing listening skills much harder.

Many students are fearful of listening, and can be disheartened when they listen to something but feel they understand very little. It is also harder to concentrate on listening if you have little interest in a topic or situation. Pre-listening tasks aim to deal with all of these issues: to generate interest, build confidence and to facilitate comprehension.

All these above reasons have inspired the writer to do research in pre-listening activities and as a result, a research title goes as" Pre-listening activities to motivate the first year English majors in listening at Haiphong Private University".

2. Aims of the study

The study has two main purposes as follows:

- Finding out the difficulties encountered by the 1st year English major in listening comprehension.

- Giving some pre-listening activities to these problems

3. Research questions

The study is conducted to answer the following questions:

- What difficulties do HPU 1st year English majors face in listening comprehension?

- What methods should be used to help HPU English major students overcome their difficulties?

4. The significance of the study

Although listening has been one of the most common skills, there are few studies on listening problems and factors affecting listening ability. The most well known one is done by Boyle (1984) identifying and classifying factors affecting listening comprehension. This thesis is designed to investigate second year English major students' obstacles and causes of those difficulties especially it is done by a HPU student of English so it can be more subjective and appropriate to the situation in HPU.

5. Scope of the study

The study limits at finding out the difficulties in learning listening skill of first year English majors. Moreover, the researcher concentrates on studying linguistic problems (vocabulary, grammar, connected speech, stress and intonation, accents, speech rate) and non-linguistic ones (skills, psychology, environment, social and cultural knowledge) accessed in the view of both students and lecturers.

6. Methods of the study

The following methods are employed to collect data for the study:

- Quantitative method (survey questionnaires were designed with participants of English major students at HPU)

- Direct observation and conservation

The major source of data for the study was students' survey questionnaire respondents while direct observation and conservation applied with an aim to get more information for any confirmation of the findings.

7. Design of the study

This study consists of three main parts: the introduction, the development and conclusion.

Part I: Introduction presents the rationales, aims, research questions, significance, scope, method and design of the study.

Part II: Development is divided into 4 chapters:

Chapter 1: Theoretical background – deals with the concepts including listening, types of listening, listening comprehension, listening comprehension process, and potential difficulties in listening comprehension.

Chapter 2: Methodology – gives the situation analysis, subjects, data collection instruments, data analysis – shows the detailed results of the survey and a comprehensive analysis on the data collected, findings and discussions.

Chapter 4: Recommendations – refers to major findings, discussions and offers some pre-listening activities for improving students' listening comprehension.

Part III is the Conclusion presenting an overview of the study, suggestion for further research and limitations of the study.

PART II – DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Listening

1.1 Definition of listening

Listening is considered one of the most important parts of the oral communication. The term is used in order to make oral communication effective. There was an idea that "Students spend 20 percent of all school related hours just listening. If television watching and one-half of conversation are included, student spend approximately 50 percent of their walking hour just listening. For those hours spent in the classroom, the amount of listening can be almost 100 percent. "Obviously, it is believe that listening is a significant and essential are of development in a native language and in a second language; therefore, there have been numerous definition of listening and listening skill.

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

In addition, Lesley Barker (2001) states that: " Listening, however, is more than just being able to hear and understand what someone else say, listening skills involve etiquette, asking for clarification, showing empathy and providing an appropriate response."

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

Rubin (1991) defined listening as "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering and responding to the

expressed verbal and non-verbal needs, concerns and information offered by the human beings". Carol (1993) described listening as a set of activities that involve "the individual's capacity to apprehend, recognize, discriminate or even ignore."

Wolvin and Coakley (1985) pointed out that listening is "the process of receiving, attending to and assigning to aural stimuli". This definition suggests that listening is a complex, problem-solving skill. The task of listening is more than perception of sound. This view of listening is in accordance with second-language theory which considers listening to spoken language as an active and complex process in which listeners focus on selected aspects of aural input, construct meaning, and relate what they hear to existing knowledge (O'Malley & Chamot, 1989; by, 1984; Richards, 1985; Holand, 1983).

Recently, Imhof (1988) stated that listening is "the active process of selecting and integrating relevant information from acoustic input and this process is controlled by personal intentions which is critical to listening". Rost (2002) confirmed, "Listening is experiencing contextual effects" which can be translated as " listening as a neurological event (experiencing) overlaying a cognitive event creating a change in a representation", ect.

http://soehaarrr.com/2010/02/21/download-english-listening-materials-audio-script/

Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a major impact on your job effectiveness, and on the quality of your relationships with others. People need to practice and acquire skills to be good listeners, because a speaker cannot throw you information in the same manner that a dart player tosses a dart at a passive dartboard. Information is an intangible substance that must be sent by the speaker and receive by an active listener. Now, we move to next part to get more about listening skill.

1.2 Type of listening

Almost the learners of English will sooner or later, find themselves in a variety of situation where they need or want to listen to English being used in the real-life for arrange of purposes. However, they have to face many difficulties because there is the big difference between the listening activities in the classroom and actual situations. In the class, the learners listened to the very grammatical standard dialogues, conservations or presentations. The speakers often speak at perfectly controlled speed, with perfect voice tone, accent and correct grammar. The learners even had the preparation already, and knew clearly about the topic that they are going to listen to.

That is the reason why the learners can listen very well. Whereas, in the real-life conservations, learners encounter various people speak with different accent, speed and voice tone without paying attention to grammar. The speaker also can use the difficult words, idioms, proverbs, or even the slang words, etc. As a result, the learners cannot listen to perfectly.

In the real-life, different situations call for different types of listening and as your listening skill evolves, so will your ability to hear what someone is really saying. There are many types of listening. However, in general and according to Adian (1995), there are two ways, which people often listen in the real-life. They are "casual" listening and "focused" listening.

"Casual" listening (in another word, we call it "Appreciative Listening"). This is one of the most enjoyable types of listening, and it comes naturally for many people. There are not a lot of responses necessary in appreciative listening though groups of listeners might often talk among themselves to process the experience. Appreciative listening is most often used when people listen to music, plays, concerts or other performances. The typical feature is that we do not listen carefully and intentionally, therefore we may not remember much of what we hear or even thesis nothing in our mind.

"Focused" listening (or "Intonational Listening"). This is simple, straightforward listening. The speaker intends to get a message across, and the

listener's goal should be to understand that message as completely as possible. The listener might need to ask questions or request clarification to get the full message. In this case we often listen with much attention for a particular purpose but we do not listen to everything we hear with equal concentration. For instance, we want to know the answer to a question, we will ask and expect to hear the relevant response. This leads to our "listening out" for certain key phrases or words. Even when listening to entertainment such as plays, jokes or songs we have a definite purpose (enjoyment), we want to know what is coming next, and we expect to cohere with what went before. There is an association between listener expectation and purpose and hi comprehension. If the listeners expects and need are intentional, his listening is likely accurately perceived and understand than that which is unexpected, irrelevant or helpful.

According to Rixon (1986) and Hublard, R and others (1984), there are two main kinds of listening in classroom, they are intensive listening and extensive listening.

http://vi.scribd.com/doc/32124132/Teaching-Listening

Intensive listening (Comprehensive/ Informative Listening) means students listen carefully for the detailed information, full comprehension or the content of the message. Anytime students listen to instructions or to a lecture from an instructor, listening to the announcement or weather forecast, they are using informative listening. The important aspect of this type of listening is whether the listener misunderstand the message being relayed by the speaker. If the listener misunderstand or does not pay close attention, informative listening is affected.

This kind of listening helps learners develop their listening skill or knowledge of the language in the effort to do exercise or other activities. The passage should be short so that learners have chances to get to grip with the content. They also feel it easy, interesting and encouraging when they listen to a short passage.

Extensive listening (Appreciative listening) is free and general listening to natural language for general ideas, not for particular details. It is the art of listening for pleasure and interest. When people enjoy a concert, speech, short jokes or poems, ect ... they are experiencing appreciative listening. They are not asked to do any language work and they can do their listening freely without any pressure. Moreover, the topics are various and entertaining, therefore they are motivated to develop their listening skill.

Wolvin and Coakley (1988, 1993) have introduced another categorization of listening, they identified five types of listening:

(1)Discrimination listening

(2)Listening for comprehension

(3) Therapeutic (empathic) listening

(4)Critical listening

(5)Appreciative listening

Discrimanative listening is the most basic type of listening, whereby the difference between different sounds is identified. If listener cannot hear differences, they cannot make sense of the meaning that is expressed by such differences. As a result, a person who cannot hear the subtles of emotional variation in another person's voice will be less likely to be able to discern the emotions the other person is experiencing.

