

Listening Difficulties of Non-English Majored Freshmen at Tay Do University, In Vietnam



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ABSTRACT: Listening skill plays an important role in studying a foreign language, especially English. However, students face a lot of difficulties in English listening. This study aims to find out the status and difficulties in listening comprehension of 149 non-English majored freshmen majoring in Pharmacy, Accounting, Business Administration, Food Technology, and Information Technology at Tay Do University. A listening achievement test was offered when the participants were studying TOEIC-based course 1. The research results found out some listening problems due to (1) lack of vocabulary knowledge, (2) inability to recognize and distinguish sounds, (3) limited reasoning ability and limited ability to use listening strategies such as judgment, taking notes, or memorizing, and (4) lack of concentration. The above results also showed some issues to which teachers need to pay attention to help learners improve their listening skill.

KEYWORDS: Listening skill, non-English majored students, Tay Do University

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Nowadays, English is considered as the most popular language used to exchange information and ideas among different nations. Thanks to English, countries are able to have common understanding and a sense of global citizenship in this multilingual world. It is an effective means to learn how to appreciate different cultures, communities and people. Moreover, English makes people understand each other more in the process of economic cooperation and other fields in today's era when countries tend to integrate for the whole development. English has gradually become an indispensable tool in the modern time. When society is more developed, it is essential for people to have expert English skills to meet the demands of integration into the world economy and exchange of culture with other countries. As a result, mastering English gives people many greater opportunities of career advancement and success in life.

According to Vandergrift (1997) listening skill requires hypothesizing, prediction, generalizing, revising and checking for the listening inputs. Students have to prepare carefully before listening. Most of students face some problems in listening because they cannot understand what the speaker says. English learners need to pay attention when learning listening and attempt to comprehend the content. The learners shall concern to the related factors to improve their skill. Unlike reading, while the readers can go back to the text any time they want, the listeners have no chance of going back to the part they may pass. Hence, learners demand to improve listening skill and it is un-denied about the important of listening.

Listening plays an important role in communication, according to Mendelsohn (1994) in the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50%; speaking is 25-30%; reading is 11-16%; and writing is about 9%. This shows that, listening takes a half of time in communication. Moreover, that is a main factor, without listening, communication cannot operate effectively. But English learners have crucial problems in listening because universities pay attention to grammar, and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not significant parts of books and teachers do not consider these skills in their classes, Hamouda (2013).

There are many reasons why it is difficult for learners to listen. According to Ur (1996), English learners often face difficulties while listening, such as: (1) Not recognize the sounds, (2) Have the habit of having to understand all the words in a sentence, (3) Cannot understand when native speakers speak quickly and naturally, (4) Need to listen many times to understand, (5) Find it hard to grasp information and cannot predict what the speaker is about to say, and (6) feel tired and lack of concentration if listening for a long time.

Also, Rubin (1994) points out five influential factors to listening. These are (1) characteristics of the listening such as speaking speed, pauses, stress and rhyme, the difference between first and second languages, etc.; (2) characteristics of the speaker such as gender and language proficiency; (3) Assignment characteristics such as exercise type; (4) Listener characteristics such as

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language proficiency, memory, concentration, age, gender, ability to use first language, background knowledge and (5) Characteristics of information processing like using listening strategies.

In addition, sometimes learners make mistakes when listening text has much specialized terminology vocabulary. Specialized terminology vocabulary is some words specialized for particular areas. If learners do not have rich and plentiful vocabulary, they will be confused when listening. In reality, the speakers may use synonyms, antonyms to explain the word. Underwood (1989) points that, for students listening to a foreign language, it is certain that they cannot know all words in the speech like mother tongue. Therefore, when they hear an unknown word which can be like a suddenly dropped barrier, they may stop and think about the meaning of word. With this reason, a good listener is a person who can understand total of the listening text.

Learning listening skills is the most difficult part in learning a foreign language. Listening is assuming greater and greater importance in foreign language classrooms. Rost (1994) emphasizes that listening can be regarded as a necessary skill in the preparation of foreign language and can even be considered a good predictor of language achievement. It is expected that this research would provide an overview of challenges in listening comprehension process so that both teachers and students can find out suitable and effective solutions.

1.2 Research aim

The study was conducted with a view to find out the difficulties that non-English majored freshmen faced in listening comprehension so that students can recognize their own obstacles in learning listening and find out appropriate ways to listen in English effectively.

1.3 Research question

The research was conducted to answer these following questions:

1. How is the listening comprehension of non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University?
2. What are some problems that non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University face in listening comprehension?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

The participants of this study are 149 non-English majored freshmen majoring in Pharmacy (36), Accounting (24), Business Administration (27), Food Technology (33), and Information Technology (29) at Tay Do University. Students have studied 30/60 periods in TOEIC-based course 1 with Very Easy TOEIC book (2nd Ed.) by Anne Taylor and Garrett Byrne (2006), Ho Chi Minh Publishing House. So these students have been familiarized with the questions of TOEIC test format, but at a basic level, the number of sentences for each listening part is less than the amount the student has to take the TOEIC test according to the international standards.

