

# EFL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LEARNING ENGAGEMENT AND PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Tran Quoc Thao<sup>1\*</sup>, Nguyen Hoang Chau Long<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH University)  
475A Dien Bien Phu, Ward 25, Binh Thanh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup> Phan Ngoc Hien Gifted High School  
74 Phan Dinh Phung, Ward 2, Ca Mau City, Ca Mau, Vietnam

Received 8 March 2022

Revised 20 July 2022; Accepted 15 September 2022

**Abstract:** Listening is considered one of the most challenging language skills, so most of EFL learners find it difficult to get engaged in learning it. Various obstacles have been reported causing challenges for EFL learners in English listening comprehension. This study, therefore, aimed to explore EFL students' learning engagement and their problems in English listening comprehension. The research was conducted at a high school in Ca Mau province, Vietnam with the participation of 180 tenth grade EFL students in answering the questionnaires. The collected quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software. The findings revealed that EFL students got engaged in listening comprehension emotionally and agentically rather than behaviorally and cognitively, and their emotional engagement tended to be the most influential. It was also found out that EFL students sometimes faced different types of difficulties (perception problems, parsing problems and utilization problems) in their English listening comprehension.

*Keywords:* EFL, learning engagement, high school, language skill, quantitative research

## 1. Introduction

Listening comprehension plays a pivotal role in the process of second/foreign language learning as it is a medium to access various sources of knowledge, and it is a threshold to determine whether an EFL learner is a competent language speaker or not (Hassan, 2000; Nunan, 2015). Besides, it is also one of the most crucial language skills and is a fundamental skill which can support and develop other language skills (Oxford, 1990; Rost, 2001). Rost (2001) points out that listening is the most important skill for second/foreign language learning because it is widely used in normal daily life, and he

also claims that there is no spoken language without listening so that listening is not a passive skill, but it is an important medium of achieving a new language. The learners cannot get the exquisite consequences with their speaking, reading, and writing abilities when they cannot comprehend the input that they are expected to receive in the classroom. Likewise, Oxford (1990) states that listening comprehension develops faster than the three other language skills, and he also suggests that it can assist the progress of the other language skills' appearance.

Furthermore, as it is known that people use English in a wide way as a major language in daily life and in many education

---

\* Corresponding author.

Email address: [tq.thao@hutech.edu.vn](mailto:tq.thao@hutech.edu.vn)

<https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4774>

levels in both native and non-native English speaking countries all over the world. Some countries (e.g., Thailand, Vietnam) have put English as a compulsory subject in their curriculum system, so listening comprehension is becoming more and more extensive and indispensable in achieving a new language as well as knowledge displayed in lectures and in media. Therefore, it is undoubted that listening is greatly essential for learners to learn a second/foreign language.

Despite its importance, listening comprehension is not easy to master. Hassan (2000) and Graham (2003) have stated that listening is one of the most difficult skills to learn. Likewise, Vandergrift (2007) asserts that one of the reasons is learners do not know how to discover the way to learn effectively. They may face the challenges in dealing with vocabulary, grammar, delivery speed and so on, and it is necessary for their teacher to emphasize the importance of the listening skills in the English learning process. In the context of Vietnam, the teaching and learning of English have received much attention from different stakeholders (e.g., educators, parents, learners, administrators); however, the quality of English language teaching and learning is not good as expected. From the reality of observation, many high school students in different areas, especially rural and mountainous schools seem not to get involved actively in the English language teaching in general and listening skill teaching in specific, and they are not very interested in English language learning. Hence, this study endeavors to investigate ELF students' learning engagement and their problems in English listening comprehension in the context of a high school in Ca Mau.

