TOWARDS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LISTENING TO THE TARGET LANGUAGE BEYOND CLASSROOM

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Abstract

It is well-established that student engagement is a prerequisite and proxy for learning and development. Yet, despite its significance, student engagement has not received proper attention as an important construct in the literature of second/foreign language research, especially in research on listening skill. The current research contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon of student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening. The research was conducted at a university in Viet Nam and targeted at second-year and third-year majors of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). To attain the aims of gaining insight into student engagement in listening beyond classroom and innovating a design for enhancing student engagement, two studies were undertaken. The first or baseline study examined the status quo of student engagement within these learners' usual self-study setting. Meanwhile, the main study examined student engagement in the project's social networked or YouListen listening space. The research was a mixed methods case study, mobilizing survey questionnaires, a record of the learners' online activity and semi-structured interviews.

The results from the baseline study reveal a worrying status quo of student engagement in terms of time and effort investment, listening strategy use, readiness, confidence and willingness to listen to the target language beyond classroom. Besides, the learning condition and factors relating to the learners themselves were perceived to affect their engagement the most. Furthermore, several significant correlations between certain behaviours of engagement were statistically identified. Last, sharing experiences with peers, asynchronous communication, test-oriented resources and real life-oriented resources gained the learner's strong favour. The findings of the main study depict a diverse picture of student engagement in which variation in engagement was associated with different learners and

different listening or sharing sub-spaces and within individual learners. In general, there were noticeable positive signs of engagement, such as being engaged with particular listening resources, the expression of positive emotions, and actively sharing listening comprehension and reflection, all of which seemed to suggest the potential of the project's listening space to engage learners to listen actively to English. Nevertheless, the prevalence of inflexible listening strategies and 'quiet' knowledge construction were identified. It was found that there was interplay of certain contextual and learner factors that might have contributed to the ways students engaged. Suggestions that might further promote student engagement were drawn and involved improvements in both the design and the learner. Based on the obtained research findings, pedagogical implications are recommended. The findings and recommendations will be of interest to EFL teachers, researchers, and policy makers.

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1 Introduction

What follows here is the presentation of research on promoting student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening, involving the deployment of Vygotskian sociocultural theory and social network sites. The first part of this thesis, the Introduction, starts with the rationale for doing this research, then it provides an overview of Viet Nam's context for the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language and of the state of L2 listening in disadvantaged areas. Next, the idea of a programme for promoting student engagement is introduced. The subsequent important section presents the research objectives. This *Introduction* chapter concludes by highlighting of the significance of the proposed research and presenting the scope and structure of the research.

1.1 Rationale for the Research

Achieving student engagement has increasingly been perceived to have great impact on the quality of higher education (Coates, 2006) and individual learning. Indeed, student engagement is well documented to be variously a "condition", "prerequisite" and "predictor" of learning and to be associated with improvements in academic achievement, learner interest and satisfaction, a sense of belonging and decreased dropout rates (Astin, 1993; Fredricks, et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2008; Kuh, 2001; Shulman, 2002). For instance, reviewing the literature on student engagement, Kuh (2001) succinctly summarizes that: "the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and professional development" (p.1). The National Survey of Student Engagement

(NSSE) and the Australian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) are developed and widely administered in the United States, Canada, and Australia, not only to measure the quality of higher education but also to enable institutions to make informed decisions on providing more favourable learning conditions (Coates, 2006).

Despite the significance of student engagement, there is a paucity of research that focuses on either promoting or investigating it as a construct in the context of second/foreign language and even less in relation to listening skill. Being a multidimensional construct, student engagement can be defined as: "students' behavioral, cognitive, affective, and social involvement in instructional activities with their teachers and classmates" (Lutz et al., 2006, p.3) and these dimensions are interwoven and interdependent. In reality, it should be understood that current research on L2 listening is mainly concerned with the cognitive dimension of engagement, exploring learners' listening strategy use (Chen et al., 2014; O'Malley et al., 1989; Vandergrift, 1997, 2003) or training learners to acquire such listening strategies (Coskun, 2010; Lofti et al., 2012; O'Malley, 1985; Thompson & Rubin, 1996). One nuance of *emotional* engagement is investigated in just a few studies, as either anxiety (Elkhafaifi, 2005) or confidence (Moyer, 2006). As a consequence, the different dimensions of engagement in listening, their dynamic interdependence and their impact on listening outcomes have not been well understood. In practice, numerous interventionist studies employ experimental or quasi-experimental designs to examine a direct relationship between their intervention program and listening performance (e.g., extensive listening (Chang & Millet, 2013), CALL integration programs (Barani, 2011; Nachoua, 2012; Saitakham, 2012; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007; and listening strategy training, as mentioned above). Within such methods, the

outcome variable is always measured by an 'in-house' (Vandergrift, 2007) summative listening comprehension post-test. Yet it should be noted that the *processes* of how these interventions succeed or fail to enhance listening proficiency are not well articulated, since the pivotal *intermediary* role of learner engagement has typically been overlooked. As Ghassemi (2013, p.45) puts it: "there is still a controversy over the effective role of listening strategies in improving listening comprehension. Adopting either strategy, the course shall be quite ineffective if it fails to increase learners' participation in the course". Ghassemi's claim can be justified by a well-established assumption that learners function as "active creators in their learning process, not as passive recipients" (Morley, 1984, 1). Therefore, the quality of learning (listening) is first and foremost guided by student engagement (Coates, 2005).

Another growing concern is many learners' low engagement in out-of-class language learning through L2 listening, despite the fact that, in recent years, L2 listening has been of great interest and recognition among researchers, teachers and learners themselves as an essential skill for efficient communication in the target language (Feyten, 1991, Hadley, 2001) and language acquisition (Rost, 2002). In one recent study, Davis (2013) raises the concern: "Why are students failing to practice listening and speaking skills outside the classroom" (p.86). It is reported that the amount of self-study time spent by Japanese students is just within the range from zero to one hour per week (Fukuda & Yoshida, 2013). Similarly, Goh's (2002) research findings reveal that whilst almost all of them made plans for L2 listening practice, only a small percentage (18%) of ESL Chinese learners stuck to their plans.

Besides, signs of disengagement such as lack of interest, enthusiasm, and concentration, loss of self-confidence, even aversion, are reported (Noro, 2006).

Given the pivotal role of student engagement, the research gap in second/foreign language listening, and the alarming low engagement in out-of-class L2 listening, the present research project is carried out with a desire to make a timely contribution by addressing these gaps and engaging students with listening to the target language. Additionally, investigating and enhancing student engagement for resourcing their improvements in language, especially listening skill, is considered urgent and significant in the context of Viet Nam's foreign language education. This is discussed in detail in the following Section.

1.2 Viet Nam's Context of the Teaching and Learning of English

Apart from the potentials of student engagement and the research gap in the literature, the pressing need for this research also arises from the specific context of teaching and learning English and L2 listening in Viet Nam. This Section is devoted to a description of this context; that is, the context of the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) and that of teaching and learning EFL or L2 listening. The Section concludes with a call for promoting student engagement in L2 listening.

1.2.1 Context of the Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language

In sketching a picture of Viet Nam's English Language Teaching and Learning, I will present in brief its history, current situation, and Viet Nam's 'National Foreign Language Project 2020'.

