

# FACTORS AFFECTING NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION: A CASE STUDY AT DONG NAI TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

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## ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension plays a pivotal role in effective communication in spoken language in the global village (Meyerhuber, 2019). Besides that, it also assists students in expanding their knowledge base and developing their English skills. However, comprehending English speech is not an easy task for non-English majors. Therefore, students at Dong Nai Technology University are offered many opportunities to improve their listening abilities in English lessons. However, due to unknown reasons, their listening skills are ineffective. The purpose of this research is to identify the obstacles that inhibit students from listening well. Additionally, the study employed a survey questionnaire administered to 120 non-English majors and an interview was conducted with 11 students. It demonstrates that students frequently struggle with unfamiliar vocabulary, lack of concentration, length and speed of the listening, cultural distinctions and no motivation. The study offers potential strategies to help students improve their listening skills, and provides teachers with methods to support this improvement.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background to the study

Although English is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the most commonly taught as a foreign language and used to assess learners' language competency in international English exams such as the TOEFL, IELTS, and FCE in four skills. Therefore, English is taught in Vietnamese schools, colleges, and universities to improve students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Among the four skills, listening is an essential skill for language

learning as children learn their first language (L1). Listening plays a critical role in L1 acquisition and is as significant in second language (L2) learning (Rost, 2011). In fact, when speaking a foreign language, learners spend more than half of their time listening (Nunan, 2002). According to research, improving listening skills improves other language skills such as reading, speaking, and writing (Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Rost, 1994; Yalcinkaya, Muluk, & Ashin, 2009). Listening (or reading) is a receptive skill, however, it appears to be the most challenging for EFL students. Indeed, listening skills have been

underemphasized in most Vietnamese schools' English learning processes (Duong & Chau, 2019; Nguyen & Thai, 2018). This is most likely due to Vietnam's official English language learning and teaching curriculum, which is predominantly exam-driven. To be more specific, students are prepared for exams that focus heavily on language knowledge such as grammar, English usage, reading, and vocabulary rather than developing listening and language communicative competence (Denham, 1992; Duong, 2014), despite the fact that all four macro skills are integrated into high school textbooks. As a result, high school pupils are less likely to have opportunities to improve their listening skills as well as communication skills.

Apparently, listening plays an important role in foreign language learning, so it has gained more and more attention in foreign language classroom.

The secret to unlocking the door to career success is to learn English proficiently. English is particularly crucial for those who work for foreign corporations. Speaking English well will not only help learners communicate with business associates, clients, and co-workers, but it will also open up many promotion prospects for the learners. Since English is such a crucial component, nearly all schools, from elementary schools to colleges, integrate it in their curriculum. However, many students who are learning English, particularly non-English majors at Dong Nai University of Technology, share the same dread of listening in English because their listening abilities are inadequate. A majority of students reported struggle with speaking, and a variety of factors influence how well students pick up on listening exercises.

In Vietnam, English is taught officially in the formal educational system and English language centres. However, many language students, especially non-English majors, always have difficulty finding out the suitable language learning ways to adapt to the energetic learning environment as universities. Yang (1999) stated that appropriate English learning

activities will help students be responsible for their own learning and succeed in using English.

Speaking, reading, writing, and listening are the four foundational English skills. Consequently, strong listening skills are vital for understanding this subject matter. This study explores the factors and strategies affecting the English listening skills of non-English majors at Dong Nai Technology University.

## 1.2. Literature Review

### 1.2.1. Definition of listening skill

The communication skill that is used the most frequently in daily life is listening. Therefore, listening is definitely essential for communicating and learning a foreign language. Because listening offers language input, listening skills become essential for learning a new language. Furthermore, no one can deny the necessity of listening skills in foreign language learning because receiving language input is essential for language acquisition. According to Krashen's input hypothesis (2013), languages are learned when people comprehend the message. The assumptions underlying it were that learning a first or second language follows the same procedure: listening comes before speaking.

A study by Nagendra, English, Reddy, & College (2014) stated that listening ability lies at the very heart of all growth, from birth through the years of formal education. The better those learning skills are developed, the more productive our learning efforts. Moreover, Steinberg (2007) and Azmi, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul (2014) defined that listening comprehension as one's ability to recognize another through sense, aural organs and allocate a meaning to the message to understand it.

According to Gilakjani (2016), listening is one of the most crucial abilities in English language learning. When students listen to English assignments, they encounter numerous listening challenges. Therefore, they struggle with listening comprehension because

universities and institutions place a greater emphasis on writing, reading, and vocabulary.

Another study of Nadig (2013) stated that many processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language are referred to as listening comprehension. These include knowing speech sounds, grasping the meaning of individual words, and comprehending sentence grammar.