## 2. Literature Review

### Listening comprehension

Various researchers have defined the term *listening comprehension*. Underwood (1989) states listening comprehension is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear and understand. Meanwhile, Vandergrift (1999) defines that listening comprehension is a complicated interactive process which learners have to focus on all elements such as sounds, intonation, linguistic structures, and social structural contexts. In this regard, Rost (2002) considers listening comprehension as a process of receiving the information from the speakers, constructing and representing meaning, negotiating meaning with the speakers and responding, and creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy. Thomson (2003) states that the learners absorb enough language input actively in the process of listening comprehension. In the same vein, Holden (2014) pinpoints that listening comprehension is also a complex activity needing a mental attempt to ensure understanding. In brief, listening comprehension is an active and dynamic skill which contains various kinds of activities in which learners need to employ both their language knowledge and background knowledge to comprehend what is spoken.

### Learning engagement

Learning engagement, student engagement or academic engagement in the education field is defined as students' active involvement in a learning activity (Christenson et al., 2012). It is a multidimensional construct which consists of three subsystems - *behavioral, emotional, and cognitive*. Behavioral engagement refers to students' engagement in terms of attention, effort, and persistence in learning activity; emotional engagement is defined as the presence of positive emotions during

task involvement and the absence of negative emotions; and cognitive engagement refers to the degree of students' attempts to learn strategically, which means students employ sophisticated rather than superficial learning strategies, such as students use elaboration rather than memorization. Many engagement studies (e.g., Reeve, 2013; Reeve et al., 2004; Vu & Tran, 2021) are based on these three dimensions.

With the increase of learning engagement study, Reeve and Tseng (2011) put forward the fourth dimension of engagement - *agentic engagement*. They define it as "students' constructive contribution into the flow of the instruction they receive" (p. 258), and they also have claimed that students become behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively in learning activities, and those indicators could predict achievement. Therefore, Reeve and Tseng (2011) have pointed out that agentic engagement can be viewed as an ongoing series of dialectical transactions between student and teacher. In the field of language teaching and learning, foreign language academic engagement refers to the learner's degree of effort or investment which act on language knowledge, language skills and related knowledge in foreign language learning process (Guo & Liu, 2016). According to Tomlinson (1996), students get more engaged when learning basic skills in context rather than in isolation, and they can function consistently at high levels of thinking, making connections among disciplines, solving real problems, presenting products to real audiences, dealing with ambiguities, and behaving like professionals in the field.

#### **Problems in listening comprehension**

A number of studies on the various problems and challenges in English listening comprehension have been found. Friscilla and Alviaderi (2017) argue that there were

seven main problems that learners took a risk such as, problems related to the listening materials, basic linguistic problems perceived by learners, listening problems caused by the failure to concentrate, psychological characteristics, the listeners, the speaker, physical settings. Anderson (1995) and Goh (2000) throw light on the listening comprehension difficulties which came from three phases of perception, parsing, and utilization. Firstly, perception problems were concerned with the listeners' failure to recognize intonation, stress, and different accents in a speech stream. In addition, high speech rates and unfamiliar vocabulary could affect learners' listening comprehension (Goh, 2000). Besides, some EFL learners were quite familiar with native speakers like American or English; however, when they realized unfamiliar accents, the accuracy would be lower and they could not catch the words or convey the messages of the conversations (Bloomfield et al., 2010). Goh (2000) claims that parsing problems including syntactic and semantic matters also occurred in the processing phase of listening comprehension. For example, listeners could quickly forget what they had heard, and therefore, that would lead to their failure to form a mental representation from the words heard. Finally, utilization was a phase in the cognitive processing of L2 listening comprehension. These issues, which were confronted by EFL learners, are normally discourse-related; for example, listeners could have difficulties in recognizing the overall structure of the ideas in a text or lack of background knowledge about listening topics also could lead to affect EFL learners' performance (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

