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**INVESTIGATING LEARNER AUTONOMY: A  
STUDY OF ENHANCING COMMUNICATION  
SKILL COURSE FOR THE FIRST-YEAR  
MAINSTREAM STUDENTS OF THE FELTE,  
ULIS, VNU**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Learner autonomy in learning English is one of the greatest concerns of learners of English. This study investigates the first-year mainstream students' autonomy in learning pronunciation at the Faculty of English Language Teacher

Education, University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University as well as the effectiveness of Enhancing Communication Skill Course.

The study used combination of questionnaires, interviews and observations with participants of 85 students and 2 teachers of the FELTE to collect necessary data. The most remarkable finding was that all learning strategies namely metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies along with making reflection, doing homework and keeping learning journals were employed by students in learning pronunciation, among which cognitive and social strategies were more favorable ones. The paper was, therefore, expected to serve as a reference for both learners of English and other researchers of the same field.

Furthermore, the research results have shown the objectivity and validity of the application of these strategies in pronunciation class as well as effectiveness of the pronunciation course which greatly helps to improve students' pronunciation as well as their learning autonomy.

The researcher's final exploration is that the application of learning strategies in learning pronunciation autonomously may only be fully achieved if the teacher gives more careful guidance and control over their students' self-learning. Meanwhile, students themselves need to improve their awareness of self-study and set their own learning pronunciation methods in which they can learn best.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

FELTE	: Faculty of English Language Teacher Education
ULIS	: University of Languages and International Studies

VNU : Vietnam National University  
BBC : British Broadcasting Corporation  
VOA : Voice of America

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*This initial chapter outlines the research problem and rationale of the study as well as its scope and significance. More importantly, the aims and objectives of the study are highlighted by three research questions. Finally, the framework of the paper serves as a compass to orientate the readers throughout the research.*

### **1.1. The statement of the problem and rationale for the study**

For many decades, English language plays a dominant role in the modern world. Each of us has ever been encountered with the necessity to learn the language for many reasons. For learners who are studying English as a second language, the ability to communicate fluently and effectively in English has been of primary significance. As a result, the communication language learning is considered a prominent approach in which learners pay more attention to speaking and listening skills and need to perceive that these skills require not only vocabulary and ideas but also a reasonable pronunciation. “Learners with good pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect” (Yates, 2002, p. 1). In other words, pronunciation learning is emphasized as a key to gain full communicative competence.

Nevertheless, foreign language teaching and learning, especially English Language Teaching in Vietnamese upper secondary schools, has been strongly influenced by the traditional approaches like grammar translation method with their major focus on grammar, reading and writing. That confirms the reason why “students have little opportunity to develop their communicative competence in English” (Nunan, 1991b, p.25), especially pronunciation. As the result, when experiencing the new English learning environment at the Faculty of English

Language Teacher Education (FELTE), University of Language and International Studies (ULIS), Vietnam National University (VNU); a large proportion of the first-year mainstream students find it embarrassed to produce correct pronunciation.

Actually, there has been a prominent shift within the field of language learning and teaching with greater emphasis being put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching over the last twenty years. Encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning, as well as to develop an ability to collaborate effectively, is regarded as a key feature of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Dearing, 1997 cited in O’Leary, 2007). In other words, learner autonomy is seriously taken into consideration. Additionally, Little (2000a) acknowledged that the more autonomous language learners are the better language learners and users. Thus, developing learners’ autonomy is of great importance.

Each semester, English Division I have held Enhancing Communication Skills course or pronunciation course which allows first-year mainstream students to learn English pronunciation. Being exposed right in its name, the main purpose of this course is to help students improve their pronunciation ability and their communicative skills as well. However, because of the reality of the limited in-class time in the pronunciation course (100 minutes or 2 periods per week), the first-year students of the FELTE officially have very little opportunity to obtain enough knowledge as well as take much needed practice in class. Therefore, it raises to me a question whether this short course has enhanced learners’ autonomy in helping them improve their pronunciation.

These assumptions have led me to undertake the study entitled ***“Investigating learner autonomy: a study of Enhancing Communication Skill Course for the first-year mainstream students of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU”***, with the hope of gaining a better understanding about reality of learner autonomy in learning pronunciation as well as the effectiveness of pronunciation course, thus some recommendations may be proposed in order to improve the quality of learning pronunciation at the FELTE.

## **1.2. Aims of the study and Research questions**

The purposes of this study are to investigate the first-year mainstream students' autonomy in learning pronunciation and to evaluate the effectiveness of Enhancing Communication Skill Course of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU. Specifically, it is attempted to the following questions:

**Question 1:** What strategies are used in learning pronunciation by the first-year mainstream students of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU?

**Question 2:** How these strategies are exploited in pronunciation course to enhance learner autonomy?

**Question 3:** To what extent does the pronunciation course help the first-year mainstream students improve their pronunciation?

## **1.3. Significance of the study**

Conducting this research, the researcher expected to identify the first-year students' autonomy in learning pronunciation at the FELTE, ULIS, VNU and the most common strategies students used to improve their pronunciation ability as well as evaluation of how these strategies were exploited; especially the effectiveness of Enhancing Communication Skill Course designed specifically for the first-year mainstream students. Once completed, the result of the research could be used as an input for learners in learning English especially in pronunciation. The research would also serve as the reference for those who want to conduct a research in learner autonomy. Moreover, the findings would help students enhance their autonomy in mastering pronunciation as well as choosing the strategies that are most appropriate with them in order to improve their communicative skills. Additionally, some recommendations of the study might be adapted to increase the performance of pronunciation course. Thus it can be of great benefits for students in their learning pronunciation at college level.

## **1.4. Scope of the study**

The study was limited to the search for the first-year mainstream students' autonomy in learning English pronunciation through Enhancing Communication

Skill Course of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU. The work involved firstly the investigation into the reality of which strategies were used in learning English pronunciation of the first-year students of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU. Then it identified the effectiveness of these strategies and how they were employed in pronunciation course. It finally suggested some recommendations to improve the quality of pronunciation course of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU.

### **1.5. Organization of the study**

The thesis was designed with five chapters.

**Chapter 1** (Introduction) provided a flow of information the rationales, the aims and research questions, the scope, the significance as well as the methods of the study.

**Chapter 2** (Literature review) offered the theoretical background of the study, including discussion of key concepts and the related studies.

**Chapter 3** (Methodology) described the research setting, participants, instruments of data collections as well as the procedure employed to carry out data analysis.

**Chapter 4** (Data analysis and discussion) presented, analyzed and discussed the findings that the researcher found out from the data collected according to the three research questions.

**Chapter 5** (Conclusion) summarized the answer to the two research questions, several pedagogical recommendations concerning the research topic, the limitation of the research as well as some suggestions for further studies. Following this chapter are the references and appendices.

*In summary, the statement of the problem and the rationale of the study together with the aims and research questions, the significance and the scope are stated in this chapter in order to show the researcher's intention of conducting the study. And organization is also presented.*

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

*This chapter presents some theoretical background based on which the study is carried out. Firstly, a detailed presentation of research background will be described with the key concepts, including “learner autonomy”, “components of learner autonomy” and “pronunciation”. Some descriptions about learner autonomy in learning pronunciation are also dealt with. Finally, a brief review of related studies will be provided, which serves as the foundation for the aims and objectives of this research paper.*

### **2.1. Learner autonomy**

#### **2.1.1. Definition of learner autonomy**

As a matter of fact, different scholars define the term “learner autonomy” in a number of academic ways. In the field of linguistics, “autonomy” is “the right of a group of people to govern itself or to organize its own activities” as defined in Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (Cambridge, 2005). In other words, it is the ability of people to make decisions without help from others. In language learning and teaching, “learner autonomy” can be used to imply the act of taking a great degree of control over the content and methods of their learning.

The term “learner autonomy” was initially introduced in *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning* written by Henry Holec in 1981. Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p.3). This very first definition brings us some importance implications that autonomous learners 1) are motivated learners in their commitment and proactiveness and 2) are able to freely apply their knowledge and skills outside the immediate context of learning. Also frequently cited for the definition of the term is the view by Little (1991), who stated that learner autonomy is “essentially the

matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process of content of learning - a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action" (Little, 1991, p.4). Along a similar line, Dickinson (1987) saw learner autonomy as a situation "in which the learner is totally responsible for all of decisions concerned with his (or her) learning and the implementation of those decisions" (Dickinson, 1987, p.11). Summarizing the existing literature; Lap, T.Q (2005) proposed a learner autonomy framework described with four factors namely 1) *cognitive factors* (ability or capacity), 2) *affective factor* (attitudes, willingness, readiness, and self-confidence), 3) *meta-cognitive factor* (setting learning goals, choosing learning materials, planning learning activities, monitoring and self-evaluating progress) and 4) *social factors* (working in co-operation with others which promote interactions and scaffolds, a condition for enhancing one's independent problem-solving skills) (Lap, T.Q, 2005, p.23).

The above-mentioned definitions slightly differ from each other in the way to define learner autonomy. This is understandable because as Little (2002) emphasized, learner autonomy is "a slippery concept" and "notoriously difficult to define precisely" (Little, 2002 cited in Dafei, 2007). However, the researcher noted that most of the definition of learner autonomy shares a consensus that autonomous learners understand the purpose of their learning program, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, acknowledging learning goals, take initiatives in planning and applying learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness. Taking into account the complexity of the concept, the researcher would rather take Holec's definition in which it is possible to see that autonomous learners take a really proactive role in the process of their learning. In this way, it appropriately replies the aim of the study is to better understand about the reality of learner autonomy in learning pronunciation thus some recommendations may be proposed in order to improve the quality of learning pronunciation at the FELTE as well as the quality of pronunciation course.