Additionally, Jafari and Hashim (2015) emphasized that listening is a way for comprehensible input, and it accounts for more than half of the time learners spend learning a foreign language.

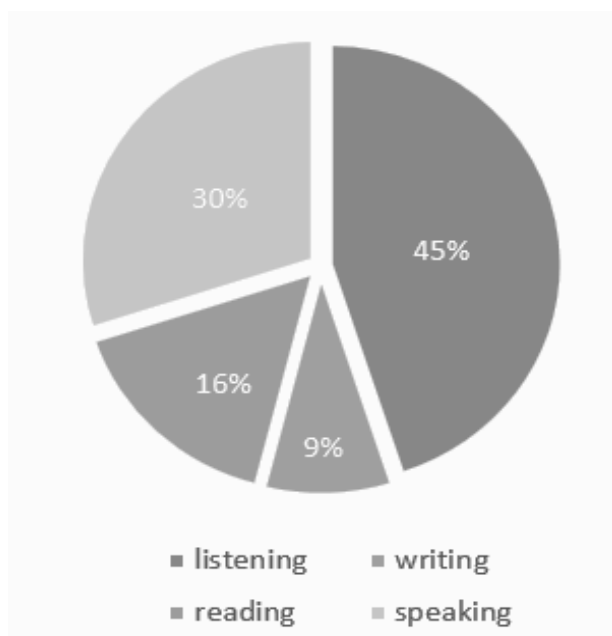
Last but not least, listening comprehension problems in Vietnam were frequently caused by unfamiliar topics. A study by Trinh (2020) was conducted at the college level, the most common issues encountered by 50 first-year English major students at Lac Hong University with regard to listening difficulties are inadequate time for learning and developing listening skills, inappropriate strategies that impede students' listening comprehension, inappropriate listening materials, and physical settings. According to Nguyen's (2013) study, which examined the primary challenges that 150 first-year students perceived in learning listening skills, the most common obstacles that these students faced were caused by speakers (the speech rate and reduced forms emerged), materials (unfamiliar topics and dense information in the recording are thought to be the most common hindrance in listening), psychological issues, and incorrect pronunciation.

The ability to listen actively and attentively is unaffected by the events occurring around the listener, by information about the user and relevant data, such as personality, opinions, background, etc. Communicators must be patient, cautious, considerate, and willing to offer materials and knowledge.

### 1.2.2. The importance of listening skill

Adults spend 45% of their communication time listening, compared to 30% for speaking,

16% for reading, and 9% for writing. Hearing is more than just being able to hear sound; it also refers to hearing in order to understand what is being said and to respond accordingly.



**Figure 1.** Four skills in communication time

Understanding and learning are equally important aspects of listening skills. Regardless of your profession—lawyer, consultant, salesperson, or office worker—listening skills are essential. Understanding what others are saying and listening to them help us learn from our experiences. It also enables us to rapidly solve problems by getting to know our peers' personalities, routines, hobbies, and sentiments.

As a result, the distinction between passive and active listening may be evident in many facets of our lives and growth; then listening is a crucial component of communication (Meyerhuber, 2019).

- Improve learning comprehension in both social and professional contexts.
- Develop your social skills.
- Create stronger connections by making others feel appreciated.
- Develop problem-solving abilities.
- Assimilate knowledge better.

## **Levels often encountered in listening comprehension**

Effective listening is a fundamental skill in coaching, facilitating a deeper comprehension and promoting meaningful conversations between the coach and the client. Listening in coaching can be divided into four distinct levels, each representing the depth and quality of engagement (Starr, 2021).

### **Level 1 - Pretend Listening**

Pretend listening takes place when the listener seems attentive but is not truly processing the information being conveyed. This often occurs when individuals lack adequate background knowledge or are distracted, hindering their ability to fully grasp the speaker's message (Brownell, 2012). Consequently, important points may be overlooked, and communication remains superficial.

### **Level 2 - Conversational Listening**

Conversational listening entails active involvement in a dialogue. In this level, the listener pays attention, responds to the speaker, and shares their own thoughts or opinions. This level is typical in casual conversations where the listener engages but frequently shifts focus between their own thoughts and the speaker's words (Starr, 2021).

### **Level 3 - Active Listening**

At this stage, the listener is completely present and deliberately engaged in understanding the speaker's message. Active listeners paraphrase, ask clarifying questions, and show empathy, ensuring they accurately interpret the speaker's intent (Rogers & Farson, 1987). This level is vital in coaching, where understanding both verbal and non-verbal cues is crucial.

### **Level 4 - Deep Listening**

Deep listening, also known as empathic or generative listening (Scharmer, 2016), required the listener to set aside their own judgments and fully immerse themselves in the speaker's

experience. Listeners at this level strive to understand the speaker's underlying emotions, needs, and motivations. In coaching, deep listening builds trust and allows for transformational insights and breakthroughs.

