

Research Article

Difficulties of Learning Listening Comprehension Faced by 1st-year English Major Students at Dong Nai University

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Abstract

This study investigated the difficulties in English listening comprehension experienced by first-year English major students at Dong Nai University. Employing a quantitative approach, the research explored various factors impacting listening skills, including background knowledge, vocabulary, physical setting, psychological and pronunciation challenges. The findings reveal that students encounter a very high extent of difficulties across all examined categories. Key challenges identified include pervasive listening anxiety, difficulties maintaining concentration, and struggles with diverse English accents, intonation changes, and rapid speech rates. Furthermore, suboptimal physical learning conditions such as poor audio quality, background noise, and the inability to replay materials significantly impede comprehension. Lexical limitations, encompassing both general and specialized vocabulary, coupled with insufficient topical and cultural background knowledge, also present substantial barriers. These results strongly reject the null hypothesis that students do not experience significant challenges and robustly support the alternative hypothesis that a wide range of difficulties are encountered. The study underscores the complex interplay of internal and external factors hindering listening comprehension among these learners, providing crucial insights for developing targeted pedagogical interventions to enhance their listening proficiency.

Keywords

Listening, listening comprehension, listening difficulties, Dong Nai University

1. Introduction

Given the cultural diversity of today's global society, English has become essential in nearly every context. In other words, people worldwide use English not only for communication but also as a gateway to career opportunities and a means to broaden their knowledge and skills, helping them thrive as global citizens.

The pervasive influence of English in our interconnected

era is undeniable. Fluency in English has become a goal for everyone. However, mastering all facets of English language proficiency—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—can be challenging for learners, with listening often identified as the most difficult skill.

The challenges associated with English language acquisition are multifaceted. Adult learners often bring

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Received: 09/03/2025; Accepted: 03/04/2025; Published: 10/05/2025



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preconceived notions and learning styles from their native languages, which can hinder their ability to acquire English effectively. At the university level, especially among English major students, listening skills are vital for academic success and future professional performance. First-year students, in particular, face various challenges as they transit from high school to the demands of higher education. These challenges may include adjusting to new teaching methodologies, encountering unfamiliar accents and speech rates, and developing strategies for processing comprehending spoken English in real time. Additionally, limited exposure to authentic English language materials and opportunities for practice can impede progress.

Understanding the specific obstacles that students face in developing listening comprehension skills is crucial for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the particular difficulties experienced by first-year English major students at Dong Nai University in learning listening comprehension, and to explore potential factors contributing to these challenges.

In line with the objectives of the study, this research has been deliberately structured to address the following key questions:

- 1) What specific listening comprehension challenges do first-year English major students at DNU typically encounter?
- 2) How frequently do students report experiencing each of these listening comprehension difficulties?
- 3) What practical implications may be drawn from the described challenges in enhancing the teaching and learning of English listening skills?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Listening

Listening has been defined in various ways across linguistics, education, and communication studies. Anderson and Lynch [1] highlight the listener's active role, stressing that understanding depends not only on the speaker's message but also on the listener's use of prior knowledge and cognitive resources. Underwood [21] defines listening more simply as focusing attention to derive meaning from auditory input.

Vandergrift and Kurita [11, 22] expand this view by describing listening as the reception and interpretation of multiple communicative elements—including emotions and beliefs—emphasizing it as a dynamic, interactive process involving cognitive and affective engagement. Similarly, Goss [8] sees listening as comprehending auditory input and transforming it into meaningful representations, requiring both bottom-up (decoding sounds and grammar) and top-down (contextual cues and prior knowledge) processing.

Krashen [10] further argues that listening is a complex

cognitive activity essential to second language acquisition, requiring active engagement rather than passive reception, and plays a central role in language learning.

Definition of Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is widely recognized as a complex cognitive process involving multiple interconnected components. Brown and Yule [4] define it as the ability to understand and potentially reproduce heard information, distinguishing between surface-level sound repetition and deeper comprehension. Rost and Hamouda [9, 17] emphasize its interactive nature, where listeners actively construct meaning by engaging with the speaker's message and drawing on prior knowledge. Gilakjani and Sabouri [6] add that listeners use sound discrimination, grammatical knowledge, prosodic features, and various linguistic and non-linguistic cues to interpret spoken input.

