

A Study In Applying Internet-Based System In Improving English Listening Efficiency Of Students In Advanced Programme

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Abstract: *Listening has been considered the most challenging subject for students of the University of Economics and Business Administration – Thai Nguyen University (TUEBA). Due to several factors, their performance is not as good as expected. An internet-based programme was applied, and after a semester, it proves to work well. This article will provide a clear look of the results of the process.*

Keywords: *English language listening skill, listening skill, internet-based programme, University of Economics and Business Administration – Thai Nguyen University, TUEBA.*

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I. Introduction

It is the fact that English plays a key role in globalization era as it is used worldwide in most international transactions. This is the reason why English proficiency is one of the top requirements for an employment. To meet the demand, English has become the most important subject in most universities. [1, pages 22 – 37].

Understanding the importance of English language in the integration process as well as aiming to provide labour market with highly qualified workforce, the University of Economics and Business Administration grants students a 12-credit-programme to study the language (approximately 165 hours), more time than any other subjects. However, studying a foreign language is not a simple process, especially in a non-speaking country. Besides, learners' progress is affected by many factors [2, pages 67 – 74]. Furthermore, listening skill is one of the most challenging one for students, especially for those who do not major in English language since this skill needs continuous and consistent practice. This could lead to discouragement among students. Additionally, there are still a number of students not taking the importance of this skill into account; as a result, they rarely spend time practicing listening skill outside their class. Knowing this situation, an intensive English listening course was designed to help to improve TUEBA's students' listening efficiency.

II. Literature review

ICT supported education implies all levels or strategies of the application of ICT in the field of education. It implies also the use of ICT equipments to guide education processes especially the actions and processes of teaching and learning. The use of ICT in the field of education has continued to pose serious challenges to educators and all those who facilitate the teaching and learning processes in the Nigeria education system (Edward, 2007). ICT supported instruction defines all ICT gadgets used as instructional media to deliver lesson contents as prepared by the instructor. Examples of this type of ICT include the broadcast audio and video which could come inform of radio and television broadcast, audio and video tapes delivered to students as part of learning kit.

Irshad Hussain, Muhammad Safdar (2008) said that Information technologies have affected every aspect of human activity and have a potential role to play in the field of education and training, specially, in distance education to transform it into an innovative form of experience. The need of new technologies in teaching learning process grows stronger and faster. The information age becomes an era of knowledge providing sound and unmatched feasibility for discovery, exchange of information, communication and exploration to strengthen the teaching learning process. Information technologies help in promoting opportunities of knowledge sharing throughout the world. Accurate and right information is necessary for effective teaching and learning; and information technologies (Haag, 1998; p.10) are "set of tools that can help

provide the right people with the right information at the right time.” Students are independent and they can make best decisions possible about their studies, learning time, place and resources.

Devine (1982), claimed that listening is the primary means by which incoming ideas and information are taken in.

Wolvin and Coakley (1988) concluded that, both in and out of the classroom, listening consumes more of daily communication time than other forms of verbal communication.

Listening is central to the lives of students throughout all levels of educational development (Coakley & Wolvin, 1997).

Listening is the most frequently used language skill in the classroom (Ferris, 1998; Vogely, 1998).

Both instructors (Ferris & Tagg, 1996) and students (Ferris, 1998) acknowledge the importance of listening comprehension for success in academic settings.

III. Subject and Methodology

3.1. Scope of the study

We chose 100 students of TUEBA’s K16 students to conduct the survey and collect the data to be analyzed.

The subject of our study is the English language issue in which listening skill is included.

The object of our study is 100students of TUEBA’s K16.

The length of our study is from September 2019 to December 2019.

3.2. Methodology

Observations, questionnaires, interviews and data collected were applied; then we have analyzed the results of students before taking and after finishing one semester. Along with the study of literatures and theories of English language teaching, we have recommended some suggestions to students to overcome the difficulties and improve their listening proficiency.

3.3. Data collections and data processing

Data collection is implemented by asking 100 students of TUEBA K16 to take the pre-term and end-of-term tests (only listening skills). After a semester, we analyze the results to see if they are improved and we use the questionnaires to ask students should be improved in the internet-based programme.

The data from the questionnaire and the tests results were collected and analyzed by using Microsoft Excel software and using the descriptive method to interpret.