In Vietnam, listening comprehension has not been considered an important subject

in the English learning process at most Vietnamese schools (Duong & Chau, 2019). Due to the official curriculum for English language learning and teaching in Vietnam, the teachers only focus on exam-driven instruction (Tran & Duong, 2020); for example, they ask students to prepare grammar, reading, and vocabulary for examination rather than communicative competence (Bui & Duong, 2018). As a result, high school students have less opportunity to practice their communication skills, especially their listening skills although all four macro skills are included as elemental components in the textbooks at the high school level. In order to examine the difficulties in listening comprehension, Duong et al. (2019) conducted the study in order to investigate whether the 11<sup>th</sup> graders used listening strategies to facilitate their listening comprehension. Participants of the study consisted of 425 students who were in grade 11 in a high school located in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam and they were all generally at pre-intermediate level. The closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview were designed for data collection. The findings showed that the eleventh graders faced phonological and lexical difficulties in listening; however, there always existed too many unfamiliar words in a listening text, so they needed to employ memory strategies more frequently. Secondly, almost all the high school students confronted semantic problems in their listening. The main factors were that the students came across unfamiliar topics and they also lacked their background knowledge. Thirdly, most of the students had severe problems with their recognition of the overall structure of listening texts including main ideas, details, etc. Fourthly, the majority of these high school students

were in favor of social and affective strategies in their listening learning. From the fourth findings above, almost all the student participants faced several listening challenges, which negatively affected their listening comprehension.

Nguyen (2013) conducted a study in Vietnam in which listening comprehension problems were addressed. The data collected from the questionnaire and semi-structured interview were analyzed statistically and qualitatively. With the participation of 150 English majored freshmen from five classes, the study explored students' perception of listening difficulties of studying listening English comprehension. Regarding the factors pertaining to the speakers, the speech rate and reduced forms emerged as the biggest difficulties of first-year students. However, ending sounds and signal words were claimed as the most frequently-encountered problems in learning listening. Among the factors related to the learners, students reported that psychological causes and incorrect pronunciation were commonly faced problems. When it comes to the levels of difficulty, they had a consistently similar idea that lack of background knowledge and limited vocabulary were the biggest obstacles to the listeners. Besides, unfamiliar topics and dense information in the recording were considered the most common hindrance in listening. Finally, the sitting position in the class did not regularly affect students' message conveying; whereas, classroom facilities contributed much to the students' performance in learning to listen. Overall, those abovementioned studies were conducted at a variety of contexts including both foreign countries and Vietnam, but there is a scarcity of research on the high school students who had special talents.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Site and Participants

The current study was carried out at a high school in Ca Mau province, Vietnam, which was one of the qualified high schools in Ca Mau province, and each year they held an enrolment for grade 10<sup>th</sup> with a large number of students who came to attend and compete. The surveyed school had ten EFL teachers. Most of them were female and had at least five years' experience teaching English as a foreign language. Eight out of ten teachers (80%) had an M.A degree, while each of the remainder (20%) had a B.A degree. This school had English classes for students of different majors, so non-English major students had to take five English classes per week, while English major students had to take six English classes weekly. The teachers could freely choose English language skills to teach their students when they needed to improve.

The study involved 180 English major students at a high school (80 males; 100 females). They were conveniently sampled. Among participants, 174 (96.7%) students were 16 years old, and 6 (3.3%) students were 17 years old. Additionally, 78.8% (142 students) reported that they had been learning English from five to nine years, 8.9% (16 students) had been learning English below five years and 12.3% (22 students) had been learning English for more than ten years. It was further reported that 30% (54 students) of the participants often self-studied English from one hour to five hours daily, and 65.6% (118 students) often self-studied English for less than 1 hour. Meanwhile, only 4.4% (8 students) often self-studied English more than five hours per day. According to the report, 41.1% (74 students) got the English score at school

from 8.5 to 10. Besides, 33.3% (60 students) got the English score from 7.0 to 8.4 while 23.9% (43 students) got the English score from 4.0 to 6.9. Only 1.7% (3 students) got the English score from 0.0 to 3.9.

#### 3.2. Research Instrument

The study employed a closed-ended questionnaire which contains three sections: Section I collected personal information, whereas Section II was adapted from Reeve and Tseng's (2011) study with 20 items in four components, namely behavioral engagement (5 items), cognitive engagement (8 items), emotional engagement (3 items) and agentic engagement (4 items) which were designed with a 5-point Likert scale (from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). Section III was adapted from Anderson's (1995) and Goh's (2000) study with 15 items to explore students' listening problems in terms of perception problems (6 items), parsing problems (4 items), and utilization problems (5 items) during their listening process. They were designed based on a 5-point Likert scale (from *never* to *always*). The questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese so that respondents did not have any difficulties in answering the questionnaire.