### **2.1.2. The importance of learner autonomy**

There are a number of changes in social sciences, economy, socio-culture, politics, etc. in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that support the development of learner autonomy. In this study, only pedagogical reasons related to education in general and language education in particular will be presented.

1. a reaction against behaviorism in medicine, politics, music, poetry, schooling, psychology, education, philosophy, and linguistics;
2. the emergence of "autonomy" as an educational ideal, with a direct influence on adult education in Europe;
3. developments in technology contributing to the spread of autonomy and self-access;
4. adult learners and different learning needs, resulting in flexible learning programs with varying degrees of learner-centeredness and self-direction;
5. commercialization of much language provision, together with the movement to heighten consumer awareness, leading to learners as consumers, making informed choices in the market;
6. increase in school and university populations, encouraging the development of new educational structures for dealing with large numbers of learners. Some form of self-directed learning with institutional support in the shape of counseling and resource centers, has been found helpful.

**(Gremmo, 1995, p.152)**

In response to above changes, learner autonomy serves itself as the best solution to meet changing needs.

Firstly, increasingly the demands of our present-day society of knowledge dictate that "the requirements of education are less focused on the production of individuals with specific skills, and more on lifelong learning and the production of autonomous individuals who are capable of training themselves to meet changing economic needs and circumstances" (Benson, 2000 cited in Dafei, 2007). In the field of second and foreign language teaching and learning, constructivist and social constructivist theories which argued that knowledge is not there waiting for learners



but requires for a process of personal and social construction are gradually becoming dominant theories. Therefore, learning is regarded as an active and interactive process of knowledge construction.

Secondly, Trim (1988 cited in McCarthy, 1998) quite rightly reminded us that:

"No school, or even university, can provide its pupils with all the knowledge and the skills they will need in their active adult lives. It is more important for a young person to have an understanding of himself or herself, an awareness of the environment and its workings, and to have learned how to think and how to learn" (McCarthy, 1998, p.3).

Obviously, the importance of learner autonomy is highly appreciated. In language education, it is a fact that not everything can be taught in class; but "even if it could, a teacher will not always be around if and when students wish to use the language in real life" (Cotteral, 1995 cited in Harmer, 2003, p.335).

Thirdly, according to Deci (1995 cited in Mohanty, 2010, p.335), "feeling free and volitional in one's actions" is a basic human need. In other words, an autonomous person is one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out choices which govern his or her actions. This argument came up as the result of the humanistic approach and learner-centered approach in language education in the 1980s and 1990s.

Last but not least, second language will proceed most efficiently if learners are allowed to develop and exercise autonomy (Nunan, 1997; 2000). From the reality of language learning classroom, students need to develop their own learning strategies to compensate for the limited class time and to counter the passivity that is an enemy of true learning.

### **2.1.3. Components of learner autonomy and routes to autonomy**

#### **2.1.3.1. Components of learner autonomy**

In order to develop learner autonomy, it is obviously essential to identify its components which reveal the characteristics of an autonomous learner. Benson (2003) clearly and concisely defined main components of learner autonomy.

### **2.1.3.1.1. Learning strategies**

For a long time there has been abundance of research regarding learning strategies which are an essential part of effective language learning.

Learning strategies can be understood in a broad sense or a narrow sense. Some study used the term learning strategies to refer to larger concepts in language learning, O'Malley & Chamot (1990) defined learning strategies as "the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.1). In this study, it is more appropriate to consider the narrow sense of learning strategies so that a deeper look into the matter can be taken. According to Rubin and Wenden (1987 cited in Giang, T.H, 2010, p.19) learning strategies are "the behaviours learners engage in to learn and regulate the learning of second language".

Learning strategies have been differentiated into three categories depending on the level or type of processing involved: 1) *metacognitive strategies*, 2) *cognitive strategies* and 3) *social/affective strategies* (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.43).

#### **Metacognitive strategies**

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p.44), metacognitive strategies are higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity. Learners may apply the following metacognitive strategies to a variety of learning tasks.

- a. *advance organisers*: planning the learning activity in advance - "You review before you go into class".
- b. *directed attention*: deciding to concentrate on general aspects of a learning task.
- c. *selective attention*: deciding to pay attention to specific parts of the language input or the situation that will help learning.
- d. *self-management*: trying to arrange the appropriate conditions for learning - "I sit in the front of the class so I can see the teacher".
- e. *advance preparation*: planning the linguistic components for a forthcoming language task

- f. *self-monitoring*: checking one's performance as one speaks - "Sometimes I cut short a word because I realize I've said it wrong".
- g. *delayed production*: deliberately postponing speaking so that one may learn by listening "I talk when I have to, but I keep it short and hope I'll be understood".
- h. *self-evaluation*: checking how well one is doing against one's own standards
- i. *self-reinforcement*: giving oneself rewards for success

### **Cognitive strategies**

As O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p.44) defined, cognitive strategies "operate directly in incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning". On the contrary to metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies may be limited in application to the specific type of task in the learning activity. Typical strategies that have been discussed in the cognitive category include:

- a. *repetition*: imitating other people's speech overtly or silently.
- b. *resourcing*: making use of language materials such as dictionaries.
- c. *translation*: using the first language as a basis for understanding and/or producing the L2.
- d. *note-taking*: writing down the gist etc of texts.
- e. *deduction*: conscious application of rules to processing the L2.
- f. *auditory representation*: keeping a sound or sound sequence in the mind - "When you are trying to learn how to say something, speak it in your mind first".
- g. *key word*: using key word memory techniques, such as identifying an L2 word with an L1 word that it sounds like.
- h. *elaboration*: 'relating new information to other concepts in memory'.
- i. *transfer*: using previous knowledge to help language learning - "If they're talking about something I have already learnt (in Spanish), all I have to do is remember the information and try to put it into English"

- j. *inferencing*: guessing meanings by using available information - "I think of the whole meaning of the sentence, and then I can get the meaning of the new word".
- k. *question for clarification*: asking a teacher or native for explanation, help, etc.

### **Social/affective strategies**

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p.45) stated that social /affective strategies "represent a broad grouping that involves either interaction with another person or ideational control over affect". Generally, they are employed for a wide range of tasks. The typical strategies are:

- a. *cooperation*: working with fellow-students on language
- b. *question for clarification*: asking a teacher or native for explanation, help, etc.
- c. *self-task*: using mental control to assure oneself that a learning activity will be successful or to reduce anxiety about a task.

#### **2.1.3.1.2. Learning motivation**

It is accepted for most fields of learning that motivation is essential to success. Motivation is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (Harmer, 2003, p.51). As Brown (2000 cited in Harmer, 2003, p.51) pointed out, a cognitive view of motivation included factors such as the need for exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge, and ego enhancement. In Foreign Language Learning theories, it is suggested that motivation can be defined in relation to two factors: 1) the *needs* of the learners and 2) their *attitudes* towards the second language and the second language community. In other words, learners are motivated if they need to learn the language in order to achieve a goal or if they want to communicate with speakers of the target language and learn about the country where the language is spoken.

According to Gardner (1985), motivation is comprised of three components: 1) desire to achieve a goal, 2) effort extended in this direction and 3) satisfaction with task. A "motivated learner" is, therefore, defined as one who is: 1) eager to

learn the language, 2) willing to expend effort on the learning activity, and 3) willing to sustain the learning activity (Gardner, 1985, p. 10). As a result, motivation plays a significant role in this model in three ways. First, it mediates any relation between language attitudes and language achievement. Second, it has a causal relationship with language anxiety. Third, it has a direct role in the informal learning context, showing the voluntary nature of the motivated learners' participation in informal second language learning contexts.

In another study, William and Burden (1997 cited in Harmer, 2003, p.51) suggested that motivation is a “state of cognitive arousal” which provokes a “decision of act” as a result of which there is “a sustained intellectual and/or physical effort” so that a person can achieve some “previously set goal”. They went on to indicate that the strength of that motivation would depend on how much value the individual places on the outcome he or she wished to achieve.

#### **2.1.3.1.3. Self-esteem**

Closely linked to motivation as well as learner autonomy is the concept of self-esteem that is formed from a comparison of self-image and the ideal self (Lawrence, 1988). Kavussanu and Harnisch (2000 cited in Penlington, 2004, p.27) described components or dimensions of self-esteem as feeling competence, having power over the learning situation, feeling valued by others and having a sense of self-worth. For many students, self-esteem means working to build their skills, confidence, and, most importantly, self-worth.

Conversely, a lack of self-esteem is likely to lead to negative attitudes towards his capability as a learner, and to deterioration in cognitive performance, thus confirming his view as incapable of learning (Wenden, 1998 cited in Le, P.T.N, 2010, p.19).

#### **2.1.3.2. Routes to autonomy**

It must be noted that students do not automatically become autonomous students. They may develop a process of learning strategies and accept responsibility for their own learning (Harmer, 2003). In other words, autonomous

learners are expected to create a personal agenda for learning and set up the planning, pacing, monitoring and evaluation of the learning process in the light of this agenda.

### **Learner training**

Learner training is assumed to be the ready strategies learners experience to promote their autonomous learning. As acknowledged by Harmer (2003) students make private reflection on the way they learn and set strategies to deal with different kinds of activities and problems as well as choose appropriate learning styles. Concerning the benefit of making reflection students can realize their own strengths and weaknesses in order to making plan for the future action. Students themselves can also evaluate their own progress in this beginning stage. Harmer (2003) states that students frequently have a very clear idea of how well they are doing or have done and they may greatly enhance their learning.

### **Homework**

Learner autonomy gets a powerful boost the first time that homework is set for students to do out of class. They will now have to study without the help of a teacher.