2.2 Instruments

The research was carried out to find out the difficulties of non-English majored freshmen when listening to English. The data collection tool was a listening achievement test offered when the participants were studying TOEIC-based course 1. The test was designed according to TOEIC-based test, selected from the book *Developing Skills for the TOEIC Test* by Paul Edmunds and Anne Taylor (2012), close to the type of listening students are studying in class with equivalent difficulty. The test is nearly 10 minutes long, includes 22 multiple-choice questions (only part 2 has 3 choices, while the rest ones have 4 choices), divided into 4 parts described in detail in the following table.

Table 1: Listening test description

Part	Number of questions	Content	Purpose
Part 1 Picture Description	5	Listen four statements, select the one statement that describes the picture.	Test the ability to distinguish the places, things, positions, and actions.
Part 2 Questions and Responses	5	Listen a question or a statement followed by three responses. Select the best response.	Test the ability to distinguish the sounds almost the same, and distinguish how to answer Yes/No questions and Wh-questions
Part 3 Short Conversations	6	Listen to two short talks given by a single speaker, then answer three questions about what is said in each talk.	Test the ability to listen to details, listen to inferences, and distinguish words that are easily confused because they have similar pronunciations

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Part 4 Short Talk	6		Test the ability to listen in combination with inference, listen to detailed ideas but need to be able to memorize or take notes because the information appears in long sentences, there are many ideas, there are no words expressing the same idea appearing in the talk.
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Listening test is done with the efforts to limit the special influence of external factors. Specifically, the format of the listening test is similar to the form students have been exposed to in the lesson. The content revolves around the common topics of the TOEIC test with the same duration. The speaker does not have a very strange or very special tone. The listening environment is not mixed with noise.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Students' listening ability

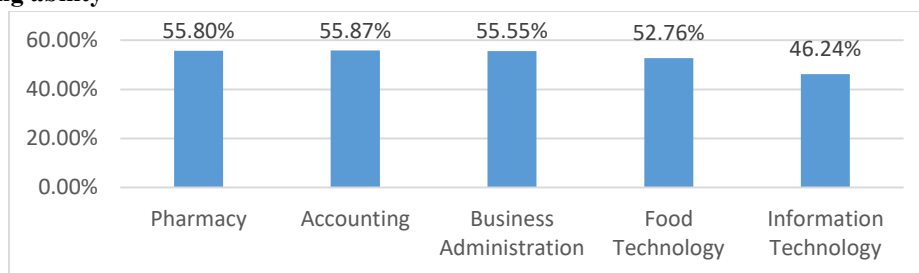


Figure 1: Students' listening ability in different classes

The results from figure 1 showed that students' ability to do the TOEIC test of different departments at Tay Do University were at the average level. In which Accounting, Pharmacy and Business Administration were nearly at the same points 55.87%, 55.80% and 55.55%. Food Technology was a little bit lower 52.76%. And Information Technology was the lowest, at below the average 46.24%. Difficulties in each part were shown in detail in the following figures.

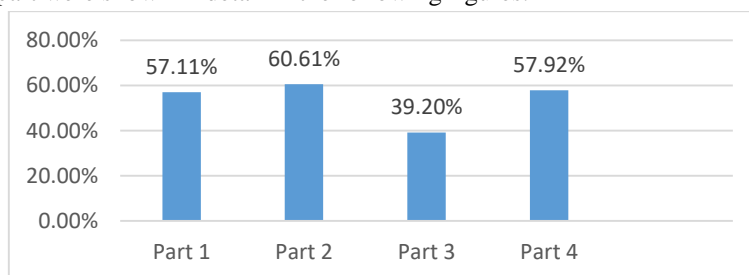


Figure 2: Students' listening ability in each part

According to the results in Figure 2, the average points for four parts were 53.71%. In which the highest points were part 2 (questions & responses) with 60.61%, students listened to the short questions with only three option responses better than the others. It may be due to lack of attention, or poor listening technique. The second one was for part 4 (short talks) with 57.92%, students listening to the talk with familiar to daily life were better than what they had not got experience. It may cause by lack of reasoning ability. The third one was part 1 (picture description) with and 57.11%. Students got higher points for distinguishing prepositions of position than distinguishing nouns indicating places and objects. This showed that students were lacking in vocabulary or this lexical knowledge is still passive, and the ability to recognize sounds was still poor. The lowest scores were part 3 (short conversations) with only 39.20%. This may be due to students' lack of deductive skills or poor listening strategies.

The above results show that the students' listening ability was only slightly higher than the average level, although the test was similar to the learning content in terms of format and difficulty. In which, the ability of students to listen to single sentences is better than listening to conversations or talks, especially when listening to short conversations. Difficulties in each conversation were shown in detail in the following tables and figures.

3.2 Difficultes in each part of TOEIC listening

Part 1-Picture description

In part 1 students listened to 4 simple sentences to choose 1 sentence with describing the given pictures.

