

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HANOI  
**UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES**  
FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

NGUYỄN THỊ HOÀI PHƯƠNG

**THE APPLICATION OF VOA SPECIAL English  
to teach listening skill to 11<sup>th</sup> form  
students in An duong high school**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of Bachelor of Arts (TEFL)

Hanoi, May 2011

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SUPERVISOR: PHẠM THỊ HẠNH, MA.

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## **ACCEPTANCE PAGE**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Ms Pham Thi Hanh. From the point of a teacher, an advisor and an instructor, she suggested and encouraged me to do this research. Thanks to her instructions and motivation, I have carried out this study hopefully.

I owe our parents because of their constant source of love, support and encouragement. They have been always by my side whenever I have had difficulties and tiredness.

I would also want to extend a special shout-out to all the research participants. The project would not have been accomplished without their responsible and valuable ideas and opinions on the questionnaires and interviews.

Finally, my special thanks go to my dear friends for their understanding and assistance during the process of doing this research. They have shared their experiences with me, which helps me to avoid weaknesses.

All these people play remarkable roles in this research. I once more time say my most sincere thanks to all of them.

Nguyen Thi Hoai Phuong

# **ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted with the attempt to raise the awareness and provide both English teachers and 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school a valueable source, VOA special English, for teaching and learning English, especially listening skill. During the process of carrying out the study, 50 students and 2 English teachers have got involved in the study with their great responsibility for taking part in the VOA listening classes and answering questionnaires as well as interview in order to help the researcher finishing the survey hopefully. After data analysis process, significant findings were noticeable. It seems that exploitation of authentic materials, particularly VOA special English in teaching and learning at An Duong High school still remained unfamiliar with both English teachers and students. From what revealed through the survey, it is recommended that teachers, students as well as the educational administrators in An Duong High school should change their thought about what for and how to learn English so that learning English can be more communicative.

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### **2. List of abbreviations**

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

VOA special English: Voice of America special English

CV: Coefficient of variation

SD: Standard Deviation

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Statement of the problem and rationale for the study

During the process of globalization, thanks to English, people from different countries, different cultures can easily communicate with each other. Therefore, English is becoming an international language, even in some countries, an official language.

Being affected by the trend of using English as a means of communication, Vietnamese people have gradually recognized the importance of English in use and started learning English actively. Generally speaking, after innovative policy, Vietnam is a potential destination of a large number of foreign investments that a favorable condition for Vietnamese to learn English is created. As the result, English is required as a compulsory subject in official curriculum and after several times being changed, it is now being taught in the light of communicative language teaching (CLT), which means apart from written skills, grammar and vocabulary, the oral skills are paid much attention to. More importantly, listening skill, which seems to be difficult and used to be ignored, has been being seriously introduced by those responsible for curriculum and textbook. Thus, it was high time for teachers to get students to develop their listening skill, not merely in order to finish exercises and pass the examination but for the purpose of using English in real life (Underwood, 1989).

However, there are many factors that affect the process of mastering the goal of being a good listener such as the time of listening, the ways to listen and so on. Among them, what to listen to still remains controversial because

of a wide range of listening materials from textbooks to authentic ones. Therefore, according to Núñez & Téllez (2009), “considerable attention is now being paid to develop instructional materials and recognize the importance of teaching resources and strategies used to maximize students’ language learning”.

From those points above, it is observable that materials truly play a vital role in language learning and achievement. It requires students and teachers, both to spend much time in choosing and searching for effective materials. Nevertheless, the fact is, in Vietnamese language learning environment, teachers and students are generally dependent on the textbooks or other commercial supplementary books without the notice of exploiting and developing materials from authentic sources which are available to access.

Due to those problems mentioned, it is essential for teachers to take the advantages of authentic materials to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and “a student’s capacities to participate in real world events” (Wilkins, 1976, p. 79). That is the reason why the researcher would like to conduct a small study using VOA special English to teach listening skill at An Duong High school with the purpose of improving students’ awareness of the potential authentic sources to practice listening skill.

## **1.2. Subjects of the study**

During the teaching practicum period, the researcher had a chance to work with 11<sup>th</sup> form students and the English teachers in An Duong High school. That close interaction provided the researcher lots of time to study what and how materials were chosen by students and teachers there and to

apply VOA special English in teaching listening skill. Therefore, the subjects of the study were 11<sup>th</sup> form students and English teachers in An Duong High school.

### **1.3. Aims of the study**

Firstly, this study aimed at finding the kinds of materials currently used to teach and learn listening skill for 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school.

Secondly, by conducting this survey, the researcher would be able to point out the effectiveness of those materials in teaching and learning listening in An Duong High school as perceived by the 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school.

Finally and most importantly, after applying VOA special English in teaching listening skill for 11<sup>th</sup> form student there, the researcher could evaluate the benefits of VOA special English and then apply it in her teaching career.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher had raised three research questions which were considered as the framework of the study as the followings:

- 1. What are the kinds of listening materials used in teaching and learning listening skill in An Duong High school?*
- 2. What are the benefits brought by those currently used materials as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school?*

3. *What are the benefits of the application of VOA special English as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school?*

#### **1.4. Significance of the study**

After answering three research questions, the practical situation of choosing and using materials for listening skills was revealed, which made either English teachers or students in An Duong High school be aware of the importance of materials in learning progress.

Added to this, through the application of VOA special English in teaching listening, the researcher would like to provide students there an available and reliable resource to practice listening skill. Apart from students, English teachers in An Duong High school could benefit from the results of this study. They were provided some information about how their student thought of course books and VOA special English, which was useful for them to choose and adapt the other kinds of material in order to motivate their students in learning process.

Last but not least, this study also brought benefits to the researcher as well. Thanks to the time of searching and choosing for a piece of news in VOA special English and the work of designing task basing on this, the researcher could improve her pedagogical skills such as searching and choosing materials, designing lesson plans or adapting various techniques of teaching English in the class. Moreover, in case VOA special English really worked in teaching listening skill, it could be a good resource for researcher to exploit to teach listening skill in her future career.

## **1.5. Scope of the study**

This study, which could be large scale carried out, only focused on the practical situation of materials choices of teachers and 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school in 2011. Moreover, the researcher chose VOA special English to teach listening skill and then evaluated its effectiveness and practicality.

## **1.6. Organization of the study**

The study included five chapters which were Introduction, Literature review, Methodology, Findings and discussion, and Conclusion.

The Introduction chapter provided readers a brief description of the topic including general background knowledge about learning and teaching listening skill, of the reason why the topic was worth studying. More importantly, in this chapter, the statement of research's aims and scope of the study were introduced to the readers.

The second chapter was about reviewing some background knowledge of the issue such as the approaches of teaching English over time, the criteria for evaluating materials and so on. The researcher critically read previous studies, compared and contrasted the similarities as well as the differences proposed in those studies. After that, the researcher showed out the gap between those studies with this research paper.

The next chapter was Methodology which outlined the research methods used and demonstrated that recognized procedures had been followed in the study. Moreover, this chapter included the explanation of the

reason why some particular methods were used and how the study was carried out.

The fourth chapter which was considered as the most important one was Findings and Discussion. The purpose of this chapter was to state what were found, and to analyze and explain why the results came as they did, how they helped answer the three research questions.

Last but not least, the Conclusion chapter was to summarize the main points of what were found through the study process. This section also briefly mentioned the unavoidable limitations of the study and included some recommendations or suggestions for further studies.

**Summary:** In this chapter, the researcher had mentioned some main points to frame the paper for the readers. Firstly, the statement of the problem and rationale for the study was written in order to give the reasons why this study was conducted. Secondly, some factors of the study such as aims and objectives, the participants, significance and scope of the study were also included in this chapter. Finally, the structure of the study was presented to help readers easily catch up with the main parts of this paper.



## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Theoretical backgrounds of teaching listening

#### 2.1.1. Definition of listening and listening comprehension

Due to fact that listening was assumed to be easily developed in mother-tongue and the misunderstanding between hearing and listening to, listening in the foreign language used to be taken for granted. However, in recent years, the awareness of listening has been changed thanks to the clear distinction between hearing and listening. Hearing, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* was simply “being aware of sounds with your ears”, while listening seemed to be a more complicated activity.

Alice Duer Miller (as cited in White, 1998, p.3) had said that “*Listening is not merely talking... it means taking a vigorous human interest in what is being told us*”. The quotation above suggested that listening was not a passive but an active activity, in which people were aware of the message which was being delivered instead of recognizing the phonetic items only. For instance, when a student said to his teacher “Forgive me for going to class late, please”, the message for his teacher was not only apologizing but also asking for permission to come in the class.

To define the term listening, researchers have suggested many different definitions which could be either simple or complicated ones. For the simplest definition, Rankin (1952) and Nicolas (1974) shared the same idea that listening was the activity in which listeners understood the aural signals. More complicatedly, listening was seen as a process involving a wide range of

factors such as “attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal), needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings” (Purdy, 1997, p.8). Purdy’s definition showed that the listening process was affected by the interactional activities of both listener and speaker because of the word choice of the speaker and his verbal and non-verbal communicating ways. More comprehensively, Jones (1956) and Rost (2002) both saw listening in a chain of processing information of the listener including some main stages as receiving the aural signals, critical interpreting and responding. Therefore, it could be said that “listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear” (Underwood, 1990, p.1). In other words, listening implied the conscious attention to the message of what being said and the listener’s reflection on it.

In language teaching, listening was often seen as listening comprehension which, according to Underwood (1990), refers to a person’s ability to listen and understand what is being said to him. However, the level of understanding is not like the assumption that the learners have to recognize and know the meaning of every word existing in the listening tape. The level is dependent on what kind of information must be listened for. For instance, the information collected from an announcement is different from that of a story.