However, homework is frequently seemed as an enemy rather than as an important contribution to learner autonomy. The teacher, Lesley Painter, noticed that when she set homework tasks she looked at her students and notices their “glazed expression” (Painter, 1999 cited in Harmer, 2003, p.338). Her students did the homework but it bored them. In fact, responsible learners are the ones who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning and behave accordingly. Responsible learners monitor their own progress and they voluntarily try to do their best to use available opportunities for their own benefit (Scharle and Szabo, 2000). In the way of taking responsibility as well as willingness to complete homework independently, learners gradually become more autonomous learners. Therefore, homework tasks become more like personal schemes of study, relevant, interesting and useful.

### **Keeping “learning journals”**

Many students keep journals or diaries of their learning experiences in the hope that they will “reflect on their lessons, exploit their successes and difficulties, and come to a greater understanding about learning and language” (Harmer, 2003, p.339).

Journal writing can be entirely voluntary task in which students can be directed to either write about anything they want, to write about what they have learnt in their lesson and how they feel about it or to write entries using recently studied language.

Once students have started keeping journals, they are better able to keep themselves on track to meet their learning goals. Learners will undoubtedly become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve their learning with the help of this strategy.

*So far, the notion of control over learning is the seed of autonomy (Benson, 2001 as cited in Lap, T.Q, 2005, p.29). In the aim to achieve autonomous learning, learner should take control over their learning, namely control over 1) learning strategies (Meta-cognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies), 2) learning motivation and 3) self-esteem.*

## **2.2. Pronunciation**

### **2.2.1. What is pronunciation?**

To acquire command of a foreign language, the learner formally learns mainly the basic skills of the target language including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and speaking, a receptive and a productive skill respectively (Bygate, 1987), unavoidably depend on pronunciation to a substantial extent. Tench (1981) rightly stated that “pronunciation is not an optional extra for the language learner, any more than grammar, vocabulary or any other aspect of language is” (Tench, 1981, p.1).

Pronunciation is defined as “a way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally understood” in American Heritage Dictionary of English Language (Boston, 1992). In other words, pronunciation refers to the production of

sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language.

Though most of us think in terms of speech production, the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics emphasizes “the way sounds are perceived by the hearer” to define pronunciation (Richard, Platt, and Weber, 1992, p.226). An emphasis on hearer’s perception is especially relevant. As a speaker, making yourself understood when you say something besides grammar, lexis, function and discourse; it has to be pronounced reasonably well. In addition, correct pronunciation is very necessary to develop our speaking skill which serves as a vital function in human communication. Moreover, the goal of pronunciation has changed from the attainment of perfect pronunciation to the more realistic goals of developing functional intelligibility, communicability, increased self-confidence, the development of speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom (Morley, 1991 cited in Otlowski, 1998).

From what has been presented, the researcher highly appreciates and chooses Tench’s definition in this thesis because it is closely related to the study of the researcher.

### **2.2.2. What affects pronunciation learning**

Like in learner autonomy, there are many factors which affect pronunciation learning, but some of them are specific to this language section as well as to learning foreign language as a whole. Brno (2007) defined the inner and outer factors, which the teachers should be aware of when setting out goals and preparing methods and materials on pronunciation learning.



### **2.2.2.1. The native language**

The influence of the native language is undoubtable. It involves the individual's production of sounds as well as combinations of sounds and features such as rhythm and intonation. The more differences there are between the native and the target language, the more difficulties will be encountered by the learners. The learners' errors derive from various sources. When a particular sound does not exist in the mother tongue, the learners tend to substitute it by the nearest equivalent from their native language. For example, the sound [ð] in English will often be substituted by [d] or [z] by Vietnamese learners as these are the nearest. The matter is the same in the case of aspirated sound like [t] or [p]. Students have tendency to pronounce the sound without aspiration. This first language application affects the rhythm and the intonation too. Still, the influence of the native language is only one of the factors and does not need to be crucial.

### **2.2.2.2. The age**

It is commonly assumed that the age factor has a great influence on pronunciation. If someone has a native-like pronunciation in a second language, they are very likely to have started learning it as children. And conversely, people who started to learn a second language in adulthood, will hardly achieve a native-like accent, although their grammar and vocabulary may be perfect. Snow (1992 cited in Brno, 2007, p. 9) comments on this issue that "research comparing children to adults has consistently demonstrated that adolescents and adults perform better than young children under controlled conditions (Snow and Hoefnagel-Hoehle, 1978 cited in Brno, 2007, p.10). The age-relation is supported also by Oyama (1976 cited in Schleppegrell, 1987 ) in which he has found that the earlier a learner begins a second language, the more native-like the accent he or she develops.

### **2.2.2.3. Phonetic ability**

It is generally assumed that some people have a better ability to hear foreign languages than others. This "aptitude for oral mimicry", "phonetic coding ability" or "auditory discriminating ability" proved by researchers who designed tests which

measure this ability. Although the results proved that some people can better discriminate between two sounds, still it is not a crucial condition of obtaining good pronunciation as training itself has a significant effect (Kenworthy, 1987 cited in Brno, 2007, p.11). The point is different methods should be applied for different types of learners.

#### **2.2.2.4. Exposure to the language**

The exposure to the target language has a wide range of meanings and intensity. The meanings may vary from living in the country where the language is spoken to talking to native-speakers or using authentic materials, e. g. films, literature, music, television, so the term is quite wide in its meaning. Living in the country of the target language does not always mean the actual use of the language. Many people may live in a non-English-speaking environment, or use their mother tongue with their families. Conversely, many learners who live in a non-English speaking country may use English in many daily situations like school or work, so the amount of exposure basically depends on its quality and quantity.

Logically, being exposed to English in the English environment should have a positive effect on the learner's pronunciation and listening skills. It is indicated that "this increased exposure to English does not necessarily speed the acquisition of English" (Snow, 1992 cited in Brno, 2007, p.12).

#### **2.2.2.5. Attitude and sense of identity**

In the acquisition of pronunciation of a foreign language the attitude and sense of identity of the learner plays a major role. It is a personality-determined factor and we can hardly predict whether people having come to the environment with different accent will modify their own. "Some seem to be "impervious" and even after a long time will absorb only some turns of phrase and the pronunciation of a few individual words; others seem very receptive and begin to change their accent almost as soon as they step off the plane" (Kenworthy, 1987 cited in Brno, 2007, p.13).

As far as teaching pronunciation is concerned, the attitude and sense of identity factor is closely connected with the inner motivation factor which is going to be explained next.

### 2.2.3. Techniques to learn pronunciation

Celce-Murcia, Briton & Godwin (1996) review the kinds of techniques that have traditionally been used to learn and teach pronunciation. The following is a fairly comprehensive list.

1. **Listen and imitate:** A technique used in the Direct Method in which students listen to a teacher-provided model and repeat or imitate it.' This technique has been enhanced by the use of tape recorders, language labs, and video recorders.
2. **Phonetic training:** Use of articulatory descriptions, articulatory diagrams, and a phonetic alphabet (a technique from the Reform Movement, which may involve doing phonetic transcription as well as reading phonetically transcribed text).
3. **Minimal pair drills:** help students distinguish between similar and problematic sounds in the target language through listening discrimination and spoken practice. Minimal pair drills typically begin with word-level drills and then move on to sentence-level drills (both paradigmatic and syntagmatic).
4. **Visual aids:** use of sound-colour charts, Fidel wall charts, rods, pictures, mirrors, props, realia, etc. These devices are also used to cue production of the target sounds.
5. **Tongue twisters:** A technique from speech correction strategies for native speakers (e.g., "She sells seashells by the seashore.")
6. **Reading aloud/recitation:** Passages or scripts for learners to practice and then read aloud, focusing on stress, timing, and intonation. This technique may or may not involve memorization of the text, and it usually occurs with

genres that are intended to be spoken, such as speeches, poems, plays, and dialogues.

- 7. Recordings of learners' production:** Audio- and videotapes of rehearsed and spontaneous speeches, free conversations, and role plays.

**(Celce-Murcia, Briton & Godwin, 1996, p.8)**

#### **2.2.4. Description of Enhancing Communication Course**

Each semester, English Division I have held Enhancing Communication Skills course which allows first-year mainstream students to learn English pronunciation. Being exposed right in its name, the main purposes of this course is to help students improve their pronunciation ability and their communicative skills as well.

The course is divided into two main parts covered in two semesters. In the first semester, students learn 44 basic single sounds (vowels and consonants) in English. The difficulty and flexibility of the course is levelled up in the second semester when students are taught pronunciation in word and sentence level.

Because of the time conducting this thesis, the researcher cannot observe the pronunciation classes in the first semester, but in the second semester only. Therefore, only detailed description of the pronunciation classes in the second semester are presented in this study. In the second part of the course, students are required to cover five main themes namely word stress, strong form and weak form (simple words and complex words), sentence stress, rhythm and linking, and intonation. Additionally, students are asked to work in groups and do a pronunciation assignment that is followed the format of a provided model in the course outline and submitted at the end of the course.

The theories of the five themes are presented in the first seven weeks by the lecturers, two periods per week (100 minutes). In each theoretical class, the lecturer provides students with the background knowledge of the lesson topic first and then let them listen to a record of native speakers. After that, students have opportunity to practice pronunciation themselves with the help of the tutors who have a good pronunciation. The tutors will walk around and help their friends. At the time, the

lecturer comes to some groups of students to control the activities of the class as well as check students' work. After having a certain time to practice, students are called to pronounce some words and corrected if needed. The lesson ends when the lecturer can be sure that all the students get the goals of the lesson and know how to pronounce target sounds correctly. The last five weeks is the time students prepare their group assignments. There are at least four tasks in a pronunciation assignment. Students are required to work in group to collect word samples and design exercises from the collected samples. Then students read the designed exercises and record their own voice (all members of a group must be equally assigned to record their voice in the exercises). In the first two weeks of five for assignment preparation, students go to lab room to discuss how to design task for their assignment and get the lecturer's specific guidance. Students can also make trial record in the lab room with computer and phone equipped. And the left time of the course, they can do the assignment at home and submit it in the 15th week.