### **1.2.3. Factors affecting the listening skills**

Listening comprehension is an essential skill for effective communication, especially in a globalized world where English acts as a common language (Meyerhuber, 2019). Despite its significance, non-English major students often face considerable difficulties in developing their listening abilities. Numerous studies have investigated the primary obstacles to listening comprehension, which are generally divided into linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural categories.

#### **1.2.3.1. Linguistic Factors**

Linguistic difficulties are frequently cited as major impediments to listening comprehension. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) highlighted that unfamiliar vocabulary posed a significant challenge, as students often encountered new words or idioms that disrupt their understanding. When listeners came across unknown terms, they might concentrate on deciphering them, leading to missed parts of the conversation (Goh, 2000). Limited vocabulary was thus a key reason for poor listening performance, as Butt (2010) emphasized that insufficient lexical knowledge greatly impairs students' ability to grasp spoken messages.

Pronunciation is another linguistic aspect that affects listening skills. Field (2008) pointed out that variations in accents, stress patterns, and linking sounds could confuse learners, making it difficult for them to break down speech into meaningful segments. Incorrect pronunciation or unfamiliar intonation patterns might lead students to misinterpret or completely miss information.

Speech rate is also frequently mentioned in the literature as a significant barrier. Buck (2001) discovered that the faster the speech rate, the more challenging it was for learners to

process and understand information in real-time. Rapid, connected speech often results in omissions or reductions in sounds, complicating comprehension, particularly for learners with limited exposure to native or fluent speakers.

#### **1.2.3.2. Psychological Factors**

Beyond linguistic challenges, psychological factors such as concentration and motivation are crucial for listening success. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) argued that listening required sustained attention and cognitive engagement. A lack of concentration due to distractions or mental fatigue could significantly diminish comprehension efficiency. Students who struggle to maintain focus during listening activities are more likely to miss important information, leading to frustration and disengagement.

Motivation is another vital factor. Dörnyei (2001) suggested that students who lacked intrinsic or extrinsic motivation might not put in the necessary effort to enhance their listening skills. Without clear goals or an understanding of the importance of listening competence, learners might approach listening tasks passively, resulting in poor outcomes.

#### **1.2.3.3. Socio-Cultural Factors**

Socio-cultural elements, including cultural differences, are often identified as barriers to effective listening. Celik (2014) asserted that language learners needed to be familiar with the cultural contexts embedded within listening materials. Cultural references, idioms, and context-specific knowledge were often not explicitly explained, leaving students confused. As Kramsch (1993) explained, understanding the “culture behind the language” was essential for effective comprehension and interaction. Students unfamiliar with the target culture might struggle to accurately interpret the meaning of conversations.

#### **1.2.3.4. Task-related Factors**

Finally, factors related to the nature of the listening task itself can influence

comprehension. According to Vandergrift (1999), the length and intricacy of listening materials might overwhelm students' working memory. Extended or complex listening passages demand continuous cognitive effort, which may be challenging for students with lower listening proficiency or limited practice.

The literature indicated that listening comprehension is affected by a mix of linguistic challenges (such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and speech rate), psychological elements (like concentration and motivation), and socio-cultural aspects (including cultural differences). The results of this study at Dong Nai Technology University are consistent with previous research, confirming that these obstacles continue to impede non-English major students in developing effective listening skills. Addressing these factors through educational interventions can greatly improve students' listening abilities.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Research questions**

The purpose of this research is to improve the listening skills of non-English majors at Dong Nai Technology University. The study is anticipated to accomplish the objectives, which are (1) to identify the listening challenges non-English majors encounter when taking the listening assignments and (2) to discover strategies to those problems. As a result, the study has been conducted to address the following questions:

*Question 1:* What listening challenges do non-English majors encounter when taking the listening comprehension?

*Question 2:* What are strategies to help non-English majors improve their listening skills?

### **2.2. Participants**

Participants in the study were 120 third-year non-English majors from class A1 at Dong Nai Technology University, consisting of 74 female and 46 male students. They were supposed to be at the pre-intermediate level in speaking English. They were aged between 20



and 21. The survey sample was picked at random to ensure the data's objectivity. These participants had acquired English listening skills for three consecutive years with a wide range of topics.

Furthermore, those students were obliged to complete three compulsory English courses at levels 1, 2, and 3, which correspond to A1, A2, and B1. Every week, they offer a 2-period lesson (for levels 1 and 2) or a 3-period program (for levels 3). Due to limited time and a vast amount of knowledge to cover, skills must be imparted with considerable effort by both teachers and students. As a result, students frequently complained about not having enough listening practice, which had an impact on their listening comprehension.