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Table 2: Part 1-Picture description

Statement	Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3	Picture 4	Picture 5
Pharmacy	55.56%	44.45%	61.11%	52.78%	80.56%
Accounting	41.67%	45.83%	70.83%	58.33%	83.33%
Business Administration	59.26%	48.15%	74.07%	51.85%	74.07%
Food Technology	54.55%	57.58%	63.64%	45.45%	66.67%
Information Technology	37.93%	48.27%	55.17%	34.48%	62.07%
Average (57.11%)	49.79%	48.86%	64.96%	48.58%	73.34%

According to the results in table 2, the percentage of students who got good answer was about 57.11%. In which, distinguishing action words that were usually used was the highest with 73.34%, while distinguishing action words that were rarely used was the lowest with 48.58%. In addition, distinguish prepositions of position, 64.96% was better than distinguishing nouns indicating places (49.79%) and objects (48.86%). This showed that students were lacking in vocabulary or this lexical knowledge is still passive, and the ability to recognize sounds was still poor, so students could recognize these words when reading, but when listening to the sounds, they could not. Difficulties in each picture were shown in detail in the following figures.

Picture 1-Distinguish nouns of place

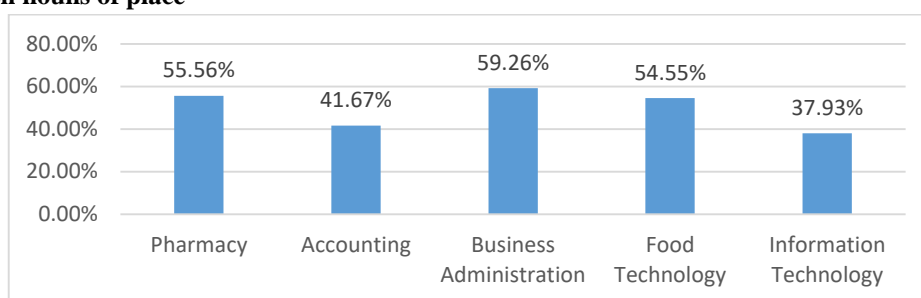


Figure 3: Picture 1-Distinguish nouns of place

Picture 1. (A) This is a meeting room. (B) This is a church. (C) This is a garden. (D) This is a hospital. This was an easy question with four different nouns of place. 49.79% chose the correct answer.

Look at figure 3, the column in the middle indicated the highest column, with 59.26% for Business Administration. The Pharmacy was in the second position, with a share of 55.56%, only 3.7% lower than the Business Administration. With a particular value of 54.55%, the Food Technology was ranked the third. The Accounting ranked the fourth with a percentage of 41.67%. Finally, the Information Technology had the lowest figure of 37.93% compared to the others. With this question, there could not have difficulties in pronunciation, but only half of students could get points. This could come to the conclusion that students were lack of vocabulary.

Picture 2-Distinguish nouns for objects

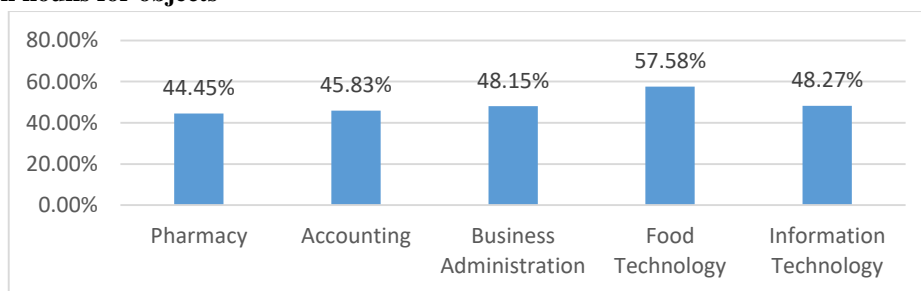


Figure 4: Picture 2-Distinguish nouns for objects

Picture 2. (A) They have a kite. (B) They have a balloon. (C) They have an airplane. (D) They have a book. This was also an easy question with differentiating nouns for objects. The four things were easily identified. But only 48.86% chose the correct answer.

Let's look at figure 4, the highest column with 57.58% was for Food Technology. With 48.27%, Information Technology came in the second. Business Administration was 48.15%. Accounting was 45.83%. And Pharmacy was the lowest with 44.45%. This may know that students were lack of knowledge about vocabulary; they did not have enough vocabulary although these were simple things usually seen in daily life.

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Picture 3. Distinguish prepositions of position

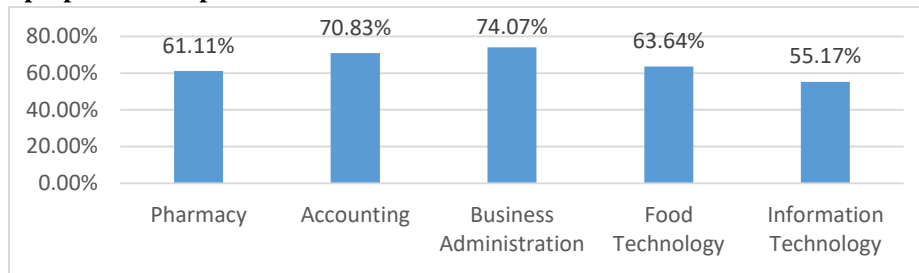


Figure 5: Picture 3-Distinguish prepositions of position

Picture 3. (A) The girl is stretching. (B) *The girl is next to the dog.* (C) The girl is dancing. (D) The girl is under the dog. There were four sentences, but the picture given was about the prepositions of position. Students easily only focused on B and D. 64.96% chose the correct answer, much higher than the result of picture 1 and 2.