### **2.3. Related studies**

Topics of learner autonomy have received a great deal of attention among English Foreign Language researchers as second language will proceed most efficiently if learners are allowed to develop and exercise autonomy (Nunan, 1997; 2000). Therefore, the subject of learner autonomy has been discussed through a large number of studies in different disciplines where learner autonomy is seriously considered. Cotterall (1999) attempted to investigate the language learning beliefs of a group of students with the help of a survey, which identified important factors in autonomous language learning.

Likewise, Kocak (2003) intended to see whether, or not, students attending English Language Preparatory School at Başkent University were ready to be involved in autonomous language learning. Meanwhile, some activities such as journal writing and using internet and technology that can help encourage learner autonomy were also presented by Nowlan (2008).

Regarding to the relationship between motivation and autonomy, Ushioda (1996 cited in Karagol, 2008, p.2) explicitly states that "autonomous learners are by

definition motivated learners”. In line with this belief the relationship between motivation and autonomy has been also investigated by some researchers for several years. In their study Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002) tried to assess students’ readiness for learner autonomy, and the results revealed that motivation had a strong impact in this readiness that was directly supported by Cotterall (1995b), Scharle and Szabo (2000).

Researchers also focused on the importance of pronunciation (Morley, 1991; Fraser et al, 2001), and relationship between learner autonomy in pronunciation learning through different pronunciation coaches (Mehlhorn, 2005). Moreover, Morley (1991 cited in Robertson, 1997) states the need for the integration of pronunciation exercises with oral communication, a shift from segmental to supra-segmentals, increased emphasis on individual learner needs, meaningful task based practices, development of new teacher strategies for the teaching and introduction of peer correction and group interaction. One of the most remarkable example of the previous studies is “*Stimulating learner autonomy in English language education*” by Lap, T.Q (2005). In this study, the researcher and his colleague in The University of Amsterdam proposed their own definition of learner autonomy after regarding a number of existing ones and then analyzed the learner autonomy in

It is obvious that the studies listed above have made great contributions to the reality of learner autonomy and pronunciation learning in Vietnam and in the world. However, it can be seen that these studies have left gaps for the present research to continue investigating learner autonomy in learning pronunciation. Therefore, the researcher is aware of the essentiality to carry out the study in a particular context in order to find out the fact to improve the situation of English learning in the FELTE where the researcher is presently a learner of English.

*In short, the researcher has discussed the definitions of learner autonomy, the importance of learner autonomy, routes to autonomy and its components. Some definitions of pronunciation have also presented. Additionally, a review of some related studies in this chapter has detected a research gap which the researcher is*

*pursuing to bridge by seeking the answer to the two research questions. These theories will serve as the foundation for the researcher to form and conduct the study according to specific methodology that will be elaborated in the next chapter.*

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

*The present chapter provides a detailed picture of methodology by presenting in details the selection of subjects, the research instruments used to answer three research questions as well as the specific procedures of data collection and data analysis.*

#### **3.1. Selection of subjects**

The target participants of the research were 85 first-year mainstream students of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU who are currently learning pronunciation course specifically designed for the first-year students. Therefore their reflection on the course will be the freshest among the freshmen. Following the “*stratified random sampling method*” which was used underlying the assumptions of “minimizing the effects of any extraneous or subjective variables that might affect the outcome of the survey study” (Minh, N.T.T, 2008, p.37), these students involved in doing the research questionnaires were from three different classes in the mainstream system: two in the major of teacher training and one in that of interpreter training. Fast-track students were not included in this study because they followed a different learning program with different objectives. The classification of the students’ majors was summarized in the **Table 1**.

	<b>Teacher training</b>	<b>54</b>
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<b>Major</b>	<b>Interpreter training</b>	31
<b>Total</b>		85

**Table 1: Classification of the students' majors**

There were some main reasons that stimulated the researcher to choose this sample. Firstly, almost of these 85 students have 8-10 years of learning English in the secondary school and high school (**See Table 2**) in which their English learning focus was highly on grammar. Therefore, they had very little consideration of learning pronunciation.

<b>Years of learning English</b>	<b>8-10 years</b>	78	91,8%
	<b>More than 10 years</b>	7	8,2%
<b>Total</b>		85	100%

**Table 2: Students' years of learning English**

Secondly, they have taken two pronunciation courses in the first semester and second semester; hence, they have directly been faced up with the matter of learning pronunciation autonomously and experienced different strategies in learning pronunciation as well. As a result, that they reflected in the questionnaires might be of great benefit for the study purposes. On the other hand, the findings and recommendations of this study would be valuable to assist their pronunciation learning because of its investigation in students' autonomy and the effectiveness of pronunciation course as well. Additionally, the number of 85 students was an acceptably "enough sample for the expected results to be able to reach statistical significance" (Dornyei, 2003, p.74). Thus, it could be possible for the sampling of this study to be representatives for all students of the FELTE.

In addition, acknowledging the important role of teachers in guiding and monitoring the development of learner autonomy; the researcher, therefore, invited the participation of two teachers of the FELTE who are officially in charge of pronunciation classes. Their classes were observed, and they were invited for interviews. More importantly, these two teachers have precious experiences for teaching English in general and pronunciation in particular (**See Table 3**).



Number of teacher	Years of teaching English	Years of teaching pronunciation
1	12 years	10 years
1	8 years	3 years
2	<b>Total</b>	

**Table 3: Teachers' years of teaching English and pronunciation**

In some aspects, they could partly realize the students' ability in learning pronunciation autonomously as well as apply some techniques to enhance their students' autonomy in learning pronunciation. Their sharing through teacher interview questions should contribute much for the result of the study. Moreover, the issues could be seen from teachers' viewpoints; accordingly, it would undoubtedly increase the research' reliability.

### **3.2. Research instruments**

To achieve reliable and valid data of the study, a variety of data collection instruments were employed namely questionnaires, interviews and class observations.

#### **3.2.1. Questionnaires**

According to Brown (2001 cited in Minh, N.T.T, 2008, p.16), "questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers".

Questionnaires research seems to be the most popular research instrument used by educational researchers in general and English Foreign Language researchers in particular. Employing questionnaires the research can gain a number of benefits:

"The knowledge needed is controlled by the questions; therefore it affords a good deal of precision and clarity. Data can be gathered in different time slots: all at once in a class, in the respondents' own time as long as it is easy to return, the questions are the same and the format is identical". (McDonough & McDonough, 1997, p.5)

This value of the questionnaires matched the aims of the study in investigating which strategies the first-year students employed in learning

pronunciation and how they were exploited as well as the effectiveness of pronunciation course in improving learner autonomy and pronunciation. For that reason, the questionnaires were employed to answer three research questions in this study.

In this research, the questionnaires were designed and delivered to 85 first-year students (**See Appendix 1**). They were written in simple English included three main parts and began with a brief introduction of research topic and a request for personal information. The first part asked for components of learner autonomy especially strategies used to learn pronunciation autonomously as presented in **Chapter 2: Literature Review**. The second part was teachers' in-class activities questions which aimed to explore whether the teacher helped to improve the students' autonomy in learning pronunciation. Some open-ended questions exploring students' personal opinions were included in the last part of the questionnaires.

The items in the questionnaires were the combination of both closed-ended questions and opened-ended questions which asked for the factual, behavioral and attitudinal data relating to students' pronunciation learning. However, most of items were closed-ended questions which "focus in only important concepts" and "involve a greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability" (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p.93).

### **Piloting and revising the questionnaires**

In the questionnaires, so much depends on the actual wording of the items; therefore, piloting the questionnaires on a sample of students who are similar to target sample are extremely essential (Dornyei, 2003). This trial steps allowed the researcher to collect feedback and revise the questionnaires. For that reason, the questionnaires was piloted with another groups of the first-year students to test whether the wording used in the questionnaires were understandable to students or not. The researcher also asked those students highlighted the points they found confused. Hopefully, the respondents felt pleasant with the questionnaires to produce the most reliable answers.

### 3.2.2. Interviews

Brown (2001 cited in Dornyei, 2003, p.129) argued that questionnaires and interview data could be seen as inherently complementary:

“...[I]n the sense that interviews are more suitable for exploring what the questions are and questionnaires are more suitable for answering those questions. Sometimes, you may want to use the strengths of both types of instruments in a single survey project”. (Brown 2001 cited in Dornyei, 2003, p.129)

Moreover, supported by Minh, N.T.T (2008), “interviews are particular useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experience” (Minh, N.T.T, 2008, p.54). For these advantages above, together with the survey questionnaires, interviews were employed as a valuable research instrument to collect data from the two teachers about their perceptions of using techniques and strategies during pronunciation course which might help stimulating learn autonomy.

Specifically, structured interviews were applied in this study in which “the agenda is totally predetermined by the researcher, who works through a list of set questions in a predetermined order” (Minh, N.T.T, 2008, p. 51). Although the structure interviews still bears some downsides, they are purposefully used to keep the research aims and direction.

The two chosen teacher were asked five questions (**See Appendix 2**) used to collect detailed information that supported the answers to the second and third research questions. Each interview’s duration was about 10 minutes.

### 3.2.3. Observation

Langley (1998 cited in Trang, B.T.Q, 2011, p.40) suggested that:

“Observation involves looking and listening very carefully. We all watch other people sometimes, but we don’t usually watch them in order to discover particular information about their behavior. This is what observation in social science involves.” (Langley, 1998 cited in Trang, B.T.Q, 2011, p.40)

On the other hand, naturalistic observations usefully created “insight into how behavior occurs in the real world”, and, therefore, “increase the research’s external validity” (Bordens & Abbott, 1999, p.107). For the researcher’s aim was to examine how learner autonomy was exploited in pronunciation class, real experiences from the observations of the chosen classes helped her obtain detailed

and exact descriptions. The researcher decided to observe two lessons of two pronunciation classes; each lesson lasted for 100 minutes regardless of break time.