### 2.3. Research instruments

To achieve the objectives of this study, two research instruments were employed: a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. This combination facilitated both comprehensive and detailed data collection, offering a clearer insight into the listening comprehension challenges faced by non-English majors.

#### 2.3.1. Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was the main quantitative tool and was distributed to 120 non-English major students at Dong Nai Technology University. It was adapted from established instruments frequently used in listening comprehension research (e.g., Vandergrift, 2007; Goh, 2000) and aimed to pinpoint the specific difficulties students encounter when listening to English.

The questionnaire was organized into three sections:

##### *Section A: Demographic Information*

This section collected general background details such as gender, age, field of study, and level of English proficiency.

##### *Section B: Listening Comprehension Challenges*

This section included 20 closed-ended items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The items covered five main areas identified in the literature: unfamiliar vocabulary (Nation & Newton, 2009), concentration issues (Goh, 2000), length and speed of listening passages (Field, 2008), cultural differences (Brown, 2001), and motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). Sample items include:

"I struggle to understand listening materials due to the speed of the speaker."

"I lose focus easily during listening exercises."

"Cultural references in listening tasks confuse me."

##### *Section C: Open-Ended Questions*

To complement the quantitative data, students were also asked to respond to open-ended questions to share more detailed personal experiences and suggest ways to enhance their listening comprehension skills.

#### 2.3.2. Semi-Structured Interview

To supplement the survey data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 students chosen based on their willingness to participate and their survey responses. The interview guide was designed to explore deeper into the challenges identified in the questionnaire, as well as students' personal strategies for overcoming these difficulties.

The interviews included open-ended questions such as:

"What do you find most difficult when listening to English audio materials?"

"Can you describe how vocabulary or speed affects your understanding of a listening passage?"

"What motivates or demotivates you to improve your listening skills?"

Interviews were audio-recorded with agreement, and each session lasted approximately 20–25 minutes. The data

gathered through interviews provided rich qualitative insights to triangulate with the survey findings.

Both instruments were reviewed and piloted with a small group of students ( $n = 10$ ) before the main study to ensure clarity and reliability.

## 2.4. Data Collection Procedures

To collect data for this study, a mixed-methods approach was utilized, combining both quantitative and qualitative instruments to gain a thorough understanding of the challenges non-English majors face in listening comprehension.

Firstly, a structured survey questionnaire was designed and administered to 120 non-English major students at Dong Nai Technology University. This questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were aimed to identify common listening comprehension issues such as unfamiliar vocabulary, lack of concentration, the speed and length of listening passages, cultural differences, and motivation levels. The open-ended questions allowed students to elaborate on their personal experiences and specific difficulties with listening tasks. The survey was administered via Google form during regular English classes, and participants were given 15–20 minutes to complete it anonymously. When students had questions that were unclear, the researcher would clarify them as they completed the questionnaire.

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 11 students who had previously completed the questionnaire. These interviews aimed to further investigate and clarify issues identified in the survey responses and gain deeper insights into students' perceptions and attitudes towards listening comprehension. Each interview lasted approximately 20–25 minutes and took place in a quiet setting on the university campus to ensure comfort and confidentiality. The interviews were audio-

recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis.

The combination of survey data and interview findings enabled triangulation, which helped validate the results and offered a more detailed picture of the obstacles hindering listening comprehension among the participants.

## 2.5. Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis of data gathered from survey questionnaires and interviews employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to pinpoint the main barriers to listening comprehension faced by non-English majors at Dong Nai Technology University.

For the quantitative aspect, responses from 120 completed survey questionnaires were coded and input into statistical software like SPSS for examination. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were utilized to summarize students' answers to closed-ended questions, offering a clear picture of prevalent challenges like unfamiliar vocabulary, concentration difficulties, the length and speed of listening passages, cultural differences, and lack of motivation.

Furthermore, cross-tabulation was applied to examine any relationships between variables, such as whether students with lower listening comprehension skills reported specific obstacles more frequently than others. The quantitative findings helped to identify patterns and trends within the larger student population.

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcripts from 11 selected students. The transcripts were reviewed multiple times to identify recurring themes and categories related to listening comprehension challenges. Codes were developed to represent specific issues mentioned by students, such as psychological factors (e.g., stress and attention lapses), linguistic challenges (e.g., unknown vocabulary and fast speech), and affective factors (e.g., motivation and cultural misunderstandings). These codes were then grouped into broader

themes that complemented the quantitative findings.