Nadig [14] identifies three essential components: recognizing speech sounds, understanding words, and grasping sentence syntax—processes that are interdependent for effective comprehension. O'Malley and Chamot [15] highlight the active role of listeners in applying contextual insights and prior knowledge, emphasizing that listening involves both bottom-up decoding and top-down processing.

In language teaching, listening is understood as an active process of receiving, understanding, reasoning, and responding to spoken language [12]. Overall, listening comprehension requires active engagement, cognitive strategy use, and the integration of multiple linguistic and contextual elements to interpret meaning effectively.

2.2. The Importance of Listening in Language Learning

Listening is a fundamental component of language acquisition, yet it is frequently undervalued in comparison to speaking, reading, and writing. In practice, however, effective listening is indispensable for achieving proficiency in any language. It not only underpins the development of other linguistic competencies but also plays a vital role in enhancing overall communicative ability and comprehension. Vandergriff [22] asserts that listening facilitates the internalization of linguistic rules and promotes the acquisition of additional skills. As a receptive skill, language initially emerges through listening, which fosters awareness and sensitivity to its structure and usage. Mastery of a target language is significantly influenced by one's ability to attune to its auditory features—such as sound, rhythm, intonation, and stress patterns.

Anderson and Lynch [1] highlight the complexity of listening by noting that its challenges become especially evident in unfamiliar linguistic contexts, where proficiency is limited. In the context of second language (L2) acquisition, Dunkel [5] emphasized the increasing pedagogical attention

given to developing learners' listening comprehension in both ESL and EFL settings. Supporting this view, Renukadevi [16] reported that numerous studies affirm the centrality of listening in effective communication, citing that language competence is derived 45% from listening, 30% from speaking, 15% from reading, and only 10% from writing.

2.3. Factors Affecting Listening Skills

Listening comprehension is defined by Brown and Yule [4] as the process of understanding spoken language, which requires active engagement, including identifying key points and connecting them to prior knowledge [13]. Underwood [21] outlines seven common challenges faced by learners: rapid speech, lack of repetition, limited vocabulary, failure to recognize cues, insufficient context, poor concentration, and the tendency to understand every word literally.

Cultural knowledge is also vital, as language is deeply tied to cultural context [1]. Learners unfamiliar with the sociocultural background of a language often struggle with comprehension. Teachers play a crucial role by providing relevant cultural context before listening tasks [3], which helps students better understand implicit meanings.

Physical factors such as poor audio quality and environmental noise can significantly disrupt comprehension [2, 19, 23]. Faulty equipment and distracting sounds may reduce concentration and motivation. Individual differences, including age, working memory, and attention span, also influence one's ability to process spoken input.

A limited vocabulary is another major obstacle. Learners unfamiliar with key words or polysemous terms often struggle to extract meaning [12, 18]. Familiarity with vocabulary enhances comprehension and motivation [3]. Moreover, fast speech and unfamiliar accents can severely affect understanding, especially when pronunciation is unclear [4, 20].

Psychological factors, such as anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-efficacy, further hinder listening skills [24]. Limited practice and ineffective strategies exacerbate these challenges. Encouraging a supportive learning environment that tolerates mistakes and fosters a growth mindset can improve learners' confidence and performance.

The conceptual framework presented herein delineates the various variables that contribute to the challenges encountered by first-year students majoring in English as they work to develop effective listening comprehension abilities.

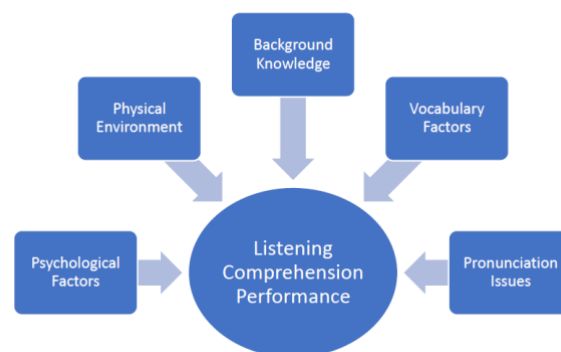


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research aims to investigate the primary challenges encountered by the first-year English major students (N=208) in developing listening comprehension skills. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the most prevalent difficulties, examine the underlying factors contributing to these challenges, and explore potential pedagogical approaches that could enhance students' listening abilities based on their feedback. In order to effectively address the research questions, this study will employ a quantitative research methodology, utilizing questionnaires as the exclusive instrument for data collection. The questionnaires were distributed to all the participants in week 11 of the second semester of the academic year. The use of questionnaires will facilitate the systematic collection of structured and quantifiable data, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the specific obstacles students face in listening comprehension. Moreover, this approach ensures that the data obtained is reliable and consistent, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions and provide evidence-based recommendations to improve listening instruction and learning outcomes.