This research paper adopted the definition suggested by Underwood (1990) mentioned above because of some factors such as the level of students was not high enough to practice the complicated listening progress and the researcher aimed at get them practice listening skill naturally for

communicative purposes. Listening, thus, is considered in the term referring to the ability of a person to listen and comprehend the message delivered to him. Added to this, throughout this paper, listening was defined in the light of listening comprehension

### **2.1.2. Types of listening**

Basing on different criteria, researchers had different ways to classify types of listening. Some suggested only two main types while the others preferred more than that.

In term of purpose for listening, Means (2009) saw listening as casual and active listening: Casual listening, which was also called passive listening, was hearing and understanding but having no intention of remembering it in long term (Means, 2009, p. 80). Means (2009) said that whether remembering the content of the conversation or not was not important at all because casual listening was relaxed. For example, while watching a football match, a dad could still keep talking with his son; however, the dad might not remember what he had talked to each other. In contrast, active listening which was subdivided into four small groups (informative, evaluative, emphatic, or reflective listening) was listening with specific purpose (Means, 2009, p.81). Means said that in active listening, the listener not only tried to understanding the message but also remembered it. Its first sub-group was informative listening that listener tried to get as much information from the speaker as possible. For instance, the doctor listened to the patients in order to know what the matter with him was. The second type of active listening was evaluative one involving the listener's judgment toward what was being said by the speaker. Next, emphatic listening required the listener to catch up with the

attitude, viewpoint of the speaker. The last division of active listening was reflective listening, which described listener's activity of processing information and match it with the response.

Doff (1988) also divided listening according to the purpose of listening, which brought him two kinds of listening: casual listening and focused listening. Alike Means, his casual listening meant that people listen with little concentration, which was contrary to focused listening with particular purpose of gathering information

Among those categorized listening according to materials, Harmer (2003) offered two types: authentic and realistic listening. Authentic listening was listening to things that were not designed for the teaching purpose, which was discussed deeper in the following parts. In contrast, realistic one was listening to the teaching purpose materials such as listening sections in textbook.

In term of information needed, Goh (2002) grouped listening into three main types. The first one was listening for general information which a person listened nonstop to get the basic idea of a discourse. The next one was for specific information: the listener only paid attention to what he was interested in while the uninterested was ignored. Last but not least was listening for detailed information which meant that every word of the spoken was paid attention to.

According to Baruah (1991, p. 201), listening comprehension was seen as intensive and extensive ones. Barual (2001) said that intensive listening was the one frequently practiced in language classes, this kind of listening required

students to listen and collect all the information containing in the passage. After that, students were asked to use the information collected during the listening time to finish several given tasks. Intensive listening aimed at challenge students to develop their listening ability; therefore, teachers were willing to provide students strategies for their improvement of listening. On the contrary to intensive listening, the extensive could be regarded as outside class listening since students felt free to listening to whatever they liked such as a story, a news report and so on without the requirement of practicing the grammar points and structures or finishing the tasks given. However, extensive listening did not mean that after listening, students gained nothing from the passage. In stead, they could pick up the language items or the interesting information for themselves.

This study was conducted according to the classification of Baruah because the aim of this research was to evaluate VOA special English material as an extensive listening source for students to take advantage of.

### **2.1.3. The importance of teaching listening**

It has been said that human beings spent about half of their communication time on listening. For example, students listened to their lectures in the class or the passengers listened to the instruction at the airport or a mother communicated with her son or people discussed with each other in a meeting; listening involved in those situations. However, language learners, particularly the second language ones, were not seriously aware of the necessity of developing their listening skill.

From passively receiving and memorizing the aural input like “a tape recorder” (Anderson & Lynch, 1999, p.9), listeners actively involved themselves in the interpretation of what they heard, bringing their own background knowledge and linguistic knowledge to process the information uttered, which Anderson and Lynch (1999) called “the listener as active model builder”. Thus, in order to become a good listener, it is suggested that language learners should construct “coherent interpretation” for all spoken messages (Anderson & Lynch, 1999, p.11): the message needs to be “coherent” both with what has been said and with what the listener has already known; moreover, the “interpretation” should be our version of what is said by the speaker.

Listening involved a sender, which could be human beings, a radio or a television program, a message, and a receiver (the listener). Listeners had to process the message with the involvement of their background knowledge, their own experiences of the issue mentioned. Added to this, listeners must deal with the sender's choice of vocabulary, structure, and rate of delivery. Last but not least, the context, along with the cross-cultural communication was considered as a factor that prevented listeners from control their own knowledge of the foreign language.

With the importance of listening in language learning and teaching mentioned above, it was essential for language teachers to help their students become effective listeners. In the communicative approach to language teaching, this meant modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations because learning to listen was for coping with the real life communication in stead of finishing the exercises only.

#### **2.1.4. An overview of approaches to listening teaching**

Before twentieth century, **the grammar-translation method** was widely used in teaching and learning foreign language. Richards and Rogers (1986) said that there was no theory for this method except for the view of language teaching and learning as a “mental discipline”, which meant that it only focused on analysis of grammar and translation while the oral skills were ignored. Therefore, it tended to turn students in to deaf and dumb as they had no chance to listen and speak. Gradually, after memorizing lots of rules and words, students still could not involve themselves in the real communication.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), during the twentieth century, the trends in language teaching changed over time. Each trend or approach suggested different general viewpoint towards the nature of language and language teaching. Among those, there were three major approaches including the structural theory, the functional theory and the interactional one which influenced the “overall practical plan” for teaching and learning foreign language (Richards & Rogers, 1986, p.19). The listening teaching, thus, was under the control of those approaches.

**The structural view** suggested that “language is a system of structurally related phonological, grammatical, and lexical elements for the transmission of meaning”; therefore, it aimed to achieve the good command of elements within the system only (Richards & Rogers, 1986, p.16). One of the well known methods applied this theory was Audio-Lingual method whose primary objective was oral proficiency but in the way of memorizing things due to its view of language as a set of habits. In this method, oral skills including

listening and speaking were practiced; however, it consisted of no communicative function since students were able to speak and listen but they could not understand thoroughly. Moreover, listening is taught as a supporting skill for the others, in which the main role of listening was providing the key structures for the lesson in stead of listening comprehension.

The second theory of language was **the functional** which considered language as a means of “expressing functional meaning” (Richards & Rogers, 1986, p.16), or in other words, language should be taught communicatively. Basing on this view of language, the communicative language teaching was seen as an effective alternative method in the twentieth century. Thanks to this method whose aim was providing learners communicative competence – learner’s ability to use target language suitably and successfully in different contexts, more attention was paid to listening, especially for the purpose of listening comprehension for the real life listening as well as listening inside the classes.

The last theory was **the interactional view** which focused on how to create and to keep conversation with others (Richards, 1983, p. 16). It could be seen that this theory shared the same basic viewpoint of language with functional theory as both two of them saw language in its communicative function, which explained why communicative approach was formed by this view. Due to the fact that no one could maintain their conversation without listening and understanding the message delivered, teaching listening under the light of communicative approach.

Generally speaking, each theory or method had its own strong points and weak points and whether which one is adapted in language classroom depends



on various factors such as the student's level, the condition of the classroom, the need of learning language and so on. For instance, the grammar – translation method could be useful for the class of beginners, especially for children as at this level, as they just learnt to memorize how to use language. Moreover, this theory was good for learning and practicing grammar and vocabulary items as language was taught and learnt structurally. However, in modern language teaching and learning, this theory cannot be applied in the class with higher level since it seems to separate and isolate language from its social function of communication.

The last two theories helped solve the problem of the previous one, which meant learning language was not for the purpose of being excellent in classroom but for the ability of using it in real life. This research paper adopted the second theory of language that saw language as a means for expressing functional meaning because based on this theory, listening referred to listening comprehension. Moreover, with the application of using VOA special English, listening was one way conversation which meant that the learner would not directly respond to what they heard.

## **2.2. Listening to authentic materials**

### **2.2.1. Definition of authentic listening materials.**

Nunan and Miller (1995) gave their viewpoint on what kind of materials that students should and should be allowed to listen to. They said that students should be provided the materials which were authentic, of interest to them and of which they were aware because only when students knew what they were listening for, were they able to perceive and understand the material better

(Nunan & Miller 1995, p.169). Moreover, in recent years, it has been generally accepted that students needed to practice listening to the kind of speech they would actually encounter in real life so that they would be able to understand and respond successfully in real communication. What was authentic material, but, was still a controversial issue; thus, since 1970s, there has been much debate about how to define authentic material and the value of using it in listening class (Underwood, 1990, p.98).

There were wide range of terms used to define the authentic materials such as “real speech”, “natural conversation”, and “what people say in real life” (Underwood, 1990, p.98). Little (1988) said that authentic materials were “created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced”. This broad definition of authentic listening materials seemed to be unclear in the sense of teaching and learning listening to a foreign language. In order to link the social purpose with the language study, it is said that authentic materials refer to the actual materials from the real world such as newspaper, radio broadcast, and news report and so on, which are not designed for the aim of language teaching and learning.

The term “authentic” could be used to refer to any form of text, either written or spoken (David, 1986, p.4). From his viewpoint, it could be implied that a listening authentic material was the spoken one which was produced in response to real life communicative needs, in which the listeners were in the role of audiences rather than learners.