IV. Results and discussions

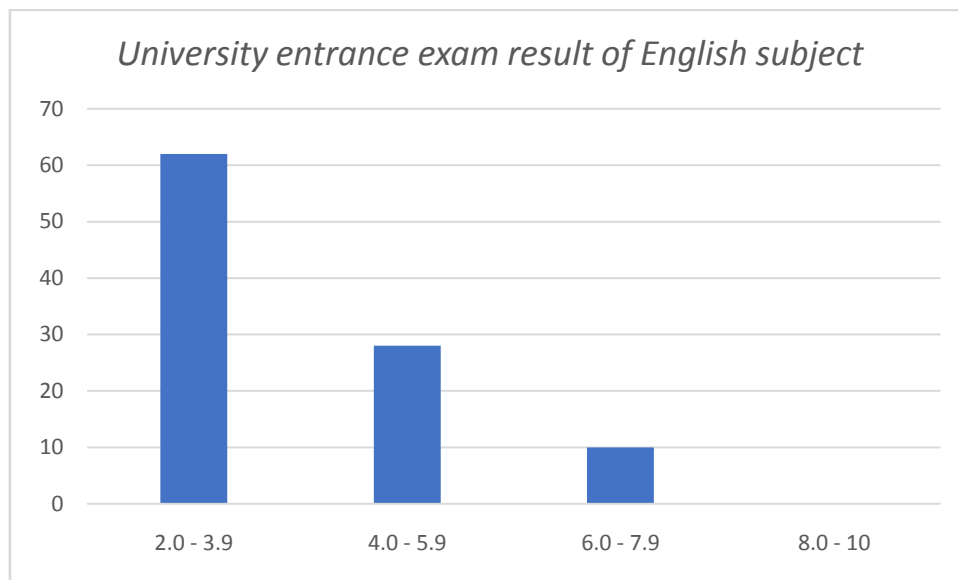
4.1. The attitudes of students to study the English listening skill

Most of the students consider listening skill is an important skill when learning a foreign language and they had had a positive aim to study it. They (about 95%) added that listening skill is one of the most frequent skill used in their communication. Thus, we can see that students are having a positive attitude to studying English listening skill.

4.2. The test results

4.2.1. The pre-course test result

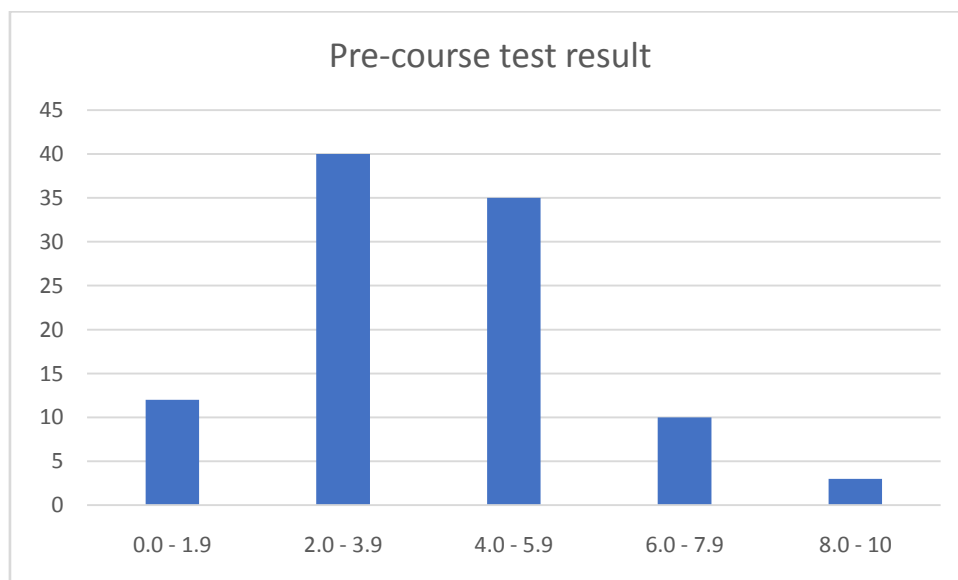
The result of the test was really discouraging, subjectively, we think that there are two main reasons for this low result. Firstly, all the students were first-year students, they weren’tfamiliar with the format and requirements of the CEFR-A2 level listening test. Secondly, they are non-English major students, at high school, they had focused mainly on their 3 required subjects to take the university entrance exam (mathematics, physics and chemistry), this low result can be observed in the following graph.



Graph 1: University entrance exam result of English subject (Mark scale: 10)

Source: Figures from the authors' survey – September 2019

The above two factors affected the result of the pre-course listening test of students. There was only 3% of the students scored 8 or above and 12 students didn't score 2 marks. There were 75% of those who scored under average and average marks. This situation was really problematic because most of students didn't get used to studying English in general and studying listening in particular.