3.2. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The participants of this study were first-year English major students at Dong Nai University. The researcher selected three classes under her supervision to explore issues related to students' gender, age, and language performance. Using convenience sampling, 324 freshmen were initially invited to participate. Out of these, 208 students returned fully completed questionnaires, which were deemed valid for analysis. This sample represents a substantial portion of the target population and provides a reliable basis for examining

listening comprehension difficulties among first-year English majors. The participants shared similar learning environments and cultural backgrounds, and all voluntarily agreed to take part in the study.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants in the study

Demographic information of the participants	
Total students	208
Male	56
Female	152
Grade level	First year students
Age	19 (N=206) 18 (N=1) 20 (N=1)
Curriculum	Focus on IELTS Foundation

3.3. Research Instruments

A structured survey questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool for this study. Questionnaires are commonly used to gather information on respondents' attitudes, experiences, and opinions. This method was selected for its efficiency in collecting data from a large sample within a short time frame, its ability to minimize response bias, and the anonymity it offers, encouraging honest responses from participants.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain quantitative data on the listening comprehension challenges faced by first-year English-major students. Its content was based on the study's conceptual framework and previous research. The instrument consisted of two parts: (1) Demographic information and learning habits (10 multiple-choice items) capturing students' listening practices and perspectives, and (2) A 19-item 5-point Likert scale assessing the extent of agreement with statements related to five key areas: background knowledge, vocabulary limitations, pronunciation difficulties, physical setting, and psychological barriers.

3.4. Data Analysis

The survey data underwent a structured analysis to ensure accuracy and meaningful interpretation. Responses from both printed and online questionnaires were combined into a single dataset, with online responses exported from Google Forms and printed responses manually entered. The dataset was carefully reviewed to eliminate incomplete or duplicate entries.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study

titled *"Difficulties of Learning Listening Comprehension Faced by First-Year English Major Students at Dong Nai University,"* issues of validity, reliability, and ethics were carefully addressed throughout the research process. The validity of the study was established by aligning the questionnaire with the research objectives to confirm their content relevance and clarity. The reliability of the questionnaire results was ensured by carefully calculating and analyzing the percentage distribution of each observed variable using SPSS.

This process helped verify the consistency and accuracy of participants' responses, ensuring that the data were reliable for subsequent interpretation and discussion. Regarding ethical considerations, participants were informed of the research purpose and procedures before participation, and their voluntary involvement was secured through informed consent. Anonymity and confidentiality of all responses were guaranteed, and the collected data were used solely for academic purposes, ensuring that the study adhered to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

Microsoft Excel 365 was used for initial data processing, organization, and calculation. For statistical analysis, SPSS (version 23) was employed to conduct descriptive statistics, including mean (M) and standard deviation (SD). The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed, and descriptive statistics were used to examine students' perceptions of listening skill development and related challenges. Data visualization through bar charts, pie charts, line graphs, and tables was applied to illustrate patterns and trends in the findings.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Background Knowledge

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of background knowledge factors

Descriptive Statistics					
Background Knowledge	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it difficult to understand unfamiliar listening texts or uninteresting topics	208	3	5	4.55	.527
With poor background knowledge, I cannot understand the main content of listening text.	208	2	5	4.22	.538
I may misinterpret what the speakers say if I do not deeply find out their culture	208	2	5	4.09	.431
Valid N (listwise)	208				