Based on some extant English textbooks by French authors such as 'L'anglais Vivant: Classe de sixieme', 'L'anglais Vivant Classes de troisieme'and some bilingual English-Vietnamese dictionaries by two Vietnamese scholars, English began to be taught in Viet Nam during the French era; that is, when Viet Nam was under French colonial rule. Although English was once a dominant language in South Viet Nam during 1954-1975, it was soon relegated to an inferior position for the next decade, with only 20% of school pupils studying English, as opposed to 70% choosing Russian nationwide (Hoang, 2010). However, English has become "the number one foreign language in Viet Nam" (ibid.) since that time. Russia and Eastern Europe's economic and political crises in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Australia's assistance with English programmes, and the inevitable trends of globalization and integration underpin the popularity of English language. Noticeably, the year 1986 is considered a landmark or turning point. That year an important decision on overall economic reform, namely exercising the open-door policy, was officially announced for development and integration at the Sixth National Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party, (ibid.). In fact, English is now a compulsory subject at lower and upper secondary and tertiary levels and an elective one at primary level. English is one of the six national examinations that students have to pass if they want to get the Secondary School Education Certificate. In contrast to the percentage pattern of learners in years before 1986, 98% of students

currently study English whilst those studying Russian, Chinese, French, German and Japanese account for just 2% (Nguyen, 2011). Also, a pilot English program has already been introduced at primary level for grades 3-5.

As regards the status quo of English teaching and learning in Viet Nam, its quality is admittedly unsatisfactory (Hoang et al, 2006, cited in Le, 2013). Worryingly, Nguyen (2011, 2013) reported the finding that many students "cannot communicate or use English in their study after 7 years at schools and 2 more years at college" and 98% of high school Vietnamese teachers of English are under-qualified in terms of their English proficiency level and only 2% of the teachers attain C1 level, revealing the poor quality of English language teacher training programs and teacher professional development. Hoang (2010) states a paradox as follows:

> *Although he rhetoric of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training stresses the development of practical communication skills, this is rarely reflected at the classroom level, where the emphasis is on the development of reading comprehension, vocabulary and structural patterns for the purposes of passing the end-of-school and university entrance examinations into colleges or universities.*(p.16)

The problem of "deaf and mute English" was a consequence of a common traditional class in which 40% of the class time is for explication by the teacher, acting as an expert transmitting knowledge, 50% for such text-based activities as reading, vocabulary exercises and/or translation, and the very small percentage of 10% is devoted to practice in pairs or groups (Nguyen, 2013). Besides, unfavourable English learning conditions are a challenge to English teaching and learning. In fact, no foreign language libraries and few English learning and teaching resources are

available at schools, even at universities, except for the major universities. Implementing 'Credit-based education', class time for language skills, phonology and other English and specialized courses throughout the whole 4-year period for B.A in English programmes has decreased considerably. It is now at only 1425 periods of 50 minutes (for undergraduates who are allowed to write a graduation paper) or 1545 (for other undergraduates who take modules instead of completing a graduation paper).

There is, therefore, a call for reforms in English education programmes and great efforts sought from all those concerned. Otherwise, "english teaching in Viet Nam would soon cease to effectively serve the demands being made on it" (Hoang, 2010, p.10). In response to the above-mentioned current limitations of English language teaching and learning, Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg dated 30 September 2008 was issued stating our goal as:

> *By 2020 most Vietnamese students graduating from secondary, vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily communication, their study and work in an integrated, multi-cultural and multilingual environment, making foreign languages a comparative advantage of development for Vietnamese people in the cause of industrialization and modernization for the country.*

In pursuit of this Decision, the National Foreign Language Project 2020 is implemented. The Project has put forward six major solutions, including teacher development, four programs at work (voluntary English programs at primary level, compulsory programs, intensive programs at all school levels and bilingual experimental programs), digital textbooks, policies and incentives, international cooperation, and favourable English teaching and learning environments (Nguyen,

2011). Noticeably, 80,000 teachers of English are to be trained to harness ICT for better teaching and learning. A model of 'Blended Solution' for ELT has also been recommended: that is, a great proportion of 60% study time is for students' multimedia-based self-study. Students are expected to take focused, frequent and extensive practice. Time for classroom follow-up accounts for just 25%, and such activities as explication, personalization, extension, and group activities are suggested. The rest of study time is for self-study. With the Blended Solution for ELT, it is estimated that only 360 class hours are needed, instead of 972 hours in traditional classes and blended solution classes are conducive to learner autonomy. The last important point about the Project is that it emphasizes and specifies the task to renovate methods of assessment and testing. Students' performance in four language skills is to be tested.

In summary, it is apparent that it is historical, socio-political and economic factors that have had great impact on the status of English language in Vietnam's foreign language education. At present, English is a dominant foreign language and so there has been ever-growing demand for good command of English for integration, personal and professional development.

1.2.2 The Teaching and Learning of EFL Listening in Disadvantaged Areas

In the context of recent reforms in the teaching and learning of English, EFL listening has started to attract attention in all levels of the education system. Specifically, it is considered imperative that listening be taught and tested with the same weight as other language skills. University English majors are now required to attain their language proficiency level 5 (C1 in Vietnam's Language Proficiency

Framework, which is compatible with the Common European Framework of Reference).

As regards the teaching and learning of EFL listening at the universities in Viet Nam's low-resource contexts, there exist certain worrying problems. Firstly, many students do start with rather poor EFL listening performance. This may be due to the fact that it is not until they enter university that they begin learning EFL listening as a language skill. This language skill has long been neglected, even excluded in English programs at many schools which only focus on grammar and translation. The second serious problem is that there have not been standard syllabi that prepare students of English to meet the requirements of the National Foreign Language Project 2020. In addition, class time for listening as a language skill at university is limited to only 100 minutes a week, which is too little for English majors to receive enough training for listening enhancement and to practise listening in different and varied contexts. Meanwhile, students' self-study is impeded because of unfavourable learning conditions or lack of language environment for language practice and interactions in the target language. Indeed, no English libraries and self-access centres are established at universities located in the provinces of the country. Meanwhile, surrounding them in everyday communication is almost entirely the mother tongue.

To sum up, owing to unfavourable learning conditions and learners' poor language proficiency, there is a possibility that they may lose confidence, feel despondent, and even neglect their out-of-class L2 listening. Therefore, it is high time for all the concerned to take action, assist and engage them towards listening to the target language.

1.3 Promoting Student Engagement in Out-of-Class L2 Listening

I have always been seeking answers to such basic questions as: whether my students are really listening to English beyond the classroom with their "heart and mind" (Barkley, 2009), whether they encounter any difficulties with listening, what their learning needs are, and how I could promote their engagement in English listening. To my thinking, and via informal conversations with my colleagues and students, leveraging the Internet, specifically, ESL/EFL listening websites and social network sites could be a feasible and promising way forward. Nevertheless, as Paulsen (2001, para.2) emphasizes, "It is no longer a question of whether to take advantage of these electronic technologies in foreign language instruction, but of how to harness them and guide our students in their use". The 'how' is a critical and difficult-to-answer issue because "technology is developing so rapidly that it can often be difficult or even overwhelming to harness, somewhat like trying to get a drink of water from a gushing fire hydrant" (Warschauer, 1995, xv). Technology may be part of a solution towards engaging L2 listeners and stimulating effective listening. Teachers and "an educational disposition" (Crook, 2008; Kern, 2006) towards the deployment of technology are considered important factors determining effective use. As a practical endeavour, the current research adopts Vygotskian sociocultural theory (see Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) as an underpinning theory.