The next step beyond discrinating between different sound and sights is to make sense of them. To comprehend the meaning requires having a lexicon os words, rules of grammar and syntax by which we can understand what others are saying. The visual components of communication and an understanding of body language also help us understand what the other person is really meaning. Comprehension is also known as content listening, informative listening and full listening.

In therapeutic listening, the listeners have a purpose of not only empathizing with the speaker but also to use this deep connection in order to help the speaker understand, change or develop in some way. Moreover, this kinds of

listening happens wherever and whenever in life. Critical listening is listening in order to evaluate and judge, forming opinion about what is being said. Judgement includes assessing strengths and weaknesses, agreement and approval. This form of listening requires significant real-time cognitive effort as the listener analyze what is being said, relating it to existing knowledge and rules. In appreciative listening, we seek certain information which will appreciate listening when we are listening to good music, poetry or made even the stiring words of a great leader.

Beside the above well-known classifications, Rost's theory (1990) introduced four types of listening suggested by Garvin (1985) with small modification:

(1) Transactional listening

(2) Interactional listening

(3) Critical listening

(4) Recreational listening

Transactional listening typically occurs in formal listening settings such as a lecture. In these situations, the listeners have limited opportunities to interfere or to collaborate with a speaker for negotiating message meaning. Whereas, interactional listening, according to Rost is relevant to recognizing the personal component of a message. The listener in explicity engaged in the cooperation with a speaker for communicative purposes and focuses on building a personal relationship with the speaker. Regarding critical listening, he addressed that critical listening similar to the one suggested by Wolvin and Coakly (1988, 1993), indicating the act of evaluating reasoning and evidence, while recreational listening requires a listener to be involved in appreciating random or integrating aspects of an event. He further stated that listening request a cognitive and social skill as well as a linguistic skill, and that the purpose of listening guide a listener as he/she listens.

Differently, Ur (1984) is another 1.2 researcher who classified listening its function. To her point of view, there are two types of listening: listening for **perception** and listening for **comprehension**. To the former, it is the act of

listening to perceive "the different sounds, sound-combinations and stress and intonation patterns of foreign language". While listening for comprehension is relevant to content understanding and it is divided into two sub-categories, passive listening for comprehension implying the act of making basic for other language skill with imaginative or logical thought and active listening for comprehension. Rather, she insisted that listening for comprehension should be considered as a continuum from passive listening on the left side to active listening on the right side of continuum.

http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=2555912

2. LISTENING COMPREHENSION

2.1 Definition listening comprehension

There are some traditional views that listening is considered a passive language skill alongside the reading skill. It means that learners are almost passive in practicing listening skill in classroom. The learners mainly have to hear the message; they only try to elicit the meaning from the individual syntactic and semantic components of the utterance and the manner in which it is spoken. The method of testing the comprehension of the learners is based on the ability to remember the utterance, which they have heard. Obviously, this method is not effective as the ability to remember the utterance does not mean that the listener can understand the message. In fact, the learner are not provided enough information about what they are going to hear before the tape plays and they cope with wide range of problems while they are listening and the result is that they cannot get any listening experience from the teacher.

However, in the past years, some present studies on listening comprehension have to come another view in which the role of listeners is though to be active. One of the most notable definition of listening comprehension is of Gary Buck. He points out that listening comprehension is an active process of constructing. For years, many meaning and this is done by applying

knowledge to the incoming to which "numbers of different types of knowledge are involved: both linguistic sound and non-linguistic knowledge". To put in another way, Gary Buck concludes, "comprehension is affected by a wide range of variables and that potentially any characteristic of the speaker, the situation or the listener can affect the comprehension of the message". In other words, comprehension of a spoken message can either be isolated word recognition within the sound stream, phrase or formula recognition, clause or sentence, and extended speech comprehension (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992)

Littlewood (1981) also expressed the same viewpoint to Gary Buck to listening comprehension. He affirmed that the listening demands active involvement from the hearer. In order to construct the message that the speaker intends, the hearer must actively contribute knowledge from both linguistic and nonlinguistic sources. The nature of listening comprehension means that the hearer should be encouraged to engage in an active process of listening for meanings, using not only the linguistic cues but also has nonlinguistic knowledge.

Anderson and Lynch (Listening, 1995, Oxford University Press) have different point of view. They consider the listener as active model builder. They say that in order to listen successfully they have to construct our own "coherent interpretation" of any spoken message. Both parts of this term are important. First, it needs to be coherent both context and the word in general. Second, it is interpretation, in the sense that it is our version of what the speaker meant, as far as we are able to assess that meaning is a result of our combining the new information in what we just heard with our previous knowledge and experience.

According to Rost (2002), "comprehension is often considered to be the first-order goal of listening, the highest priority of the listener, and sometimes the sole purpose of listening". Especially for the 1.2 learners who are acquiring a new language, the term "listening comprehension" typically refers to all aspects of listening since comprehension through listening is considered to be

a foundation for enabling learners to process the new language, and since 1.2 listening (Long & Macian, 1994). However, Rost (2002) firmed that the term "comprehension" need to be used in a more specific sense in listening studies. In addition, research has shown that learners behave differently in listening by the purposes of listening to incoming texts (for example, Mills, 1974; Devine, 1982; Rechard, 1983; Ur, 1984; Wolvin and Coakly, 1988, 1993), according to Rost (2002), listening comprehension is an inferential process. Linguistic knowledge and world knowledge interact as listeners create a mental representation of what they hear. Bottom up and top down processes are applied to get to this mental representation and achieve comprehension.

To the nutshell, in order to be successful in listening, we should remember that: "Listening comprehension is not a skill which can be mastered once and for all and then ignored while other skills are developed. There must be regular practice with increasingly difficult material." (Rivers Wilga, M.(1986) Teaching Foreign Language Skill, The University of Chicago Press, p.157)