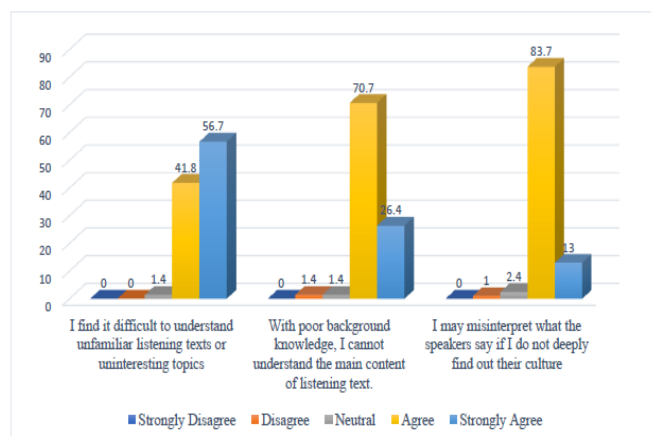


Figure 2. The difficulties related to background knowledge.

The data highlight the significant impact of background knowledge on students' listening comprehension. A large majority (98.5%) agreed that unfamiliar or uninteresting topics hinder understanding ($M = 4.55$, $SD = .527$), indicating widespread recognition of this challenge. Similarly, 97.1% reported that limited background knowledge impairs their ability to grasp main ideas ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .538$). Cultural understanding also emerged as crucial, with 96.7% acknowledging the risk of misinterpreting messages without cultural context ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .431$). These findings underscore the importance of both topical and cultural knowledge in effective listening comprehension.

4.2. Vocabulary Factors

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of vocabulary factors

Descriptive Statistics					
Vocabulary Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Limited vocabulary affects my ability to understand spoken English	208	3	5	4.13	.382
I have difficulty understanding reduced forms, idiomatic expressions, colloquial language and slang.	208	3	5	4.33	.490
I find it hard to listen well because of lacking vocabulary about specialized terminology	208	4	5	4.34	.474
Sometimes, I lose my concentration when listening because I think about the meaning of new words.	208	4	5	4.36	.480
Valid N (listwise)	208				

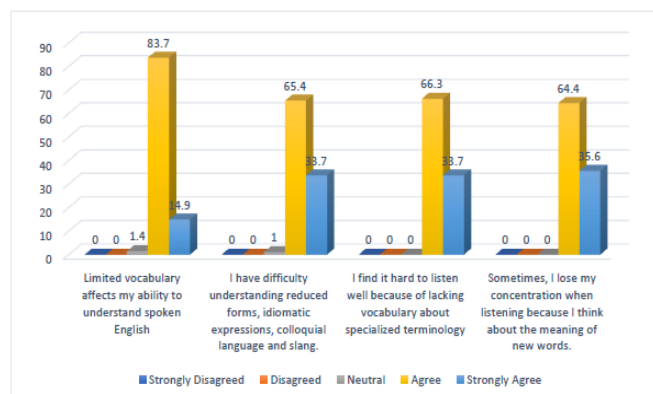


Figure 3. The difficulties related to vocabulary

The results in Table 3 reveal that vocabulary-related difficulties significantly hinder first-year students' listening comprehension. High mean scores (4.13–4.36) indicate strong agreement on these challenges, with the highest mean (4.36) linked to loss of concentration when encountering unfamiliar words. Similarly, difficulties with specialized terminology ($M = 4.34$) further disrupt comprehension. Low standard deviations (all below .50) reflect a high level of consensus.

Figure 3 shows that 83.7% strongly agreed that limited vocabulary affects their understanding, with over 64% reporting concentration loss due to unknown words. These findings highlight the critical need for targeted vocabulary development to improve listening comprehension and processing efficiency.

4.3. Physical Setting Factors

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of physical setting factors

Descriptive Statistics					
Physical Setting	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD player interfere with my listening comprehension	208	3	5	4.73	.486
I find it challenging to focus on listening tasks when there is background noise in the classroom.	208	2	5	4.07	.428
I find it difficult to understand the spoken word when there are lots of breaks and pauses.	208	3	5	4.62	.524
I find it difficult to arrive at a complete understanding when recorded material can't be repeated.	208	3	5	4.30	.501
Valid N (listwise)	208				