To address these challenges, an asynchronous, online, English listening supporting and sharing learning space, or 'YouListen', will be designed with the deployment of direction from Vygotskian sociocultural theory, ESL/EFL listening websites, and social network sites. Such a space is proposed to be conducive to enhancing student engagement. Indeed, it has the potential to facilitate interactions

between a teacher and students, as well as between a student and his/her peers. These interactions can be in the form of scaffolding, collaborating, and sharing listening experiences around the content and perspectives related to what the students have listened to. They are directed towards assisting the learner in developing across their Zone of Proximal Development or attaining a level of development that would be impossible without these interactions. There is also the possibility of alleviating potential problems with interactions such as time and place constraints. Listening may thereby no longer be an isolating activity. Positive attitudes towards L2 listening, strategy training, and learning opportunities may not be sufficient in themselves, so that learners may need support, sharing, a space of contribution, and competence in self-expression. These needs may be satisfied in this learning environment. Therefore, they are likely to become more engaged in L2 listening.

The extent to which a learning space such as YouListen can enhance student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening in the low-English resource context of Viet Nam remains unknown and so deserves investigation.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research therefore entail:

(1) investigating the real situation of current learner engagement in out-of-class listening: with a focus on their frequency and time on task, quality of effort in listening activities, learning and self-regulation strategies and emotions when listening beyond the

classroom, and factors that affect learner engagement in out-of-class listening

(2) examining student engagement in a social networked listening space

(3) examining the factors that affect their engagement in such a social networked listening space

(4) proposing recommendations for the further fostering of student engagement in such a social networked listening space

These four research objectives are manifested in the research questions which are to be mentioned in the Section 2.6.

1.5 The Significance of the Research

The present research is considered of great potential significance because of its promise of making contributions to the teaching, learning and resourcing of foreign language experience in general, and listening skill in particular. First, the research is expected to offer a better understanding of language learners' out-of-class engagement as a multifaceted construct. That is, what they are actually doing, how they are feeling and striving to listen cognitively to English beyond the classroom, and how they interact with teachers and peers. Importantly, this research underscores the self-reported influence of the context in which the learner is invited to engagement and the internal factors that come from the status and biography of the learner him/herself.

The third contribution of this research comes from its potential to make recommendations for the fostering of student engagement in a social networked listening space. It may prove the great value of integrating Vygotskian sociocultural theory, ESL/EFL listening websites and social network sites for a higher level of engagement and improvements in language and listening performance when they are effectively integrated. The research will address the misconception about listening and technology that good listening ability is a natural gift – one that needs no engagement - and that technology may automatically bring about miracles. In other words, the lazy assumptions are that learners will all be highly engaged, even deeply immersed, and learn productively with a repository of Internet-based resources: it is merely a matter of sitting in front of the screen, searching and clicking. In particular, the present research would offer educators and teachers better insights, inspire them, and help them to make informed decisions in order to proliferate a feasible model of engaging learners in this dimension of language learning. As a result, students may have increased exposure to native speakers' English outside the classroom, as well as a sense of responsibility and meaningful experience when they actively participate in productive tasks and activities in various modes (visual, audio, and verbal/textual) and interact with teachers and peers. This is of paramount significance in the low-English resource contexts of Viet Nam. Vietnamese students have chances to improve their listening and be better prepared for course requirements and real listening situations. A further significant merit in this project is that it attempts to enrich that body of research on out-of-class language learning and L2 listening which highlights that listening is a *social* process, occurring within a learner's active interactions with his/her teacher, peers and others. Finally, the accomplishment of the study might inspire researchers, policy makers, and teachers to continue to facilitate

student engagement and recruit the social networked learning environment for other groups of students and their courses in reading, writing and speaking.

In summary, important information about the research, including the rationales, context, student engagement programme, objectives, research questions, and contributions of the research, has now been outlined.

1.6 The Scope of the Research

As explicitly indicated in the title, the present research focuses on teachers' facilitating their student engagement in out-of-class *listening* only. What makes this language skill deserve my special interest is its importance to the overall experience of learning. Students' poor listening performance and reflect their unfavourable learning conditions: that is, no English libraries, scarcity of English resources and audio recordings, few opportunities to learn and communicate with native speakers of English, and limited classtime. According to Chapelle and Curtis (2000), listening and speaking, among the four language skills, are the most fundamental communicative skills that need to be mastered by Asian learners but are the least achieved. The potential beneficiaries of the study are the second and third-year English majors in the low-English resource contexts in Viet Nam. The target students are supposed to accomplish listening tests of level 5 - C1 when taking their graduation exam.

1.7 The Structure of the Research

The research report consists of nine chapters organised as follows.

Chapter 1 presents the research problem under investigation, justifies the significance of pursuing it and provides the objectives and structure of the research. The chapter includes the background and identification of the problem, research objectives, the significance, scope, and structure of the research.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertinent to the research topic. The chapter reviews literature on student engagement, language listening, the Sociocultural theory, social networking sites. This review allows the specification of Research Questions that address the broad objectives of this project.

Chapter 3 describes how the research is conducted and justifies why it is done in that way. It provides a description of the research's two component studies, the mixed methods case study design with justifications for the choice of this research design, the underlying philosophical assumptions, an account of the research site and participants, a general description of data collection methods and data analysis approaches, a discussion of validity and reliability of a case study and a consideration of ethical responsibilities.

Chapters 4 reports findings obtained from analysis of a status quo survey questionnaire which serves to inform the research's design of an intervention programme. The findings are followed by a discussion that addresses the first research question.

Chapter 5 describes the intervention design and procedures of implementing the intervention and collecting data.

Chapter 6 reports findings about the participants' behavioural engagement with the listening space based on their online activity in the project's listening space that consists of the YouListen website, Facebook and VoiceThread sub-spaces.

Chapter 7 reports findings about the participants' cognitive, emotional and social engagement with the listening space based on their online activity in the project's listening space.

Chapter 8 presents and discusses themes identified from the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with participants after the intervention had finished and preliminary findings from the participants' online activity had been drawn.

Chapter 9 interprets and discusses the obtained findings of the main study with regards to the research questions of the main study.

The last chapter, Chapter 10, draws the overall general conclusions of the whole research project and indicates the implications of its findings. The contributions, implications, limitations as well as recommendations for future research are identified and presented.

The next part of this thesis is devoted to the presentation of relevant literature in which the programme for investigating and promoting student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening is grounded and, thus, the proposal of specific research questions for this project.

2 Literature review

This chapter provides a detailed insight into the theoretical background knowledge underlying the subject matter, reviewing literature on student engagement and out-of-class L2 listening. This review is followed by the presentation of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, which is the learning theory underpinning this research. Consideration is also given to two other main components of the programme for promoting student engagement, namely ESL/EFL listening websites. In the final Section, several related empirical studies are reviewed and my own research questions declared

2.1 Theoretical Background of Student Engagement

This Section presents the construct and nature of student engagement, followed by a description of the dimensions of student engagement in general and in L2 listening in particular. In the last part of the Section, the factors that influence student engagement are reviewed.

2.1.1 The Construct and Nature of Student Engagement

It is widely acknowledged that the concept of student engagement is an important one in the literature of education. Much effort has been invested in defining and exploring its nature. By tracing the meanings of ‘student engagement’ in dictionaries, this concept can be defined as “being actively committed”, involving oneself or becoming occupied; participating (Fredricks et al, 2004, p.60). In the

higher education literature, it has been defined in either a broad or narrow sense and from different research perspectives. Student engagement is "a broad phenomenon which encompasses students' in-class and out-of-class experiences" (Coates, 2006, 16), or narrowly considered 'time-on-task' or academic learning time' (cited in Coates, 2006) or "a cognitive phenomenon having to do with the extent to which students are mentally involved with the issues and problems of academic study" (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991 p.269). Kahu (2013) depicts what student engagement means from four research perspectives, namely (1) the behavioural perspective, (2) the psychological perspective, (3) the socio-cultural perspective, and (4) the holistic perspective.