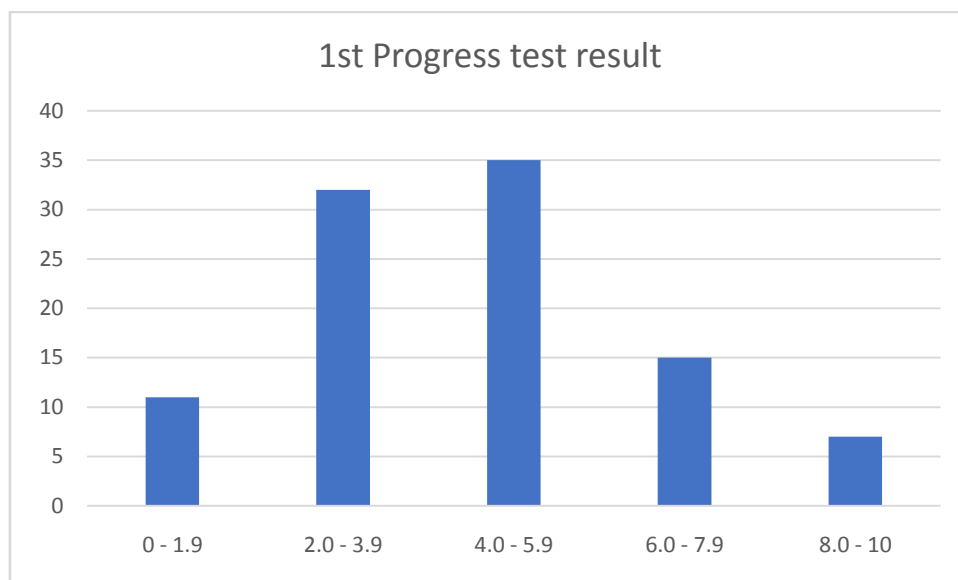


Graph 1: Pre-course test result (Mark scale: 10)

Source: Figures from the authors' survey – September 2019

4.2.2. The first progress test result

After this first step, we discussed, designed and asked these students to take part in an online listening course to improve the familiarity of the students to the A2 test and prepared for them the needed knowledge to take the real A2 test. Every two days, beside studying compulsorily at classes, students had to sign in the system to do the test's 5 parts and study vocabulary (we asked them to study vocabulary because we found that most of the students, 99%, claimed in the questionnaire that they hadn't got enough vocabulary to do the pre-course listening test. After one month we asked them to take the first progress test and collected the result as shown in the following graph.



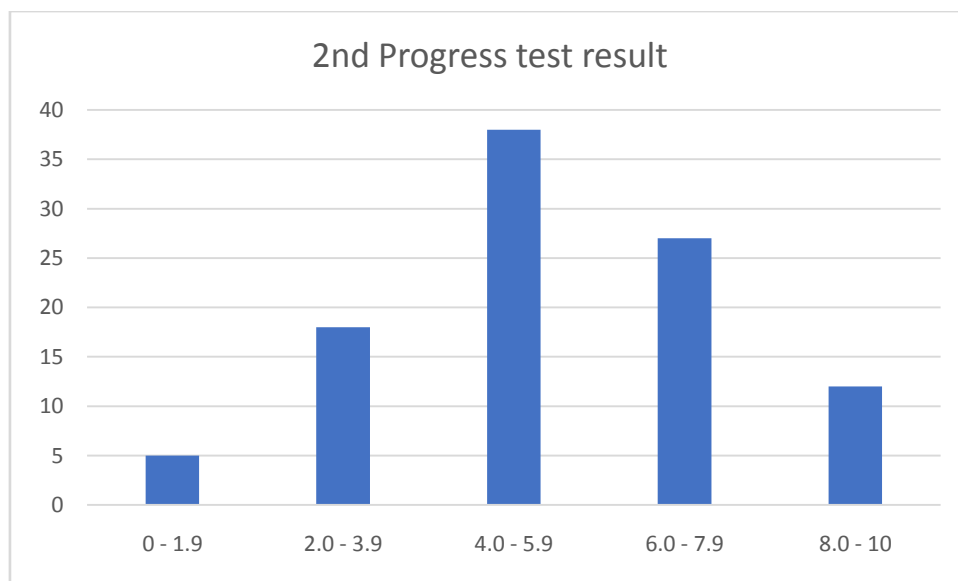
Graph 3: 1st Progress test result (Mark scale: 10)

Source: Figures from the authors' survey – October 2019

We can see that, the number of students who got average marks did increase (to 35%), and encouragingly, the number of students who got over 6 marks slightly increase this may because the students got used to the format of the test and they were also provided needed tactics and sufficient vocabulary to do the listening tests. The number of students who got bad was nearly the same.