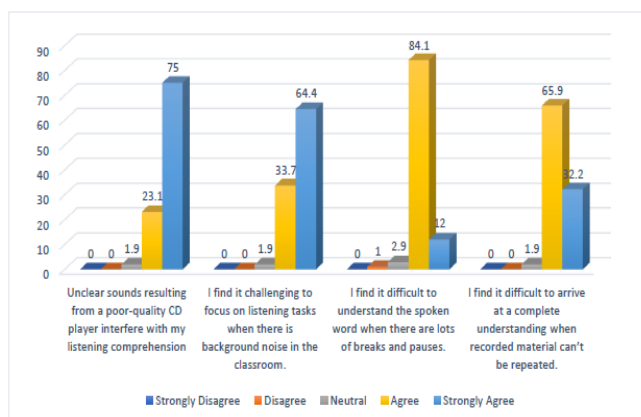


Figure 4. The difficulties related to physical setting

The data indicate that poor audio quality is the most significant obstacle to listening comprehension, with a high mean score of 4.73 and 98.1% of students agreeing it affects their understanding. Similarly, frequent breaks and pauses in recordings pose difficulties ($M = 4.62$, 84.1% agreement), emphasizing the need for clear, continuous audio input.

Other challenges include background noise ($M = 4.07$) and the inability to replay material ($M = 4.30$), with over 64% of students strongly agreeing these factors hinder comprehension. These findings highlight the substantial impact of environmental and technical conditions on students' listening performance.

4.4. Psychological Factors

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of psychological factors

Descriptive Statistics					
Psychological Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is difficult for me to concentrate on a foreign language.	208	2	5	4.28	.538
I lose concentration on tracking of meaning when listening to long or complex sentences.	208	3	5	4.23	.476
Anxiety makes me nervous and afraid and thus contributes to poor performance.	208	3	5	4.63	.505
I start feeling anxious and my ability to listen is greatly reduced when I have problems in understanding a listening text.	208	3	5	4.70	.479
Valid N (listwise)	208				

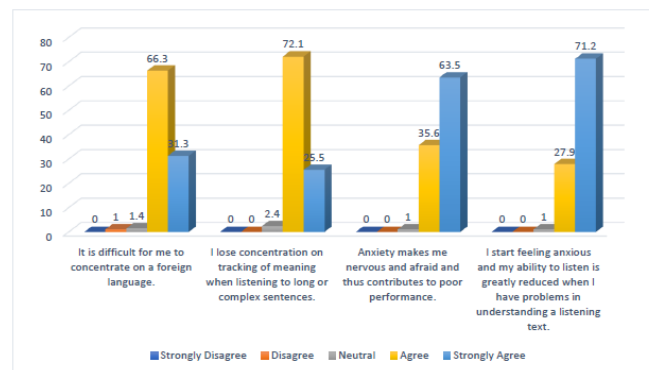


Figure 5. The difficulties related to psychological factors

The data from Table 5 and Figure 5 show that psychological factors significantly impact listening comprehension. Concentration difficulties are widespread, with 97.6% of students agreeing it is hard to focus on a foreign language ($M = 4.28$) and on long or complex sentences ($M = 4.23$). Anxiety is identified as a major barrier, with 99.1% reporting that nervousness undermines their performance ($M = 4.63$), and the same percentage indicating that comprehension difficulties further heighten anxiety ($M = 4.70$). These findings highlight that concentration issues and anxiety are key obstacles, often reinforcing each other to hinder effective listening.

4.5. Pronunciation Factors

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of pronunciation factors

Descriptive Statistics					
Pronunciation Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unfamiliar accents both native and non-native speakers make me encounter difficulty.	208	3	5	4.31	.495
I often misunderstand the meaning of one sentence if the speaker changes his intonation.	208	2	5	4.15	.442
It is difficult for me to understand the texts when speakers speak quickly.	208	3	5	4.31	.493
I find it difficult to understand the listening text when the speaker does not pause long enough.	208	3	5	4.19	.449
Valid N (listwise)	208				