Specifically, from a behavioural perspective, student engagement is tracked from 'time-on-task', student behaviours or what students actually do, and from institutional practices. From a psychological perspective, student engagement is viewed as "an internal individual process" (p.758), involving student mental effort, and/or emotions. One significant discrepancy between psychological and socio-cultural perspectives on student engagement lies in the fact that the latter emphasizes "the impact of the broader social context on student experience" (p.763) whilst the former just examines student engagement "within the individual" (p.763). Such contextual factors as disciplinary power, academic culture and an excessive focus on performativity are likely to undermine the engagement of students, especially those who are freshmen or non-traditional students (p. 763). Finally, student engagement is also defined from a more holistic view, entailing "the perceptions, expectations and experience of being a student and the construction of being a student" (Bryson, Hardy, and Hand, 2009).

Despite "a confusing array of definitions and associated concepts" (Dunne & Owen, 2013, xv), "we know it [engagement] when we see it, and we know it when it is missing" (Newmann, 1986, 242). In other words, there are certain vivid characteristics of student engagement. First and foremost, there is consensus that student engagement is a multidimensional construct (Christenson et al, 2012, v), with a combination of such components as behaviour, cognition and emotion. As Skinner and Belmont (1993) put it, "the target motivational outcome was student engagement … Engagement includes both behavioural and emotional components" (p.572). Combining three components is recommended by Fredricks et al (2004). This recommendation has resonated with the view that "engagement is more than involvement or participation - it requires feelings and sense-making as well as activity" (Harper & Quaye, 2009, p.5). Engaged students are therefore portrayed as those who not only get involved, complying with institutional and class regulations and the completion of tasks, but they also put forth effort, persist, self-regulate their behaviour toward goals, challenge themselves to exceed, and enjoy challenges and learning (Klem & Connell, 2004). Noticeably, student engagement is a "meta" construct, as suggested by Fredricks et al.: it is highly appreciated among researchers, enabling the integration of diverse approaches for better understanding of the multifaceted nature of student engagement. Another significant characteristic is that it is a dynamic phenomenon (Fredricks et al, 2004; Bryson & Hand, 2007; Barkley, 2009). Indeed, there can be variations in intensity and duration, along a low-high continuum, procedural, substantive, surface, deep, short-term or stable, and long-term engagement. This can be attributed to qualitative differences in the level or degree of engagement along each component and reciprocal effects of different components and processes. A double helix is employed by Barkley (2009) as a

metaphor for engagement. In this double helix, "active learning and motivation are spirals working together synergistically, building in intensity, and creating a fluid and dynamic phenomenon that is greater than the sum of their individual effects" (p.7). Apart from being dynamic, student engagement is likely to be malleable (Connell, 1990). That is, the level of engagement, and the positive or negative nature of engagement experiences are presumed to be influenced by contextual factors. The models such as the 'Self-System Model of Motivational Development' attempt to explicate the influence of contextual factors on student engagement. In addition, student engagement exerts strong influence on the quality of education, being regarded as "an all-pervasive term used in higher education across the world" (Dunne & Owen, 2013, p. xvi).

From the constructivist perspective, knowledge is co-constructed; therefore, learners and their approach to learning are considered central to educational practice (Dunne & Owen, 2013), such that "learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities" (Coates, 2005, p.26). In fact, student engagement is acknowledged as one of the best predictors of effective learning (Kuh, 2001). Student engagement enables us to better understand student experience in activities that have the potential to bring about desired outcomes (Coates, 2005; Kuh, 2009). As Coates (2006) puts it, "At a certain level of analysis, engagement represents a singularly sufficient means of summarising and characterising students' interactions with their study and institutions." (p.16). The activities or practices refer to those that facilitate academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences and a supportive campus environment. "Learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or

crafts" (Newmann et al., 1992) and "Persistence, satisfaction, and graduation" (Kuh et al, 2007, p.44) are some of the desired outcomes. Furthermore, it is emphasized that student engagement is a dual responsibility of both the learner and the institution, as clearly articulated in Kuh's (2009) definition: "the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college *and* what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" (emphasis in original) (p.683). Learners are supposed to invest their time and effort in educationally purposeful activities and administrators and lecturers are to provide conditions, opportunities and expectations for them to become engaged (Coates, 2005).

The last important point is that several researchers attempt to offer better understanding of student engagement by contrasting it with superficial participation, apathy, or lack of interest (Newmann et al., 1992), alienation (Mann, 2001, 7), passivity (Dunne & Owen, 2013), inertia, apathy, disillusion or engagement in other pursuits (not engagement with university study) (Krause, 2005). As explicated in Krause (2005),

> *Inertia is a germane term to describe their attitude to university and their role in it… more suggestive of doing nothing, which aptly depicts the state of being for a group of students who do not actively pursue opportunities to engage in their learning community. For some students, the interlocking of individual and institutional interests, goals and aspirations never occurs. They do not choose or see the need to waver from their familiar path to engage with people, activities or opportunities in the learning community.* (p.4)

Based on the above-mentioned accumulated knowledge of the student engagement construct and in the light of Vygotskian Sociocultural theory, I therefore

intend to design a learning environment that might encourage L2 listeners to demonstrate desired learning behaviour. It may support them in mobilizing and sustaining their physical and mental effort, their
listening strategies and self-regulated strategies and positive emotions, as well as allowing interaction with others to accomplish a listening task, improve listening skill, communicate in the target language, enrich general and cultural knowledge or attain other preset learning goals. It should be dynamic from learner to learner and within an individual learner, also dynamic over time and context and mediated by such factors as contextual and individual variables, self-system processes and learning environment such as social network sites.

2.1.2 Dimensions of Student Engagement and Student Engagement in L2 Listening

The multidimensionality of student engagement is well-established. This Section is devoted to presenting the four dimensions proposed, namely behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and social engagement: as understood in general terms and in relation to L2 listening in particular. Fredricks et al. (2004) offer a detailed description of the first three dimensions.

Let us consider the behavioural engagement first. The researchers introduce three common definitions: (1) being concerned with attendance and complying classroom norms, (2) foregrounding “involvement in learning and academic tasks” which can be manifested in such behaviours as paying attention, concentration, completing tasks, asking questions or participating in class/group discussion, and (3) entailing

participation in extra-curricular activities or school governance (see Fredricks et al., 2004).

The second component, emotional engagement, is conceptualized as "reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school" (ibid.) or "emotions during ongoing action" (Skinner & Belmont, 1993) such as enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity, interest, apathy, boredom, anxiety, and frustration. The component is associated with attachment to an institution and willingness to study (Fredricks et al, 2004), with academic achievement, learning, personality development, and health (Christenson et al, 2012). Emotional engagement is presumed to affect other dimensions of engagement, which subsequently affects learning (Fredricks et al., 2004; Osterman, 2000).

The third dimension is cognitive engagement which "incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills." (Fredricks et al., 2004, p.60). Apart from psychological investment, cognitive engagement involves being strategic and self-regulated (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990; Guthrie et al., 2004). Finn and Zimmer (2012) specify the indicators of cognitive engagement, some of which are asking questions for the clarification of concepts, persisting with difficult tasks, studying sources of information beyond those required. In the computer conferencing literature, cognitive engagement has gained increasing interest (Garrison et al., 2001; Pawan et al., 2003; Zhu, 2006).