In this study, an observation scheme (**See Appendix 3**) was applied to find out the procedure of a pronunciation class as well as to count the teacher's speaking time and students' working time in order to clarify the way teacher facilitate his students' learning autonomy. The class observation was supposed to answer the third research questions.

### **3.3. Procedures of data collection**

The procedure of data collection could be categorized into four phases as follows.

#### **Phase 1**

In this phase, all preparation should be seriously considered. Firstly, the first version of the questionnaires was piloted with three first-year students of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU in order to gain constructive feedback. Then, it was carefully revised and finalized to ensure its accuracy, conciseness, comprehensiveness and focus. Draft version of teacher interview questions and observation scheme were also designed in advance.

Afterward, the researcher would contact two lecturers of the FELTE along with students of pronunciation classes to get permission for class observations and interviews as well as their acceptance of taking part in the research.

#### **Phase 2**

After being piloted and revised, the survey questionnaires were directly delivered to 85 first-year students of three classes of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU. The research briefly introduced the study together with making confirmation of confidentiality so that the students would be willing to state their opinions in the questionnaires. During the time of questionnaire filling, when any confusion emerged, essential help was provided by the researcher.

The researcher suggested the class complete the questionnaires in the break time and collected all the papers right after that.

### **Phase 3**

After getting teaching timetable of two chosen teachers, the researcher asked for an appointment which was at interviewees' convenient time. Then the interviews took place in an informal atmosphere to minimize the participants' anxiety. In order to eliminating any misunderstanding, the main interview questions were given out at the beginning of the interviews.

During the interviews, questions were asked one at a time to clearly make out the interviewees' viewpoints. All the interviews were recorded to examine data reliability and transcribed by the researcher later. Each lasted from ten to fifteen minutes.

### **Phase 4**

In this phase, the researcher asked for permission to observe two classes. Observation scheme was completed to aim at the points investigated. Besides, short discussion about the lessons was also conducted with the teachers and the students to get a whole picture of the pronunciation course as well as procedure of each lesson. Thanks to the corporation and support of participants, after class observation, the researcher could draw learning and teaching procedure of a pronunciation class which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **3.4. Procedure of data analysis**

After the data collected, they were processed through three phases.

### **Phase 1: Data classification**

The data gathered from questionnaires were put into two categories: 1) the data from Likert rating-scale questions which "consist of a series of statements and respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with these statements" (Nguyen Thi Thuy Minh, 2008, p.28) and 2) short-answer questions.

The data collected from observation was presented in the observation scheme and questions used in teacher interviews were open-ended questions. For each kind of data, the researcher employed an appropriate way of coding and decoding.

### **Phase 2: Data coding**

Mechanical counting was performed to render specific statistics. The data from rating-scale questions was presented in both number and percentages. Besides, mean was also calculated to illustrate average number.

Response to short-answer questions which shared the same ideas was expressed in a mutual pattern. The data collected from interviews were transcribed and interpreted the participants' ideas to support the point. Tables and charts were be utilized to vividly illustrate the data which had been coded.

### **Step 3: Data decoding**

After the results were summarized clearly in tables and charts, they were interpreted by the researchers to find out conclusions, implications and applications in the next chapter.

*So far, this chapter has justified the methodology employed in this paper by stating the reasons of choosing target participants, explanation of advantages of three research instruments. Data collection procedures and data analysis procedures were also mentioned in details.*

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*This chapter presents, compares and contrasts the data from the three different research instruments. In this section, the discussion of findings is enclosed to highlight the use of strategies by the first-year students in learning pronunciation and the ways they are employed at pronunciation lessons as well as the effectiveness of pronunciation course in helping student enhance their autonomy. Some implications and application of the study will also be stated.*

### 4.1. Findings

#### 4.1.1. Research question 1: What strategies are used in learning pronunciation by the first-year mainstream students of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU?

The first research question was raised as it would be worth investigating whether first-year mainstream students at the FELTE employed any strategies in learning pronunciation.

In the part 1 of the questionnaires, the students were asked to give opinions for three learning strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. The data would be demonstrated as follows:

Strategies		1	2	3	4	5	n	Mean
S1	<i>advance organisers</i>	7	3	40	26	9	85	3.32
S2	<i>directed attention</i>	2	15	28	32	8	85	3.34
S3	<i>selective attention</i>	6	10	31	30	8	85	3.28
S4	<i>self-management</i>	6	20	29	20	8	83	3.05
S5	<i>self-monitoring</i>	3	2	29	32	19	85	3.73
S6	<i>delayed production</i>	9	32	21	20	3	85	2.72
S7	<i>self-evaluation</i>	1	14	46	19	4	84	3.13
S8	<i>self-reinforcement</i>	3	19	41	18	4	85	3.01

**Table 4: Metacognitive strategies' components**

As can be seen from **Table 4**, there were 8 statements from S1 to S8 asking for 8 relevant metacognitive strategies. Most of students agreed or had neutral ideas for whether they have used any of metacognitive strategies in learning pronunciation with mean ranging from 3.01 to 3.73. The lowest mean was 2.72 for S6 asking about **delayed production** strategies that indicated students have not employed *delayed production* much in learning pronunciation. The highest mean was 3.73 of S5-**self-monitoring** that reflected the fact that most of students have been aware of *correcting their pronunciation mistakes immediately when they realize they are wrong*. However, mean of the other questions fluctuated around 3 which shows that they are not sure if they *have reviewed the lesson before going to class (advance organizers)*, as well as applied **self-management, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement** strategies to enhance their autonomous learning. In short, through the survey, it was conveyed that students have not clearly acknowledged higher order executive skills (**metacognitive strategies**) that require much from students' self-planning and monitoring ability.

**The results for second dimension of learning strategies namely cognitive strategies were illustrated in the following** Table 5.

Strategies		1	2	3	4	5	n	Mean
S9	<i>repetition</i>	2	5	17	40	21	85	3.86
S10	<i>resourcing</i>	2	5	16	43	18	84	3.83
S11	<i>note-taking</i>	4	9	36	29	4	82	3.24
S12	<i>deduction</i>	1	12	37	29	2	81	3.23
S13	<i>auditory representation</i>	2	8	23	44	8	85	3.56
S14	<i>key word</i>	5	17	35	24	4	85	3.06
S15	<i>elaboration inferencing</i>	2	7	21	45	8	83	3.6
S16	<i>question for clarification</i>	1	17	38	23	4	83	3.14

**Table 5: Cognitive strategies' components**



In this table, cognitive strategies' components were investigated from S9 to S16. The above figures suggested that students preferred using *repetition* and *resourcing* for studying pronunciation than others strategies, with the highest mean of 3.86 and 3.83 respectively. It was followed by *elaboration inferencing* and *auditory presentation* with the mean of 3.6 and 3.56 as order. Both *key word* (3.06) and *question for clarification* (3.14) experienced the lowest scores. The left strategies share neutral opinions.

It could be revealed that **cognitive strategies** which might be limited in application to the specific types of task in the learning activity as aforementioned in **Chapter 2: Literature Review** are more favorable than metacognitive ones with higher value of mean.

As shown in **Table 6**, both *cooperation* and *self-task* were highly appreciated by first-year mainstream students in pronunciation learning when serving for rather high mean ranking form 3.39 to 3.88. Meanwhile, they were also ready for self-study (3.56) by using self-study books for improving pronunciation (3.39).

Strategies		1	2	3	4	5	n	mean
S17	<i>cooperation</i>	1	4	25	47	5	82	3.62
S18		3	2	25	46	8	84	3.64
S19		1	1	16	51	15	85	3.88
S20	<i>self-task</i>	2	8	30	40	7	85	3.56
S21		1	11	37	24	11	84	3.39

**Table 6: Social strategies' components**

Via observation of two pronunciation classes, the researcher noticed that just some activities listed above were employed by students. See **Table 7**.

Activities in class		Y/N
1	Listening to video of native speakers (then repeat)	Y

2	Practicing individually	Y
3	Working in pairs/group to record pronunciation	Y
4	Tutor's walking around and offer help	Y
5	Peer checking	Y
6	Evaluating students' work	Y

**Table 7: Teacher's and Students' activities in class**

As can be seen in **Table 7**, **metacognitive strategies** were employed by peer checking and evaluating student's work. Students were also allowed to listen and repeat the native speakers' pronunciation as using of cognitive strategies. More importantly, the classes encouraged more social strategies which paid more attention to group work and individual work.

Secondly, questions for clarifying students' strategies in **routes to autonomy** were also involved in the first part of the survey questionnaires. The data was summarized in **Table 8**.

Routes to autonomy		1	2	3	4	5	n	Mean
S22	<i>Learner training</i>	2	3	25	49	6	85	3.63
S23		0	9	33	39	3	84	3.43
S24		0	6	18	55	3	82	3.67
S25	<i>Homework</i>	2	8	46	23	5	85	3.21
S26		0	3	38	32	9	82	3.57
S27	<i>Keeping learning journal</i>	2	15	42	20	2	81	3.06

**Table 8: Components of Routes to autonomy**

It is easily recognized that there existed confusion with the application of components of **Routes to autonomy** among students. Many of them agreed with making reflection on their learning pronunciation process (3.63); and almost of them were supposed to realize their strengths and weaknesses in pronunciation ability with highest mean of 3.67. Although a considerate proportion of them might

not spend time to complete all assigned homework before going to class (3.21); instead of that, waiting for teacher’s checking. However, once they did homework, they did it by themselves (3.57). Additionally, keeping learning journals was not actually something familiar with them with the lowest mean of 3.06.