From figure 5, the middle column revealed the highest column with 74.07% for Business Administration. Accounting was in the second with 70.83%. Food Technology was 63.64%, and 61.11% for Pharmacy. Information Technology was the lowest with 55.17%. Students appeared to place a high value on identifying prepositions of position. They maybe do well for this question.

Picture 4. Distinguish verbs of action

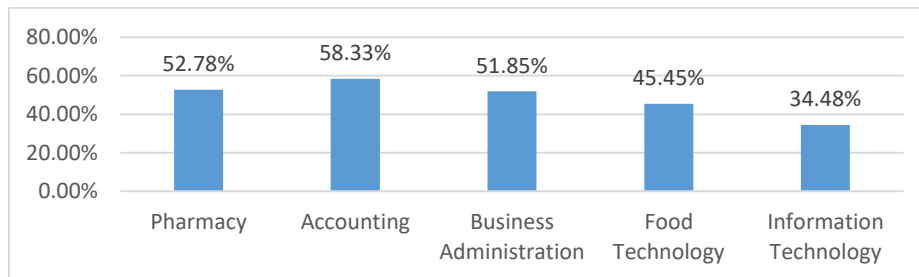


Figure 6: Picture 4-Distinguish verbs of action

Picture 4. (A) The man is singing. (B) The man is dancing. (C) The man is angry. (D) *The man is rowing.* This is a rather difficult question differentiating action verbs, the picture was about the rarely used vocabulary, students had to choose basing on excluding known answers. 48.58% chose the correct answer.

Figure 6 showed that 58.33% for Accounting. Pharmacy was in the second with 52.78%. Business Administration was 51.85% and 45.45% for Food Technology. Finally, Information Technology had the lowest figure of 34.48%. This was a difficult question about distinguishing verbs of action, only about half of students could overcome this exercise, that was acceptable.

Picture 5. Distinguish verbs of action

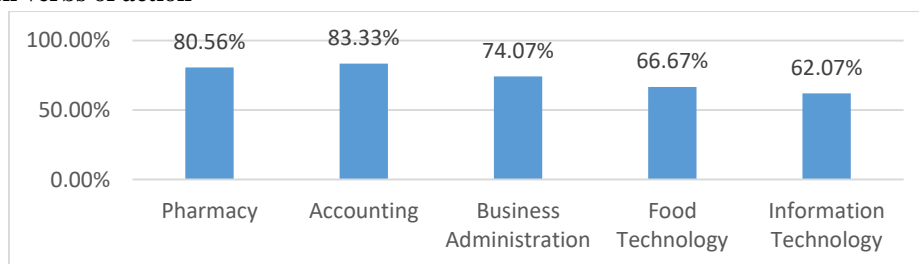


Figure 7: Picture 5-Distinguish verbs of action

Picture 5. (A) The person is writing. (B) The person is cutting. (C) *The person is painting.* (D) The person is laughing. This picture was also about distinguishing verbs of action but it was easier than the previous one due to simple vocabulary that was familiar to students. 73.34% chose the correct answer.

Figure 7 showed that the second column had the highest percentage of 83.33% for Accounting. Pharmacy was with 80.56%. Business Administration was rated the third with 74.07%, and 66.67% was for Food Technology. Finally, Information Technology had the lowest 62.07%. It is easier for students to distinguish action verbs for this picture because most of the vocabulary they knew and often encountered.

Part 2-Questions & Responses

In part 2 students listened to the question and chose a corresponding answer out of the 3 options they heard.

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Table 3: Part 2-Questions & Responses

Statement	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Pharmacy	47.22%	77.77%	86.11%	61.11%	69.44%
Accounting	45.83%	70.83%	83.33%	58.33%	62.50%
Business Administration	44.44%	74.07%	70.37%	48.15%	62.96%
Food Technology	36.36%	75.76%	81.82%	54.55%	42.42%
Information Technology	31.03%	68.96%	82.75%	41.38%	37.93%
Average (60.61%)	40.97%	73.48%	80.87%	52.70%	55.05%

According to the results in table 3, the percentage of students who chose correctly was 60.61%. In which, question 1 – “What time” only got 40.97%, the lowest out of 5 questions. Thus, students were not good at distinguishing between similar sounds “at” and “It’s” maybe due to lack of attention, or poor listening technique. Question 2 asked students to distinguish two similar-sounding sentences “How old are you?” and “How are you?”. The result of this sentence is better with 73.48% of students answering correctly, maybe because the number of rhymes in the two sentences was different, students could easily recognize it. Question 3 was a yes/no question which had the highest score of 80.87%, the reason could be because the answer to the question Yes – No was quite short and simple, so most students recognized it and chose the right one. With the questions “where” and “why”, the answer was at the average 52.70%, and 55.05%, respectively. Difficulties in each question were shown in detail in the following figures.