Apart from these three dimensions that Harper and Quaye (2009) succinctly depict these three dimensions or facets of engagement as activity, feelings, and sense-

making, the concept of student engagement is expanded with the inclusion of social engagement, the fourth dimension (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Lutz et al., 2006). For instance, Guthrie and colleagues realized that engaged readers were socially interactive in the sense that they shared what they read, their interpretation of a text with a "community of literacy". One striking feature of the dimensions of student engagement is that they are interdependent. Therefore, it is suggested to examine them simultaneously for better understanding of student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004).

As regards second/foreign language listening beyond the classroom, the aforementioned dimensions are possibly interpreted as follows. An L2 listener can be recognized as being behaviourally engaged when he/she spends a considerable amount of time in listening to recordings in the target language. Affective reactions could be enjoyment, enthusiasm, curiosity, interest, confidence, apathy, boredom, anxiety, and frustration with listening activities or characteristics of listening tasks and spoken texts or the content of the listening materials. The cognitive dimension could be revealed with learners' use of listening strategies, especially metacognitive strategies, mental effort invested in listening, and preference for taking challenge such as listening to different accents, authentic texts or different text genres. Finally, socially engaged listeners share the resources and content they have listened for, their comprehension, their difficulties or good ways of listening, or their other reactions toward listening activities and content. They could also collaborate with other peers for listening projects, mutual support or participate in class/group discussions.

The malleability of student engagement as mentioned in section 2.1.1 is discussed in detail in the coming Section.

2.1.3 Factors Influencing Student Engagement and Student Engagement in L2 Listening

This Section reviews certain contextual and individual factors that affect student engagement respectively.

2.1.3.1 Contextual Influences

There are numerous contextual factors that are indicated in the literature such as culture, educational contexts, community, family, peers, etc. (see Fredricks et al., 2004; Christenson et al., 2012; Shernoff et al., 2016). Staying within the scope of this research, this Section focuses on specific contextual influences, namely the teacher, peers and learning tasks and resources.

2.1.3.2 The teacher

The teacher is acknowledged to play a critical role in enhancing student engagement, even though student engagement "needs to be shaped and driven by students themselves if learning is to be autonomous and effective" (Ushioda, 2011, p.207). In the language learning literature, positive correlations between student engagement and teacher behaviour have been documented (Fukuda & Yoshida, 2013; Yang, 2011). As mentioned in Skinner & Belmont (1993) and Skinner & Pitzer (2012), teachers are likely to engage students when providing optimal structure, autonomy support and involvement, because these behaviours are perceived to satisfy individuals' fundamental needs, namely needs for competence, needs for autonomy and needs for relatedness (Connell, 1990). The structure would be optimal if the teacher could clearly and consistently articulate what students are

expected to do and provide them with guidance on how to attain desired outcomes so that students can proceed to make their own study plan, and set high but attainable goals for themselves. Students generally aim to perform at a level that is consistent with the teacher's belief and expectations. The teacher can support students' autonomy by allowing and encouraging them to make their choice of learning activities and participate in shared decision making. By doing so, students may perceive the personal meaning and relevance in their learning activities, thereby engaging in them more actively (Wankel & Blessinger, 2012). The last aspect of teacher behaviour, involvement or interaction with students, is presumed to eliminate such feelings as being rejected or being neglected (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). The teacher's interaction with students can be conceived by considering the amount of time spent interacting with students, level of interest, care and affection towards them as individuals, and the offering of learning resources (ibid.). Yang (2011) emphasizes that "Student-teacher interactions, in which the teacher guides students to collaboratively engage in problem solving and knowledge-building, are particularly significant in the L2 learning process" (p. 181) and reports "students' engagement is enhanced during student-teacher interactions in situated language learning" (p. 195). Student-teacher interactions are considered a necessary condition for student engagement by Pianta et al. (2012) and maintaining this type of interaction is top of the list of the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education outlined by Chickering and Gamson (1987). It is suggested that teachers should be accessible and willing to engage in more friendly exchanges that cover topics about student growth and development, not just "specific academic and vocational topics or requirements" (Endo and Harpel, 1982, p.133). It would also be desirable for the teacher to provide clear, prompt feedback (Newmann et al., 1992) and good quality

feedback that is defined as “information that helps students troubleshoot their own performance and self-correct; that is, it helps students take action to reduce the discrepancy between their intentions and the resulting effects’ (Nicol et al., 2006, p.208). It is also widely acknowledged that when students see an instructor who shows his/her great enthusiasm for learning or simply loves teaching, inevitably they are affected by this energy and will engage themselves actively in the learning process (Imai, 2010).

In an ICT-integrated language learning environment, such as that to be considered here, the teacher’s behaviour may entail providing academic, affective and technical support with the employment of online forums, student blogs and learner progress reports, encouraging autonomous and collaborative learning, creating a supportive online community, managing and facilitating online interaction (Marsh, 2012). Further suggestions are training learner for effective use of CALL (Hubbard, 2004), or developing learning-to-learn skills in response to the issue of “new levels of complication about learning to learn that confront the student (and instructor) who makes use of Web-based opportunities” (Collis & Meeuwsen, 1999, p. 29).

To sum up, the teacher as an influential factor in promoting student engagement is well documented and Miller (2010)’s following statement can be an invaluable guideline for enhancing student engagement both inside and outside classroom.

> *When instruction is planned with learners' needs and goals in mind, actively involves students in learning from one another, taps into their life experiences, and is challenging at learners' varying levels, learner engagement is likely to be strong, and learning is more apt to occur (Miller, 2010, p.2)*

2.1.3.3 Peers

The influence of peers on a student's engagement in studying has long been recognized. In early work, Chickering & Gamson (1987) determined that students are likely to become more involved when working with their peers and "improve thinking and deepen understanding" by sharing their own ideas and responding to others. Together with teacher support, personal support from peers is valued, helping students to feel more confident and willing to invest more time and effort in academic work (Newmann, 1992). Astin (1993) claims that "the student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years" (p.398). This claim is echoed with growing evidence in research studies by Chickering (1993), Topping (2001), and Harmon (2006), to name just a few. The authors Ody and Carey (2013) review and enlist the areas relating to peers' positive impact, including students' transition to college, social and emotional development, satisfaction with college, learning and academic performance, persistence and retention (p.292).

Maintaining and strengthening peer interactions is therefore of significance. Examples of peer interactions conducive to learning can be: discussing course content with other students, working on group projects for classes, tutoring other students (Astin 1993), and peer teaching (Goldschmid & Goldschmid, 1976). In language learning, peer interaction has the potential to mitigate frustration and course

attrition related to challenges when learning a foreign language by interacting with a more proficient learner who has undergone similar frustration and assures the beginner that the learning goals are attainable (Gaies, 1985). Peer interaction often involves negotiating meaning, peer tutoring, peer review, and collaborative dialogue. Chang's (2009) case study reveals that peer review via synchronous and asynchronous CMC has the potential to enhance student engagement in English writing. According to Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller (2002), one form of peer interaction, peer-peer collaborative dialogue, whereby learners converse to solve linguistic problems together, "mediates second language learning". In the experimental study by Garcia & Asencion (2001), the experimental group shared their notes after listening to a mini-lecture, whilst the control group did not make any interaction. It was found that the former had significantly better performance in the listening comprehension post-test, they supported each other by questioning language use and correcting grammar mistakes and they got involved in confirming their comprehension of the recorded lecture and code-switching. It should be noted that peers may sometimes have also have *adverse* effects on a student's engagement - as in the case in Kowal & Swain (1994) in which the weaker students have little or no participation in completing tasks because of peer exclusion and dominance by the stronger ones.