#### 3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Before collecting the data, the researchers first obtained the relevant permissions from the school administrators, and then the questionnaires were administered to students in person. It took students around 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaires. The explanation was given to students before they answered the questionnaire. With respect to the data analysis, the software SPSS version 21 was employed in terms of descriptive statistics (Mean = M; Standard deviation = SD). The meaning of the interval mean scores is

interpreted as 1-1.80: Strongly disagree/Never; 1.81-2.60: Disagree/Rarely; 2.61-3.40: Neutral/Sometimes; 3.41-4.20: Agree/Often; and 4.21-5.00: Strongly agree/Always.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1. Results

##### 4.1.1. EFL Students’ Learning Engagement in Listening Comprehension

As could be seen in Table 1, the total mean score of EFL students’ learning engagement in listening comprehension is 3.35 out of 5 (SD=.58). Regarding the components of the engagement in listening comprehension, the mean scores of EFL students’ emotional engagement, agentic engagement, behavioral engagement and cognitive engagement are 3.42 (SD=.57), 3.41 (SD=.64), 3.31 (SD=.66) and 3.23 (SD=.45), respectively. Such findings mean that overall EFL students were uncertain whether they got engaged in their listening comprehension. They got involved in listening comprehension in terms of emotional and agentic engagement but behavioral and cognitive engagement.

**Table 1**

*EFL Students’ Learning Engagement in Listening Comprehension*

No		N = 180	
		M	SD
1	Behavioral Engagement	3.31	.66
2	Emotional Engagement	3.42	.57
3	Agentic Engagement	3.41	.64
4	Cognitive Engagement	3.29	.45
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.35</b>	<b>.58</b>

The results in Table 2 reveal that the participants in EFL students believed that they listened very carefully to their teacher’s talking about a new topic (item A3: M=3.52, SD=.67) and they worked hard when they started new activities in listening class” (item A10: M=3.48. SD=.86). Nevertheless, they were unsure if they listened carefully while doing listening tasks (item A1: M=3.14. SD=.75), paid attention in the listening process (item A5: M=3.30, SD=.90) and did the listening tasks attentively (item A6: M=3.14. SD=.54).

**Table 2**

*EFL Students’ Behavioral Engagement in Listening Comprehension*

No		N = 180	
		M	SD
A1	I listen carefully while doing listening tasks.	3.14	.75
A3	The first time my teacher talks about a new topic, I listen very carefully.	3.52	.67
A6	I do the listening tasks attentively.	3.14	.58
A5	I pay attention in the listening process.	3.30	.90
A10	I work hard when I start new activities in listening class.	3.48	.86

With respect of the results in Table 3, the participants in EFL students agreed that “when [they worked] on something in class, [they felt] interested in it” (item A13: M=3.57, SD=.97), and “when [they were] in

class, [they felt] curious about what [they were] learning” (item A18: M=3.42, SD=.73). However, they were uncertain if they enjoyed learning new things in class or not (item A8: M=3.13, SD=.83).

**Table 3**

*EFL Students' Emotional Engagement in Listening Comprehension*

No	N = 180		
	M	SD	
A13	When I work on something in class, I feel interested in it.	3.57	.97
A18	When I am in class, I feel curious about what we are learning.	3.42	.73
A8	I enjoy learning new things in class.	3.13	.83

As for the results in Table 4, the participants in EFL students agreed that “[they let their] teacher know what [they were] interested in” (item A19: M=3.44, SD=.62), “during class, [they expressed their] preferences/opinions about topics being discussed” (item A17: M=3.52,

SD=.56), and “[they offered] suggestions about how to make the listening period better” (item A20: M=3.48, SD=.84). Nonetheless, they were neutral if they asked questions about the listening tasks (item A2: M=3.27, SD=.85).