Question 1 – What time

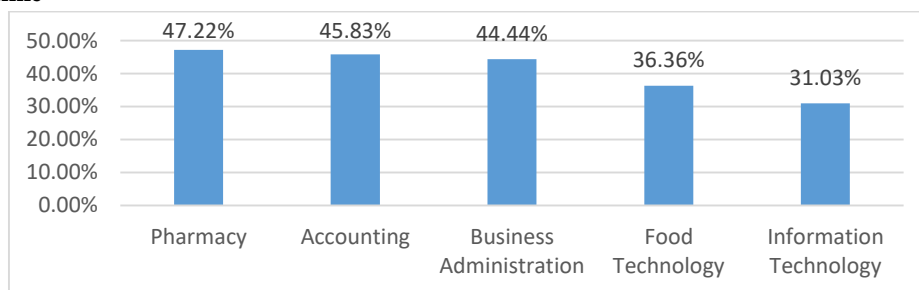


Figure 8: Question 1 – What time

Question 1. What time does the movie start? (A) *At three thirty.* (B) *It's a good movie.* (C) *It's three o'clock.* “What time” was an easy question that students usually used in daily life, but the result showed that only 40.97% chose the correct answer.

Pharmacy, Accounting and Business Administration had nearly the same value as 47.22%, 45.83% and of 44.44% while Food Technology and Information Technology were lower with 36.36% and 31.03%. When being ask “What time”, it was not difficult to give the answer, but students could not choose the correct answer. This revealed that it was difficult for students to distinguish between similar sounds “At and It’s”.

Question 2 – How

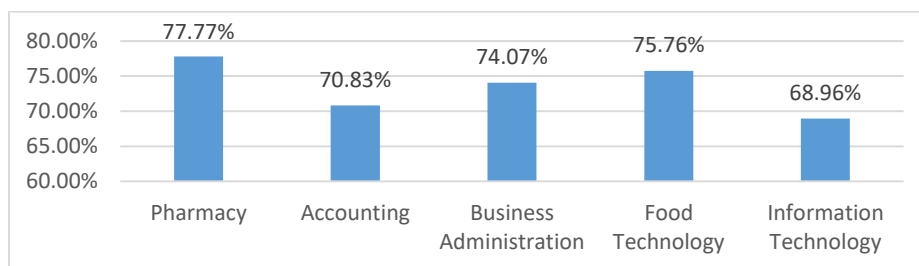


Figure 9: Question 2 – How

Question 2. How old are you? (A) *I'm fine, thank you.* (B) *I'm fifteen.* (C) *I feel sick.* 73.48% chose the correct answer. That was good. Students could recognize the different between “How old are you? and How are you?”

114/149 students at five classes got the correct answers, in which Pharmacy had the greatest scale 77.77% while Information Technology was at the lowest 68.96%. When students’ vocabulary was good, it was not difficult for them to distinguish between similar sounds, too.

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Question 3 – Yes/No

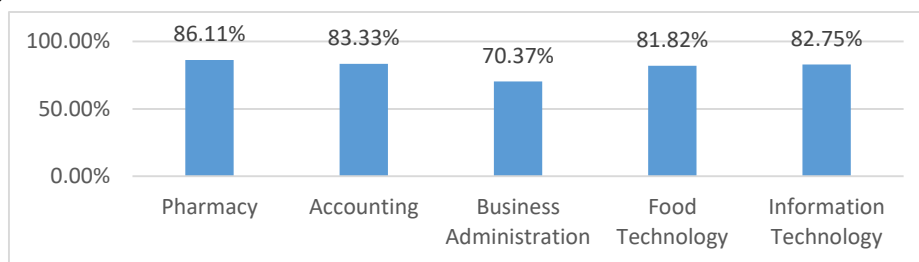


Figure 10: Question 3 – Yes/No

Question 3. Do you like chocolate ice cream? (A) No, I can't. (B) Yes, I do. (C) Yes, I can.

80.87% chose the correct answer, the highest rate compared to the others in part 2 – Questions & Responses. Students can find out the difference in giving the answer for Yes/No question, especially in “Do-Can” one.

Figure 10 showed that the highest column was Pharmacy with 86.11%. Accounting was only 2.28% behind Pharmacy with 83.83%. Business Administration was rated third, with 82.75%, and 81.82% for Information Technology. Food Technology had the lowest figure of 70.37%. The result revealed that yes/no question was easily understood by students.