2.2 Listening comprehension process

The listening process can be diagrammed as below in the figure (Field, 2002; Lynch, 2002; Rost, 2002 and Swaffar & Bacon, 1993)
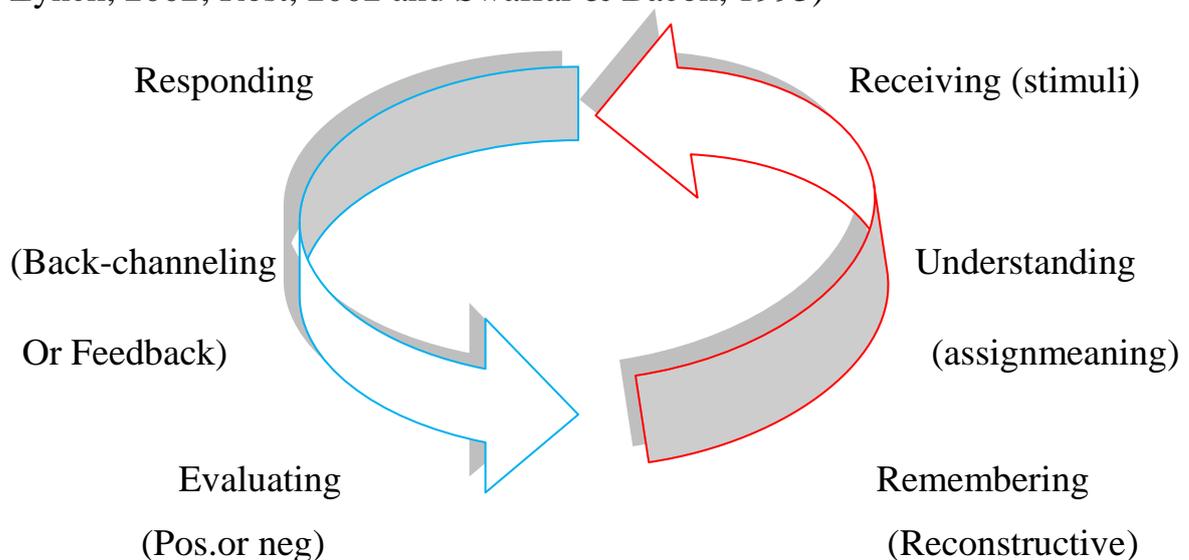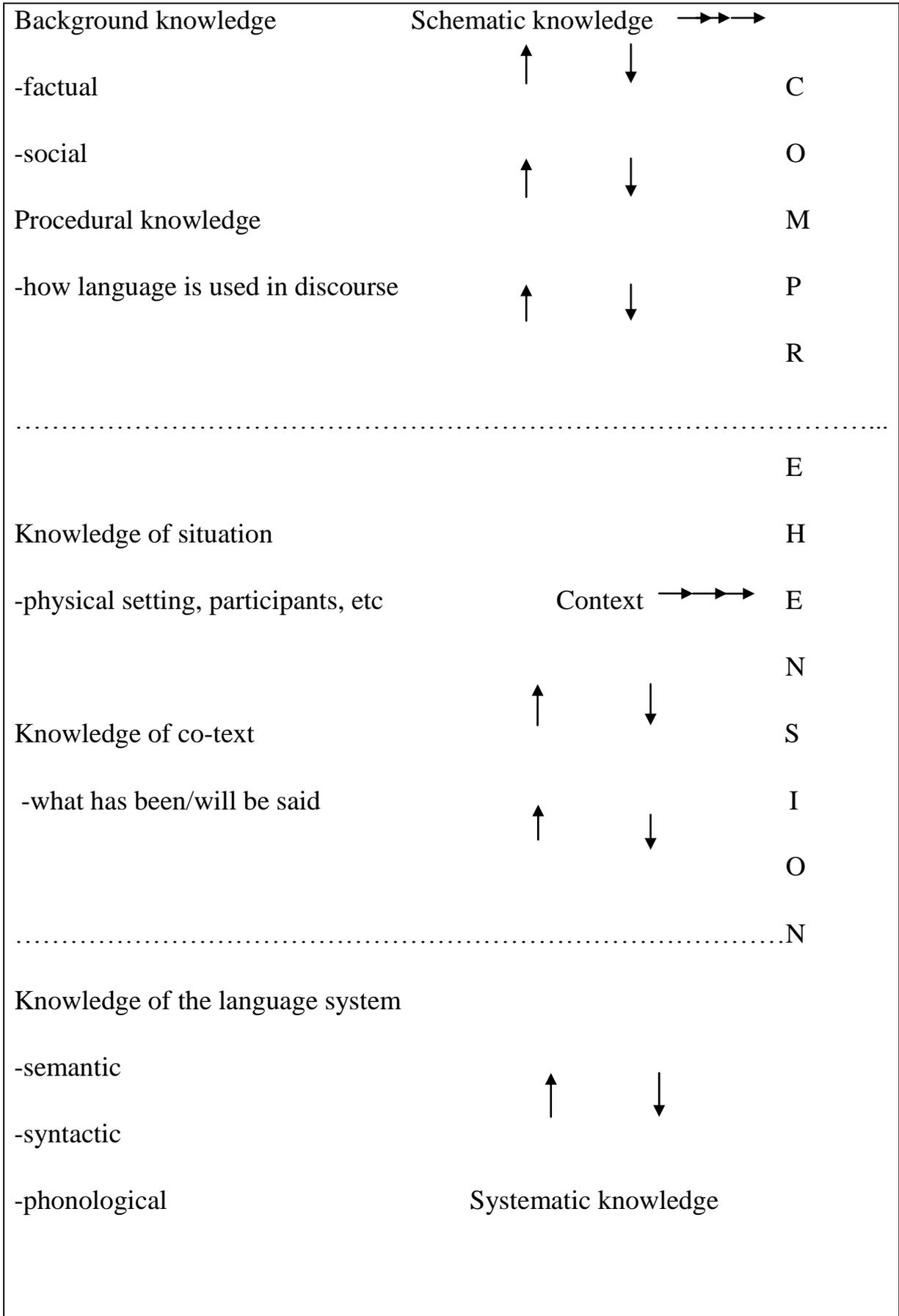

Responding

Receiving (stimuli)

(Back-channeling

Understanding

Or Feedback)

(assignmeaning)

Evaluating

Remembering

(Pos.or neg)

(Reconstructive)

Figure 1: Listening comprehension process

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The figure shows that the listening comprehension includes 5 stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding. The first stage is the perception of sound. The listeners only purely receive and listen to the sound. In another world, it can be called "hearing". Then, the listeners use their prior knowledge to understand the spoken message and remember. The evaluation happens in their minds and leads to suitable responses. Lesley Barker (2001) has the same idea: "when the listeners can understand, remember, evaluate and give the suitable responses, they are experiencing the listening comprehension process". Listening, is more than just being able to hear and understand what someone else say, listening skills involve etiquette, asking for clarification, showing empathy and providing an appropriate response.

It also agrees that the comprehension process is constructed based on the two principal sources of information which Widowson (1983) refers to as systematic or linguistic knowledge and schematic or non-linguistic information. Figure 2 below summarizes the relationship between these information sources:

Background knowledge   Schematic knowledge →►→

-factual   ↑   ↓   C

-social   ↑   ↓   O

Procedural knowledge   M

-how language is used in discourse ↑   ↓   P

                                    R

………..

                                    E

Knowledge of situation   H

-physical setting, participants, etc   Context →→ E

                                    N

                    ↑   ↓

Knowledge of co-text   S

 -what has been/will be said   ↑   ↓   I

                                    O

……….N

Knowledge of the language system

-semantic

-syntactic   ↑   ↓

-phonological   Systematic knowledge

Earlier review of research in L2 listening instruction (Lynch, 1988, 2002; Mendelssohn, 1988; Oxford, 1993; Rost, 2002; Rubin, 1994) pay attention to the critical role of both bottom-up and top-down processes in comprehension. Listeners use top-down processed when they use context and prior knowledge (topic, genre, culture, and other schema knowledge in long term memory) to build a conceptual framework for comprehension. Listeners use bottom-up processed when they construct meaning by accretion, gradually combining increasing larger units of meaning from the phoneme-level up to discourse-level features.

In short, listening comprehension involve two distinct processes (bottom-up listening and top-down listening) and 5 stages (receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding) with two principal sources of information (linguistic and non-linguistic). These processes interact in form of parallel distributed processing; the degree to which listeners may use one process more than the other will depend on the purpose of listening.

2.2   The stages in listening comprehension

According to Buck, 1994, there are two stages in listening comprehension:

(1) apprehending linguistic information (text-based: low level)

(2) relating that information to a wider communities context (knowledge-based: high level) And there are two processing models for comprehension:

(1) bottom-up

(2) top-down

In addition, these studies suggested that listening is achieved through bottom-up processing and it occurs through a number of consecutive stages in a fixed offer, starting with lowest-level of processing and moving up to higher-levels of processing.

Bottom-up processing starts with the lower-level decoding of the language system evoked by an external source such as incoming information and then moves to interpreting the representation through a working memory of this

decoding in relation to higher-level knowledge of context and the world (Morley, 1991).

On the contrary, top-down processing explains that listening comprehension is achieved through processing that involves prediction an inference on the basis of hierarchies of facts, propositions and expectations by using an internal source such as prior knowledge (Buck, 1994). This process enables listeners by bypass some specific information and make researchers consider that listening comprehension is not an unidictional ability.

Besides, Mary Underwood, 1989 introduced three stages of listening comprehension. They are pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening stage.

According to him, "**Pre-listening** work can be done in a variety of ways and often occurs quite naturally when listening form part of an integrated skill course. When planning lession, time must be allocated for pre-listening activities and these activities should not be rushed". (Mary Underwood, Teaching Listening, Longman 11989, P.31). It is true that learners will find it extremely difficult to do a listening lesson, when they have no idea of what they are going to hear. Even if the sounds or the words which they hear are familiar, they may still be unable to understand because they lack certain kinds of knowledge of the topic, setting or the relationship between the speaker. Thus, the listeners feel as in real-life listening situation in their native language. Teachers can help their students to arouse their expectations and see the purpose before a listening lesson. This kind of work is described as "pre-listening activities". "It would seem a good idea when presenting a listening passage in class to give students some information about the content, situation and speakers before they actually start listening." (Penny Ur, 1992, P.4)

The **While-listening** stage involves activities that students are asked to do during the time that they are listening the text. The purpose of while-listening activities is to help learners develop the skill of eliciting messages from spoken language. There are also other reasons why students need to listen to

the language they are studying. The main thing is that to learn to recognize how it sounds (the pronunciation of words, the stress, the rhythm, the intonation that they can use what they hear as a model for their own speech). When developing the skills of listening for comprehension, while-listening activities must be chosen carefully. They must vary at different, levels and in different cases. "Good while-listening activities help learners find their way through the listening text and build upon then expectations raised by pre-listening activities." (Underwood, Teaching Listening, 1990, P.46).