### **2.2.2. The importance of using authentic materials in listening teaching**

As mentioned above, listening authentic materials are not designed for the purpose of teaching and learning but for the social communication; therefore, it is assumed that it may be difficult or even impossible for the listeners to listen again and again until all the missing or misunderstanding information was clear. For example, the speaker who reads VOA news assumes that his audiences are the native ones; thus, with no attention to the non-native listeners, his speech and accent are naturally presented. Yet, this listening type helps motivate students in their listening process because it provides them the real language of the world events, the language in its cross-cultural communication and more importantly, “put them in touch with the world outside the confines of the classroom and the school” (White, 1998, p.88).

Moreover, teaching listening should be for its communicative function in real life. Therefore, it is the authentic materials which can meet the requirement of real communication thanks to their merits that if students were provided chances to listen to wide range of authentic recordings; they would get familiar with different voices, with various accents, with the native speakers’ ways of expressing things (Underwood, 1990, p.100).

However, according to White (1988), listening to the truly authentic materials can frighten students because of unfamiliar language. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers and learners both have to get involved in the process of adapting this kind of material in their listening work. Moreover, it is recommended that whether the materials are authentic or not is not an important issue, but the range of listening work should be introduced based on

the text which is as nearly authentic as possible, or in other words, the semi-authentic materials.

### **2.3. Criteria for the selection of recorded materials**

Authentic materials should not be chosen randomly but chosen to fulfill the objective of the lesson and to be suitable with the students' level and of their interest as mentioned in the study of Martinez (2002). Moreover, language study is influenced by the theory of language and the theory of language learning. Therefore, when evaluating the adapted material used in teaching and learning English, it is strictly recommended that the evaluation should base on some related factors. Moreover, various stakeholders such as the material users, the administrators should get involved in the process of evaluating materials in stead of the teachers alone (Dickinson, 1987, p.200).

A checklist of Gardner and Miller (1999) covered ten categories to evaluate a material as follow: language level, skills, objectives, length of activity, language of instruction, pathways, technology, assessment, evaluation and progression. However, this checklist seems to be so general that it is difficult to say it is for teachers, learners or those responsible for the course book to use in evaluation of materials.

Dickinson's (as cited in Reinders & Lewis, 2006) set of checklist included a statement of objectives, meaningful language input, practice material, flexibility, instructions and advice for learning, feedback, tests, and advice about progression, advice about record keeping, reference materials, indexing, and motivational factors. It seems that his offered items are too general and only focus on reading and vocabulary, such as that the material should have "meaningful language input".

Lockwood (1998) drew sixteen distinctions between textbooks and self-instructional material, from which learners and teachers can apply to evaluate materials. His list is presented in binary form: “written for teacher use/written for learner use” (p. 12), “occasionally offers summaries/always offers summaries” (p. 17) and “can be read passively/requires active response” (p. 20) and so on.

Spelleri (2002) mentioned the suitability between materials and students’ competence, which, according to him, materials should be slightly difficult with students in order to motivate them to achieve the knowledge. Nevertheless, he also suggested it was wise for the teachers to avoid choosing too complex materials because it might de-motivate their students or frighten them with the unfamiliar vocabulary. It could be said that Spelleri’s viewpoint was about the link between materials and student’s level.

The other factor, which teachers should put in concern when choosing materials, was the pedagogical methods used to explicit students (Morley, 1991, p.20). For instance, students at lower level seem to be not good enough to deal with the authentic materials; thus, teacher should be willing to provide them necessary help for them to achieve the lesson.

Generally, Richards (2005) claimed that an effective material was shaped by numerous factors such as teacher factor, learner factors and the contextual factors. Specifically, teacher factors included the “teacher’s language proficiency, training and experience, cultural background and preferred teaching styles” while the learner factors were learners’ learning style preference, their language needs, interest and motivation”. About the

contextual factors, the things should be put in concern were the school culture, classroom conditions, class size and the availability of teaching resources.

Tomlinson (1998) recommended more points in evaluating a material. Some of them remained the same as those of Richards, but some were specified. For example, the learner factors, also called learners' needs were categorized into personal needs (including age, sex, cultural background, interests, and educational background), learning needs such as learning styles, previous language learning experiences, learning goals and expectations for a course, and the future professional needs which was the requirement for the future of undertakings in terms of knowledge of language and language use. The teacher factors were absolutely like what mentioned by Richards. For the contextual factors, known as administrators' needs, Tomlinson added the educational policy such as the under-resourced and strict syllabus the teachers were expected to obey. Tomlinson's viewpoint was clearly summarized as the following table:

Learners' factors	Personal needs	Age; sex; cultural background; interests; motivation and educational background
	Learning needs	Learning style preferences, language learning experience, learning goals and expectation.
	Future professional needs	Requirements in terms of language and language use.

Teachers' needs	Personal needs	Age, sex, cultural background, interests, teachers' language proficiency
	Professional needs	Teaching style preference; training experience
Contextual factors	Educational policy; School culture; School condition; Availability of teaching resources.	

**Figure 1: Criteria for evaluating the selected listening materials  
(Tomlinson, 1998, p. 23)**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the scope of this graduation paper was to evaluate the effectiveness of materials as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students; therefore, the researcher only used some of learner-related factors in this study. They were interest and motivation, learning style and experience, learning goals and the requirement in term of language of language use. However, the availability of the resources would be also used as a criterion to evaluate both currently use materials and VOA special English.

**Summary:** In this chapter, some issues have been critically reviewed in order to set a framework for the practical study. Listening, according to what presented in the previous part, is seen as listening comprehension which refers to the ability of a person to understand the aural message delivered to him.



Moreover, listening type considered in the class of this study was extensive listening. Along with the definition of listening, some approaches of teaching and learning this skill were analyzed and the functional theory was adopted. Last but not least, the criteria for evaluating materials were put into checklist which mainly focused on the learners' factors.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter illustrates the methodology applied in the research paper. To be specific, the researcher has justified the sampling of participants, the instruments, procedure of data collection and data analysis as well as the treatment of material (VOA special English) in listening classes.

### **3.1. Subjects of the study**

The subjects of this study were both 11th form students and English teachers in An Duong High school. The process of sampling participants from the population of them was illustrated as follow:

#### **3.1.1. Students**

As the research aimed at evaluating the benefits brought by materials to 11th form students; the results mainly relied on the surveyed questionnaires answered by students. Due to the fact that this research was carried out during the researcher's teaching practicum, the convenience sampling had been used for the selection of students, which meant that the study was based on the data collected from students of class that the researcher was in charge of. Added to this, since VOA special English was still a new term to those students, the research only choose 50 students of one class who were introduced to it through the lessons .

The students who are of elementary level have been learning English for about six years. However, their listening skill is not at the elementary level but beginners in stead as according to their teachers, they are not be able to fully finish the listening practice of elementary level.

### **3.1.2. Teachers**

English teachers were involved in the study in order for the researcher to know more about the listening activities of 11th form students in An Duong High school. Besides gathering information from students, interviewing teachers was one way to cross check what was collected from the students.

Before carrying out the study, the researcher supposed to interview five English teachers in An Duong High school. However, in fact, the number of teachers being interviewed was limited because of some reasons. Firstly, in order for the teachers to compare the benefits of currently used materials and VOA special English, they were the ones who attended the class which was introduced to VOA special English. Secondly, during the process of introducing VOA special English, there were only two teachers who approved the researcher to adapt VOA special English in listening section of 11th form students while the rest prevented the researcher from doing so as they were afraid of the negative effects on students such as lack of time to focus on the course book, the de-motivation rising as the materials were too difficult and so on. Thus, the researcher was able to interview two of English teachers in An Duong High school.

The two teachers got involved in the study have been teaching English for about seven to ten years. They are the ones who often update the new trends of teaching English and the new materials for their class. However, their update mainly concentrated on the written skills, especially reading and vocabulary achievement. Therefore, to them, using authentic materials, specifically VOA special English, to teach listening skill is still a new issue.

## **3.2. Treatment**

Due to the fact that the researcher used VOA special English to teach listening skill in An Duong High school, the materials selection was also included into the methodology the study.

### **3.2.1. Materials**

When being first introduced in 1959, VOA special English is for the purpose of helping non native speakers all over the world to communicate in clear and simple English through radio. Gradually, it becomes more familiar with those people and besides communication function; its role has been expanding: to teach people American English. Over the years, VOA special English is seen as an effective tool for teaching and learning listening skill though it is not designed for a particular teaching program.

Although VOA special English is about the latest news around the world, it is not a truly authentic material but a semi one because it provides people a non-traditional way of learning and practicing English. With the short sentences, limited vocabulary and slow pace of speaking, VOA special English is easy for non native people to listen to and to understand what is being said. Moreover, the transcript of each program is available in the internet; thus, it is possible for learners to practice and improve their listening along with speaking skill.

### **3.2.2. Illustration**

The researcher succeeded in applying VOA special English in teaching listening skill for 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school. Two listening sessions using VOA special English were delivered to an 11<sup>th</sup> form class.

The researcher chose two pieces of news on VOA special English which were of the themes in the course books. After that, those pieces of news were designed in the form of a listening section including some tasks given in three main parts: “Before you listen”, “While you listen” and “After you listen”.

The procedure of listening lessons applying VOA special English was the same as that of course books with three main phases. Firstly, in the post listening stage, the students were warmed up by some group or pair work. Those work aimed at leading in students in the main content of the lesson and cheering them up to get involved in the lesson. Secondly, students practiced listening tasks. In this stage, a recording of VOA special English news was prepared in advance for students to listen to and finish the designed exercises. The researcher in the role of the teacher instructed students how and what they were going to do with each kind of exercises. For instance, for the gap filling exercises, they had to listen carefully and tried to catch up with every word of the listening recording. Students were allowed to listen to the recording no more than three times depending on the difficulty of the recording and the designed exercises. Finally, after finishing exercises, they took part in the post listening stage with group or pair work again to use the vocabulary as well as the information they had listened to discuss some related issues or to report the content of the recording.