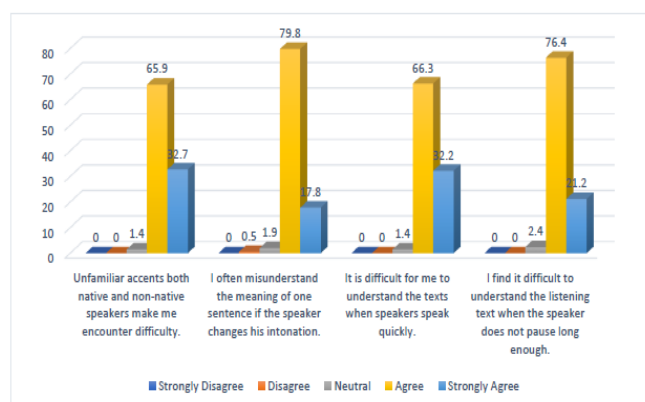


Figure 6. The difficulties related to pronunciation factors

The data from Table 6 and Figure 6 indicate that pronunciation features significantly hinder listening comprehension. Unfamiliar accents pose a major challenge, with 98.6% of students agreeing ($M = 4.31$). Similarly, changes in speaker intonation ($M = 4.15$), rapid speech ($M = 4.31$), and insufficient pauses ($M = 4.19$) were widely reported as obstacles, each with high levels of agreement. These findings highlight that accent, intonation, speech rate, and pausing are key pronunciation-related barriers affecting learners' understanding of spoken English.

4.6. Discussions

Research question 1: What specific listening comprehension challenges do first-year English major students at DNU typically encounter?

The findings clearly demonstrate that first-year English major students at Dong Nai University face substantial difficulties in developing English listening comprehension skills. The challenges fall into five main categories: background knowledge, vocabulary limitations, pronunciation features, physical/technical conditions, and psychological factors. Across these areas, mean scores range from 4.07 to 4.73 on a 5-point Likert scale, with over 95% of students frequently agreeing or strongly agreeing that they experience such difficulties.

These challenges are not isolated but affect all aspects of the listening process. Psychological barriers such as anxiety and difficulty concentrating are almost universally reported, particularly when students encounter fast or complex speech. External issues like poor audio quality and background noise further compound the problem. Additionally, limited vocabulary and insufficient background or cultural knowledge hinder comprehension and disrupt focus, especially when students face unfamiliar or abstract content.

Overall, the data indicate that these students are not dealing with occasional difficulties but are struggling with a pervasive

and interconnected set of obstacles. The consistently high agreement across all categories highlights the widespread and serious nature of these listening comprehension challenges.

Research Question 2: How frequently do students report experiencing each of these listening comprehension difficulties?

The study reveals that first-year English major students at Dong Nai University frequently encounter significant challenges in listening comprehension across five major domains: background knowledge, vocabulary, pronunciation, physical setting, and psychological factors. These difficulties are consistently reported by a large majority of participants, as evidenced by high mean scores and agreement rates on the Likert scale.

In terms of background knowledge, many students struggle with unfamiliar or unengaging topics and insufficient cultural understanding, which hinders their ability to grasp meaning in context. Vocabulary limitations are also prominent, particularly in relation to reduced forms, idiomatic expressions, and specialized terminology. These lexical gaps often interrupt comprehension and affect sustained attention.

Physical setting challenges such as poor audio quality, distracting classroom noise, and the lack of replay options present additional obstacles, often disrupting the flow of listening tasks. Students also report difficulty when recordings contain excessive pauses or breaks, suggesting a preference for natural speech continuity.

Psychological barriers are especially pervasive, with anxiety and concentration problems ranking among the most severe issues. These affect performance under pressure, particularly during difficult or rapid speech. Students frequently lose track of meaning when processing lengthy or complex sentences, indicating a cognitive overload during listening tasks.

Pronunciation-related challenges further compound the issue. Understanding unfamiliar accents, varied intonation, and fast speech proves difficult for many, pointing to a need for greater exposure to diverse listening inputs and training in processing spoken cues.

In sum, the findings demonstrate that these listening comprehension problems are not isolated but deeply embedded in the students' learning experience. They call for integrated pedagogical approaches that address linguistic proficiency, technical support, cognitive training, and emotional preparedness.

Research Question 3: What practical implications may be drawn from the described challenges in enhancing the teaching and learning of English listening skills?

The study's findings suggest several key pedagogical implications for enhancing English listening instruction, particularly for first-year English majors at Dong Nai University. Integrating background knowledge and cultural context into listening lessons is essential, as many students

struggle with unfamiliar topics and cultural references. Pre-listening activities that introduce relevant concepts, vocabulary, and cultural cues can better prepare students and activate prior knowledge.