Post-listening activities are the activities that are done after the listening is completed. Some post-listening activities are extension of the work done at the pre-listening and while-listening stages and some relate only loosely to the listening text itself. The purpose of post-listening activities are: to check whether the learners have understood what they need to or not; to see why some students have missed parts of the message or fail to understand the message; to give the students the opportunity to consider the attitude and the manner of the speakers of the listening text; to expend on the topic or language of the message; and to transfer learned things to another context and to make introduction for the planned work.

3. POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

3.1 Listening problems

According to Mary Underwood, Teaching Listening, 1989, the major listening problems include:

- *Lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak:* that means the learners cannot control how quickly the speaker speaks. They feel that the utterances disappear before they can sort them out. "They are so busy working out the meaning of one parts of what they hear, they miss the next part. Or they simply ignore a whole chunk because they fail to sort it all out quickly enough." One of the reasons for this is that learners cannot keep up with the speed and they often try to understand everything they hear. When they fall in sorting out the meaning of one part, they following will be missed.

This can lead to the ignorance of the whole chunk of discourse. Obviously the fail to listen. One method if tackling this is to show students how to identify the important words that they need to listen out for. In English this is shown in an easy-to-spot- way by which words in the sentence are stressed (spoken louder and longer). Another is to give them one very easy task that you know they can do even if they do not get 90% of what is being said o build up their confidence, such as identifying the name of a famous person or spotting something that is mentioned many times.

- *The listener's vocabulary:* this is the main problem of the learners in listening comprehension. It is very difficult to understand the spoken texts if we do not know the new words. According to Mary Underwood "an unknown word can be like a suddenly dropped barrier causing them to stop and think about the meaning of the word and thus making them miss the text part of the speech. "There are four situations relating to the vocabulary that the learners usually committed (1) trying to understand every word. In spite of the fact we can cope with missing whole chunks of speech having a conversation on a noisy street in our own language, many people do not seem to be able to transfer that skill easily to a second language. One method of tackling this is to show students how to identify the important words that they need to listen out for. In English this is shown in an easy-to-spot way by which words in the sentence are stressed (spoken louder and longer); (2) getting left behind trying to work out what a previous word meant.

All people speaking a foreign language have experienced this problem at one or more than one time. This often happens when you hear a word half remember and fine you have completely lost the thread of what was being said by the time you remember what it means. However, it also can happen with words you are trying to work out that sound similar to something in your language, words you are trying to work out from the context or words you have heard many times before and are trying guess the meaning of all words. In individual listening you can cut down on this problem with vocabulary pre-

teach and by getting students to talk about the same topic first to bring the relevant vocabulary for that topic area nearer the front of their brain.

One training method is that is to use a listening or to get them to concentrate just on guessing words from context. Another is to load up the task even more by adding a logic puzzle or listening and writing task, so that just listening and try to remember words seems like an easier option. Finally, spending time revising vocabulary and doing skills work where they come into contact with it and use it; (3) not knowing the most important words. Therefore, doing the vocabulary pre-teaching before each listening is an effective solution. Nevertheless, these words must actually be guessed from the context. The other solution is simply to build up their vocabulary and teach them how they can do the same in their own time with vocabulary lists, graded readers, monolingual dictionary use, etc,; and (4) not recognizing the words that have been known.

The common reasons why students might not recognize the words included not distinguish between different sounds in English, or conversely trying to listen for differences that do not exist. Other reasons are problem with the word stress, sentence stress, and sound changes when words are spoken together in natural speech such as weak forms. What all this boils down to is that sometimes pronunciation work is the most important part of listening comprehension skills building.

- *Inability to concentrate:* This can be caused by a number of things but in listening work it is a major problem because even the shortest break in attention can seriously impair the comprehension of the whole process of listening. Whether the topic is interesting or not, students sometimes find tired and unable to concentrate. The outside factors may well make concentration difficult, too. For instance the bad quality machines, poor recording, unfavorable rooms for the use of recorded materials, street or next-door class noise…all of these facts prevent strongly to the concentration of the listeners and as the result, they cannot get full of the message intended.

- *Not being able to catch information repeated:* this type of difficulty connects with what the speakers say or "input" while the listeners are not always in the positions to get the repetition. This is the case when learners joint in conservation outside the classroom. Repetition cannot be asked for when listening to the radio or watching television. Even in the classroom, when listening to the lecture, learners cannot frequently order the lecture to repeat the utterance as many times as they wish. Therefore, the teacher can be solved only when learners are given the opportunity to control their own machines and proceed in whatever way they wish.

- *Problem of interpretation:* These can occur when the speaker and the listener are from the different background and the listener is unfamiliar with the context of speaker's talk. Students who are unfamiliar with the context may have considerable difficulty in interpreting the words they hear even if they can understand the "surface" meaning. In addition, the meaning of non-verbal clues; facial expression, nods, gestures, tone of voice can easily be misinterpreted by listeners from other cultures. This problem can even occur when the speaker and the hearer are from the same backgrounds and use the same language.

- *Established learning habits:* Learning habits is an important factor leading to the success of language learning. If student establish wrong habits, they may fail in their leaning, etc.

In different point of view, another linguistics named Goh (2002) stated problems in listening comprehension depended on three stages:

- *In perception stage:* do not recognize words they know, neglect the next part when thinking about meaning, cannot chunk steams of speech, miss the beginning of the text an unable to concentrate.

- *In the parsing stage:* quickly forget what is heard, unable to form a mental representation from these words, and do not understand subsequent parts of input because of earlier problems

- *In the utilization stage:* understand the worlds but not the intended messages, confused about the key idea in the message.

3.2 Pre-listening activities

3.2.1 Why should we do pre-listening activities?

In real life it is unusual for people to listen to something without having some idea of what they are going to hear. When listening to a radio phone-in show, they will probably know which topic is being discussed. When listening to an interview with a famous person, they probably know something about that person already. A waiter knows the menu from which the diner is choosing their food.

In our first language we rarely have trouble understanding listening. But, in a second language, it is one of the harder skills to develop - dealing at speed with unfamiliar sounds, words and structures. This is even more difficult if we do not know the topic under discussion, or who is speaking to whom.

So, simply asking the students to listen to something and answer some questions is a little unfair, and makes developing listening skills much harder.

Many students are fearful of listening, and can be disheartened when they listen to something but feel they understand very little. It is also harder to concentrate on listening if you have little interest in a topic or situation.

Pre-listening tasks aim to deal with all of these issues: to generate interest, build confidence and to facilitate comprehension.

3.2.2 Aims of pre-listening activities

> **Setting the context**

This is perhaps the most important thing to do - even most exams give an idea about who is speaking, where and why. In normal life we normally have some idea of the context of something we are listening to.

> **Generating interest**

Motivating our students is a key task for us. If they are to do a listening about sports, looking at some dramatic pictures of sports players or events will raise their interest or remind them of why they (hopefully) like sports.

Personalization activities are very important here. A pair-work discussion about the sports they play or watch, and why, will bring them into the topic, and make them more willing to listen.

> ➤ **Activating current knowledge**

"You are going to listen to an ecological campaigner talk about the destruction of the rainforest'". This sets the context, but if teacher go straight in to the listening, the students have had no time to transfer or activate their knowledge (which may have been learnt in their first language) in the second language. What do they know about rainforests? - Where are they? What are they? What problems do they face? Why are they important? What might an ecological campaigner do? What organizations campaign for ecological issues? Pre-listening activities will prepare for students the knowledge of the context.

> ➤ **Acquiring knowledge**

Students may have limited general knowledge about a topic. Providing knowledge input will build their confidence for dealing with a listening. This could be done by giving a related text to read, or, a little more fun, a quiz.

> ➤ **Activating vocabulary / language**

Just as activating topic knowledge is important, so is activating the language that may be used in the listening. Knowledge-based activities can serve this purpose, but there are other things that can be done. If students are going to listen to a dialogue between a parent and a teenager who wants to stay overnight at a friend's, why not get your students to role play the situation before listening. They can brainstorm language before hand, and then perform the scene. By having the time to think about the language needs of a situation, they will be excellently prepared to cope with the listening.

> ➤ **Predicting content**

Once we know the context for something, we are able to predict possible content. Try giving students a choice of things that they may or may not expect to hear, and ask them to choose those they think will be mentioned.

> **Pre-learning vocabulary**

When we listen in our first language we can usually concentrate on the overall meaning because we know the meaning of the vocabulary. For students, large numbers of unknown words will often hinder listening, and certainly lower confidence. Select some vocabulary for the students to study before listening, perhaps matching words to definitions, followed by a simple practice activity such as filling the gaps in sentences.