Two versions of lessons applying VOA special English in An Duong High school were attached along with this paper (see Appendix 4a and Appendix 4b)

### **3.3. Data collection instruments and procedure**

#### **3.3.1. Data collection instrument**

The two main instruments used in collecting data were interview and questionnaire

##### **3.3.1.1. Interview**

As mentioned in Durkin's study (2003), questionnaire and interview were the most commonly used in data collection as they supported each other to raise the reliability of the data. For instance, questionnaire would enable the researcher to gain information from large number of participants while interview provided chance to deeply look at the viewpoint and thoughts of the participants.

Therefore, semi-structured interview was carried out with two teachers selected. Semi-structured interview offered the researcher flexibility, control and logic during interviewing.

On the day of interviewing, the researcher invited teachers to answer some main questions and encouraged them to offer their own opinions. There were four questions (see Appendix 3) used to interview. Firstly, the researcher introduced about herself and her study to the teachers and then asked them to be willing and feel free to answer the questions as they would not be discussed specifically in any paper. After that, the researcher asked teacher the five main

questions of the interview and raised some more during the talk. Finally, after being interviewed, the two teachers were thanked for their generous support to the study.

### **3.3.1.2. Questionnaire**

Though the number of students involving in the study was not really large, the questionnaire was chosen to get information from students as questionnaire was “easy to construct and capable of gathering a large amount of information” (Dornyei, 2003, p 13).

In terms of the structure, the questionnaire was designed for collecting factual, behavioral and attitudinal data; thus, various types of questions such as Yes – No questions, multiple choice questions, open – ended ones and the Likert scale. The Yes – No questions were for collecting the data about the interest of students towards each kind of materials while the multiple choice ones aimed at gathering factual information such as kinds of materials used in teaching and learning listening skills in that school. Besides, the open – ended questions were to collect the other opinions of students that the researcher could not cover wholly.

In terms of the content, there were ten questions divided into two survey questionnaires (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2); one for evaluating the benefits brought by currently used materials and the other for VOA special English. The first questionnaire contained six questions which were divided into some main parts based on the factors used as criteria to evaluate materials as interest and motivation, learning style and experience, learning goals and requirements in terms of language and language use, and the

availability of resources. This version of questionnaire was delivered to students at the first week of teaching practicum when VOA special English was not introduced to them. The second version of questionnaire which was to collect students' opinions about VOA special English contained four questions. This version basically remained the same as the first one except for some minor details such as self – practicing with VOA special English or cultural knowledge brought by this kind of material. After two weeks dealing with VOA special English and some time practicing it at home, students were asked to answer the second version of questionnaire.

### **3.3.2. Data collection procedure**

The process of gathering data was divided into three main phases namely piloting, delivering and collecting data.

#### **3.3.2.1. Piloting**

After being designed and commented by the supervisor, the questionnaires and interview were piloted in the pre-stage of the study. The aim of this activity was to find out and correct any misunderstanding in both structure and content of those questions. Five students from other class were randomly chosen to pre-answer the first draft of the questionnaires on currently used materials and one teacher was invited to give her opinion about the questionnaire on VOA special English. The teacher and students were encouraged to point out any unnecessary, unclear items and felt free to give comments as well as suggestion for best improvement. With their constructive comments and suggestion, the researcher had corrected some spelling



mistakes pointed out and improved the weak points of the first drafts such as the too complicated or new words.

### **3.3.2.2. Delivering and collecting**

After being well improved, the survey questionnaire on currently used materials, in the first stage of the study, was delivered to 11th form students during their break time. The researcher briefly explained what they were going to do and carefully instructed them how to answer the questions in order to avoid any misunderstanding. The researcher waited for students to complete and provided needed help for students' problem of new words or unfamiliar terms. After ten minutes, the researcher collected the survey questionnaire and thanked students for their assistance.

After two weeks students were introduced to VOA special English, the second stage of the study was carried out, in which students were asked to complete the second survey questionnaires on VOA special English. The procedure of the delivering and collecting was the same as the first time with questionnaires on currently used materials.

For the interview with teachers, with the appointment arranged in advance, the interviews were held in comfortable places and appropriated time. Before asking teachers, the researcher tried to explain what the study was and warmly welcome the teachers to enjoy the interview. English was chosen to be the interview language. The transcripts of the interview were attached along with this paper (see Appendix 5a and Appendix 5b).

All the information collected from survey questionnaires and interview was first synthesized.

### 3.4. Data analysis.

Firstly, all the data from questionnaires was put into the quantified form and then categorized into four main groups of criteria to evaluate materials including interest and motivation, learning style and experience, learning style and requirement in term of language use, and the availability of sources.

The numerical statistics were charted in both bar and pie charts in order to be presented and compared clearly. For instance, the questions about interest and motivation of students were put in two charts, one about the currently used materials and the other VOA special English. Data from Likert scale questions were tabled and charted. The researcher used excels to calculate Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Coefficient of variation (CV). From the calculated data, the researcher recognized that CV was too high (around 0.4) that Mean was not good enough to popularize because according to Tran and Tran (2006), the figure of Mean and SD showed that there were 75% of participants at the range of ( $\text{Mean} \pm 2.SD$ ). However, because the fact that CV was around 0.4, Mean could not present what was the significance of the data. Therefore, the researcher decided to use Mode which is the highest frequency of a quantity to analyze the data.

After being clearly presented, the data was synthesized so that results could be draw from both types of data.

**Summary:** In this chapter, the brief description of methodology used in the study was presented. In order to introduce VOA special English to both teachers and 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school as well as comparing two kinds of materials, course books and VOA special English, the researcher

chose two pieces of VOA special English news to apply in listening classes. The two main instruments of the study were interview and questionnaires. After collecting data, the researcher started analyzing the information with some statistical tools.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

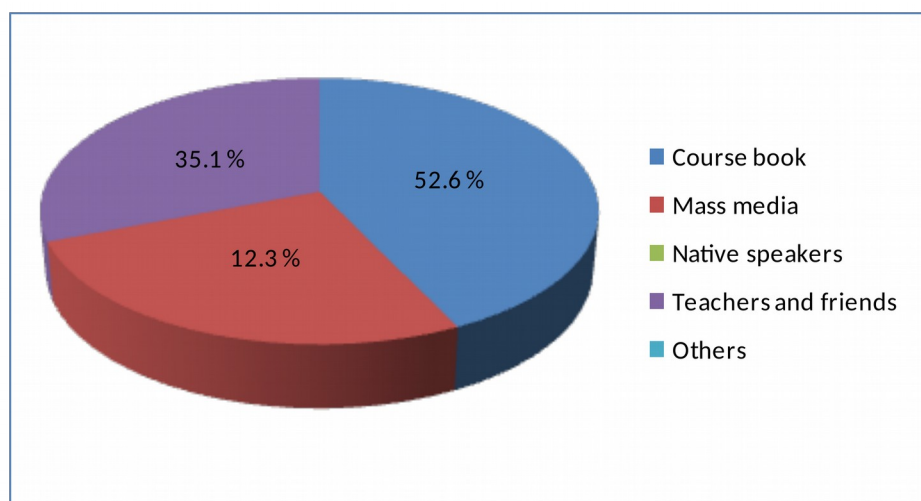
All the data collected from the questionnaires and interview was summarized and analyzed in this chapter to answer the three research questions. Further explanations and discussion were also incorporated to gain thorough insights into the researched issue.

### A. FINDINGS

#### FINDINGS FROM STUDENTS

##### **4.1. Kinds of listening materials used in teaching and learning listening skill in An Duong High school**

According to question number 6 in “Questionnaires on currently used materials”, kinds of listening materials which were being used in An Duong High school were presented in the following figure



**Figure 2: Kinds of listening materials**

There were three choices (course books, mass media and teacher and friends) sharing the percentage of kinds of listening materials currently used in

teaching and learning in An Duong High school. As opposed to the “native speakers” source, course book made up the highest percent (about 52.6%) among those choices.

The second available listening source was “teachers and friends”, which took 35.1% in total. Next, mass media was also considered as one kind of material for students to listen to.

On the contrary to those three kinds of materials, the “native speakers” choice occupied 0% of the pie chart.

#### **4.2. Effectiveness of currently used materials as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school in comparison with that of VOA special English.**

The two next research questions were answered by the findings basing on the criteria to evaluate a material as mentioned in chapter II. The following charts and tables were clear presentation of what the researcher had collected.