Vocabulary instruction should also be prioritized. Difficulties with both general and specialized vocabulary highlight the need for systematic teaching of lexical items, contextual inference skills, and recognition of idiomatic language commonly found in spoken discourse.

Pronunciation challenges—including accent, intonation, and fast speech—require targeted training. Exposure to diverse, authentic audio materials can build processing fluency and help students adapt to various speech patterns.

Improving the physical and technical listening environment is equally important. High-quality audio equipment, minimal background noise, and the ability to replay recordings can significantly support comprehension.

Psychological barriers such as anxiety and concentration issues also demand attention. Instructors should create a low-stress, supportive environment, incorporate strategies for managing cognitive load, and promote a growth mindset to build students' confidence and listening stamina.

Overall, a holistic approach to listening instruction—addressing linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors—is crucial. By implementing these strategies, educators can more effectively support students in overcoming their listening comprehension difficulties and foster greater success in language learning.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the challenges first-year English-major students at DNU face in developing listening comprehension skills. The findings reveal that students encounter a wide range of difficulties stemming from linguistic limitations (vocabulary and pronunciation), psychological barriers, environmental conditions, and insufficient background knowledge. Common challenges include fast speech, unfamiliar accents, limited vocabulary, and lack of contextual knowledge. External factors such as poor classroom acoustics, ineffective technology use, and limited access to authentic listening materials further hinder comprehension. Additionally, psychological factors—especially listening anxiety, low self-confidence, and lack of motivation—significantly impair students' listening performance.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHICS AND LEARNERS' BACKGROUND AND LEARNING HABITS

Dear Participants,

The purpose of this survey is to gain insight into the difficulties in learning English listening comprehension encountered by fresh students whose major is English. Your responses are going to be of significant contribution to this study. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and it may take 5 to 10 minutes to complete the survey. All the data collected will be treated confidentially and for research purposes only.

Thank you very much for your time.

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

- ☐ 19 ☐ Others (please specify _____)

3. How do you evaluate your level of English listening proficiency when entering Dong Nai University?

- ☐ Very bad ☐ Bad
☐ Average ☐ Good
☐ Very good

4. Have you ever failed listening test?

- ☐ Never ☐ Once
☐ Twice ☐ Three times
☐ More than three times

5. How do you feel about your ability to comprehend spoken English when

a. Communicating with teacher?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Very bad | ☐ Good |
| ☐ Bad | ☐ Very good |
| ☐ Neutral | |

b. Communicating with your classmates?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Very bad | ☐ Good |
| ☐ Bad | ☐ Very good |
| ☐ Neutral | |

c. Communicating with foreigners?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Very bad | ☐ Good |
| ☐ Bad | ☐ Very good |
| ☐ Neutral | |

d. Listening to authentic audios (songs, movies, clips, academic presentation...)?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Very bad | ☐ Good |
| ☐ Bad | ☐ Very good |
| ☐ Neutral | |

6. Do you think that listening comprehension is important?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Somehow important |
| ☐ Important | ☐ Not important |
| ☐ Neutral | |

7. Do you think that learning listening comprehension is difficult?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Very difficult | ☐ Easy |
| ☐ Difficult | ☐ Very Easy |
| ☐ Neutral | |

8. How much time do you spend on practicing listening each week besides class time?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Rarely | ☐ 4-6 hours |
| ☐ Less than 1 hour | ☐ More than 6 hours |
| ☐ 1-3 hours | |

9. How often do you do these activities before listening tasks?

a. Checking and understand listening instruction.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ☐ Very often | ☐ Rarely |
| ☐ Often | ☐ Never |

☐ Neutral

b. Pre-taught/learnt some new words.

☐ Very often

☐ Rarely

☐ Often

☐ Never

☐ Neutral

c. Guess unknown words or phrases.

☐ Very often

☐ Rarely

☐ Often

☐ Never

☐ Neutral

d. Try to understand the listening content based on known words.