> **Checking / understanding the listening tasks**

By giving your students plenty of time to read and understand the main listening comprehension tasks, you allow them to get some idea of the content of the listening. They may even try to predict answers before listening.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY
A STUDY ON PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES FOR 1ST ENGLISH MAJOR IN HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

1. Introduction

Among the research methods, many research is one of the most important and useful areas of measurement in applied social research. A "survey" can be anything from a short paper-and-pencil feedback form to an intensive one-on-one in-depth interview. According to Kathleen Bennett DeMarrais, Stephen D.Lapan, survey research can be defined most simply as a means of gathering information, usually through self-report using questionnaire or interview. Johnson (1992) gave the idea that "The purpose of a survey is to learn about characteristic of an entire group of interest (a population) by examining a subset of that group (a sample)".

The reason for conducting survey includes influencing a selected audience, modifying a service or product and understanding or predicting human behavior. The data of the survey reflects descriptive, behavioral or preferential characteristics of – according to Alreck and Settle (1995) and Rea and Paker (1997). Basing on these advantages of doing survey research, the writer has decided to employ the survey questionnaire as a major technique together with other methods to collect the information for the graduation paper.

In this chapter, the writer describes the setting of the study (students and their background, resources and materials). The subjects, and instruments for collecting the data and the data collection procedure and data analysis, which integrate with the research paper.

2. The setting of the study

2.1 Students and their background

Most of the 1st English majors are between the age of 19 and 21. They have studied English at least 3 years at high school or more. However, at secondary high schools, the students only concentrated on learning about grammar and

practicing reading skill, rarely or even never did the students have a chance to practice listening skill. Consequently, it is the big challenge for them in changing learning habits and methods at university.

Besides, it is the fact that English majors at HPU seem not to have high language proficiency because their entrance mark is just 13 or little more for three subjects (Maths, Literature and English) and their listening marks for the first term are quite low – just from 5 to 7. So they tend to have higher anxiety in learning and practicing listening skill.

2.2 Resources and materials

The textbooks used for the first year are Listen in 1, Listen in 2, Listen in 3, Contemporary topics, Let's listen and teacher – recommended book – Tactics for listening. They are useful and interesting for freshmen in forming their basic listening skill. However, first – year students have no chance to enjoy many listening lessons so to improve listening skill better, learners should actively communicate with their friends and teachers in different periods of English and find listening materials form different sources (on internet, from bookshop and library, etc) to practice listening more at home.

3. The subjects

The study was carried out with the participation of 40 first – year English students of the school year 2012-2013. These students are selected randomly to ensure the reliability of the research.

4. Instruments for collecting data

While conducting the survey research, the most prevalent data-collection methods are questionnaires, interviews and direct observations of language use. In addition, many other types of information can be gathered including test result, compositions, or reactions to l2 oral or written-language data.

Two survey questionnaires for both students and teachers were designed and used as the main instrument for collecting data. The questionnaires can range from short 5-8 item instruments to a long document, which requires one or two hours to complete. Items in the questionnaire can be open-ended format

or closed, requiring the respondents to select one from among a limited number responded. The discourse structure of questionnaire is important to consider, as it seems obvious that the respondent must be able to understand the language of the questionnaire.

5. Data collection procedure

In the process of conducting the survey research, the researcher must make a series of careful decision about how the study will be carried out. These include a great deal of steps such as: determining the purpose of the study; stating the research questions; specifying the population and drawing a sample from the population; deciding on the methods of data collection; developing instruments, and training data collectors or interviewers; collecting data; analyzing data; and addressing non response. Understanding these steps will help researchers asses and construct their own meaning from reports of surveys that they need.

Data gathered from responses of the students in the survey questionnaires were sorted and analyzed statistically to get these answers for the research questions. There were two main kinds of analysis descriptive analyses and co-relational analyses. To the former, the result of the survey are often reported in frequencies and percentages. These descriptive statistics are numbers that summarize the data. Co-relational analyses can be applied along with the descriptive analyses to analyze relationships among variables.

In conclusion, this chapter describes the method using questionnaires to investigate students and teachers so as to answer the research question raised in the first chapter. Based on the subjects mentioned, prominent findings for the research questions will be realized and presented in the next chapter.

6. Data analysis

In this chapter, with data collected from the survey questionnaire, a comprehensive analysis will be presented. It is the reorganization of the students' common difficulties when studying listening skill through the data from the questionnaire by the means of pie charts and columns, laid our

corresponding to the sequence of the questions and draws out immediately conclusion at each figure.

6.1 Years of studying English (Q1)

1 -3 years	3 – 5 years	5 – 7 years	More than 7 years
0%	0%	0%	100%

Table 1: Years of studying English

As can be seen from the pie chart 100% of the students who took part in the study spent more than 7 years studying English. In addition, they got used to English as a second language for a long time. Moreover, all of them have from nine to thirty English periods a week. In comparison with other universities, students of Haiphong Private University had more time exploring English.

6.2 Students' attitude toward listening skill (Q2&3)
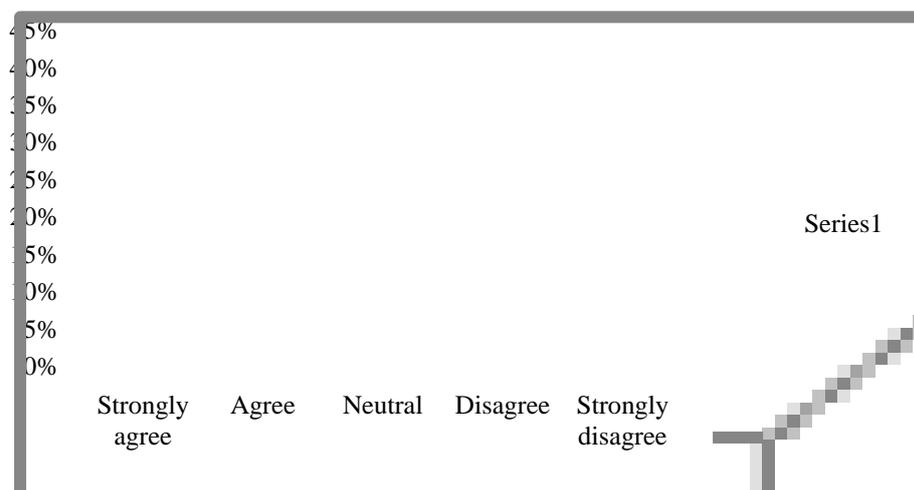

Chart 1: Students' attitude toward listening skill

The pie chart shows most students (87.5%) considered listening as the most difficult skill among reading, speaking and writing to them. There is only 12.5% of them do not have any ideas about this question. No one thinks that this skill is easy to master.

27

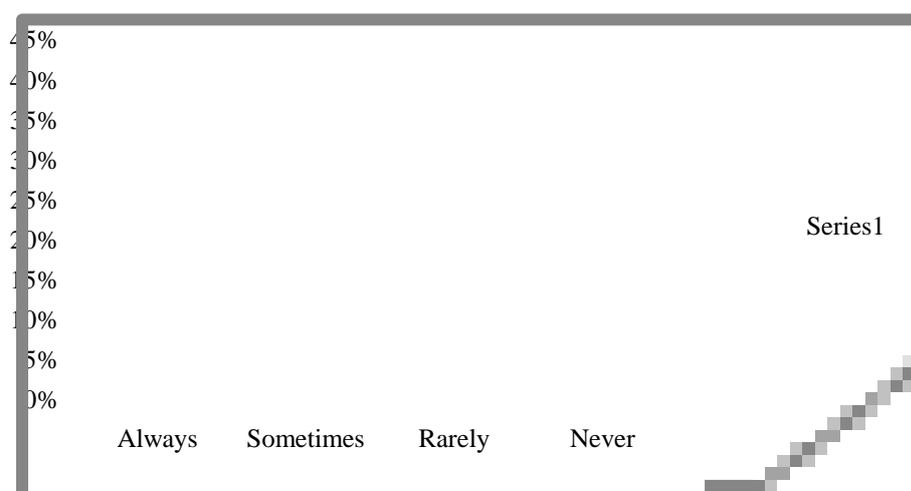**6.3Students' time allocation for self-study (Q4)**

Chart 2: Students' time allocation for self-study

As can be seen from the chart, up to 87.5% of the students sometimes or rarely practicing listening skill at home and only 12.5% of them do it every day as their habits. Students' time allocation for self-study at home is also a problem and it affects the learners very much in mastering the listening skill. "Practice makes perfect". However, it seems to be a disadvantage of HPU 1st year English majors.