In summary, all the students participating in the study confirmed that all of strategies discussed above have been employed in learning pronunciation of the first-year mainstream students of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU. However, the rate as well as the frequency of their exploitation varies among 85 surveyed students. In the next section, more detailed discussion of how these strategies are employed in pronunciation course will be presented.

#### **4.1.2. Research question 2: How these strategies are exploited in pronunciation course to enhance learner autonomy?**

To answer this research question in the most thorough way, this part was divided into two major aspects: firstly, S28 to S36 asked for whether those strategies aforementioned in the first research questions were employed by the teacher in the pronunciation class. Secondly, S36 to S44 were designed to find out how strategies in **routes to autonomy** have been applied in class. Statistics of the first part was illustrated in **Table 9**.

	1	2	3	4	5	n	mean
<b>S28</b>	2	2	21	48	11	84	3.76
<b>S29</b>	1	7	14	44	18	84	3.85
<b>S30</b>	1	2	8	43	29	83	4.17
<b>S31</b>	0	2	12	41	30	85	4.16
<b>S32</b>	2	4	21	33	16	76	3.75
<b>S33</b>	2	4	20	39	19	84	3.82
<b>S34</b>	0	3	27	46	7	83	3.69
<b>S35</b>	0	2	23	38	20	83	3.92
<b>S36</b>	1	2	30	34	18	85	3.78

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**Table 9: Teacher’s exploitation of learning strategies in pronunciation class**

The most striking feature of the table was students’ positive attitudes towards pronunciation course. Teacher’ teaching methods were somewhat applications of **metacognitive, cognitive** and **social** strategies expressed in relatively high mean. In terms of **metacognitive strategies**, a large population of students recognized that teacher encouraged them to *review the lesson before class, set specific goals for each lesson or self-evaluate* to facilitate pronunciation learning. Besides, teacher asks students to pronounce and record their pronunciation (S32) as a use of cognitive strategies accounted for mean of 3.75; S33 in which social strategies was involved made up for mean of 3.82. Teacher’s guidance in using different sources to enhance learning pronunciation autonomously (from S34 to S36) was supported at rather high mean.

**Table 10** described the figures related to application of strategies in **routes to autonomy** in pronunciation course.

**Table 10: Teacher’s exploitation of strategies in Routes to autonomy**

	1	2	3	4	5	n	mean
<b>S37</b>	0	1	16	55	20	83	4.46
<b>S38</b>	0	2	19	39	22	82	3.99
<b>S39</b>	0	2	1	42	28	73	4.3
<b>S40</b>	0	1	9	41	33	84	4.26
<b>S41</b>	1	1	10	34	39	85	4.28
<b>S42</b>	0	4	21	24	33	82	4.05
<b>S43</b>	0	3	23	39	18	83	3.87
<b>S44</b>	1	5	44	29	5	84	3.28

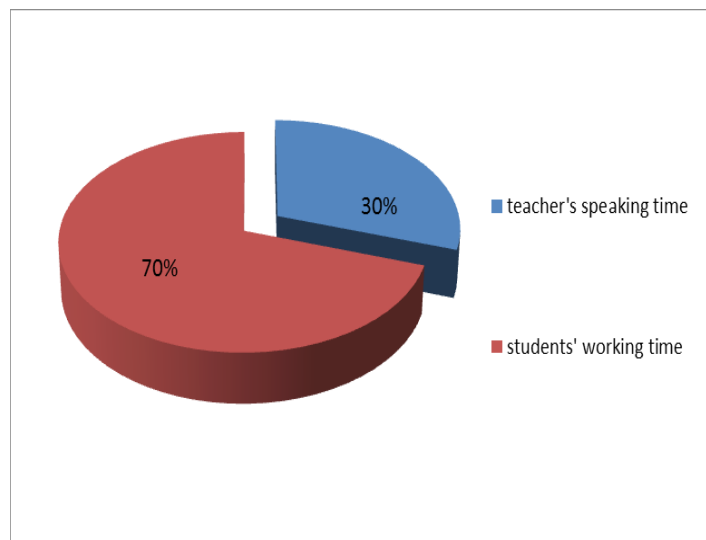
As

can be inferred from the table, students appeared to be quite happy with strategies that teachers have employed on the purpose of improving the students’ autonomy in learning pronunciation. Students highly agreed that teachers provided them with opportunities to reflect on their learning, indicated by mean of 4.46. Furthermore, it

was also supported that they were given homework and pronunciation assignment (4.3 and 4.26 respectively) as well as guided to do them at home (4.28) and then checked their progress every week (3.87). Accounting for the lowest mean in comparison with other strategies in the table, teachers' encouragement of keeping learning journals was not considered seriously.

It can be said that teachers somehow acknowledged of necessity of improving learner autonomy in learning pronunciation by employing a large number of useful learning and teaching strategies.

Via class observations, the researcher noticed that for each 100 minutes, the teacher's speaking time was less than that of student's working. See **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1: Teacher' and students' working time in class**

Only conducting some activities in class such as lecturing, checking and correcting mistakes, teacher acted as an facilitator most of the time; therefore, the teacher's real speaking time only made up for 30 % of the whole. Students themselves were the person who worked most during the lesson. After listening the teacher' slecturing, students were allowed to practice individually with the help of tutors. After that they could work in group and discuss about the way to pronounce correctly and give comments along with evaluation of each other's performance. Therefore, it resonably was estimated for 70 % of class time. Thus, it's

understandable to suppose that pronunciation course has created a healthy environment which allows students to improve their autonomy in spite of limited time (100 minutes per week).

Furthermore, in that limited amount of in-class time, teacher in some ways has employed different strategies such as native speaker listening, tutoring or peer evaluation and so on all of which partly helps to foster learner autonomy in learning pronunciation.

Through interviews, researcher could gain more useful information from participants. They claimed that the most common strategies they have used in teaching pronunciation was lecturing the background knowledge of target sounds, then letting students listen to some videos that students could immitate later, asking them to practice most of the time individually or group after that, and finally checking, correctting and evaluating their work. By some ways, they can apply some components of metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies as stated in teacher 1's interview (See **Appendix 2**).

“Firstly, I provide them with very basic theory, and then let them listen to a video of native speakers. Secondly, I let them practice by pronouncing the words or reading a text in the course book. During practicing, I point out clearly the way to pronounce the sounds carefully as well as their mistakes. Next, a group of tutors walk around the class and offer help. Then, I check every student as groups as well as help them to correct mispronunciation”. (Appendix 2)

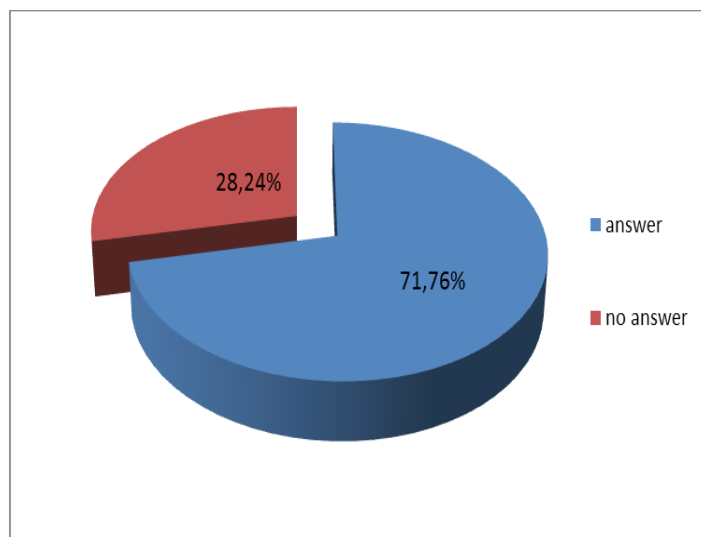
Teacher 2 shared the nearly same teaching procedures in which he conducted some following strategies.

“First, I survey the level of students' making mistakes of the target sounds. Secondly, I start teaching by explaining carefully about articulation of each sound, the way to lay the tongue or the way to practice difficult sounds, etc. Thirdly, I take examples and analyze them in order to help students recognize the sounds in a specific words or a sentence. Next, I let students practice thoroughly in class and then assign homework”. (Appendix 2),

In short, three learning strategies along with strategies in **routes to autonomy** were reported to commonly used in pronunciation classes of Enhancing Communication Skill Course in a variety of methods and techniques.

#### **4.1.3. Research question 3: To what extent does the pronunciation course help the first-year mainstream students improve their pronunciation?**

In the third part of the questionnaires, the researcher focused on finding out the extent to which the pronunciation course helps improve students' pronunciation. Three questions designed in part 3 were open-ended questions with the aim of getting students' free opinions about effectiveness of pronunciation course; therefore it required for some handwriting. That was the reason why a few students felt reluctant to give answers. The proportion of students' response was shown in **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2: Students' response**

Most of the students were willing to response to three questions in the part 3, accounting for 71.76% of the whole sample. Meanwhile, there were 24 students out of 85 (28.24%) did not give any answer at all.

For question 45, among of 61 students giving answers there was only 2 of them who supposed that the strategies that teacher provided did not help them learn pronunciation autonomously. The first one explained that sometimes these strategies

were not guided clearly enough and the way teacher employed them was a little bit fast, therefore she could not remember. The other one thought that pronunciation involved in a large number of difficult and complex components which required much teacher' guidance; therefore, self-study did not work much. Nevertheless, among 59 students who said "yes", there were 9 of them did not give any specific explanation for their choices. Those who had positive answer shared some mutual ideas in which teacher's experience was highly appreciated. In a rather subjective mood, they believed that the useful strategies teacher provided them were effective because of their long teaching experience (See **Table 3**). They also accepted that they could learn difficult words as well as feel more confident when speaking. Furthermore, some realized that thanks to teacher's suggestion of self-study sources such as English online programs, music, etc., they could improve their pronunciation.