2.1.3.4 Learning Tasks and Resources

It is presumed that tasks have the potential to engage learners when they are authentic and appropriately challenging. Authentic tasks are conceived as "meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy of one's effort" (Newmann et al.,

1992, p.23). As suggested by these authors, tasks can be more strongly authentic if they offer learners autonomy in deciding topics and materials to learn, as well as determining the pace and procedures of learning, facilitating collaboration among learners, satisfying learners' intrinsic interest, and entailing an element of fun. Apart from authenticity, the *challenge* of tasks is also considered influential. As Rost and Wilson (2013, p.4) put it, "tasks pitched at the right level-not too difficult and not too easy-often lead to active engagement".

As regards learning resources, relevant, comprehensible, and interesting materials are considered requisite for learners' willingness to engage in sustained listening practice and language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Renandya, 2012). Comprehensible input is understood as a language input which is slightly challenging, or one step beyond the learner's current competence, yet most of it can be understood by the learner. In Krashen's terminology, it is i+1, whereby (i) refers to the learner's current level of competence and 1 to the next level. Krashen (1982) claims that "the best input is so interesting and relevant that the acquirer may even 'forget' that the message is encoded in a foreign language" (p.66). In this case, the acquirer genuinely experiences a very high level of engagement, showing intense concentration and deep immersion in listening to the materials. It is also reported in empirical studies by Nation (2007), Millet (2010) and Onoda (2012) that listening to easy and interesting texts is positively associated with increased self-confidence and improved listening performance. Online listening resources are presumed to facilitate language learners to listen actively and independently (Peterson, 2010).

2.1.3.5 Individual factors

The individual factors are also often called the learner or personal factors/facilitators (Lam et al, 2012; Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). These factors refer to "students' self-perceptions or self-system processes which refer to durable appraisals of multiple features of the self, such as self-efficacy or a sense of belongingness in school." (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012, p.26). In the student engagement literature, there is prevalence of motivational models of engagement such as a "self-system process model" (Connell & Wellborn, 1991) and the motivational model of context, self, action and outcomes which was grounded in the self-determination theory (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). These models highlight the importance of motivation, intrapersonal dynamics (Finn and Zimmer, 2012) by positing the human's basic needs, that is, needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. As Skinner and Pitzer (2012) put it,

> *The core idea is that humans come with basic needs, and when these needs are met by social contexts or activities, people will engage constructively with them. When these needs are thwarted, people become disaffected, that is, they withdraw, escape, or act out.* (pp. 26-27)

There is empirical evidence about the contribution of certain personal factors such as self-efficacy, learning goals and attribution to student engagement (Lam et al., 2012; Schunk and Mullen, 2012). There follows below a more detailed presentation of affective variables and goal orientation.

Affective Variables

Affective factors have been considered greatly influential in second/foreign language acquisition (Krashen, 1982) and in learners' decision to listen (Flowerdew

& Miller, 2005; Rost & Wilson, 2013). How they may engender such impact can be explained in Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. The concept of an affective filter is proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977) and employed by Krashen to refer to an imaginary barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language from the available input. The filter will be 'up' (blocking language input) when the learner demonstrates low motivation, lack of self-confidence, or great anxiety, thereby making the input unavailable for comprehension or acquisition.

Flowerdew and Miller (2005) highlight and specify the four affective factors, namely attitude, motivation, affect, and physical feelings that account for learner engagement in listening. The attitude factor entails attitudes towards the source of listening resources, their content and format and towards language listening in general. Much emphasis is laid on the significance of motivation in enhancing language learner engagement. This factor is associated with "the direction and magnitude of the human behaviour, that is, 1) the choice of a particular action, 2) the persistence with it, and 3) the effort expended on it" (Dornyei, 2001, p.8). Thus, the 'what' and 'why' of learning as well as the extent of learners' endeavour are partly influenced by their motivation. Motivation is considered as a cognitive force maintaining attention and focus (Rost & Wilson, 2013), and "a kind of fuel in the learning engine" for effort exertion and increased self-confidence" (Aragao, 2011, p. 3). The third affective variable of great impact on decisions to listen is affect (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005), which is defined as "broadly aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which can condition behaviour" (Arnold and Brown, 1999, p.1). Anxiety in language listening, a negative feeling possibly derived from self-doubt, frustration or fear of failure, is reported to be correlated with poor listening

performance and high attrition rates (Elkhafaifi, 2005). Last, physical feelings which may arise from "outside sources during listening" may contribute to learner engagement in listening. The outside sources of such feelings can be noise in the recording or in the learner's surrounding environment, the content of the listening resource, etc.

2.1.3.6 Goal orientation

It is well documented that those learners who set declaring a desire to pursue their academic goals are likely to exert effort and demonstrate persistence in attaining those goals (Williams et al., 2002; Simons et al., 2004; Patrick et al., 2007). Further detailed relationships between academic goals and engagement are illuminated when researchers investigate comparative studies between mastery and performance goal orientations in relation to student engagement. Mastery goal-oriented learners strive towards improving skills and competence and are likely to be intrinsically motivated. Meanwhile, students with performance goals are mainly concerned with demonstrating competence and superior ability by, for example, outperforming other individuals. Moreover, they tend to employ surface strategies such as rote memorization and avoid challenging tasks due to fear of looking incompetent (Ames & Archer, 1988). About language listening, improving listening ability and overall language proficiency for communication and academic purposes is considered a crucial learning goal. There is acknowledgement in much research that mastery-oriented individuals are likely to be more willing, persistent and cognitively engaged with the adoption of learning and self-regulating strategies and preference for taking on challenge (Walker & Greene, 2009).

To sum up, this review of literature on student engagement enables us to have a good grasp of its proposed nature. It has also provided pointers for the selection of material that might populate a 'listening platform' and how that platform might be designed and promoted. Within the scope of the recent research, the focus of student engagement here is narrowed to student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening. Accordingly, fundamental knowledge of L2 listening and out-of-class L2 listening is reviewed in the following Section. The literature on student engagement, L2 listening, and out-of-class L2 listening serves as a theoretical foundation for examination and facilitation of student engagement.

2.2 Theoretical Background of Listening

This Section starts with the definition of listening as a language skill and out-of-class L2 listening. Next, the Section presents models of input processing and listening strategies, followed by potential listening problems that L2 listeners might face. The Section ends with guidelines for L2 listening.

2.2.1 Definition of Listening

Listening used to be regarded as a passive skill. However, much effort has been made by researchers and educators to explore the nature of listening in recent years; thereby, listening is better understood and recognized as active and far more complex than just taking in some fragment of information and holding it in a medium-term memory. Let us consider some typical definitions cited in 'Practical English Language Teaching Listening' by Marc Helgesen, et al (2007).

- "Listening is an active, purposeful processing of making sense of what we hear." (Helgesen, 2003, p.24).

- (Listening is the) "mental process of constructing meaning from spoken input" (Rost, 2002, p.279).

- "Listening comprehension is the process of understanding speech in a first or second language. The study of listening comprehension in second language learning focuses on the role of individual linguistic units (e.g., phonemes, words, grammatical structures) as well as the role of the listener's expectations, the situation and context, background knowledge and topic." (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p.313).