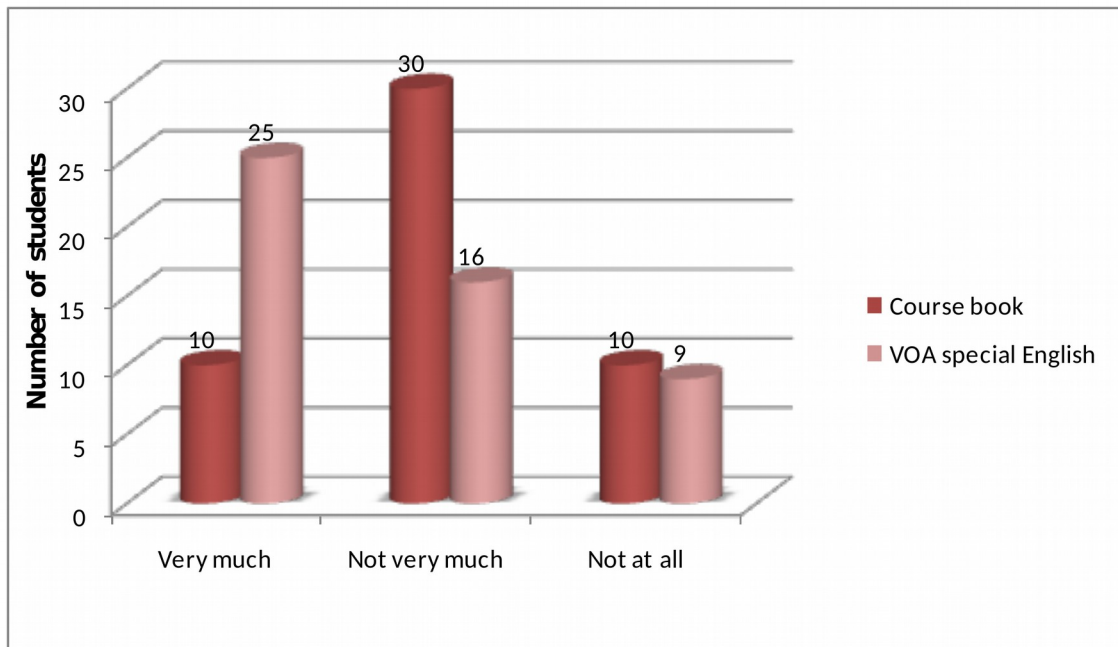
##### **4.2.1. Interest and motivation**

The first part was about two factors namely interest and motivation. In order to discuss and analyze the data effectively, the researcher divided those main points into two small parts with some illustration of the data.

##### **Interest**

In collecting data process, the researcher had asked 11<sup>th</sup> form students to answer how much they liked listening to course book and VOA special English which was introduced to them before. Although the question for each of those two kinds was delivered at different time, the results were presented in only one chart to be compared and contrasted with each other.

The presentation of data as following was based on two questions: the first question of “Questionnaires on currently used materials” and that of “Questionnaires on VOA special English”.



**Figure 3: Student’s interest in course book and VOA special English.**

According to the chart, the number of students who liked to listen to course books and recording provided was the same as that of those who did not like listen to it at all while there were about 30 students (60%) did not very much. The result of students’ opinion about the course books showed the large distance between the highest and the lowest. For instance, in the chart, the number of students who did not like course books very much was three times greater than that of each of the rest. Moreover, as seen in the sum of 30 students did not like course books very much and 10 of them did not like it at all, it seemed there was a tendency of students not being interested in this kind of material as this number was four times greater than that of those who liked to listen to it very much.

On the contrary to course books, VOA special English seemed to bring much interest to the students as there was half of them liked to listen to VOA very much. However, this figure was exactly the same as that of those who did not like it very much. Therefore, it was difficult to conclude whether VOA special English was extremely loved by students or not; but, in contrasting with students' interest in course books, much fascination was paid to VOA special English than course book.

### **Motivation**

The motivated factors brought to 11<sup>th</sup> form students by course book were shown in the following table corresponding to the Likert - scale

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Responses</b>							
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 2	<i>Neutral</i> 3	<i>Agree</i> 4	<i>Strongly agree</i> 5	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CV</i>
Interesting topics	4	<b>25</b>	10	10	1	2.58	0.9	0.37
Test	0	5	1	10	<b>34</b>	4.46	0.94	0.21
Challenging exercises	0	5	<b>35</b>	7	3	3.16	0.67	0.21
Level suitability	2	8	9	<b>28</b>	3	3.3	0.96	0.29
Teacher's support	4	4	2	10	<b>30</b>	3.44	0.97	0.28

**Figure 4: Motivated factors of course books**

Factors	Responses							
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 2	<i>Neutral</i> 3	<i>Agree</i> 4	<i>Strongly agree</i> 5	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CV</i>
Interesting topics	4	5	2	10	<b>29</b>	4.16	1.29	0.31
Listening to what impresses them most	2	2	4	16	<b>26</b>	4.24	1.03	0.24
Self practice	8	10	5	<b>15</b>	12	3.72	1.08	0.29
Level suitability	3	9	<b>26</b>	10	2	2.98	0.88	0.3
Listening to native speakers	1	8	1	<b>30</b>	10	4.2	1.18	0.28
Learning cultures	1	1	8	<b>25</b>	15	4.04	0.85	0.21

**Figure 5: Motivated factors of VOA special English**

According to the tables, Coefficient of variation (CV) and Standard Deviation (SD) were so high that Mean was not good enough to popularize; therefore, the researcher used Mode, which was about the highest frequency of a quantity, to analyze the data in stead of Mean.

First and foremost, interesting topics were considered as one of the motivated factors. With 25 students (figure 4), it was clear that Mode of



interesting topics of course books was “Disagree” while that of VOA special English was “Strongly agree” with 29 students choosing “Strongly agree” (figure 5). Moreover, according to the table, there was a tendency of students to disagree with the statement “The topics of listening sections are very interesting” because the percentage of students who chose “Strongly disagree” (4 students) and “Disagree” (25 students) made up nearly 60% of the total number of students. In contrast, more students seemed to find topics of VOA special English interesting with more than 70% of them chose two last items of the scale (10 students agreed and 29 ones strongly agreed that topics on VOA special English were interesting). The opportunity brought by VOA special English as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students were proved by the number of students tilted to the very right side of the scale with nearly 90% of them (about more than 40 students) felt free to listen to whatever they wanted.

The second factor that included in the motivation list was the final test which was mainly based on the exercises practiced in class. Basing on figure 4, Mode of this item was “Strongly agree” with more than half of students choosing it.

The next factor was level suitability which was considered as an importantly motivated factor for students. According to two tables, more students agreed that the difficulty of listening sections in course books was suitable for their level than that of VOA special English because Mode of level suitability was “Agree” for course books and “Neutral” for VOA special English.

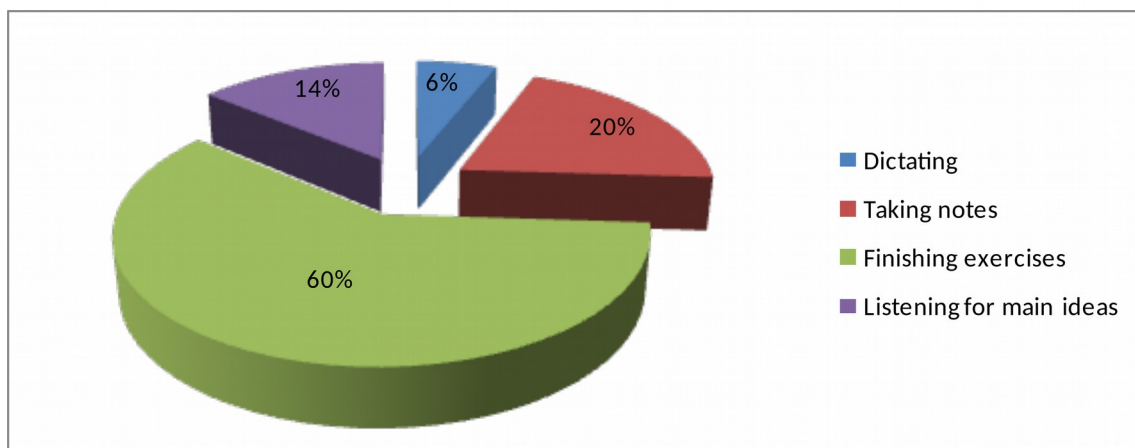
The fourth item included in motivated factors was teacher’s support. Because only in listening class, students received the teacher’s support; thus, only course books were provided this item in asking about student’s opinion

about motivated factors. Mode of this item was “Strongly agree” with 30 students choosing it.

Though it seemed that students faced no difficulty in listening with their teachers’ help, in the next item, they were not sure that the exercises were challenging enough for them to practice listening skills as 30 per 50 students in the Mode “Neutral” (figure 4).

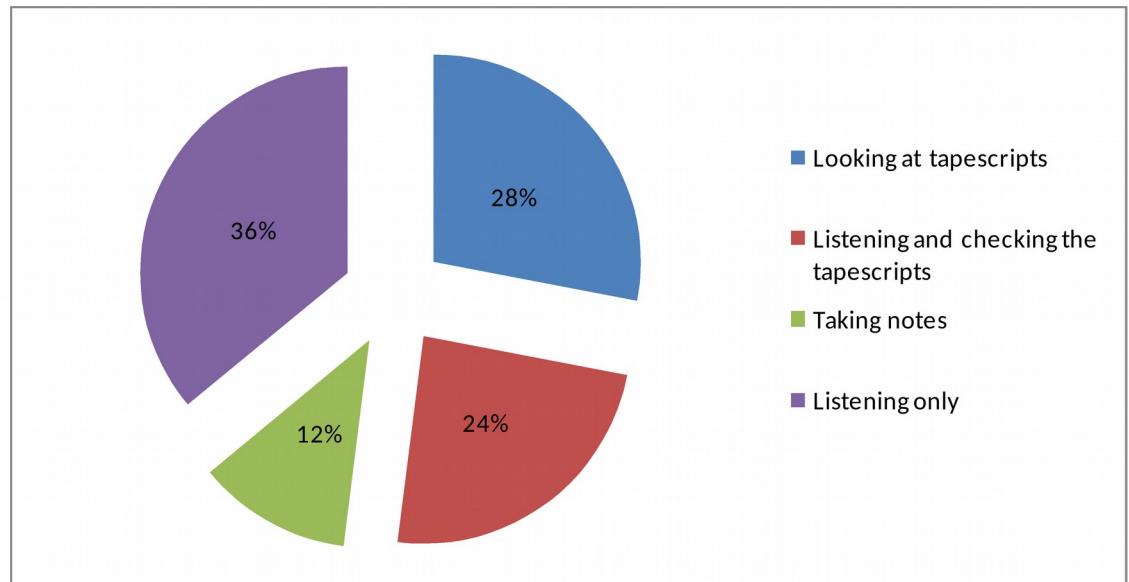
The two last factors in figure 5 were about what students could gain when listening to VOA special English. Mode of these items were “Agree” with 30 students for learning from native speakers and 25 students for learning cultures.