To conclude, many students currently are facing the challenges in finding the appropriated materials as well as documents to enhance their listening without the help of professors of teachers. As a result, they cannot self-practice listening at home effectively and encouragingly. It is one of the most challenging issues causing the failure in listening comprehension when students do not have the chance to practice at school any more.

6.4 Students' perceptions about their listening difficulties (Q5)

Factors affecting listening	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Your vocabulary is efficient enough to comprehend the spoken texts.	0%	27.5%	17.5%	47.5%	7.5%
Grammar helps you much in listening comprehension.	12.5%	15%	20%	45%	5%
You have problem with various and unfamiliar accents.	25%	50%	25%	0%	0%
Stress and intonation make you feel hard to understand the message intended.	20%	66%	7.5%	7.5%	0%
It's difficult for you to understand when native speaker produce spontaneous connected speech.	45%	35%	15%	5%	0%
The speech rate of native speaker is too fast.	22.5%	27.5%	50%	0%	0%
You feel stressful and nervous while you are listening.	12.5%	40%	17.5%	2.5%	27.5%
You have hearing problems.	0%	5%	42.5%	50%	2.5%
Environment factors (noise, physical condition, unpleasant atmosphere…) prevent you from listening.	37.5%	57.5%	5%	0%	0%
Your social and cultural knowledge is good to comprehend all the spoken messages.	17%	67.5%	5%	10%	0%

Based on the literature review, the writer designed the survey questionnaire into 2 main factors affecting listening; linguistic and non-linguistic factor. To the first, the writer would like to analyze the factors relating to the linguistic field.

As can be seen from the table almost of the students (45%) are not confident with their vocabulary, 55% of them think that their vocabulary is good enough to help them in listening. It can be said that they have obstacles in listening comprehension because of lacking vocabulary but it is not a very bis and major problem. The chart also points out that grammar is not the problem of 1st English majors in listening comprehension because most of the students (52.5%) thinks that their grammar cannot help them much to understand the spoken language. Only 27.5% of the learners seem to depend on the grammar in mastering this skill.

Besides, almost all of students (75%) find difficult to understand the spoken message because of various and unfamiliar accents. Therefore, varying accents become one of the difficulties that English majors encounter in listening comprehension. In addition, stress and intonation is a big challenge as well. 86% of the students admitted that they feel hard to understand the message intended because of this phonological factor (stress and intonation). One more phonological factor affects to students' listening competence is the connected speech. The majority of students (80%) feel it is difficult for them to understand when the native speakers produce spontaneous connected speech. Speech rate of native speakers seems is not a very big problem to the learners. Only 40% of students think it is too fast to them to catch the spoken text while 60% have no ideas about this question. Maybe they feel the speech rate is not affected them much in understanding the texts.

To the non-linguistic field, it can be shown from the data collected that the majority of students (52.5%) get stressful and nervous when they are listening to English. This psychology is a big problem of 1st year English majors to listen well. Moreover, the chart indicates that 95% of the students become

hesitant and unable to concentrate on listening by the environmental factors such as the noise, physical condition or unpleasant atmosphere…during listening process. Furthermore, most of the students (60%) think their social and cultural knowledge is good enough to listen. This factor together with hearing problems seem not the major challenges to students when only 5% of them complained for hearing problem and 10% of them are not confident with their understanding about culture and society.

6.5 Students' attitude toward listening skill in the class (Q6)

You can see that 60% of students like to learn listening skill in class because they can work with classmates. This working in group make they feel more confident and excited. There are 40% of them think learning listening skill in class better because of the teacher. Teacher can solve their problems immediately or have some activities to make their listening lessons more interesting.

6.6 Students' perceptions about their pre-listening activities (Q7)

Favorite activities	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Games	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Songs	65%	20%	10%	5%	0%
Discussion	55%	20%	15%	5%	5%
Pictures	40%	30%	25%	5%	0%
Information-gap	40%	30%	15%	20%	0%
Quiz	30%	25%	10%	15%	20%
Questions	30%	35%	25%	10%	0%

Listening skills are vital for your learners. Of the 'four skills,' listening is by far the most frequently used. There are many types of listening activities. In

this case, the writer designed the survey into 7 activities: games, songs, discussion, pictures, information-gap, quiz and questions.

The chart shows that students like learning listening with games and songs. 100% of the students agree game is their favorite activity and 85% of them vote for songs while other activities only get 55% to 70%. It can be said that students prefer acting than sitting on a place and learning.

As you can see that, 75% of the students agree with learning by discussion. It seems to the students like learning in groups, or they will to get more enthusiastic if they can talk, can debate.

The chart also points that pictures and information-gap are favorite activities of the students (70%). Only 5% of the students are not interested in pictures and 20% of them admitted that they don't like information-gap activity.

As can be seen from the table, almost of the students are not confident with quiz (55%) and questions (65%) activity. These activities seem to be boring with them.

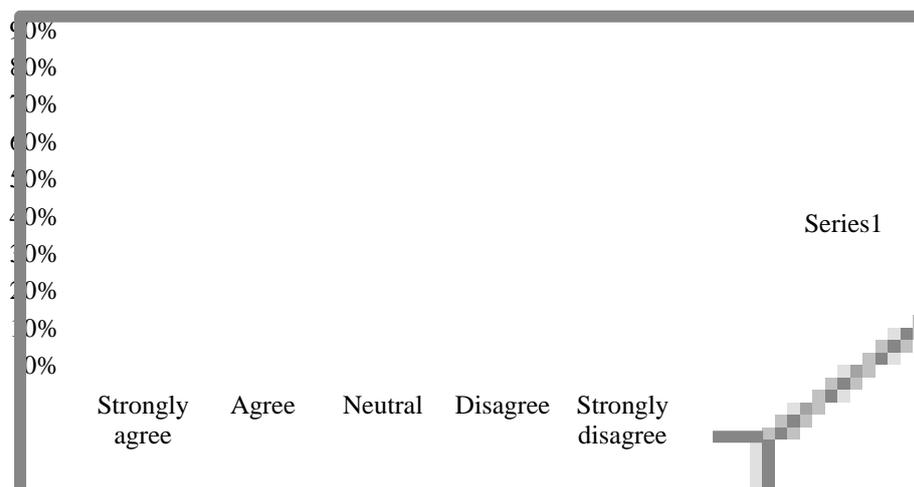### 6.7 Students' attitude toward pre-listening activities (Q8&9)

Chart 3: Students' attitude toward pre-listening activities

You can see that 90% of the students realize the importance of pre-listening activities. They admitted that we should have pre-listening activities. This

helps students more active to ready for listening comprehension and motivate students' background.

7. Findings and discussions

In listening comprehension process, most of the 1ˢᵗ year English majors encounter various kinds of difficulties that refer to many aspects of spoken English. They are both linguistic factors.

Regarding linguistic factors, there are five main obstacles that students at HPU have been facing. Firstly, most of the students (60%) have difficulty in listening comprehension because of *limited vocabulary.* It is a really big problem because according to Mary Underwood "an unknown word can be like a suddenly dropped barrier causing them to stop and think about the meaning of the word and thus making them miss the text part of the speech". Secondly, is it *difficult for students to recognize words from sound heard in connected speech.* It is easy to understand this since spoken English is characterized by the features of connected speech such as weak forms, contraction, elision, assimilation and connotation, which are totally different to Vietnamese language.

Thirdly, students *have poor knowledge of stress and intonation* while stress and intonation play important roles in perception. According to Anderson and Tony Lynch (1988), stress and intonation are great sources of listening problem of ELF learners. Fourthly, students are *not familiar with various accents.* Listening to the different accents from different people is a hard job. Once one gets accustomed to the way speaker say, he or she may face problems of failure in recognizing sounds and signals if he or she changes to listen to another one with different manner of making an utterance. Lastly, it is *fast speech rate* that 80% of students lack control over the speed at which speaker speaks. Therefore, they may not get messages from the speechmakers because they are so busy working out the meaning of one part of what they hear, then they miss the next part.

Non-linguistic difficulties in listening comprehension involve three aspects including psychology, environment and general knowledge. The first obstacle is *stress and nervousness in students' psychology*. In the researchers' opinion, linguistic factors are the reasons for learners' feelings. For example, when one hears a listening text, mostly because of lacking linguistic knowledge like word meaning, pronunciation, etc, he cannot understand the intended message. As a result, their listening comprehension fail in just step two of 5 steps in listening process and so listening skill becomes a difficult skill as the viewpoints of 55% of students.