- "Listening is conceived of as an active process in which listeners select and interpret information which comes from auditory and visual clues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to express." (Rubin, 1995, p.7).

With careful consideration of the above-mentioned definitions, we can develop a better understanding of listening as a *practice*. Indeed, listening entails more than just decoding what is heard. First and foremost, it is an active skill and the listener is an active communicator who is alert and being "active" through strategically receiving, thinking, selecting and interpreting information. In addition, to facilitate listening comprehension, he/she is expected to take full advantage of all possible clues from linguistic input: that is the various visual and auditory clues to the recognition and classification of listening contexts and background knowledge.

He/she may effectively build meaning (schema) inside his/her head based on what is already known. In other words, a listener must relate aural input to his/her knowledge and experiences to actively make sense of speakers' messages. Apart from a communication process between 'sender' and 'receiver', there is a process of negotiating understanding and ideas between the listener and the speaker. What is more, there is a fundamental difference between hearing and listening. Whilst hearing is sensing with our ears the words that are being spoken, listening involves our auditory system plus our cognitive functions: paying attention, remembering, thinking and reasoning to understand what speakers are saying and doing. As Sheila Steinberg (2007) puts it,

> *"Listening is more complex than merely hearing. It is a process that consists of four stages: sensing and attending, understanding and interpreting, remembering, and responding. ... The stages occur in sequence but we are generally unaware of them." (p.76)*

2.2.2 Out-of-class L2 Listening

Out-of-class L2 listening could be depicted in a broader picture of out-of-class language learning and out-of-class learning more generally. As defined by Benson (2001): "out-of-class learning is any kind of learning that takes place outside the classroom and involves self-instruction, naturalistic learning or self-directed naturalistic learning" (p.62). In the literature, out-of-class listening is referred to with such terms as self-instruction listening, self-access listening, autonomous listening, independent listening, just to name a few. It must be realized that it is the learner that conducts out-of-class listening, either alone or with others, at his/her own space, pace and time and importantly without the direct control or dominance of the teacher (Dickinson, 1987; Rixon, 1986). Additionally, the learner listens beyond the

classroom for various purposes, such as accomplishing a listening task, developing listening skill, acquiring language, enriching knowledge, and listening for pleasure. There has been recognition that out-of-class listening is of great significance in learners' listening proficiency enhancement and language acquisition (Davis, 2013; Rost, 1990; Rost & Wilson, 2013). As Rost and Wilson (2013) emphasize, "Autonomous listening is essential to language development, as language classrooms seldom offer sufficient listening opportunities for sustained progress" (p.16).

Given the significance of out-of-class listening, numerous suggestions have been put forward by researchers and practitioners and will be briefly introduced here. To start with, the teacher's ongoing support is placed as emphasis, because the learner may not be ready and strategic enough to take advantage by themselves of available opportunities for learning and listening well (King, 2011; Rixon, 1986; Rost & Wilson, 2013). It is suggested that the teacher's role should be shifted towards being more of a manager and counsellor than an informant (Rixon, 1986) or language advisor (Rost & Wilson, 2013). It would be desirable for the teacher to assist students in finding appropriate and productive ways of listening outside, and setting their own listening goals. There has been a call for consideration into the amount of support needed and the way of providing that support, with recommendation of "the right amount of support at the right time, with the support being gradually lessened as students become more confident" (Rixon, 1986, 126). King (2011) proposes the design of scaffolded self-directed portfolios to support learners' self-directed learning.

The second frequently adopted approach is strategy training. Apart from cognitive listening strategies, metacognitive or self-management strategies are of

great concern (Goh, 1997; Oxford, 2011; Vandergrift, 2011). In addition, facilitating learners to listen extensively with teacher-provided supplementary materials, Internet-based resources, digital stories, and listening projects is considered a promising approach (Chang & Millet, 2013; Erbaggio et al., 2010; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). Extensive listening refers to "all types of listening activities that allow learners to receive a lot of comprehensible and enjoyable listening input" (Renandya & Farrell, 2011, p.56). Vandergrift and Goh (2012) categorize extensive listening practice into typically individual practice and specially designed projects. The former involves learners' access to different listening resources as supplementary for their listening practice and the latter is "a task that requires learners to plan and work towards definite listening outcomes and to work collaboratively with others over a period" (p.200). The four extensive listening projects are introduced in detail by these authors, namely peer listening task, facilitated independent listening, listening buddies, and authentic interview. The final important approach to be mentioned in the current research is integrating new technologies such as social network applications. These new technologies are acknowledged to enhance listening opportunities (e.g., Rost & Wilson, 2013).

The next two Sections discuss the models of processing spoken input and listening strategies. Gaining an insight into them enables us to keep a track of and facilitate learners' cognitive engagement.

2.2.3 Models of Input Processing

How do people make sense of what they hear? In response to the question, I would like to present the three main models: the bottom-up model, the top- down model and the interactive model respectively.

2.2.3.1 The Bottom-up Models

Jack Richards (2008, p.4) explains that following bottom-up processing, "comprehension begins with the data that has been received which is analysed as successive levels of organization - sounds, words, clauses, sentences, texts - until meaning is arrived at." In addition to the grammatical relationships, such suprasegmental phonemes as stress, rhythm and intonation also substantially contribute to this data-driven processing (van Duzer, 1997). Thus, the bottom-up model considers listening as a process in which small chunks of an utterance are absorbed, analyzed, and gradually added to the next chunk until they become meaningful. Also, comprehension is just a process of decoding, such that the listener plays a rather passive role while listening, just decoding and comprehending mechanically.

In view of this model, the authors of 'Practical English Language Teaching Listening' warn that over-reliance on "bottom-up" processing can get listeners into trouble and frustration and leave them failing to work out what speakers mean. A detective' crawling at the bottom of a brick wall and looking at it brick-by-brick is used as a metaphor for this model. Surely, they noted: "it is difficult to get a good, overall view of the wall. And when you get to a missing brick (to take the metaphor a

step further-an unknown word or a new piece of grammar), there is nothing to focus on" (Helgesen et al., 2007, p.7)

2.2.3.2 Top- down Models

Top-down processing, on the other hand, refers to an approach whereby a listener constructs their interpretation of the meaning as intended by the speakers with the employment of schemata or structures of knowledge in the mind (Nunan, 1998). Thus, learners' background knowledge acts as a starting point in understanding the meaning of a message. Background knowledge can be content-based schema-general knowledge about life experience and previous learning or textual schema-knowledge of language and content used in a particular situation (Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2010).

2.2.3.3 The Interactive Models

In the listening literature, there is emphasis on the necessity of both the abovementioned models of input processing and the deployment of different sources of information for better comprehension of spoken input (Anderson and Lynch, 1988; Buck, 2001; Richards, 2008; Vandergrift and Goh, 2012). As Buck (2001) explains, "The point is simply that listening comprehension is the result of an interaction between a number of information sources, which include the acoustic input, different types of linguistic knowledge, details of the context, and general world knowledge, and so forth…" (p.3). Anderson and Lynch (1988) illustrate the relationship between systemic knowledge and schematic knowledge during the

process of listening for comprehension or interpretation of what the speaker is saying with the following Figure.