Question 4 – Where

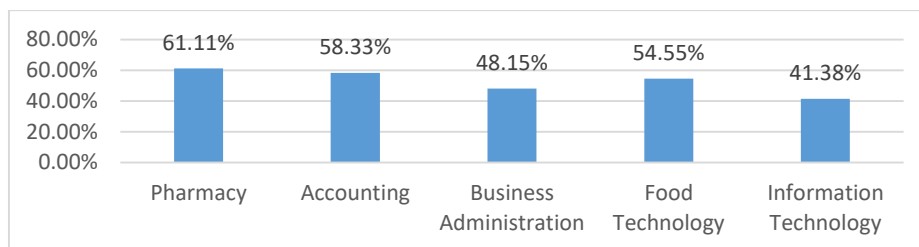


Figure 11: Question 4 – Where

Question 4. Where did she go? (A) Yes, she did. (B) To the supermarket. (C) She's going now. 52.70% got good answer, at the average points. This was students' lack of attention. The question was so simple but they could not choose the correct answer.

In figure 11, Pharmacy still was the leaders with 61.11%. Accounting and Food Technology were nearly the same with 58.33% and 54.55%. Business Administration and Information Technology were at the lowest rates with 48.15% and 41.38%. It was not difficult for students to use Wh-question, especially with “Where”, but due to lack of concentration, students were at the average rate only.

Question 5 – Why

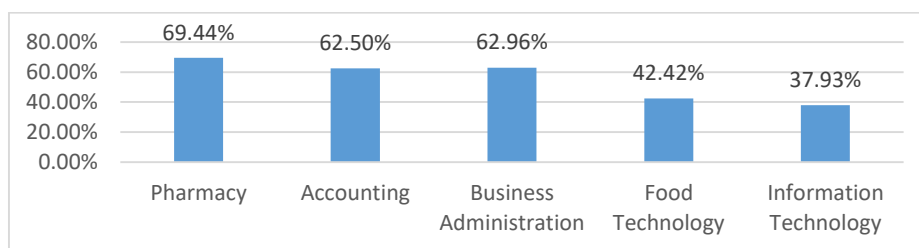


Figure 12: Question 5 – Why

Question 5. Why did you close the window? (A) The window is closed. (B) It's a window. (C) Because it's cold. 55.05% chose the correct answer, a little bite higher than “Where” question (52.70%), but it was still at the average rate.

In figure 12, Pharmacy, Accounting and Business Administration were at the rate 69.44%, 62.69% and 62.50% respectively. Food Technology and Information Technology were only at 42.42% and 37.93%. When having “Why-question”, usually the answer must begin with “Because”. In the answer, there was one statement having “Because” but students could not get good points for this type of question. They limited reasoning ability and limited ability to use listening strategies such as judgment, taking notes, or memorizing.

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Part 3 - Short conversations

In part 3 students listen to two short conversations to answer questions. The results of table 4 and 5 showed that the students' ability to listen to the conversation was not good, with the average score below 50% - conversation 1 (35.31%), conversation 2 (43.09%). This may be due to students' lack of deductive skills or poor listening strategies. Difficulties in each conversation were shown in detail in the following tables.

Table 4: Part 3-Short conversation 1

Statement	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Pharmacy	38.89%	22.22%	38.89%
Accounting	33.33%	29.17%	41.67%
Business Administration	48.15%	18.52%	44.44%
Food Technology	57.58%	18.18%	45.45%
Information Technology	51.72%	13.79%	27.59%
Average (35.31%)	45.93%	20.38%	39.61%

Script

M: Good morning. How may I direct your call?

W: I'm calling for the project manager. Is she in?

M: Just a moment please. Oh, I'm sorry, she's out of the office.

W: I see. Well, then I'll try again this afternoon.

The average score of conversation 1 was **35.31%**. Students listened well to details (45.93% for question 1), students recognized it rather well when the answer was quite similar to the words used in the conversation and was repeated with related words (39.61% answered question 3 correctly). The lowest score was in questions required students to hear information combined with inference (20.38% answered question 2 correctly). Thus, although listening to the conversation was not very good, the students hear the details better when listening to the combination of inference. Let's find more details in each question.

Question 1. Who is the woman calling for? (A) The man. (B) The director. (C) An extension. Key: (D) *The project manager*. 45.93% chose the correct answer, the highest rate compared to the others in conversation 1. Students got the exactly the answer from what they hear in the conversation "the project manager". From table 4, Food Technology had the highest percentage, at 57.58%. Information Technology was with 51.72%. Business Administration with 48.15%. Pharmacy and Accounting were at 38.89% and 33.33%. According to data, students' poor vocabulary made it harder for them to differentiate words during interactions.

Question 2. Who does the woman speak to? Key: (A) *The operator*. (B) The project manager. (C) Her co-worker. (D) The director. Only 20.38% chose the correct answer. Students had to base on the conversation to choose the correct answer, but maybe they did not have enough vocabulary to do this kind of question. From table 4, the highest percentage was 29.17% for Accounting. Pharmacy was at 22.22%. Business Administration and Food Technology were at the same 18.52% and 18.18%. Information Technology had the lowest figure of 13.79%. According to the data, students' poor vocabulary made it difficult for them to listen based on the situation.

Question 3. What is the woman going to do? (A) Cancel an appointment. Key: (B) *Call again the same day*. (C) Call back tomorrow. (D) Wait for a phone call. 39.61% chose the correct answer. The answer was quite similar to the words used in the conversation "This afternoon was same day". From table 4, Food Technology and Business Administration had the highest percentage, at 45.45% and 44.44%. Accounting was ranked third with a specific value of 41.67%. Pharmacy and Information Technology were at 38.89% and 27.59%. Thus, students' poor listening skill made it harder for them to differentiate words during the interactions.