The second obstacle is from unfavorable environment with poor physical condition, unpleasant atmosphere and noise in which noise is the most interfering factor. The last obstacle is *lack of social and cultural knowledge.* 60% of students think that their general knowledge is not good enough or too poor to listen well. This poses big challenge for students because background knowledge is always the first essential factor for understanding any spoken language.

From the findings and discussions above, the researchers see the 1st year English majors at HPU face various difficulties (both in linguistics and non-linguistics). The next part is going to suggest some solutions with the hope of giving some suitable ways to help learners to overcome these obstacles.

CHAPTER 3 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES TO MOTIVATE THE FIRST YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS AT HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Pre-listening activities play a very important role in helping students to learn how to listen in the foreign language. They help teachers find out about what students already know about the topic, and the prepare for the vocabulary and language structures in the text. Pre-listening activities also help students prepare for what they are going to hear, and helps mitigate the anxiety which comes from listening in a foreign language, by providing a clear context. Moreover, pre-listening activities can offer opportunities for class discussion and more interaction among students.

The previous part shows that the first year students of English in HPU have in countered a great deal of difficulties in learning to listen in English. Hence, this chapter suggests some pre-listening activities to help students have a better preparation for listening learning. The writer will use topics in the "Listen in 1" – book for the first year English majors in listening at Haiphong Private University.

Activity 1: Using song to predict the content and catch the student interest

Topic: Introduction and Greeting

Goal of this unit is that students understand greetings, introductions and confirm people's name.

➢ Teachers play "How do you do song" for student listening

➢ After that teachers ask student what the song is about, that is topic of listening lesson.

It is known that music helps increase your concentration levels. It helps improve memory. It has been found to increase memory levels of Alzheimer's and dementia patients. Moreover, music plays a vital role in enhancing creativity and problem-solving skill. This makes learning become easier and happier for students.

Activity 2: Using games to activate existing vocabulary

Topic: Family

Goal of this unit is that students can identify family members.

Procedure:

➢ Teachers divide class into two teams and have one member from each team stand at the front of the classroom facing the board.

➢ Teacher write words relevant the family topic, such as: mother, father, son, nephew..

➢ Teacher will tell students information about the relationship between members in family, like " son of mother's brother", " wife of father", or " mother of mother"…

➢ Students who touch the right words on the board faster will be the winner.

As you know, games have many benefits in learning English, especially in pre-activities. They awake students, attract students in the lesson. Besides, there are many kinds of games to suit with each lesson's purpose and status of class. This is one of the most popular pre-activities in language learning.

Activity 3: Predicting vocabulary

Topic: Physical description

Goal of this unit is that students can identify people through physical description.

Procedure:

➢ The teacher writes the topic on the board.

➢ Students predict the vocabulary items that may appear in the passage.

➢ The teacher writes the suggested words on the board and asks for the reason of the students' choice of words or for the meaning.

➢ Students are then given a passage to check their prediction.

Activity 4: Using pictures to predict topic

Topic: Music

Goal of this unit is that students can identify different genres of music.

Procedure:

➢ Teacher shows 3 pictures of 3 famous singers.

➢ Teacher gives them 3 minutes to brainstorm about " who are they" and " what type of music does each person sing or play"

➢ After 3 minutes are up, teacher will ask students answer the questions. If there is a picture with the listening passage, teacher can ask students some questions related to the given pictures in order to motivate students to think the topic quickly and freely. If there is no picture, perhaps the teacher can find or draw a picture that fits the text. Visual aids are immensely helpful in aiding

students' comprehension. They attract students' attention and help and encourage them to focus on the subject in hand.

The good characteristics of this activity is that students are not criticized for their ideas so they will be open to sharing new ideas, in other words, it permit students to approach a topic with an open mind.

Activity 5: Asking relevant warm-up questions

Topic: Places

The purpose of this unit is that student can understand how to describe places. All too often, teachers start the lesson by saying "Turn to page…". It's very important to get the students warmed up and in the mood for English with a short activity. And a better way than giving them a discussion question is getting their teeth into, encouraging them to be a good conservationalists.

There are many kinds of warm-up questions the teacher can use, includes easy and advanced topics. The teachers should tell the students that they just have three to five minutes to answer the questions because this is the pre-listening activity. The teacher will need more one or two minute to do a round-up. The questions can be suited to pairs or group.

Procedure

➢ Which city do you most want to visit?

➢ Why do you want to go there?

➢ What is there to see?

➢ What would you like to do there?

Activity 6: Using photos to review vocabulary and grammar structures

Topic: Home

In this listening lesson, students will know about how o describe the homes.

Procedure:

➢ Look at the photos in rooms in a house. Use the words in the box to complete the real advertisement.

Kitchen   bedroom   dining room   bathroom   living room

For Sale or Rent Lakeside Estate

Fully furnished one – and two - _____ homes.

Spacious_____ for relaxing, _____ for meals and modern
_____ with all-new appliances. _____ with
basin and old-fashioned bathtub.

Very bright rooms and great views.

Close to public transportation and shopping.

Parking available

Tel: 555-3819

➢ Use the words in the box to complete the sentences about the house.

Sofa   tables   range   bed   chairs   refrigerator   window

Doors balcony cabinet armchair microwave cupboard coffee table

1. The kitchen has a _____,_____,_____ and _____ .

2. The bedroom includes a double _____ and a _____
overlooking the lake.

3. There's a _____, _____, and _____ in the living
room.

4. The dining room has a _____, five _____ , and a large
_____ .

5. Large _____ and French-style _____ make every room warm
and bright.

When we listen in our first language we can usually concentrate on the overall
meaning because we know the meaning of the vocabulary. For students, large
numbers of unknown words will often hinder listening, and certainly lower
confidence. Select some vocabulary for the students to study before listening,
perhaps matching words to definitions, followed by a simple practice activity
such as filling the gaps in sentences.

Activity 7: Using "Reading something relevant" to pre-teach preposition of place

Topic: Locations

Purpose of this listening lesson is that students will be able to identify locations in a store.

Procedure:

➤ Complete the following sentences with *in, on, next to*, or *between*.

1. Men's wear is _____ the second floor.

2. CD players are _____ the electrical goods department.

3. The electrical department is _____ the furniture department.

4. Tennis rackets are _____ the second floor in sporting goods.

5. Sporting goods is _____ the restaurant and the escalator.

Another type of predicting task is to let students read the listening comprehension questions before they listen. In this way, they can guess the topic of the listening text. Sometimes, the teacher can even ask the students to guess the answers to the questions before they listen. Notice that even though it may be impossible to predict the correct answers, the students will be more motivated to listen to the passage to see if their predictions are correct or not

Activity 8: Using symbols/maps to review vocabulary

Topic: Weather

The purpose of this listening lesson is that students will be able to identify types of weather and understand weather reports.

Procedure:

➤ What's the weather like in Europe? Match each weather report to one of the cities on the map. Draw lines to the correct cities.

A **What's the weather like in Europe? Match each weather report to one of the cities on the map. Draw lines to the correct cities.**

❶ ... rain across the city with the temperature at a very humid twenty-seven degrees ...

❷ ... it's a warm and sunny eighteen degrees in the city this morning ...

❸ ... snow will continue all day, and the temperature will stay at about minus five ...

❹ ... right now, it's partly cloudy with the temperature a cool eight degrees ...

❺ ... cloudy and cold this morning, with a temperature of about minus five degrees ...
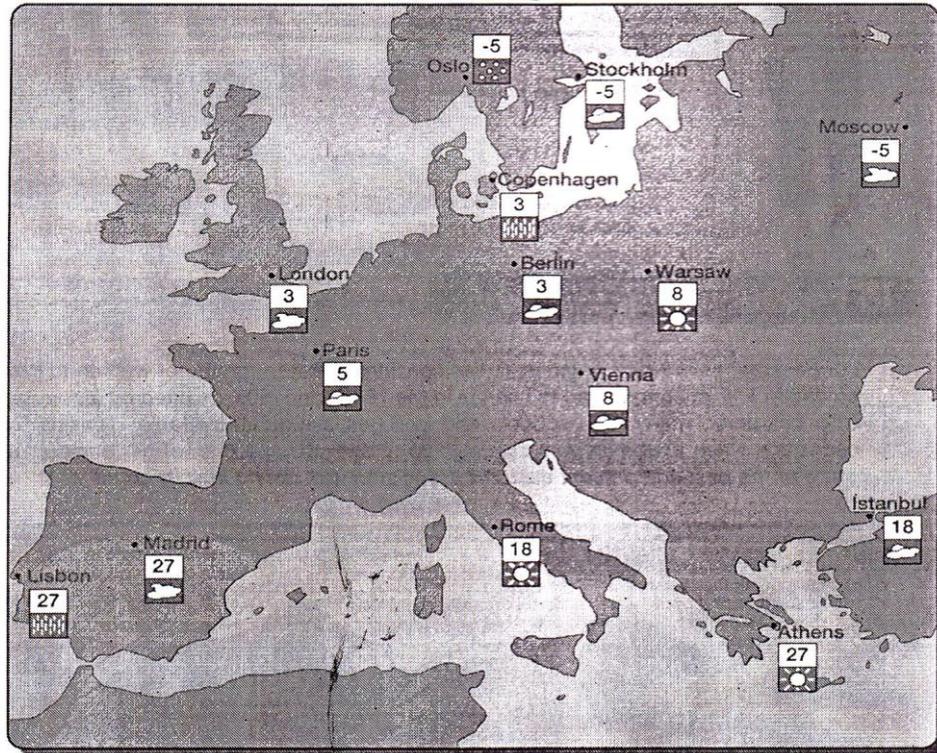
> After finishing this exercise, the teacher will ask students some questions: "What's the weather like in your city on a typical day in July? What's it like in January, April and October?"