**Table 4**

*EFL Students' Agentic Engagement in Listening Comprehension*

No	N = 180		
	M	SD	
A2	I ask questions about the listening tasks.	3.27	.85
A19	I let my teacher know what I'm interested in.	3.44	.62
A17	During class, I express my preferences/opinions about topics being discussed.	3.52	.56
A20	I offer suggestions about how to make the listening period better.	3.48	.84

Regarding the results in Table 5, the participants in EFL students did not get involved in the listening comprehension cognitively. They were neutral about what they wanted to get (item A9: M=3.24, SD=.54) and what they should do in listening comprehension (item A14: M=3.34, SD=.73) done before listening. When doing listening tasks, they were unsure if they could try to “relate what [they

were] learning to what they already [knew]” (item A4: M=3.19, SD=.86), “connect what [they were] learning with [their] own experiences” (item A15: M=3.30, SD=.97), “make all the different ideas fit together and make sense” (item A7: M=3.36, SD=.95), and “change the way [they learned]” (item A16: M=3.24, SD=.63). After the listening, they were also neutral if they should ask questions to teacher (item 11: M=3.30, SD=.91).

**Table 5**

*EFL Students' Cognitive Engagement in Listening Comprehension*

No	N = 180		
	M	SD	
A4	When doing listening tasks, I try to relate what I'm learning to what I already know.	3.19	.86

A15	When I listen, I try to connect what I am learning with my own experiences.	3.30	.97
A7	I try to make all the different ideas fit together and make sense when I study listening.	3.36	.95
A9	Before I begin to listen, I think about what I want to get done.	3.24	.54
A12	As I study, I keep track of how much I understand, not just if I am getting the right answers.	3.38	.69
A14	I imagine what I should do in listening comprehension.	3.34	.73
A16	If what I am listening is difficult to understand, I change the way I learn.	3.24	.63
A11	After checking the answers, I often ask questions to my teacher.	3.30	.91

#### 4.1.2. EFL Students' Difficulties in English Listening Comprehension

The results in Table 6 reveal that the overall mean score of EFL students' difficulties in English listening comprehension was 3.36 out of 5 (SD=.62), which means that the participants in this study sometimes experienced the listening difficulties in terms of perception problem (M=3.39; SD=.57), parsing problem (M=3.35; SD=.73) and utilization problem (M=3.36; SD=.58).

**Table 6**  
*EFL Students' Difficulties in English Listening Comprehension*

No		N = 180		
		M	SD	Level
1	Perception problem	3.39	.57	Sometimes
2	Parsing problem	3.35	.73	Sometimes
3	Utilization problem	3.36	.58	Sometimes
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>.62</b>	Sometimes

**Table 7**  
*EFL Students' Perceptions Problem in English Listening Comprehension*

No		N = 180		
		M	SD	Level
B3	I mistake one word for another in the listening.	3.54	.33	Often
B4	I encounter too many unfamiliar words and/or expressions in the listening.	3.50	.84	Often
B5	I miss the next part of the listening while I am thinking about	3.28	.28	Sometimes

In detail, the participants as can be seen in Table 7 admitted that they often faced difficulties in perception problems in English listening comprehension such as “[they mistook] one word for another” (item B3: M=3.54, SD=.33) and “[encountered] too many unfamiliar words and/or expressions” (item B4: M=3.50, SD=.84). However, they sometimes “[missed the next part of the listening while [they were] thinking about the meaning of the earlier part” (item B5: M=3.28, SD=.28), “[missed] the beginning of the listening” due to fast speech rate (item B2: M=3.17, SD=.54), “[were] not sure if it [was] right or [they could not] recognize so many sounds” in the listening process (item B1: M=3.03, SD=.67), and sometimes “[they found] it hard to concentrate on the listening comprehension” (item B6: M=3.02, SD=.70).