Table 5: Part 3-Short conversation 2

Statement	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
Pharmacy	44.44%	63.64%	22.22%
Accounting	33.33%	79.17%	29.17%
Business Administration	40.74%	74.07%	29.63%
Food Technology	39.39%	75.76%	18.18%
Information Technology	27.58%	55.17%	13.79%
Average (43.09%)	37.10%	69.56%	22.60%

Script

M: Excuse me. I need to check out of my room about 30 minutes late tomorrow. I'm expecting a phone call at 10:30, and I won't be finished by 11:00. Will that be a problem?

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W: Not at all. Your bill has already been paid, so just leave your keys in the room.

M: Great. Thank you very much.

W: I hope you enjoyed your stay.

The average score of conversation 2 was 43.09%. Students listened well to details (69.56% correctly answered question 5). The lowest score was in questions required students to hear information combined with inference (22.60% for question 6 and 37.10% for question 4). Thus, although listening to the conversation was not very good, the students hear the details better when listening to the combination of inference. Let's find more details in each question.

Question 4. Where is this conversation taking place? (A) At a university. Key: (B) *At a hotel.* (C) On the subway. (D) At home. The answer was based on the situation of "room" and "check-out" to choose the answer "At a hotel". But 37.10% chose the correct answer, maybe students did not know how to guess what they heard. From table 5, Pharmacy had the highest ratio, at 44.44%. Business Administration and Food Technology were at 40.74% and 39.39%. Accounting and Information Technology were at the lowest rates of 33.33% and 27.58%. Students had difficulty in choosing the right answer based on the situation due to lack of reasoning ability.

Question 5. Why will the man leave his room late? (A) He will wake up late. Key: (B) *He is expecting a phone call.* (C) He wants to stay longer. (D) He lost his room key. 69.56% chose the correct answer, the highest rate compared to the others in conversation 2. This was an easy question since students got the exactly the answer from what they heard in the conversation "I'm expecting a phone call". From table 5, Accounting had the greatest rate, at 79.17%. Food Technology and Business Administration were at 75.76% and 74.07% while the industry is ranked third in 63.64% and 55.17% were of Pharmacy and Information Technology. This meant that when students could hear the correct words in the conversation, the score would be high.

Question 6. What time will the man probably leave? Key: (A) *11:30* (B) 11:00 (C) 10:30 (D) 10:00. This was a very difficult question, students heard "10:30" and "11:00", but the answer must be "11:30", thus only 22.60% chose the correct answer. From table 5, Business Administration and Accounting were better than others with 29.63%. and 29.17%. Pharmacy got 22.22%. Food Technology and Information Technology were 18.18% and 13.79%. In conclusion, students were limited reasoning ability.

Part 4-Short talks

In part 4 students listen to two short talks to answer questions. The results of table 6 and 7 showed that the students' ability to listen to the talks was completely different, in which talk 1 got 77.10% while talk 2 only had 38.75%. This may be due to students' background knowledge. Difficulties in each talk were shown in detail in the following tables.

Table 6: Part 4-Short talk 1

Statement	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Pharmacy	88.89%	94.44%	61.11%
Accounting	83.33%	83.33%	66.67%
Business Administration	92.59%	92.59%	74.07%
Food Technology	63.64%	87.88%	57.58%
Information Technology	68.97%	89.66%	51.72%
Average (77.10%)	79.48%	89.58%	62.23%

Script of short talk 1

M: Yesterday, I was trying to get my computer *connected to the Internet*. It was a complete disaster! First, I couldn't figure out the access number for the modem. Then, *I forgot my password*. When I finally remembered my password, the telephone line was busy. I waited for twenty minutes, but it was no use. I gave up because *I had to go to work*. I'll have to try again today.

All three questions of talk 1 were about listen to details. The average score was very good at 77.10%. Students listened well to details (89.58%, 79.48% and 62.23%). This talk was about a popular topic – internet that all students were familiar to, the vocabulary was also simple. Thus, students got high points when they had experience of what were talked about. Let's find more details in each question.

Question 1. What problem was the man having? (A) He couldn't change his password. (B) The telephone was not working. (C) His computer shut down. Key: (D) *He could not connect to the Internet.* 79.48% chose the correct answer. The answer was got exactly from the talk "connected to the Internet". From table 6, Business Administration had the highest proportion of 92.59%. Pharmacy and Accounting came to the next with 88.89% and 83.33%. Information Technology and Food Technology were also good at 68.97% and 63.64%.

Question 2. What did the man forget? (A) His modern. (B) His phone line. (C) His access number. Key: (D) *His password.* 89.58% chose the correct answer. Students got information from what they heard in the talk without reasoning or guessing ability. From table 6, 94.44% and 92.59% were of Pharmacy and Business Administration. Information Technology, Food Technology and Accounting were at high rates with 89.66%, 87.88% and 83.33%.