By integrating quantitative statistics with qualitative insights, the analysis offered a deeper understanding of the factors that negatively impact students' listening abilities. The triangulation of both data sets ensured greater validity and reliability of the findings, leading to more informed recommendations for both students and teachers.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

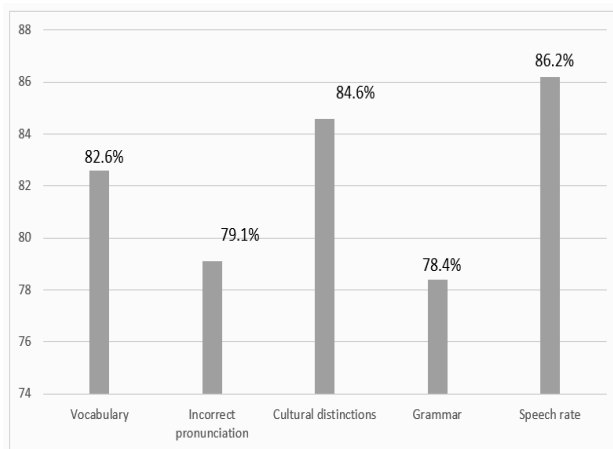
#### 3.1. Findings and results

##### 3.1.1. Results from the student questionnaire

##### 3.1.1.1. Students' problems

There are numerous elements that can obstruct learners' listening comprehension. Not enough knowledge, not thinking big enough to underestimate learning, which leads to decline, and not depending on severe judgment. Due to a misunderstanding of the problem, the learners have a difficult time grasping the major material of the lesson. In addition, according to Yagang (1994), four primary elements might generate problems for listeners: messages, speakers, listeners themselves, and physical environments. The first two elements are linguistic factors that impair listening comprehension, whereas the others include some probable non-linguistic problems.

##### 3.1.1.1.1. Linguistic factors



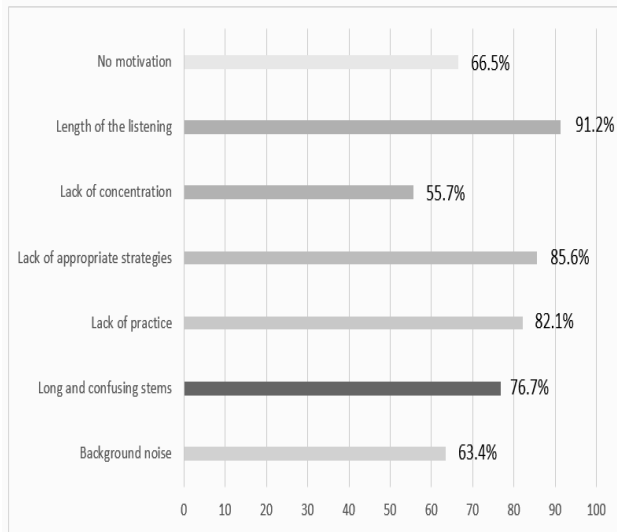
**Figure 2.** Linguistics factors when listening

Linguistic factors include vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, cultural distinctions, grammar and speech rate. As previously discussed, reading materials contain a large number of new words, phrases, and idioms that may be difficult to understand. When a new term is read out, listeners either disregard it or take a brief moment to think about it, missing the following segment of the tape. As a result, it is quite predictable that vocabulary is a major issue for listeners in listening activities, as illustrated in Figure 2, accounting for 82.6% of participants. In learning time of English, more than half of participants believe that they do not know the words exactly or they are unfamiliar with the words in the English context when listening. According to Butt (2010), the students' vocabulary was too limited to understand the message, which was a severe barrier to listening comprehension. Another issue is that Another 79.1% of them have problems with incorrect pronunciation. It also implies that many words have a variety of meanings but the same pronunciation, or some changes in the pronouncing of different kinds of words leading to differences, and when they are employed in their less usual usage, students become confused. It was seen that most of the participants (84.6%) agree that the cultural distinctions affect their English listening. Therefore, understanding these cultural factors helps language learners communicate effectively and acquire language by understanding word meanings and the contents of any language in the context while listening. According to Celik (2014), students should be aware of the cultural dimensions of language, which have a substantial impact on learners' comprehension. If the listening activity incorporates wholly diverse cultural resources, the learners may struggle with comprehension. It is the obligation of teachers to provide background information about the listening exercises in advance. Another issue is that the percentage of speech rate is around 86.2%. It shows that the speakers are linking and omitting sounds, causing the speed to sound faster than normal. Listeners struggle to follow the



rhythms and miss certain important elements that can be asked during understanding. The lowest rate comes from those who are influenced by grammatical structures (78.4%), who agree with the problem above.