#### 4.2.2. Learning style and experiences



**Figure 6: Students' experience of listening to course books.**

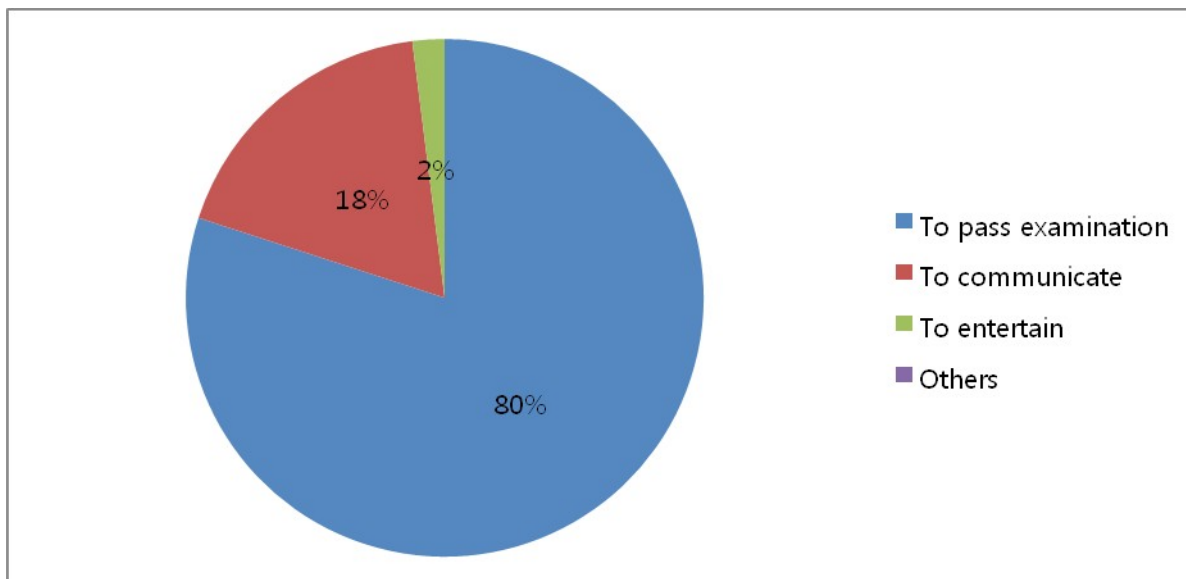
The above pie chart presented the finding about the student's experience of listening to course books. Dictating made up the smallest portion with only 6% while the biggest one was of finishing exercises (60%). With this high percentage, finishing exercises was the techniques which students used in listening to course books.



**Figure 7: Students' experience of listening to VOA special English**

Figure 7 illustrated that those students who had chance to listen to VOA special English at home, many of them only listened to it and did nothing to improve their listening skill. This group of students occupied 36%. The second technique they used while listening to VOA special English was looking at tape scripts with 28%. There was about 12% - the lowest number of students took notes while listening.

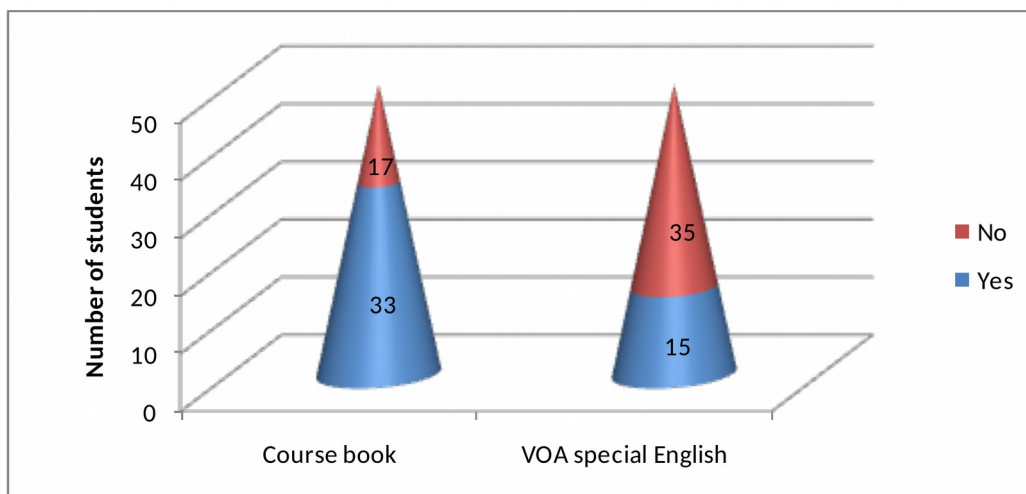
### 4.2.3. Learning goals



**Figure 8: Learning goals**

According to figure 8, the highest percentage was 80% of students learning English for the purpose of passing examination while only 18% for communicative functions of language. The lowest one was to entertain with only 2%.

### 4.2.4. Availability of sources



**Figure 9: Easiness of accessing materials**

From figure 9, it was observable that students found more difficult to access to VOA special English than course books. The number of students who could be able to use VOA special English (15 students) was two times less than that of course books (33 students). As the result, there were 35 of them who said that it was not easy for them to access to VOA special English.

### **FINDINGS FROM TEACHERS**

According to two teachers, although they knew VOA special English was a good source for students to practice listening skill, they have never used VOA special English to teach listening skill in An Duong High school.

When being asked what they thought about whether their students liked listening to VOA special English or course book, both of them said that students seemed to like the former one much more than the latter.

The teachers thought that their students only learnt English, especially listening skill for the purpose of passing the examination. However, they thought that maybe some of students were interested in English because they wanted to communicate with others in English.

The only issue that two teachers shared different opinion was level suitability of VOA special English. One teacher thought that VOA special English was difficult enough to motivate students in learning to listen while the other said that the language used in VOA special English could be too unfamiliar for students to listen to.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **4.3. Kinds of materials used in teaching and learning listening skill in An Duong High school**

There was no student offering other kinds of materials; thus, it could be concluded that apart from those given sources, 11th form students in An Duong High school had little chance to access to other types of listening materials. More importantly, none of them had chance to communicate with the foreigners, which resulted from the real condition provided for teaching and learning English in An Duong High school. Due to the fact that, it was a school in the countryside, students in that school, specifically 11<sup>th</sup> form students, had no opportunity to meet and practice real life communication with native speakers. The school condition (Tomlinson, 1998) directly affected the choice of students in choosing source of materials.

With more than a haft number of students listened to course book, it was clear that material was the easiest to be accessed by students in that school. For the choice of “teachers and friends”, because almost all of students only practiced listening English inside classroom, they were provided chance to listen to lecture from their teachers or to discussion or speech of other friends.

Although the percentage of “mass media” was not as high as the others, this result showed that students have been taking use of the mass media to find interesting and useful sources for practicing listening skill.

Since course books were the most widely used in An Duong High school, the researcher assumed that the evaluation of currently used materials in An Duong High school mainly focused on that kind of materials. Thus, the

next parts of this chapter concentrated on comparing the effectiveness of course book and VOA special English.

#### **4.4. Benefits brought by currently used materials as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school**

When being asked for reasons why they did not really like course books, some of the students stated that the themes of some lessons in their books seemed to be out of date and uninteresting. Added to this, some said that the quality of the recording was not good enough for them to listen to. More importantly, some of recordings were conducted by the non native speakers, sometimes even Vietnamese; thus, students found listening sections disappointing. The data collected from students was suitable for that of teachers. Both teachers said that their students did not find course books interesting. From their viewpoint, with some topics, even the teachers had no interest in; therefore, there was no surprise that their students paid less attention to listening section in course book. In addition to boring topics, some students said that the language in listening section seemed to be bookish; thus, they were provided less words of real communication. Those reasons sufficiently explained the result presented in figure 3.

What students thought about the topics in course books was exactly the same as that of the teachers. According to a teacher, course books were designed for long – term use; thus, they were not frequently updated, which made not only students but teachers gradually got less interested in dealing with the lessons again and again.

According to the teachers, the listening ability of students in An Duong High school was not good enough to cope with a completely new listening recording at the final examination, listening parts in tests was redesigned from



what they had learnt in books. From the researcher's viewpoint, that way of teaching and learning listening skill in An Duong High school seemed to be the adaptation of Audio – Lingual method which was discussed in study of Richards and Rogers (1986). Although listening skill was still being taught in that school, it was learnt in the way of memorizing things needed for the tests only. In other words, they were like “a tape recorder”, who passively tried to listen as discussed by Anderson and Lynch (1999). Therefore, students were not able to take part in the real communication with English.

Generally speaking, it would be said that students tended to completely rely on what was chosen to them in stead of checking it by themselves. Their way of thinking affected their choice when being asked whether they felt course books was suitable for their level or not. In contrast, their teachers said that some recordings were too difficult for them to listen to, which forced teachers to read out loud during the listening class. The result implied that students in An Duong High school were still passive in their study. Therefore, teachers were the ones who took responsibility of guiding and instructing them to more actively get involved in the learning process.

In addition to this, what techniques named as pedagogical methods used by teachers to cheer up their students to listen to the recording in the study of Morley (1991) would affect the learning process of students; which explained why teachers' willingness for help motivated their students as they would know how to deal with different kinds of listening sources.