4.2.3. The second progress test result

We continued the progress in the following month but did a few changes, we noticed that students could do the fill-in-the-blank questions (including the vocabulary questions) better than multiple choice questions, so we cut down the number of fill-in-the-blank questions and add more multiple choice questions in order to help students develop their skills of getting information to do this kind of questions. And at the end of October 2019, we asked students to do the second Progress tests, and their results are shown in the following graph.



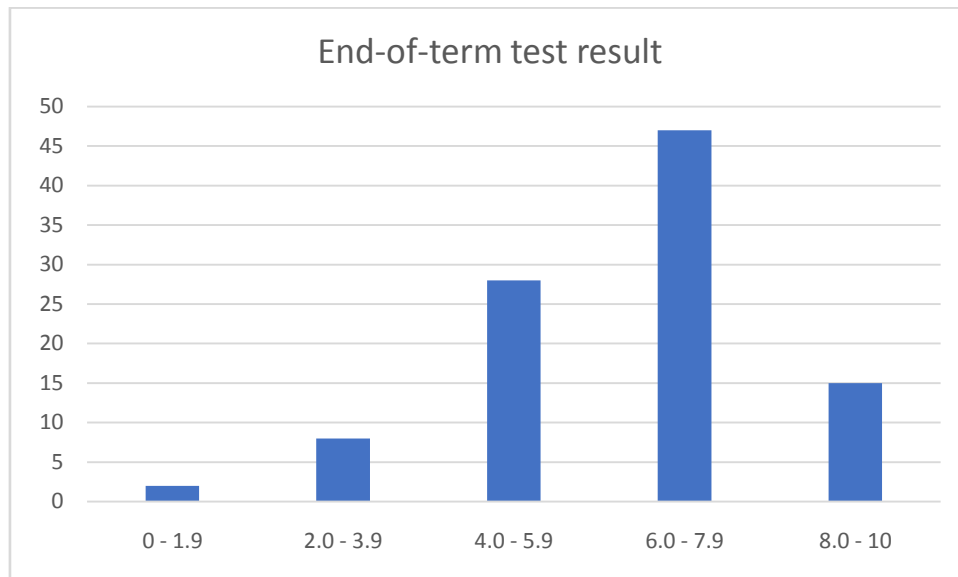
Graph 4: 2nd Progress test result (Mark scale: 10)

Source: Figures from the authors' survey – November 2019

This month, the number of students who over increase dramatically with 39%, in which the number of students who got over 8 nearly doubled after a month, while those who got underfour marks did decrease (23%), which marked a very potential perspective of the process.

4.2.4. The end-of-course test result

The process was continued applying the last month of the course, however, as there are the significant increase of marks of part 4 and part 5 (both parts consist of fill-in-the-blank questions), we decided to decrease the frequency of this type of the test and focused more on the multiple choice questions. At the end of December 2019, we held the end-of-term test for all the students and collected the listening skill result individually to analyze to know whether the English listening ability improves or not. Let’s have a look at the following graph.



Graph 5: End-of-term test result (Mark scale: 10)

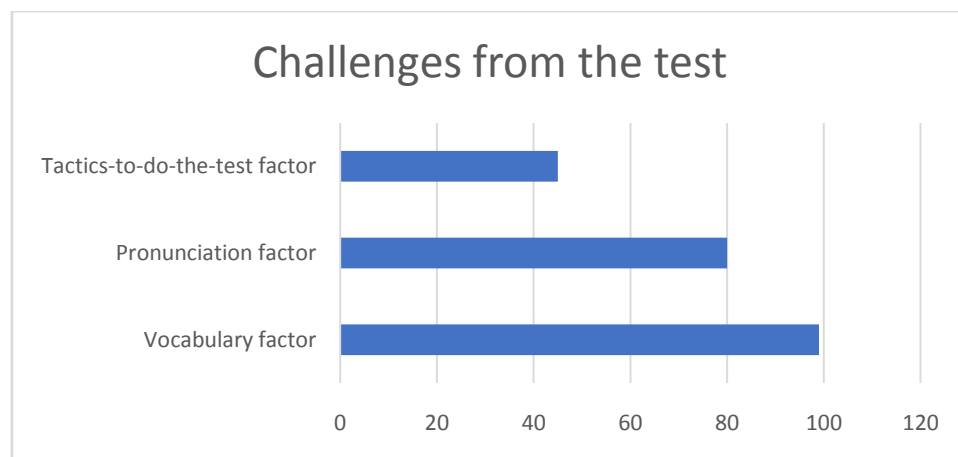
Source: Figures from the authors’ survey – December 2019

We can see that, the number of students who scored 8 – 10 did increase from 3% at the beginning of the course to 15%, and more significantly, the number of students who got under 4 dramatically decreased (only 10%), especially those who got 2 – 3.9 dropped dramatically from 40% (pre-course test) to 8% (end-of-course test). The total of students who got average marks (from 4 – 7.9) also increased from 45% (pre-course test) to 75% (end-of-course test).