	the meaning of the earlier part.			
B2	Fast speech rate makes me miss the beginning of the listening.	3.17	.54	Sometimes
B1	I hear sounds but I am not sure if it is right or I cannot recognize so many sounds.	3.03	.67	Sometimes
B6	I find it hard to concentrate on the listening comprehension.	3.02	.70	Sometimes

The participants (Table 8) admitted that they still had many difficulties in parsing problems in English listening comprehension. They sometimes found it difficult to understand a lot of new information in a short time (item B10: M=3.13, SD=.83) and to divide the long

listening into several parts” (item B9: M=2.67, SD=.88), and forgot phrases or sentences just heard because of the length (item B7: M=2.89, SD=.66). However, they rarely could “understand the content of different parts of the listening” (item B8: M=2.53, SD=.79).

**Table 8**

*EFL Students’ Parsing Problems in English Listening Comprehension*

No		N = 180		
		M	SD	Level
B10	It is difficult to understand a lot of new information in a short time.	3.13	.83	Sometimes
B7	I forget phrases or sentences just heard because of the length.	2.89	.66	Sometimes
B9	It is difficult to divide the long listening into several parts.	2.67	.88	Sometimes
B8	I cannot understand the content of different parts of the listening.	2.53	.79	Rarely

As can be seen in Table 8, the participants reckoned that they still had many difficulties in utilization problems in English listening comprehension. They sometimes “[got] confused about the main idea of the listening” (item B14: M=3.23, SD=.49), “[could not] grasp the intended message although [they knew] words” (item B12: M=3.10, SD=.79), “[had] difficulties in

following unfamiliar topics” (item B11: M=2.80, SD=.52), and “arrange ideas of the listening to get the relationship among ideas” (item B13: M=3.07, SD=.26). Nevertheless, there was only one problem that the students rarely experienced was “[they could not] get details or supporting ideas in the listening” (item B15: M=2.59, SD=.56).

**Table 9**

*EFL Students’ Utilization Problems in English Listening Comprehension*

No		N = 180		
		M	SD	Level
B14	I get confused about the main idea of the listening.	3.23	.49	Sometimes
B12	I can’t grasp the intended message although I know words.	3.10	.79	Sometimes
B13	It is difficult to arrange ideas of the listening to get the relationship among ideas.	3.07	.26	Sometimes
B11	I have difficulties in following unfamiliar topics.	2.80	.52	Sometimes
B15	I can’t get details or supporting ideas in the listening.	2.59	.56	Rarely

#### **4.2. Discussion**

As mentioned above, there were four components of learners' engagement, namely behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, agentic engagement, and cognitive engagement. This study has revealed that EFL students were not actively engaged in the listening process on a general basis. They only focused on the listening comprehension emotionally and agentially, but they were uncertain about their behavioral and cognitive engagement in the listening process. It could be explained that although the participants in this study were English major students, and they allocated their time to self-studying English daily, listening is still one of the most challenging language skills for them (Hassan, 2000; Graham, 2003). Hence, the participants may pay much attention to the listening emotionally and get themselves involved in the listening process. Additionally, it could be due to the reality that the listening skill is not tested in the final high school exams and the teaching and learning are exam-driven (Tran & Duong, 2020). EFL students may be aware of the importance of the listening skill, so they may feel interested in the listening comprehension; nonetheless, they seemed to be indifferent in the listening process behaviorally and cognitively because they may learn things useful to get prepared for the exams.

As regards the difficulties in listening comprehension, viz. perception problems, parsing problems, and utilization problems, the results unraveled that EFL students sometimes experienced them in listening comprehension. With respect to the perception problems, EFL students often had difficulties in dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary in the listening process and sometimes experienced difficulties in

understanding the content of the listening and recognizing the sounds. This may be that the listening recordings may contain different new words that EFL students could not know, and there may be different types of accents that students could not recognize. This finding is supported by Goh (2000) and Bloomfield et al. (2010) who have asserted that students who fail to recognize different accents and unfamiliar vocabulary and cope with high speech rates can encounter difficulties in listening comprehension. Additionally, this finding is partially corroborated with that Tran and Duong's (2020) study which discovered the high speed of delivery and speakers' accent as causes for listening problems.