### 3.1.1.1.2. Non-linguistic factors



**Figure 3.** Non-linguistics factors when listening

Non-linguistic factors are varied from background noise, long and confusing stems, lack of practice, lack of appropriate strategies, lack of concentration, length of the listening, and no motivation. Though these factors are changeable and improvable, in certain contexts, it may cause unexpected results for the exams. Another source of poor performance is background noise (63.4%) from the surrounding environment, such as the sport centre, self-study space, the class next door, or horns from automobiles on the street. According to the survey, the majority of non-major students find it difficult to listen because long and confusing stems (76.7%) cause them to lack basic understanding about the issue, or they do not know how to activate what they know about the topic prior to listening. Of course, there are times when students are hesitant to discuss unknown or undesirable issues. This also explains why pre-listening practices are insufficient in listening lessons. The next problem refers to lack of practice (82.1%). Most students are too busy working part-time jobs to practice listening at home,

school, or in their spare time, resulting in poor listening abilities. Furthermore, some students believe that anxiety and stress might make them feel less confident in their listening abilities; especially when the recording is only played once, they become frightened and nervous, which has a significant impact on their psychology. Last but not least, lack of appropriate strategies (85.6%) make the students not know how to do well in their listening comprehension. Although students are equipped with a lot of listening strategies but they do not know the way to apply the appropriate strategies to each listening comprehension. Besides that, 66.5% of students have no motivation when practicing listening to English in particular and learning English skills in general. It is a common issue for students who are not learning English as their major at the university. When students don't understand, they often become bored, lose motivation and eventually give up. In fact, English requires significant amount of practice, not just a few days of hard work. Listening to and understanding this language will take time, especially in a non-English speaking context. Based on the chart above, the percentage of length of the listening is approximately 91.2% because some students believe length of the listening is one of the reason that makes them feel bored and tired of listening comprehension. That is why the quality of listening is not as good as teachers expect from their students. According to Celik (2014), students' grade levels can play a significant role in their ability to listen to extended parts and retain all information. Students at lower proficiency levels find it challenging to concentrate on listening tasks for more than three minutes and to complete them. Short listening passages facilitate learners' comprehension and reduce exhaustion. Around 55.7% students agree that one of the most crucial aspects influencing the capacity to learn listening comprehension is concentration. As a result, students may find it challenging to concentrate in a foreign language class. Nevertheless, the smallest attention span can have a huge impact on listening

comprehension. Even when they are paying attention to the material, students still find listening to be tiresome and annoying because it requires a lot of work to not miss the message. This happens because of low arousal brought on by a lack of desire, a lack of interest in the subject, or boring lectures by teachers that make it difficult to learn the content.

### 3.1.2. Results from the student interview

Interviews conducted with 11 non-English major students at Dong Nai Technology University revealed valuable insights into the challenges they encounter with listening comprehension. Several prominent themes emerged, aligning with the questionnaire results.

#### *Unfamiliar Vocabulary*

Most interviewees indicated that encountering unfamiliar words during listening tasks significantly impedes their understanding. Many students expressed that when they hear unfamiliar vocabulary, they tend to focus on trying to decipher the meaning, which causes them to miss subsequent information. This observation is consistent with Butt's (2010) claimed that limited vocabulary was a major obstacle to effective listening comprehension.

#### *Lack of Concentration*

Some students admitted that their focus tends to drift during listening activities, especially when the material is lengthy or complex. They identified classroom distractions and personal fatigue as common reasons. This supports Rost's (2011) assertion that concentration is a crucial factor in listening success.

#### *Speed and Length of Listening Materials*

Interviewees often mentioned that fast speech and lengthy audio recordings negatively affect their ability to follow and comprehend the content. Many students reported difficulty keeping up when speakers link words or omit sounds, which aligns with Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) observation that speech rate and

prosodic features pose challenges for second language listeners.

#### *Cultural Distinctions*

Another frequent concern was the difficulty in understanding listening materials due to cultural differences embedded in the content. Students pointed out that references to customs, idioms, and background knowledge unfamiliar to them complicate comprehension. This supports Celik's (2014) argument that cultural knowledge is essential for interpreting meaning in a second language.

#### *Motivation Issues*

Some students revealed a lack of intrinsic motivation to enhance their listening skills. They mentioned that without clear, immediate benefits or engaging content, they felt less inclined to practice listening regularly. This resonates with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which emphasized the importance of intrinsic motivation in learning success.

In summary, the interviews confirmed the quantitative data gathered from the survey and highlighted the interconnectedness of linguistic, cognitive, and affective factors affecting listening comprehension. Students commonly face challenges with vocabulary, concentration, speech speed, cultural context, and motivation, all of which collectively impact their listening performance.

### 3.2. Discussion

The results of this research highlight several key factors that impede the listening comprehension skills of non-English majors at Dong Nai Technology University. Despite having numerous chances to enhance their listening abilities during English classes, many students still encounter considerable challenges, indicating that listening comprehension remains a difficult aspect of language learning for non-native speakers (Meyerhuber, 2019).