4.3. Some causes influencing the listening ability of students

4.3.1. Challenges from the test

According to the questionnaire, we have identified 4 difficulties which influence the listening ability of students of students when taking the tests as we can see in the following graph.



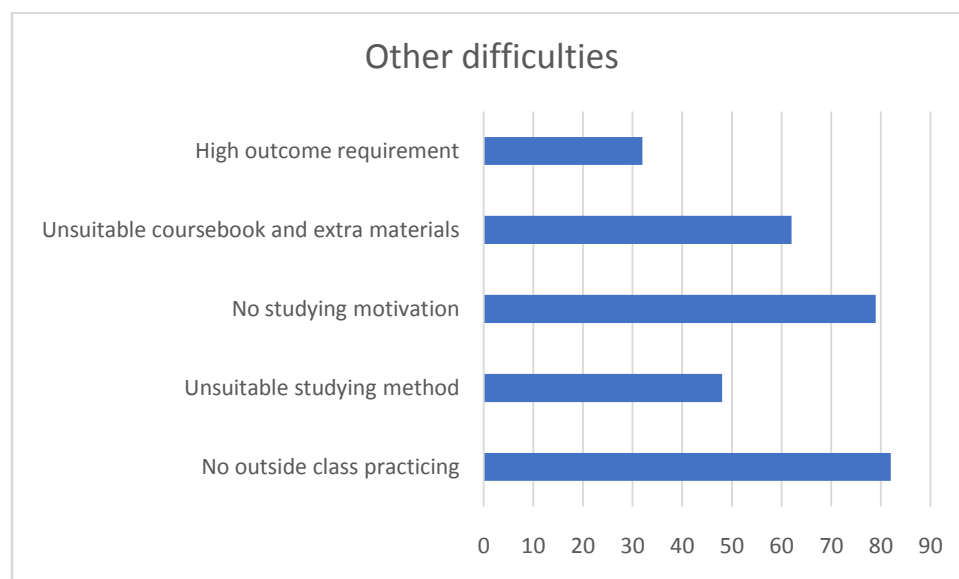
Graph 5: Challenges students met when taking the real test

Source: Figures from the authors’ survey – 2019

As mentioned above, most of the students got difficulty with the vocabulary, they had a really limited amount of the vocabulary at the beginning of the course because they hadn't study English much at high school. But this situation was improved after 4 months, they were provided with A2 vocabulary lists and most of them got to study all of them. Because of getting familiar with the types of questions and were provided with the tactics to do the test, only 45% of the student got difficulty in taking the real test.

4.3.2. Other difficulties

After collecting and analyzing data collected from the questionnaire, we have identified 5 other difficulties which also influenced the listening efficiency of students.



Graph 6: Other difficulties affecting student's studying result

Source: Figures from the authors' survey – 2019

Most of the students didn't practice English listening outside class (82%), this may because of their lack of motivation in studying, 79% of the students claimed that they didn't have right motivation in studying at university in general and in studying English in particular. Meanwhile 48% said that uninteresting coursebook and extra materials was also a contributing factor making them uninterested in learning listening both in classes and at home.

V. Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1. Recommendations

Basing on the analyzing some factors affecting the English listening skill of TUEBA's students of advanced training programme, we would like to recommend some suggestions in order to help to enhance the teaching and learning English listening skill of lectures and students of TUEBA's students of the programme in particular and of the other students of TUEBA in general.

- Improve students' awareness of importance of learning English language to help them in their studying at the university as well as support them in their future jobs.
- Apply a suitable teaching methodology; get students to get used to the format of the required test they would have to take in the future.
- Apply advanced technology in teaching listening skills, use the E-learning system to help students practice outside class.
- Choose the more suitable coursebook to attract students' attention and help them to have better motivation to practice outside class.

5.2. Conclusions

Although the study was conducted with a small scale, it clearly depicted the facts of teaching and studying English listening skill in TUEBA's advanced programme. In the era of international integration, the demand of using English language in employees' jobs is really crucial. The fact of teaching English language in general and teaching listening skill in particular are facing with many limitations and challenges while the requirements of English language abilities are higher and higher. So, in order to catch up with the development of modern society as well as employments' requirements, TUEBA needs to develop the contents, the curriculum

of the English language subjects, especially applying advanced technology to help control the self-study progress of students and help them to have better chances to practice English listening skill outside the class.

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