With respect to parsing problems in English listening comprehension, EFL students sometimes encountered difficulties in remembering what they could listen due to the time length, amount of information and syntactic and semantic matters in the listening. These problems may be related to the fact that these high school students have established certain learning habits such as a desire to listen and understand each word in a listening text, so they may find it difficult to arrange the ideas in a listening text to see the links between them. This finding is supported by Goh (2000) who has claimed that learners can face parsing problems including syntactic and semantic matters in the listening comprehension.

In terms of utilization problems in English listening comprehension, EFL students were sometimes confused with the content of the listening and alien listening topics. This may imply that EFL students did not usually encounter the difficulties in understanding the overall content of the listening. As they were English major students, they may practice their listening skill a lot. Therefore, they may be able to grasp the content of the listening on a general basis.

## 5. Conclusion

From the results above, it can be concluded that EFL students' listening comprehension ability seemed to be influenced by their emotional and agentic engagement not behavioral and cognitive engagement, and their emotional engagement was believed to be the most dominant in the listening comprehension. Furthermore, EFL students sometimes encountered listening problems (perception, parsing and utilization problems) in their listening process. Such findings can lead to some pedagogical implications. Firstly, there should be a change in the English language teaching which should focus more on specific English language skills, especially the listening and speaking skills even though the final exams do not embed such skills so that they can adjust students' behavioral and cognitive engagement in the listening process. Secondly, EFL teachers should instruct students with listening strategies to listen effectively. They can create different listening tasks for different groups of listening strategies so that students can employ to practice. Thirdly, EFL students should change their learning habits from learning for exams to learning for enhancing their English language proficiency. Finally, administrators should organize different training workshops for teachers to improve the quality of English language teaching in general and English language skills in specific in order to adapt the teaching methods and techniques to different characteristics of students.

In spite of the possible contributions of the study to the field, there remain some limitations. First, the sample size is not large enough for generalizations to other contexts. This is because only tenth grade EFL students were in this study. Second, the findings would be more useful if more research instruments such as observations and/or journals to provide students and

teachers with opportunities for shedding the light on listening problems had been employed.

## References

- Anderson, J. R. (1995). *Cognitive psychology and its implications* (4th ed.). Freeman.
- Bloomfield, A., Wayland, S. C., Rhoades, E., Blodgett, A., Linck, J., & Ross, S. (2010). *What makes listening difficult? Factors affecting second language listening comprehension*. University of Maryland Center for Advanced Study of Language.
- Bui, Q. T. T., & Duong, T. M. (2018). Creating an active environment for students' willing to communicate in English. *Scientific Journal of Saigon University*, 59, 54-61.
- Christenson, S. L., Reschly, A. L., & Wylie, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Handbook of research on student engagement*. Springer.
- Duong, T. M., & Chau, N. T. (2019). English listening comprehension problems perceived by English majors at The Saigon International University. In T. T. Dang (Ed.), *Proceedings of International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning Today 2019: Autonomy and Motivation for Language Learning in the Interconnected World* (pp. 209-222). Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City Press.
- Duong, T. M., Tran, T. T. H., & Tran, T. Q. (2019). Eleventh graders' actual use of English listening learning strategies at Duong Van Duong high school. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 35(1), 114-130. <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4341>
- Friscilla, W. T., & Alviaderi, N. (2017). Listening to students' voices: Students' problems in listening comprehension. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)*, 82, 33-36.
- Gilakjani, A. P., & Ahmadi, M. R. (2011). A study of factors affecting EFL learners' English listening comprehension and the strategies for improvement. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(5), 977-988.
- Goh, C. (2000). A cognitive perspective on language learners' listening comprehension problems. *System*, 28, 55-75.
- Graham, S. (2003). Learner strategies and advanced level listening comprehension. *Language Learning Journal*, 28, 64-69.