Regarding to question 46 asking for whether students maintained the strategies in learning pronunciation autonomously after the pronunciation course by specifying their own learning plans, the researcher received 58 for "yes" and 3 for "no".

Among 58 students said "yes", they mentioned some common methods that they often used to learn pronunciation. Firstly, someone preferred reading aloud a text or a paragraph to find new words and then check their transcription in the dictionary. More carefully, some females kept these new words in their notebook/learning diary so that they could revise them later. With students who could learn better by audio and visual aids, they would like to watch movies without Vietnamese subtitles, listen to BBC, VOA, etc. in order to imitate native speaker's pronunciation or record their own voice to check accuracy. Even, many of them went to public places to meet and talk to foreigners. In that way, they believed they could practice speaking skills as well as pronunciation. In addition, a few of them loved working with friends from whom they could ask for help.

On the other hand, three "no" answers also gave some reasons for their decision. One found the strategies provided very difficult to follow. Another stated



that she did not know how to employ those strategies effectively because there was no one giving her detailed instructions. The remaining student even confused about her learning plan. She was not sure whether she maintained the methods or not but just practiced pronunciation before exams.

Taking question 47 into consideration, there were 58 positive opinions collected (3 didn't give answers) but only 47 students who explained for their answers when being asked about effect of pronunciation course on their self-learning habit. Most of them informed that the pronunciation course fostered their autonomy in learning speaking and listening as well. Specifically, they could approach many strategies in which they were guided to work by themselves as well as gain a lot of experience for their language learning process. Moreover, some of them explained that pronunciation course required students to build their own learning method because of the majority of their working time (See chart 1); therefore automatically, they must partly improve their learning autonomy.

Generally, the data collected from survey questionnaire revealed that most of the students find the strategies employed by the teacher in pronunciation course helpful. It obviously enhances students' pronunciation as well as their communication skill. More importantly, a large proportion of students are willing to maintain those strategies in learning pronunciation and so in other skill because of their good effects on their learning autonomy.

Furthermore, teachers who were interviewed also claimed that with their guidance of practicing pronunciation at home as well as set a particular method to check students' self-study, their students achieved positive results. Teacher 2 shared that:

“After assigning homework, I must set the rules and punishments which require students practice at home and check every student at the beginning of the class. If they do not practice at home, the mistakes will be exposed clearly when they pronounce... Actually, the result is much better”. (Appendix 2)

Differing from teacher 2, teacher 1 confessed not putting any pressure of self-study on his students but just giving guidance and suggestions. Nevertheless, he still could realize his students' progress after the course.

“Furthermore, I often assign homework in order to help them revise and practice more at home. Their homework mainly focuses on practicing the target sounds or reading the texts. There are also exercises in the course book that they have to complete. However, that is almost all they do at home. Doing more exercises does not become one of their learning habits; and we also cannot check whether they self-study or not, it’s not compulsory. In spite of that, I recognize their progress through 15 weeks of pronunciation course when marking their recordings”. (Appendix 2)

That fact partly reflected that his students by some means have practiced pronunciation themselves without his asking in order to perform well in their recording assignments. Teacher 1 also added that:

“The effective of the pronunciation course is obvious. I did a research that investigated the effectiveness of the pronunciation course. Most of the respondents stated that the course was really significant. It helped to improve the learners’ pronunciation at least at the level of basic sounds. (Appendix 2)

Additionally, teacher 2 emphasized the stability of difficult sounds that students could gain after the pronunciation course.

To summary, the pronunciation course contributed much to improving the pronunciation of the first-year mainstream students. In comparison, students agreed that they could pronounce more correctly than the starting time. Especially, by applying strategies in learning pronunciation, they could also improve their learning autonomy.

## **4.2. Implications**

With the support of above-mentioned findings, several implications could be drawn.

Firstly, the findings of metacognitive and cognitive strategies showed that students had tendency to employ less metacognitive strategies than cognitive ones. As the result, the learners should pay more attention to higher order executive skills which can improve their ability of self-planning, self-managing, self-monitoring and self-evaluating. Therefore, they could use them to facilitate their learning in the rapid flow of the age of information technology which asks for active and

demanding individuals. Learning passively with knowledge as well as learning strategies provided by the teacher at college is likely to make students become automatic “imitators”. It is crucial for students to set their goals of learning and plan to achieve these targets by themselves.

Secondly, the research also pointed out that keeping learning journals were not seriously taken into consideration in learning pronunciation. There was a fact that not all students could recognize the benefits of keeping learning diary which makes reflection on their learning as well as keeps track of their process. Thus, the awareness of learning journals should be raised among students so that it could serve as an effective instrument for pronunciation learning in particular and English skills in general.

Last but not least, some students reported that they were not guided clearly or give detailed instructions by the teacher about the strategies which should be employed to improve learning pronunciation autonomously. Therefore, careful instructions and guidance might help teachers encourage their students to be more active in learning pronunciation. As the result, the students would be involved more in those strategies in order to gain achievements and maintain them in the long-term learning process.

#### **4.3. Application**

On the whole, the research is of considerable help for both students of the FELTE and researchers working on the related issues. Therefore, the result of the study can be applied to enhance the students’ autonomy in learning pronunciation as well as improve the teaching and learning method and quality of Enhancing Communication Course of the FELTE, ULIS, VNU.

Specifically, learning strategies mentioned in the study can be employed in pronunciation classes. In term of metacognitive strategies, teachers can help their students to be advance organizers or self-managers/monitors by encouraging them review the lesson before class as well as arrange appropriate conditions for their learning. Furthermore, students should be guided to self-evaluate their progress in learning by recoding their pronunciation and then check how well they perform.

Regarding to cognitive strategies, repetition, auditory representation, inferencing, etc. can be exploited in pronunciation class. That provides students with a variety of learning methods. In addition, teacher can create cooperating learning environment in which students work in pairs or groups; therefore, they can get support from their friend and learn the way to operate their own task as well. On the contrary, students should be sometime allowed to work individually, but with the guidance of the teacher. In that way, teacher need to provide students with description of task, useful sources that they can find valuable learning materials and strategies. In some aspects, their social strategies will be fostered.

On the other hands, concerning the benefits of homework in helping students revise in-class knowledge at home, teachers may assign an amount of homework after each class. Because as data collected in the study, students do not get much homework but only some in the course book. Keeping learning journals should also be encouraged among students.

*To sum up, in this chapter answer to each research question has been clearly provided via a thorough analysis and discussion of the data collected from research instruments. From that, some implications are withdrawn and application of the study is suggested. Major findings will be summarized in the next chapter.*

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

*This concluding chapter aims to summarize the findings, highlight contributions of the research. Address notable limitations and propose some practical suggestions for further research.*

### **5.1. Summary of findings**

On the whole, this research paper performs as a fairly comprehensive study of investigating the first-year mainstream students' autonomy in learning pronunciation at the FELTE, ULIS, VNU. Through deep analysis of data collected from questionnaires, interviews and class observations, the researcher comes up with some major findings for three research questions as follows:

Firstly, the study indicated that different strategies were variously employed in learning pronunciation by the first-year mainstream students of the FELTE namely metacognitive, cognitive and social /affective strategies. Among them, cognitive and social strategies were rather preferred. On the other hand, components of routes to autonomy were taken less considerations.

Secondly, the researcher found out that these strategies applied in a number of ways in pronunciation course. In each lesson, teacher managed to combine some appropriate strategies with the aims of creating an active learning environment which most enhance learner autonomy. In general, the lesson started with teacher's lecturing of very basic knowledge, students were allowed to listen to native speaker video later on (cognitive strategies). Most of the time left was spent for student's practicing individually and in groups (social strategies). Teacher also asked students to record and evaluate their pronunciation as well (metacognitive strategies).

As the results, the study received almost all students' positive attitudes towards pronunciation course. They highly agreed that the course help to improve their pronunciation as well as autonomous learning.

### **5.2. Limitations**

To some extent, the paper has managed to describe an overall picture of the first-year mainstream students' autonomy in learning pronunciation. Nevertheless, there still exist several unavoidable limitations in this study.

In the first place, a limited population is one downside of this research. The survey questionnaires for students and observation couldn't be extended to all English learners as well as groups in Division I of the FELTE. Although the data collected from questionnaires, observations and interviews could ensure the liability

and validity of the findings, the researcher expects to involve more participants. As the result, the findings could be of greater validity and reliability.

Additionally, regarding shortage of time and division of schedule for teachers who were in charge of pronunciation classes, the research could only invite the participation of two teachers for interviews. That might not reflect the whole viewpoints of all teachers. Besides, due to the limit of the researcher's knowledge and experience, the researcher has not covered all the aspects of this subject yet. Investigation of learning motivation needs to be in a deeper research.

In short, the research fully acknowledged these limitations; therefore, they should be taken into account in future research of the same field.

### **5.3. Suggestions for further research**

As aforementioned, the limited scope and participants of the study might pose shortcomings to the outcome of the study; it has offered the other researchers various approaches to this issue as follow.

They may conduct a long-term study in which the researcher will examine whether students maintain these strategies in their self-learning. Also, another direction is to find out the learner motivation in learning pronunciation that this study hasn't covered yet.

Moreover, there can be another study that clarifies the differences between male and female students' autonomy in learning pronunciation because of their different psychological characteristics as well as learning habits.

*In a nutshell, the research's major findings, the limitations and the suggestions into considerations to implement further investigations into this field have been discussed in the final chapter.*

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### Students Survey Questionnaires

My name is Nguyen Thi Phuong Anh from 08.1.E8, the FELTE, ULIS, VNU. At present, I am conducting my thesis entitled “*Investigating students’ autonomy: a study of the Enhancing Communication Skill Course for the first-year mainstream students of the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS, VNU*”. Your cooperation with sincere answers is crucial to the success of my research. Your information will be kept confidential for the study purposes only. Thank you for your help.