About the difficulty of exercises, some of them said that they only finished the multiple choice exercises or True – False ones why the other kinds were, especially comprehension questions, too difficult for them to answer. Once again, this case showed that students in An Duong High school

did not realize the real importance of learning listening English. It was due to the fact that during the listening class, all they needed to do was finishing the given exercises. Therefore, students assumed that they were learning to finish listening exercises in stead of practice their listening ability. They were now learning listening for the exercises rather than for real communication as mentioned by Underwood (1991). Added to this, this situation alarmed that students were still lack of knowledge about how to listen to teaching purpose materials included in “realistic listening” (Harmer, 2003).

Although the course books and their aims were to get involved in the real communication, the reality of teaching and learning English in An Duong High school was still under the light of Grammar Translation method (Richards & Rogers, 1986). The oral skills, especially listening skill, were paid less attention on the contrary to grammar and written skills.

To sum up, it might be said that the benefits brought by course books as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school were only the good scores and good performance in examination.

#### **4.5. Benefits brought VOA special English as perceived by 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school**

On the contrary to course books, VOA special English brought students in An Duong High school more benefits rather than only overcoming examination.

First and foremost, VOA special English created chances for students to listen to what they were impressed on most, which course books could not bring to them. According to the teachers, VOA special English was good for students if they spent time on searching and listening to what they could be

able to catch up with. The result once more time proved that motivation factors as mentioned in studies Richards (2005) and Tomlinson (1998) was the key to encourage students in study.

Secondly, as mentioned in the previous part, students in An Duong High school had no chance to listen to native speakers; thus, thanks to VOA special English, it was possible for them to get on well with various accents of native speakers. Besides, some extra – linguistics benefits were brought to students such as cultures, lifestyle and so on. Thanks to this, students were able to widen their knowledge about the outside world, which help them much in their communication. That was the goal which Communicative Language Teaching method looked for.

However, there were some shortcomings which prevented students from taking full use of VOA special English. Firstly, the availability of VOA special English was not as good as course books. According to students, there were some other factors affected student's time and possibility to listen to VOA special English such as how much time their parents allowed them to use computer and internet frequently or a large amount of homework they had to do. Therefore, it would say that in this point, VOA special English was less effective than course books. The availability of the resources which was included in contextual factors (Richards, 2005, Tomlison, 1998) would affect the use of it in a particular situation of teaching and learning. In addition to the accessing possibility, the researcher found that the ways of finishing exercises during listening to the course books of students affected their learning style and experiences while listening to VOA special English. That could be explained that they got used to with using exercises as hints to find out information in the recordings; thus, while listening to VOA, in which no

exercises were offered, they properly looked at tape scripts. Therefore, what was discussed by Richards (2005) and Tomlinson (1998) about the impact of learning style on the effectiveness of materials was clearly showed out in that situation.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

After significant findings were revealed through analysis in previous part of this chapter, the researcher would like to give some pedagogical recommendations which best suit the learning and teaching context in An Duong High school.

### **4.6. For the students**

Firstly, it would be said that students should change their understanding about what for and how to learn English, especially the oral skills. Students should be provided some seminars or project about the real function of language in general as well as the importance of learning English. Added to this, their awareness of communicative competence should be raised so that gradually, they are able to realize that they are learning English for their real life communication apart from the purpose of passing examination. Though it needs some period of time for this changing, it is strongly recommended that the English teachers should be responsible for raising students' understanding.

Secondly, because it is the time of “learner – centered” tendency, students should be more active in their learning. In stead of mainly relying on what is chosen for them, students should take best use of the other available sources for practicing their English, including listening skill. In recent days, thanks to the development of mass media, more and more English programs,

including some teaching purpose ones, are available on TV, radio, internet and so on such as news report, English stories, film trailers, movie extracts or even English songs. Thus, apart from the listening sections provided in course books, students are allowed to listen to a wide range of materials, which can bring them the real English needed for communication as well as the other benefits like cultural issues, background knowledge and so on.

Finally, from the researcher's viewpoint, mastering a goal of good listeners is not easy if there is no regular practice with suitable methods. Therefore, students should ask for experience from teachers as well as their friends so that they can find the most effective methods for their study.

#### **4.7. For the teachers and educational administrators**

Since the exploitation of authentic materials in general seems to be unpopular among English teachers in An Duong High school, the researcher would prefer suggest that teachers' awareness of using authentic materials should be raised. They can hold some professional meetings in which those with better understanding of applying authentic materials can share their experience with the others. Besides, in teaching contests, in stead of teaching the course books again and again, teachers should be willing to choose the other kinds of materials to experiment in their classes so that they can evaluate and comment on the content as well as the appropriateness of those materials.

However, authentic materials with their unfamiliar language can frighten students with lower level as asserted in study of White (1988); thus, teachers should be careful in choosing and adapting it in the class. They should spend time on searching and designing lesson wisely in order to best suit their students' level. Moreover, the content of the adapted materials should have something similar to the themes and topics of the course books so

that when dealing with those kinds of lessons, their students have had some general knowledge as well as needed vocabulary. For the difficulty of schedule and students' purpose of passing examination, teachers should negotiate with students by asking them to finish the easy listening section at home and use the in – class listening section for further practice with authentic materials.

Additionally, it seems that students in An Duong High school have less chance to speak with the native speakers, which prevents them from being confident in real life communication and realizing the communicative function of English. Thus, it is suggested that the administrators should provide more chances for them to practice speaking with foreigners through the internship programs with those from English -speaking countries.

Last but not least, as mentioned in the previous part, it is impossible for all students to access authentic materials, the teachers should prepare as many lessons adapting authentic materials as possible so that their students have more chances to get on well with them. Nevertheless, it is impractical to replace all listening sections in course books by authentic materials (Nunan, 1999); the authentic should be used as a source of supplementary materials. Therefore, teachers should be more careful in choosing authentic materials so that the aims and objectives of lessons were still achieved.

**Summary:** The analysis in this chapter provides the answers for the three research questions. It was observable that course books still played dominant role in teaching and learning English in An Duong High school due to the purpose of overcoming the examination of both teachers and students in that school; therefore, it was difficult to apply the new authentic materials in teaching and learning context of that school. However, decreasing those

weaknesses is not impossible as the researcher have suggested some recommendations for students, teachers and educational administrator to enhance the use of authentic materials.

# CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

## 5.1. Major findings of the research

From the thorough analysis and discussion of the data collected from the survey questionnaires and interviews, significant findings based on the research questions were identified.

Firstly, the study revealed that authentic materials, particularly VOA special English, still remained a new issue to both teachers and 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school. To be specific, both two teachers have not used VOA special English in their listening class and nearly half of students have never used VOA special English to practice their listening skill. Almost all of them preferred course books because they were best suitable for the real condition of that school.

Secondly, it was discovered that although VOA special English was a new term to students, they were really interested in listening to it as they could practice listening skill as well as widen their background knowledge with the cultural issues including in each VOA program. However, it was clear that due to the limitation of some factors as internet, computer and time for listening, students there found difficult to access this kind of material whenever they wanted.

Thirdly, the study helped find out the real situation of learning and teaching listening skill in An Duong High school, which was still under the light of Grammar – Translation Method as less attention was paid to oral practice. Added to this, teachers taught for the purpose of helping students to overcome the examination, and students learnt English with no more than the



score of the tests. Moreover, it seemed that students were not sufficiently provided the techniques applied to deal with different kinds of materials and different kinds of listening exercises.

## **5.2. Limitations of the study**

Despite the researcher's considerable effort, the study has certain limitations due to the time constraint and the researcher's limited ability

Firstly, the number of teachers involved in the study was relatively low in comparison with the number of those teaching in An Duong High school. However, this shortcoming was caused by the trouble that the researcher had to deal with during carrying out the study.

Added to this, the number of students who were considered as the main participants of the study was not large enough to popularize the general situation of teaching and learning listening skill in that school as well as the other ones.

Moreover, the listening sections adapting VOA special English was not sufficient enough to generalize anything. Although the researcher was extremely interested in adapting VOA special English, there were some objective factors such as teachers' approval and limited time of teaching practicum which made the study process was not as good as expected.

In sum, due to the researcher's inexperience and shortage of time, limitations in the study are unavoidable. However, serious work and the great efforts of the researcher in selecting and justifying the methodology of the study well ensure the reliability and validity of the results.

### **5.3. Suggestions for further studies**

As mentioned above, the exploitation of authentic materials in An Duong High school remains novel in learning and teaching listening skill; thus, the researcher offered that there were great chances for others to carry out further studies.

Firstly, in term of population, the further studies can expand the sampling of the participants, both teachers and students. Moreover, more teachers as well as students from different schools can get involved in the study to increase the validity of the research.

Secondly, as this paper only focused on listening skill, the further ones can be carried out in different language skills. This would provide comprehensive of pictures of the exploitation authentic materials in the second language learning and teaching context in Vietnam.

Finally, this study could be considered as the first step for other to go deeper on this field. The researcher suggested that the other researchers could carry out the other survey, in which they are going to compare between classes using VOA special English with the ones did not.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Questionnaire on currently used materials

*This survey questionnaire is designed for my study on “An investigation in the application of VOA special English to teach listening skill to 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school”. Your assistance in completing the following questions is greatly appreciated. You can be sure that you will not be identified in any discussion of the data*

### **Personal information**

Your name: .....

Your school: .....

Your gender: .....

How long have you been studying English? .....

### **A. Interest and motivation:**

**1. Do you like listening to the course book and listening tape provided? Give your reason.**

- a. Yes, I like it very much
- b. Yes, I like it but not very much

c. No, I don't like it at all

Reason:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What is your opinion about the following statements about the listening parts in the course book?