There are situations in real life where we listen only for some specific details and ignore the rest of the entire message. For example, when we listen to the weather report on TV, we are only interested in the temperature in the city where we live or where we plan to go on the weekend, or when we are sitting in a train station or an airport, we do not listen to the details of all the announcements. It is important to expose our students to a variety of types of listening texts for a variety of purposes so that they will develop a variety of listening strategies to use for different situations.

Activity 9: Preparing vocabulary

Topic: Suggestions

Goal in this unit is that students can recognize suggestions and understand objections.

Procedure:

➢ What could the other person say to accept each suggestion? And to reject it? Number the sentences in each column (1-4).

ACCEPT
___ OK. That sounds like a good date.
___ Yeah, it looks like the perfect size.
___ All right, I've never tried it.
___ Great! Seems like there's lots to do there.

REJECT
___ I don't think so. It's too hot then
___ I'd prefer somewhere else. It's too far away.
___ No, that one is too small.
___ I'd rather not. It looks dangerous.

➢ After finishing this exercise, the teacher will ask the students "How else could the person accept or reject the suggestion? Make a list with a partner."

It is very important to give students practice in this area, because in real-life, they will not be able to listen to something several times. Therefore, it will be impossible for them to catch all the details, so they need to be comfortable with some ambiguity in listening and realize that they can still learn even when they do not understand every single word. Listening for the gist is similar to the concept of skimming a passage in reading. The key is to ask students one or two questions that focus on the main idea or the tone or mood of the whole passage. Notice that students can answer the gist questions even though they do not understand every word or phrase in the passage. If the passage is recorded well, students will be able to guess the answer simply from the tone of voices of the speakers.

Activity 10: Predicting the content of the listening text

Topic: Learning style

The purpose of this listening lesson is that students can realize learning style and understand information in a lecture.

Procedure:

➢ What are the students doing? Using the words in the box to label each picture.

Taking note	listening to a tape	reading a text book
Attending a lecture	asking question	using a computer
Studying in a library	taking part in a discussion	doing a experiment

➢ After finishing this exercise, the teacher will ask students some questions like "Which style do you prefer?", " What is your learning style?",etc. And when students answer the questions, the teacher can introduce the topic of the lesson.

Another type of pre-reading activity is to set the scene for the students. As we have said before, listening to passages in the classroom can be more difficult than listening in real life, because of the lack of context. So the teacher can help provide the background information to activate learners' schema, so they will be better prepared to understand what they hear.

These are just a few examples of pre-listening tasks. Using the creativity, teachers can think of many more. Most of the time, we would only use one kind of pre-listening activity before each listening session. Pre-listening tasks should not take much time. Remember the purpose of them is to activate the students' schema, in other words, to add context, so that the actual listening becomes easier itself.

PART III – CONCLUSION

1. Overview of the study

Being one of HPU English majors, from facing a lot of difficulties in listening comprehension, together with the deep awareness about the importance of listening; the researches decided to carry out the study with the hope of finding some obstacles that students experience in listening comprehension as well as suggesting some pre-listening activities to improve their listening skill.

The study includes three main parts. Part I is the introduction of the research. It introduces to the readers the basic information why this thesis is fullfilled, how it is conducted and what is conducted for. Part II is the development of the thesis including four chapters. The first chapter provide readers an overview of the theoretical background on which this study bases on. They include the definition of listening comprehension, potential difficulties in listening comprehension, etc. The next chapter introduces the method applied in the thesis. It is an action research with the definitions and processes. Techniques employed in this minor thesis such as data collection and data analysis can be found here. Basing on the literature, a survey questionnaire were designed for the 1st year majors of Faculty of Foreign Languages and using quantitative method to analyze the data, findings were found and represented in the chapter three.

Accordingly, students' eight obstacles in listening comprehension are lacking vocabulary, failing recognizing words in connected speech, having poor knowledge of stress and intonation, being not familiar with various accents, listening to fast speech rate, possessing stress and nervousness, learning in uncomfortable environment and lacking general knowledge. The last chapter is the discussion and recommendations for the obstacles found above to help learners to overcome difficulties. It consists of **song, games, predicting vocabulary, looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs, using**

relevant warm-up questions, reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures, reading something relevant,

listening for specific information, listening for the gist, predicting the content of the listening text.

The last part is the summary of the previous parts and chapters. It is also the part the concluding marks are drawn out and pedagogical implication and suggestions for the further researchers are presented.

2. Limitations and suggestions for further study.

In any research paper, limitations are unavoidable. The study presented is of no exception.

Firstly, the difficulties found out in the study is just from first –year English majors at HPU so there should be further studies on different subjects.

Secondly, the techniques and activities suggested through prove to be useful and effectively, they are likely to be subjective and incomplete. There should be some more techniques and activities to help first English majors of HPU in particular and English major students in general make good advance in listening skill.

Thirdly, listening is only one of the four basic skills in teaching and learning English. However, there has been a few of studies in improving these skills. Therefore, it is important that studies on reading, speaking and writing for better English teaching and learning should be carry out.

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APPENDIX

STUDENTS' SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed for the study on some obstacles facing HPU 1st English majors in listening comprehension. Your assistance in completing the survey is highly appreciated. All the provided information is solely for the aims of the study, not only for the other purposes. Please write down the answer or tick in the box!

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

1. How long have you learnt English?

    A. 1-3 years   C. 5-7 years

    B. 3-5 years   D. More than 7 years

2. Among 4 skills Reading, Speaking, Writing and Listening, Listening skill is the most difficult for you?

    A. Strongly agree   D. Disagree

    B. Agree   E. Strongly disagree

    C. Neutral

3. How is listening skill important for you?

    A. Very important   D. Not very important

B. Important   E. Strongly disagree

    C. Neutral

4. How often do you practice listening at home?

    A. Always, whenever I am free it's my habit.

    B. Sometimes when I remember and like to listen.

    C. Rarely, only when I have to finish my homework.

    D. Never, I hate listening to English. It makes me have a headache.

    E. Other ideas

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Check your own answer

Factors affecting listening	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Your vocabulary is efficient enough to comprehend the spoken texts.					
Grammar helps you much in listening comprehension.					
You have problem with various and unfamiliar accents.					
Stress and intonation make you feel hard to understand the message intended.					
It's difficult for you to understand when native speaker produce spontaneous connected speech.					
The speech rate of native speaker is too fast.					
You feel stressful and nervous while you are listening.					
You have hearing problems.					
Environment factors (noise, physical condition, unpleasant atmosphere…) prevent you from listening.					
Your social and cultural knowledge is good to comprehend all the spoken messages.					

6. The advantages when listening in class?

A. I feel more confident when working with my friends.

B. The teacher is helpful.

C. The teacher has various activities.

7. Check your favorite pre-listening activities

Favorite activities	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Games					
Songs					
Discussion					
Pictures					
Information-gap					
Quiz					
Questions					

8. What do you think about pre-listening activities?

   A. Strongly important   D. Not very important

   B. Important   E. Strongly disagree

   C. Neutral

9. How can pre-listening activities help you?

   A. It helps me to activate

   B. It helps me to ready for listening

   C. It motivates my background knowledge

10. In your opinion, what your teacher should do to help you improve your listening acquisition? Alternatively, do you have any useful tips to share the learners?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

-THE END-

Thank you once again!