A major issue identified is the frequent difficulty with unfamiliar vocabulary. This

observation is consistent with Nation and Newton (2009), who highlighted that a limited vocabulary significantly impairs a learner's capacity to effectively process spoken input. Without an adequate lexical foundation, students often struggle to interpret key messages, resulting in diminished comprehension and frustration during listening exercises.

Furthermore, students' reported lack of concentration points to non-linguistic factors impacting listening performance. Goh (2000) suggested that attention lapses are common among language learners and can stem from disinterest, fatigue, or task difficulty. This lack of focus disrupts the ability to efficiently process auditory input and prevents learners from following the flow of conversation or lectures.

The findings also indicate that the length and speed of listening passages pose significant challenges. This supports Field's (2008) findings, which suggested that lengthy listening tasks and rapid speech can overwhelm learners' working memory, particularly when they are not familiar with the rhythm and intonation patterns of native speakers.

Cultural distinctions were another significant factor noted in this study. Brown (2001) argued that understanding spoken English often requires more than just linguistic knowledge—it also necessitates cultural familiarity. Students may miss implied meanings, idiomatic expressions, and culturally specific references, which are often embedded in authentic listening materials.

Lastly, the lack of motivation highlighted in the survey responses underscores a common issue in second language acquisition. Dörnyei (2001) contended that motivation is crucial for maintaining learner engagement and persistence. Without intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, students are less likely to exert the necessary effort to overcome listening challenges.

Overall, these findings suggest that enhancing listening comprehension among non-English majors requires a combination of learner-driven strategies and teacher support. Future research could further investigate interventions that address these challenges and evaluate their effectiveness over time.

### **3.3. Some suggested solutions to improve listening comprehension for non-English majors at Dong Nai University of Technology**

#### ***For students***

*Firstly, encouraging the motivation and concentration when practicing listening English.*

According to Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021), and Futonge (2005), students can exploit the English songs from low level short, basic listening with less information) to high level (complex materials with more content). This helps students benefit from having better listening comprehension abilities, which enable them to process information swiftly, sensitively, and accurately.

*Secondly, students should learn about the characteristics of English to familiar with unfamiliar vocabulary.*

A study from Kacani and Cyfeku (2015) showed that similar to other skills, students must invest enough time and effort in it if they want to perfect it. Therefore, students should develop their vocabulary by practicing listening to the same words in one sentence or another one in a lesson. When students hear and understand the meaning of words in a certain phrase, they will remember those words and the grammar structure used again. Then, students can be asked to infer the meaning of the word from the listening.

*Thirdly, how to solve the length and speed of the listening, students can improve their listening comprehension by actively practicing listening logically and methodically.*

In the study of Dinh, Nguyen, and Nguyen (2024), learners will progressively become

accustomed to and improve their listening abilities over time by consistently practicing and being exposed to various materials that range from easy speed to tough speed. Additionally, by repeatedly hearing the same material, students can increase their vocabulary. Pick a tape that interests them and keep playing it. Try to retain useful sentences or even paragraphs while they listen. The terminology students don't know yet, in particular, should be noted and memorized so that students can understand the meaning of the words, sentences, and phrases in that lesson. This will also help you determine the sentence structure.

*Last but not least, students should try to communicate in English with native speakers.*

Communicating with a native speaker, and in case if you do not understand what they say, take the initiative to inquire about the subject matter.

Another study of Moussu (2010) said that when speaking their native language, most native speakers are unaware of the modifications. Inform a native speaker if you don't comprehend them. When it is appropriate, follow up by inquiring as to why they said a certain phrase.

A native speaker can explain the occurrence to you and think about the change with ease. Of course, the native speaker frequently can only respond, "That's just how we say it!" But you can talk to native speakers to examine and dissect that language. Then, you'll pick up some useful English insights. Moreover, students can widen their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation day by day.

*Finally, students should learn listening to English through English movies or video to get to know more about the cultural distinctions or find the information about it on the Internet.*

The more students use this way to learn about the differences of culture, the more they can comprehend the cultures from around the world in the research of Futonge (2005). Many people have used this method of practicing

listening because it works. Students can pick a video with their preferred material to watch on their own. Tools for translation can also be applied simultaneously to aid in listening. Alternately, students can combine watching videos with bilingual subtitles with listening to make understanding them easier. The topics can be various aspects of the country, such as its food, transportation, entertainment, festivals, traditions, or living conditions.

Additionally, students can also pick a brief video to watch while they listen to allow them to practice listening fluently. Next, they can pick a clip that they enjoy to use as practice for listening and communicating. This period of practice is crucial since it will enable you to improve both your speaking and listening abilities.