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Question 3. Why did the man give up trying yesterday? Key: (A) *He had to leave for work.* (B) His phone didn't work. (C) He didn't have change for a phone call. (D) He hates waiting. 62.23% chose the correct answer, the lowest when compared with the others in talk 1. This maybe because in the multiple choices there were two words "work" that made students confused. From table 6, Business Administration had the highest score of 74.07%. Accounting and Pharmacy were at 66.67% and 61.11%. And 57.58% and 51.72% were of Food Technology and Information Technology. Students had a little difficulty due to incorrect judgment during the listening process.

Table 7: Part 4-Short talk 2

Statement	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
Pharmacy	30.56%	47.22%	38.89%
Accounting	37.50%	50.00%	41.67%
Business Administration	22.22%	55.56%	22.22%
Food Technology	21.21%	63.64%	33.33%
Information Technology	41.38%	55.17%	20.69%
Average (38.75%)	30.57%	54.32%	31.36%

Script of short talk 2

M: Welcome to scenic Durango. Our resort offers many activities that you can enjoy in the beautiful sunshine each day. For example, we offer river rafting and rock climbing. We also offer mountain biking trips, golf lessons and tournaments, and many other sports. If you need further information or want to sign up for any of these activities, please ask for our activities coordinator, Roxie Lane. She will be pleased to help.

This talk was about the information of a resort with many details. Most students only stayed in hotels when travelling. So if based on actual experience, it would not be true. And this was proved that the average score of talk 2 was only 38.75%. Students listened well to details (54.32% correctly answered question 5). The lowest scores were in questions required students to hear information combined with inference (31.36% for question 6 and 30.57% for question 4). Thus, although listening to the conversation was not very good, the students hear the details better when listening to the combination of inference. Let's find more details in each question.

Question 4. What kinds of activities are offered at this resort? (A) Indoor activities. Key: (B) *Outdoor activities.* (C) Both indoor and outdoor activities. (D) Only children's activities. This was a difficult question. 30.57% chose the correct answer. Usually based on the experience that at a resort there were many activities, so students chose (C) Both indoor and outdoor activities. In addition, there was no phrase as outdoor activities but students had to base on "sunshine" to choose the correct answer. From table 7, Information Technology had the largest share of 41.38%. Accounting and Pharmacy were with 37.50% and 30.56%. Business Administration and Food Technology were with a rate of 22.22% and 21.21%.

Question 5. Which water activity is offered? (A) Swimming. (B) Scuba diving. (C) Water polo. Key: (D) *River rafting.* This was rather easy question since students could get the answer from what they heard, but only 54.32% chose the correct answer. Maybe there were too many details appearing at the same time made students confused. From table 7, Food Technology had the highest percentage at 63.64%. Business Administration, Information Technology and Accounting were 55.56%, 55.17% and 50.00%. Pharmacy had the lowest figure of 47.22%.

Question 6. Who should guests contact with questions? (A) The hotel manager. Key: (B) *The activities coordinator.* (C) The front desk. (D) The clerk. This question was easy because the answer key was mentioned in the talk, but this was also difficult since it was hard to get the "activities coordinator" in a series of information. Then maybe students chose the answer based on the experience that when staying in a hotel, if they needed something, they usually asked the "front desk". This experience did not help them in choosing the answer. And only 31.36% got good points. From table 7, Accounting had the greatest rate at 41.67%. Pharmacy and Food Technology were 38.89% and 33.33%. Business Administration and Information Technology were ranked 22.22%, and 20.69%.

4. CONCLUSION

Research results showed that the listening ability of non-English freshmen at Tay Do university was only at average, although the difficulty of the listening test and the content were similar to the lesson content. The above results also contributed to pointing out some difficulties of students in listening and the causes of these difficulties. Specifically, (1) students distinguished action words and prepositions of position better than nouns of places and objects, possibly due to lack of lexical knowledge. (2) the ability to distinguish some words was still limited, distinguishing similar sounds was not good, possibly due to poor vocabulary knowledge, or poor listening technique. (3) students listened to separated sentences better than to conversations or talks, or listening to single sentences with less information was better than to long sentences with many ideas. This maybe show slow speed of sound recognition, ability to concentrate, take notes and memorize limited. (4) listening to information mentioned only once was not good. This showed that the ability to concentrate, take notes and memorize was still limited, perhaps students expected to hear it many times. And (5)

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listening to details was better than listening with inference. It meant that students did not use their reasoning ability well when listening.

The research results found out that students faced some listening problems due to (1) lack of vocabulary knowledge, (2) inability to recognize and distinguish sounds, (3) limited reasoning ability and limited ability to use listening strategies such as judgment, taking notes, or memorizing, and (4) lack of concentration. To help learners improve their listening skills, teachers should pay attention to the following issues: Learners need to regularly supplement their knowledge of vocabulary. Practicing the ability to distinguish homonyms is also considered a necessary activity. Learners need to practice thinking, reasoning, interpreting, and judgment before, during and after listening. Listening and taking notes are also important skills that improve concentration and getting information.

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