#### Background information

Your name: ..... Your gender:      Male                       Female

Your group: .....

Your major:              Teacher training               Interpreter training

Your age: .....

Years of learning English: .....

Your email: .....

Your phone number: .....

---

*For each of the items below, please tick or circle the number that reflects your viewpoint/habits in a five-point scale.*

---

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

#### Part 1:

1. You review the lesson before going to class.              1      2      3      4      5
2. You set the goals for the next lesson.                              1      2      3      4      5
3. In each lesson, you focus on some specific sounds which you feel necessary and pay less attention to others that you suppose less important.      1      2      3      4

4. You choose your own seat in the class (near the teacher).  
1 2 3 4 5
5. You correct the pronunciation mistakes immediately when you realize they are wrong.  
1 2 3 4 5
6. You only pronounce the words when you have to in order to listen to the others.  
1 2 3 4 5
7. You pronounce and record to evaluate your pronunciation.  
1 2 3 4 5
8. You give rewards for your success in learning pronunciation.  
1 2 3 4 5
9. You repeat your teacher's pronunciation. 1 2 3 4 5
10. You use dictionaries to check transcription. 1 2 3 4 5
11. You take note during pronunciation class. 1 2 3 4 5
12. You have your own tips to learn pronunciation. 1 2 3 4 5
13. When you are trying to learn how to pronounce something, you speak it in your mind first. 1 2 3 4 5
14. You identify an English word with a Vietnamese word that sounds alike in order to remember it better. 1 2 3 4  
5
15. You guess the way to pronounce a new word based on known words. 1 2 3 4 5
16. You ask the teacher when you don't know how to pronounce a word. 1 2 3 4 5
17. You ask your friends when you don't know how to pronounce a word. 1 2 3 4 5
18. You are willing to work in group in pronunciation class.

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. You discuss with your group to do pronunciation assignment.             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. You are willing to work independently in pronunciation class.           |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. You use self-study books for improving pronunciation.                   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. You reflect on your pronunciation learning.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. You have strategies to learn pronunciation.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. You can realize your strengths and weaknesses.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. You complete all you homework before the next class.                    |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. You are willing to do homework independently.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. You keep 'learning journal/diary' to keep track of your learning goals. |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Part 2:**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28. Teacher asks you to review lesson before going to class.                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Teacher asks you to set goals for each lesson.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. Teacher guides you how to make plan for your self-study after the pronunciation course.  |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Teacher asks you comment (self-evaluate) on your record and helps correct your mistakes. |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Teacher asks you to pronounce and record your pronunciation.                             |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. Teacher let other students listen to and comment on your record.                         |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

34. Teacher asks you to use dictionaries when you don't know how to pronounce a word.

1 2 3 4 5

35. Teacher guides you to use self-study books to learn pronunciation.

1 2 3 4 5

36. Teacher provides you with a lot of useful sources to learn pronunciation at home.

1 2 3 4 5

37. Teacher provides you opportunities to reflect on your learning.

1 2 3 4 5

38. Teacher gives you strategies to learn pronunciation.

1 2 3 4 5

39. Teacher gives you homework to do at home.

1 2 3 4 5

40. Teacher gives you pronunciation assignments to do at home.

1 2 3 4 5

41. Teacher guides you to do homework and pronunciation assignments.

1 2 3 4 5

42. Teacher checks your homework in the next class.

1 2 3 4 5

43. Teacher checks your progress on your pronunciation assignment every week.

1 2 3 4 5

44. Teacher encourages you to keep learning journals to keep track of your pronunciation learning.

1 2 3 4 5

**Part 3:**

**It is important that you handwriting comments in this section are constructive to the value of the study.**

45. Do you think that strategies the teacher provides you can help you learn pronunciation by yourself? Explain your answer.

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

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

46. **AFTER** the pronunciation course, do you maintain the strategies in learning pronunciation by yourself? Will/did you make any plan to practice pronunciation yourself? Please specify how.

.....  
.....  
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47. Do you think the pronunciation course help you enhance your self-learning? Explain for your answer.

.....  
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*Thank you so much for you cooperation!*

**APPENDIX 2.1**

**Teacher interview questions**

1. Do you think that learner autonomy in learning English pronunciation is necessary? Give more explanation for your answer.



2. What do you think about your students' ability to learn pronunciation autonomously?
3. What are strategies that you employ to teach pronunciation in class?
4. What have you done to encourage them to learn pronunciation autonomously at home?  
What is the result?
5. Can you realize the progress of the first-year students after pronunciation course?

## **APPENDIX 2.2**

### **Interview transcripts**

**Teacher 1**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

**Duration: 10 minutes**

**1. Do you think that learner autonomy in learning English pronunciation is necessary? Give more explanation for your answer.**

Yes, absolutely. It is very important because of two reasons. Firstly, the time for a pronunciation class is only 2 periods per week (100 minutes). In that limited time, teacher cannot provide students with all necessary knowledge but just some basic only. Secondly, due to a rather large population of a class, teacher cannot make specific consideration to each student. Therefore, it requires much learner autonomy. However, self-study does not always bring benefit if students have only themselves. It would be better if they study with another friend.

**2. What do you think about your students' ability to learn pronunciation autonomously?**

Subjectively, it is not very good. To have deeper evaluation, we will need a real research about this issue. The reason is that students do not know how to learn or have an appropriate learning method. They just pronounce but do not know surely whether it is correct. Furthermore, there is no one who listens to them and corrects their mistakes. That's why I said before, self- learning but with partners who can pronounce rather well.

**3. What are strategies that you employ to teach pronunciation in class?**

Firstly, I provide them with very basic theory, and then let them listen to a video of native speakers.

Secondly, I let them practice by pronouncing the words or reading a text in the course book. During practicing, I point out clearly the way to pronounce the sounds carefully as well as their mistakes.

Next, a group of tutors walk around the class and offer help.

Then, I check every student as groups as well as help them to correct mispronunciation. Nevertheless, with one group I just choose one sound to check and then the other group with another sound because of the limited time and rather large population of the class.

**4. What have you done to encourage them to learn pronunciation autonomously at home? What is the result?**

Of course I ask them to practice at home because of the limited time in class. I also ask them to record their voice and listen to again. By this way, they can realize their mistakes. They may record the second time to see the progress. And they will bring their record to class next time, I will listen to and give comments.

Furthermore, I often assign homework in order to help them revise and practice more at home. Their homework mainly focuses on practicing the target sounds or reading the texts. There are also exercises in the course book that they have to complete. However, that is almost all they do at home. Doing more exercises does not become one of their learning habits; and we also cannot check whether they self-study or not, it's not compulsory. In spite of that, I recognize their progress through 15 weeks of pronunciation course when marking their recordings at the end of the course.

**5. Can you realize the progress of the first-year students after pronunciation course?**

Apparently. The effective of the pronunciation course is obvious. I did a research that investigated the effectiveness of the pronunciation course. Most of the respondents stated that the course was really significant. It helps improve the learners' pronunciation at least at the level of basic sounds. However, there are many factors which influence on pronunciation. The turning point depends on the ability of each individual.

**Teacher 2**

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

**Duration: 10 minutes**

**1. Do you think that learner autonomy in learning English pronunciation is necessary? Give more explanation for your answer.**

It is very essential. Because the in-class time is just in 2 periods, furthermore most of the time students speak in Vietnamese, if they do not practice more at home; their Vietnamese sounds will dominate their English sounds.

**2. What do you think about your students' ability to learn pronunciation autonomously?**

Actually it is rather bad. Immediately after leaving the class, they speak Vietnamese instead of English and they are not aware of practicing difficult sounds in English.

**3. What are strategies that you employ to teach pronunciation in class?**

First, I survey the level of students' making mistakes of the target sounds.

Secondly, I start teaching by explaining carefully about articulation of each sound, the way to lay the tongue or the way to practice difficult sounds, etc.

Thirdly, I take examples and analyze them in order to help students recognize the sounds in a specific words or a sentence.

Next, I let students practice thoroughly in class and then assign homework.

**4. What have you done to encourage them to learn pronunciation autonomously at home? What is the result?**

After assigning homework, I must set the rules and punishments which require students practice at home and check every student at the beginning of the class. If they do not practice at home, the mistakes will be exposed clearly when they pronounce. I also ask them to read a text, pay attention to ending sounds, circle difficult sounds as well. Moreover, they can listen to a video of native speakers and imitate or record their own pronunciation to evaluate the accuracy.

I also give them useful sources or document for their self-study such as video, books and e-books, or I myself make model that serves as a reference for my students.

Actually, the result is better. However, I'm afraid that after a long time without my pushing, they will distract and lose a little bit the perception of sound.

**5. Can you realize the progress of the first-year students after pronunciation course?**

Of course. Students themselves really make great progress. Generally, the stability of difficult sound that they perform is leveled up.

**APPENDIX 3**

**OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

**A. CLASS PROFILE**

---

**Name of teacher:** .....

**Date:**

---

**Observed class:** .....

.....

**Start time:** .....**End time:**

.....

**Duration:**

.....

---

**B. OBSERVATION**

	<b>Activities in class</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Conductor</b>
1	Teacher's lecturing			
2	Listening to video of native speakers			
3	Practicing individually			
4	Working in pairs/group to record pronunciation			
5	Tutor's walking around and offer help			
6	Teacher's checking and correcting mistakes			
7	Peer checking			
8	Calling students to pronounce			
9	Evaluating students' work			
10	Doing exercises in class			
11	Assigning homework			
12	Teacher's guiding to do homework and learn at home			