☐ Very often

☐ Rarely

☐ Often

☐ Never

☐ Neutral

LIKERT SCALE ON DIFFICULTIES THAT STUDENTS FACE WHEN LEARNING ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement that describes your difficulty in listening comprehending English:

(1) = strongly disagree

(2) = disagree

(3) = neutral

(4) = agree

(5) = strongly agree

	Background Knowledge Factors	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
10	I find it difficult to understand unfamiliar listening texts or uninteresting topics					
11	With poor background knowledge, I cannot understand the main content of listening text.					
12	I may misinterpret what the speakers say if I do not deeply find out their culture					
	Vocabulary Factors	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
13	Limited vocabulary affects my ability to understand spoken English					

14	I have difficulty understanding reduced forms, idiomatic expressions, colloquial language and slang.					
15	I find it hard to listen well because of lacking vocabulary about specialized terminology					
16	Sometimes, I lose my concentration when listening because I think about the meaning of new words.					

	Pronunciation Factors	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
17	Unfamiliar accents both native and non-native speakers make me encounter difficulty.					
18	I often misunderstand the meaning of one sentence if the speaker changes his intonation.					
19	It is difficult for me to understand the texts when speakers speak quickly.					
20	I find it difficult to understand the listening text when the speaker does not pause long enough.					

	Physical Setting Factors	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
21	Unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD player interfere with my listening comprehension					
22	I find it challenging to focus on listening tasks when there is background noise in the classroom.					
23	I find it difficult to understand the spoken word when there are lots of breaks and pauses.					
24	I find it difficult to arrive at a complete understanding when recorded material can't be repeated.					

	Psychological Factors	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
25	It is difficult for me to concentrate on a foreign					

	language.					
26	I lose concentration on tracking of meaning when listening to long or complex sentences.					
27	Anxiety makes me nervous and afraid and thus contributes to poor performance.					
28	I start feeling anxious and my ability to listen is greatly reduced when I have problems in understanding a listening text.					

APPENDIX 2: THE CURRICULUM OF ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF 1ST YEAR STUDENTS AT DNU

Map of the book

▶ The IELTS Test overview page 4					
Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Grammar	Vocabulary
1 ▶ Read all about it! page 6					
1 Introducing reading skills 2 Reading academic texts Summary completion		Discussing a topic (Part 1) Expressing a personal opinion		Present simple	Word families; prepositions; pronunciation: syllables
2 ▶ Take note page 16					
	1 Letters and sounds 1 2 Introducing listening skills	Discussing likes and dislikes (Part 1)	1 Task 1 Introduction to Task 1 Reading and describing data 2 Task 2 Paragraphing; linking expressions; reference links	Frequency adverbs and expressions	TV programmes; word partners: do, give and make
▶ Academic Word Study and Review 1 page 26					
3 ▶ It goes with the job page 28					
1 My worst job Reading skills practice 2 Service workers are the happiest staff Short-answer questions; sentence completion; T/F/NG		1 Discussing jobs and careers (Parts 1, 2) 2 Job satisfaction (Part 3)		Past simple	Word partners; pronunciation: word stress
4 ▶ Family values page 38					
	1 Letters and sounds 2 2 International Friendship Club (Section 1) Note completion	1 Discussing relationships (Part 2) 2 Dealing with difficult questions (Part 3)	1 Task 1 Key skills Reading and describing data; identifying trends 2 Task 2 Paragraphs Topic sentences; reference links; supporting sentences	Articles	Family tree; right word/ wrong word; word families
▶ Academic Word Study and Review 2 page 48					
5 ▶ A sporting chance page 50					
1 The Boys of Summer, the Men of Fall Short-answer questions; classification; T/F/NG 2 The curse of the referee Summary completion; matching		1 Discussing sports and hobbies (Parts 1, 3) 2 Describing a person (Part 2)		Present perfect	Sports and games; word partners: do, play, go; pronunciation: word stress
6 ▶ Animal rights and wrongs page 60					
	1 Wildlife film festival (Section 2) Note completion 2 The right to roam (Section 3) Sentence completion; table completion	1 Discussing animals (Part 3) 2 Discussing moral issues (Parts 1, 3)	Task 2 Presenting and justifying an opinion Analysing the question; planning the answer	1 Review of present tenses 2 Comparison	Prepositions; word families; right word/ wrong word
▶ Academic Word Study and Review 3 page 70					
7 ▶ Appropriate technology page 72					
1 Changing lives Sentence completion; matching; labelling a diagram 2 The price is wrong Locating information; matching; multiple choice		Describing places (Part 2)		Passive	Environment; word families; pronunciation: sounds