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
a. The topics of listening section are very interesting					
b. The listening exercises will be used in the final tests.					
c. The exercises are challenging enough for me to practice listening					
d. I find listening sections easy because they are relevantly chosen for my level.					
e. When I listen to the records, my teacher often encourages me how to practice listening skill effectively					

**B. Learning style and experience**

**3. What do you do to improve your listening skill when listening to the recording?**

- a. I often try to dictate the speech
- b. I try to catch up with key words and take notes.
- c. I only finish the given exercises.
- d. I try to grasp the general content of the record
- e. Others

**C. Learning goals and requirement in term of language and language used**

**4. What do you learn English for?**

- a. To pass examination
- b. To communicate
- c. To entertain
- d. Others



**D. Availability of sources**

**5. Is it easy for you to practice listening to the course book again? Give you reasons**

a. Yes

b. No

Reason:

.....  
.....

**6. What listening sources are available to you?**

a. Course books

b. Mass media (TV, internet, radio ...)

c. Native speakers

d. Teachers and friends

e. All of above

*Thank you very much for your assistance!*

## APPENDIX 2

### Questionnaire on using of VOA special English

*This survey questionnaire is designed for my study on “An investigation in the application of VOA special English to teach listening skill to 11<sup>th</sup> form students in An Duong High school”. Your assistance in completing the following questions is greatly appreciated. You can be sure that you will not be identified in any discussion of the data*

#### **Personal information**

Your name: .....

Your school: .....

Your gender: .....

How long have you been studying English? .....

#### **A. Interest and motivation**

##### **1. Do you like listening to VOA special English?**

- a. Yes, I like it very much
- b. Yes, I like it but not very much

c. No, I don't like it at all

2. What is your opinion about the following statements about listening to VOA special English?

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
a. There are lots of interesting topics on VOA special English					
b. I am able to choose to listen to what impresses me most					
c. With tape script provided, I can self practice listening					
d. VOA special English is suitable with my level					
e. With VOA special English, I have chance to listen to real English from native speakers with various accents					
f. Listening to VOA special English, I can learn about the cultures of other countries					

**B, Learning style and experience** (answer the following question if you listen to VOA special English at home after being introduced to it in the class)

**3. What do you do to improve your listening skill while listening to VOA?**

- a. I often look at the tape script
- b. I grasp the content of it and then check it with the typescripts
- c. I take notes the key words
- d. I just listen to it

**C. Availability of the source**

**4. Is it easy for you to access VOA? Give your reason**

- a. Yes
- b. No,

Reason:

.....  
.....

*Thank you very much for your assistance!*

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Questions for interviewing**

1. What do you think your students practice English for?
2. From your viewpoint, what do your students like listening to, course book or VOA special English?
3. Have you ever used VOA special English to teach listening skill to your students?
4. Do you think the VOA special English is suitable for you students? Why?

# APPENDIX 4a

## Transcript of teacher A's interview

### Researcher (R) and Teacher (T)

**R:** Good afternoon! Welcome and thank you for taking part in my interview

**T:** You are welcome!

**R:** My name is Nguyen Thi Hoai Phuong. I am 4<sup>th</sup> year student of University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University. I am carrying out a small survey for my graduation paper namely “The application of VOA special English in teaching listening skill in An Duong High school”. I would like to invite you to answer some questions for my thesis. Are you ready?

**T:** Yes, I am

**R:** Firstly, how do you feel about the listening classes in which I applied VOA special English in teaching listening skill?

**T:** Well, I think it is good, very interesting. Honestly, it has been the first time I saw my students feel excited about listening section.

**R:** So from your viewpoint, what do your students practice English for?

**T:** I am sure that almost all of them learn English because it is a required subject and one of three main subjects that are used in graduation exam. But I think that there are some of them want to study it because they like using it in communication. But the number of those students is very small.

**R:** Thank you. So do you think which kind of material your students like listening to, course books or VOA special English?

**T:** After your introduction of VOA, I think that students seem to like VOA more than course books. I think that the topics in course books are somehow out of date while there are various topics in VOA for students to choose from.

**R:** Thank you. So have you ever used authentic materials, particularly VOA special English to teach listening skill for your students?

**T:** No, not yet. You know, I have to follow the schedule of the course books, and the school condition is not good enough for me to use VOA special English.

**R:** Can you explain more about the condition?

**T:** Yeah. The number of cassette players is not sufficient enough for us to teach listening skill. Sometimes, I have to read out loud the tape scripts during the listening classes. Moreover, there are lots of extracurricular activities so I have not much time for searching and designing lesson from other sources apart from course books.

**R:** So do you think VOA special English is suitable for your students?

**T:** To some extent, it is suitable. But if you want to use it, you have to carefully choose because some of them are higher than the students' level. I think that though 11<sup>th</sup> form students are supposed to be at elementary, their listening skill is just of the beginners.

**R:** Thank you very much for your answers. Wish you a nice day.

**T:** Thanks. Good luck for you graduation paper.

# **APPENDIX 4b**

## **Transcript of teacher B's interview**

### **Researcher (R) and Teacher (T)**

**R:** Good afternoon! Welcome and thank you for taking part in my interview

**T:** You are welcome!

**R:** My name is Nguyen Thi Hoai Phuong. I am 4<sup>th</sup> year student of University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University. I am carrying out a small survey for my graduation paper namely “The application of VOA special English in teaching listening skill in An Duong High school”. I would like to invite you to answer some questions for my thesis. Are you ready?

**T:** Yes. Let's start

**R:** Firstly, how do you feel about the listening classes in which I applied VOA special English in teaching listening skill?

**T:** Well, I think it is so so. Students are seldom interested in listening section because this skill is difficult to them

**R:** So from your viewpoint, what do your students practice English for?

**T:** They are learning for the examination and tests. Especially, for listening skill, it is the test that forces them to learn to listen. In the final test, the listening part is redesigned from what they have listened during the semester.



So they try to remember everything to finish the questions in stead of practicing listening skill.

**R:** Thank you. So do you think which kind of material your students like listening to, course books or VOA special English?

**T:** It depends. For those who want to study English for examination, they will like course books, of course. In contrast, the others may like VOA because it provides them language for communication. And maybe because it is new to them.

**R:** Thank you. So have you ever used authentic materials, particularly VOA special English to teach listening skill for your students?

**T:** No, not yet. Personally, I think that following the strict schedule with course books means that there is no time to practice anything else. But I think students can use it as a supplementary source at home.

**R:** So do you think VOA special English is suitable for your students?

**T:** I don't think so. Very few pieces of news on VOA are at level of students why the rest seems to be too difficult for them. Even with the course books, sometimes I have to read the tape scripts because if letting them listen to the recording, they can hear nothing. So VOA which is not evaluated in advance can't suit students' level.

**R:** Thank you very much for your answers.

**T:** You are welcome.

# APPENDIX 5a

## LISTENING SECTION

### People's background

#### Before you listen

**Work in pairs.** Answer the following questions.

1. Do you know other women who also won the US National Medal of Science?
2. What do you know about her (them)?

Listen and repeat:

self-testing	equipment	kidney
Miles Laboratories	liver launch	diabetes

#### While you listen

You will hear someone talking about another woman who won the US National Medal of Science. Listen to the talk and do the following tasks.

**Task 1.** Decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F). Correct the false information

1. Helen Murray Free's invention is used to measure blood glucose levels.
2. She was born in 1933.
3. Helen has no longer lived in India.
4. Helen worked for both Miles Laboratories and drug company Bayer.
5. Helen's brother is the co-author of her books

**Task 2.** Listen again and write the missing words

Another scientist has made life (1) \_\_\_\_\_ for people with the disease diabetes. Helen Murray Free invented (2) \_\_\_\_\_ that lets diabetics measure their own (3) \_\_\_\_\_ at home. Helen Free developed dry reagents for urine testing. Reagents produce a (4) \_\_\_\_\_ or lack of reaction – important in medical testing. She said she is proud of having (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to Clinistix Reagent Strips. When placed in a person's (6) \_\_\_\_\_, they can provide information about conditions like diabetes, infections and (7) \_\_\_\_\_ and kidney damage.

**After you listen**

**Work in groups.** Summarize briefly the information about Helen Murray Free. Then retell the summary to the class.

*Thousands of Discoveries in 10-Year Study of World's Oceans* Retrieved 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 at <http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/Worlds-Oceans-Study-Women-Science-106897003.html>

# APPENDIX 5b

## LISTENING SECTION

### Holidays

#### **Before you listen.**

**Work in pair.** Discuss with your partner about the following questions

1. Have you ever gone on a trip during summer holiday?
2. Describe your trip with some main points such as time, place, with whom, our activities there and you feelings.

#### **While you listen.**

You are going to listen to a friend talking about his summertime vacations. Listen carefully and finish the tasks that follow

**Task 1.** Answer the following questions:

1. When and where did his best vacation take place?
2. With whom did he go with?
3. How long did he go on his vacation?
4. Where did he sleep, a hotel or a campground?

**Task 2.** Decide whether the statements are True (T) or False (F)

1. At the time, he was living in the East of the US.
2. They did not check in a hotel.
3. It was much more comfortable for them to stay in a campground than in a hotel.
4. After visiting Washington, D.C., they went to Canada.
5. They were not allowed to enter Canada.
6. They spent two days in Quebec City.

**After you listen.**

**Work in group.** Each group is given a card with some information about the place in the card. Imagine that you have had a vacation at that place. Discuss within your group and report your journey (using the vocabulary from the recording you have listened to).

Source: *Summer vacations*. Retrieved 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 at [http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/podcasts/show\\_podcast.php?issue\\_id=1809828](http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/podcasts/show_podcast.php?issue_id=1809828)