### ***For teachers***

*As teachers, they may help students develop their listening abilities in a variety of ways. Here are some suggested strategies that they can employ (from Richards (2008) and Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011):*

- Firstly, teachers should give their students helpful feedback regarding their listening abilities and encourage them to practice and make necessary modifications.

- Secondly, teachers should perspicuously convey the clear listening expectations to their students so that the students can understand the level which they can reach, as well as set standards and criteria for judging listening.

- Thirdly, teachers can provide students with resources to help them improve their listening skills, such as listening practice materials on the bookstore or the Internet, such as websites that facilitate listening practice, books compiled by well-known authors both domestically and abroad—each resource has benefits and is appropriate for listening exercise.

- Fourthly, teachers should quip students with effective listening strategies: To achieve this purpose, students are taught how to identify



the reason for listening, use prior knowledge of the subject to anticipate or predict material, and select appropriate listening approaches. Students may concentrate on certain input items thanks to selectivity, which also reduces the amount of information they must maintain in their short-term memory in order to recognize it. Furthermore, teachers should demonstrate students how to employ top-down and bottom-up tactics in a flexible and collaborative manner, as well as when to use each.

- Moreover, teachers should encourage students to practice listening both at home and at school as much as possible.

- Last but not least, teachers should create a supportive environment in the classroom that is encouraging and helpful so that students can listen with confidence.

- Lastly, teachers can offer individual support to students who might be having trouble listening personal encouragement, extra practice chances and individualized criticism as well.

## 4. CONCLUSION

### 4.1. Conclusion

The research revealed the factors non-English majors at Dong Nai Technology University have with listening components and give solutions. They mostly have difficulties with length and speed of the listening, unfamiliar vocabulary, cultural distinctions, no motivation and lack of concentration. Based on the problems above, some possible solutions for both students as well as teachers are suggested so as to improve students' listening skill.

To improve their listening abilities, it appears that they require more particular teaching. Strategy-based listening instruction with authentic listening materials may improve non-English students' listening comprehension. Furthermore, the findings provide teachers with information on how to train students in establishing proper EFL listening skills to avoid challenges in perceiving authentic listening and meet the requirement for communicative

competence in the global village. This study was conducted with a limited number of students. The author hopes that it can be expanded for future research.

### 4.2. Limitations of the study

Despite meeting the study's objectives, there are some inherent limitations.

First and foremost, the time for doing the research was limited. The study was completed in around six months, which included planning the idea to survey the problems that non-English-major students face in their language learning; referring to previous researches from other former researchers; developing and collecting questionnaires from the students; and analyzing data.

The second one is from the teachers' own experience, viewpoint, and approach to teaching English to their students. Teaching listening skill in the classroom was not used to their full potential.

The last one is that due to time constraints and the limited scale of the thesis, not all non-English major students at DNTU participate in this study. Because there were only 120 individuals in the study, the findings may not be generalizable to other sites.

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# CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN KHẢ NĂNG NGHE HIỂU CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH: NGHIÊN CỨU TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CÔNG NGHỆ ĐỒNG NAI

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## THÔNG TIN CHUNG

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## TỪ KHOÁ

*Nghe hiểu;*

*Khó khăn khi nghe;*

*Kỹ năng nghe;*

*Hướng giải quyết;*

*Sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh*

## TÓM TẮT

Nghe hiểu đóng một vai trò quan trọng trong giao tiếp hằng ngày đặc biệt trong môi trường toàn cầu (Meyerhuber, 2019). Bên cạnh đó, nó còn hỗ trợ sinh viên mở rộng kiến thức và phát triển kỹ năng tiếng Anh. Tuy nhiên, việc hiểu tiếng Anh không phải là một vấn đề dễ dàng đối với sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh. Vì vậy, sinh viên Trường Đại học Công nghệ Đồng Nai được cung cấp nhiều cơ hội để cải thiện khả năng nghe của mình trong các giờ học tiếng Anh. Tuy nhiên, kỹ năng nghe của họ vẫn không hiệu quả và chưa được cải thiện đáng kể. Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là xác định những trở ngại cản trở vấn đề nghe hiểu tiếng Anh của sinh viên. Bài nghiên cứu này đã sử dụng một bảng câu hỏi khảo sát được gửi cho 120 sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh và một cuộc phỏng vấn đã được thực hiện với 11 sinh viên. Điều này chứng tỏ rằng sinh viên thường xuyên gặp khó khăn với từ vựng, thiếu tập trung, thời lượng và tốc độ nghe, sự khác biệt về văn hóa và không có động lực. Nghiên cứu cũng đề xuất một số giải pháp khả thi cho cả sinh viên và giảng viên nhằm nâng cao kỹ năng nghe cho sinh viên.