- Guo, J. D., & Liu, L. (2016). Devotion to FL Learning: Connotation, structure and research perspective. *Journal of Jiangxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 49(6), 181-185.
- Hassan, A. (2000). Learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 13, 137-152.
- Holden, R. W. (2004). Facilitating listening comprehension: Acquiring successful strategies. *Bulletin of Hokuriku University*, 28, 257-266.
- Nguyen, T. B. H. (2013). *English learning strategies of Vietnamese tertiary students* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Tasmania]. Open access repository. <https://eprints.utas.edu.au/17105/>
- Nunan, D. (2015). *Teaching English to speakers of other languages: An introduction*. Routledge.
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies*. Newbury House.
- Reeve, J. (2013). How students create motivationally supportive learning environments for themselves: The concept of agentic engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 579-595.
- Reeve, J., Jang, H., Carrell, D., Jeon, S., & Barch, J. (2004). Enhancing students' engagement by increasing teachers' autonomy support. *Motivation and Emotion*, 28, 147-169.
- Reeve, J., & Tseng, C.-M. (2011). Agency as a fourth aspect of students' engagement during learning activities. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36(4), 257-267.
- Rost, M. (2001). *Teaching listening*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rost, M. (2002). *Teaching and researching listening*. Longman.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1996). Good teaching for one and all: Does gifted education have an instructional identity? *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 20(2), 155-174.
- Tran, T. Q., & Duong, T. M. (2020). Insights into listening comprehension problems: A case study in Vietnam. *PASAA*, 59, 77-100.
- Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching listening*. Longman.
- Vandergrift, L. (1999). Facilitating second language listening comprehension: Acquiring successful strategies. *ELT Journal*, 53(3), 168-176.
- Vandergrift, L. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research. *Language Teaching*, 40(3), 191-210.
- Vu, M. T., & Tran, T. Q. (2021). Non-English major students' learning engagement in task-based language learning. *HNUE Journal of Science*, 66(5), 23-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18173/2354-1075.2021-0233>

## TÌM HIỂU VIỆC THAM GIA HỌC TẬP VÀ KHÓ KHĂN CỦA HỌC SINH PHỔ THÔNG TRONG QUÁ TRÌNH NGHE HIỂU TIẾNG ANH

Trần Quốc Thao<sup>1</sup>, Nguyễn Hoàng Châu Long<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Đại học Công nghệ Tp. Hồ Chí Minh  
475A Điện Biên Phủ, P. 25, Q. Bình Thạnh, Tp. Hồ Chí Minh, Việt Nam

<sup>2</sup> Trường THPT chuyên Phan Ngọc Hiển  
74 Phan Đình Phùng, P. 2, Tp. Cà Mau, Cà Mau, Việt Nam

**Tóm tắt:** Kỹ năng nghe được xem như là một trong những kỹ năng khó nhất trong quá trình học ngôn ngữ nên hầu hết người học tiếng Anh như là ngoại ngữ ít chú trọng trong việc tham gia học kỹ năng này. Ngoài ra, trong quá trình học kỹ năng nghe, người học cũng gặp nhiều khó khăn. Do đó, nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu mức độ tham gia học nghe và các khó khăn trong quá trình nghe hiểu của học sinh phổ thông. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện tại một trường trung học phổ thông ở Tỉnh Cà Mau, Việt Nam với 180 học sinh lớp 10 tham gia trả lời bảng khảo sát. Phần mềm SPSS được sử dụng để phân tích dữ liệu. Kết quả cho thấy học sinh phổ thông tham gia học nghe hiểu theo cảm xúc và tác nhân hơn là hành động và nhận thức, và học sinh có xu hướng tham gia học nghe hiểu theo cảm xúc ở mức độ cao nhất. Kết quả còn chỉ ra học sinh phổ thông đôi khi gặp các khó khăn khác nhau (khó khăn về nhận thức, khó khăn về phân tích cú pháp, và khó khăn về cách sử dụng) trong quá trình nghe hiểu tiếng Anh.

**Từ khóa:** tiếng Anh, tham gia học tập, trường phổ thông, kỹ năng ngôn ngữ, nghiên cứu định lượng