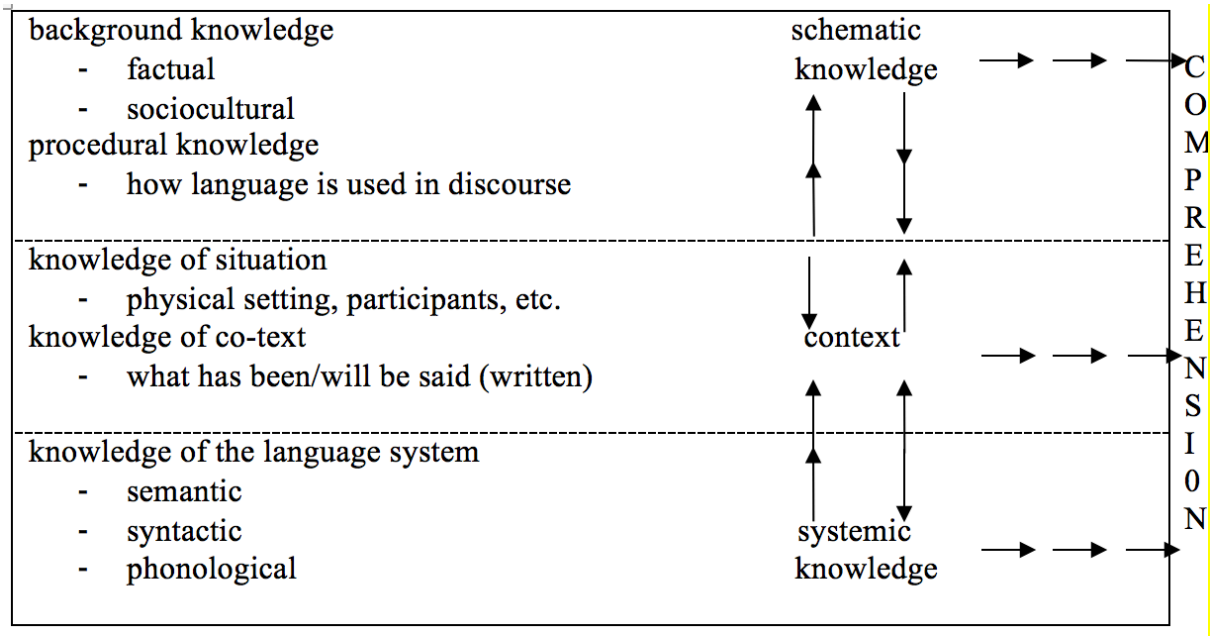


Figure 2-1 Information sources in comprehension (by Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p.13)

Systemic knowledge or linguistic knowledge refers to "knowledge of phonological, syntactic and semantic components of the language system" (Widdowson, 1983 cited in Anderson & Lynch, 1988, p.13). Schematic knowledge refers to schema as mentioned above in sub-Section 2.2.3.2. It is noticeable from the authors' figure that the two main sources of information complement each other for better listening comprehension

2.2.4 Listening Strategies

There is consensus among L2 researchers and classroom teachers that acquiring effective listening *strategies* may lead to successful listening and, therefore, it is imperative to teach the learner how to listen as a strategic practice.

Learning strategies can be defined as “Mental processes that are activated to understand new information that is ambiguous or to learn or retain new information” (O’Malley et al., 1989, p.422). They can be categorized under three main groups, namely cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective strategies (O'Malley et al., 1985, p. 582-584). Hereby is a brief introduction to these categories.

a. Cognitive Strategies

In O’Malley and Chamot’s words, cognitive strategies “operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning” (1990, p.44). A learner with this type of strategy attempts to comprehend and store input in working or long-term memory for later retrieval. The frequently mentioned cognitive strategies are repetition, resourcing, translation, imagery, auditory representation, note taking, elaboration, inferencing, deduction (see O’Malley et al., 1985; Vandergrift, 1997 for details.)

b. Metacognitive Strategies

According to O’Malley et al. (1989), “Metacognitive strategies involve knowing about learning and controlling that learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning activity.” (p.422). In L2 listening, the metacognitive strategies refer to the actions whereby learners are consciously attentive to a spoken text, and monitor and evaluate their comprehension of the text. Goh (1997, 1998 cited in Richards, 2009) describes in detail the three metacognitive strategies, namely planning, monitoring and evaluating, considering what they are, what their benefits are for general listening development and how they are applied in three stages of

listening (i.e. pre-listening, while listening and post-listening), as in the following Table 2-1.

Metacognitive strategies	**General listening development**	**Specific listening task**
Planning (involves determining learning objectives and deciding the means of achieving them)	- Identify learning objectives for listening development - Determine ways to achieve these objectives - Set realistic short-term and long-term goals - Seek opportunities for listening practice	- Preview main ideas before listening (background knowledge) - Rehearse language necessary for the task - Decide in advance which aspects of the text to concentrate on
Monitoring (to check on the progress in the course of learning or carrying out a learning task)	- Consider progress against a set of pre-determined criteria - Determine how close it is to achieve short-term or long-term goals -Check and see if the same mistakes are still being made	- Check understanding during listening - Check the appropriateness and the accuracy of what is understood and compare it with new information - Identify the source of difficulty
Evaluating (determining the success of the outcome of an attempt to learn or complete a learning task)	-Assess listening progress against a set of pre-determined criteria - Assess the effectiveness of learning and practice strategies - Assess the appropriateness of learning goals and objectives set	- Check the appropriateness and the accuracy of what has been understood - Determine the effectiveness of strategies used in the task - Assess overall comprehension of the text

Table 1 Metacognitive strategies for self-regulation in L2 listening

c. Socioaffective Strategies

The socioaffective strategies refer to "interacting with another person to assist learning" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.44). They entail questioning for clarification, cooperation, lowering anxiety, self-encouragement and taking emotional temperature (see Vandergrift, 1997 for details).

As far as learning strategies are concerned, the relationship between the listening strategy use and L2 listening ability has been investigated by researchers,

notably Vandergrift (1997; 2003). There is agreement among many researchers that metacognitive strategies are the most important in developing language skills and fostering learner autonomy (O'Malley et al, 1985; Hauck, 2005). As a result, there has been the implementation of listening strategy training programmes. Apart from these programmes, extensive listening is also recommended as a good approach for pleasure and improvements in listening. The next section is devoted to this listening approach.

2.2.5 Extensive Listening and its Benefits

Prior to presenting a review of the benefits of extensive listening, this section starts with a brief introduction to this listening approach.

EXTENSIVE LISTENING

Extensive listening is an approach whereby L2 learners have much exposure to a varied and large amount of spoken language at their appropriate level and interest. This is often outside the classroom and in a sustained period of time (Brown, 2017; Baruah, 1991; Rost, 2016; Renandya & Farrell, 2011; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). As Renandya and Farrell (2011) put it, extensive listening can be "all types of listening activities that allow learners to receive a lot of comprehensible and enjoyable listening input" (p.5). Such listening activities can be narrow listening, teacher read-alouds or storytelling, repeated listening (Renandya, 2011), reading while listening (Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang et al., 2018), academic listening, sheltered language instruction, online listening in guided coursework (Rost, 2016), etc. There are several main points to understand about extensive listening, these are as follows. To start with, this approach places emphasis on the importance of

practising listening a great deal (Ridgway, 2000). In addition, it is advised that the learner select extensive listening materials that are "at an i or i-1 level; i refers to students' current level" (Renandya, 2011, p.34) or "at or below one's comfortable fluent listening ability" (Chang, 2012, p.30) so that they could obtain "maximum comprehension" (Gilliland, 2015, p. 16), and also listen for information and have a sense of confidence (Field, 2008). Apart from being comprehensible, listening texts that satisfy the individual learner's interests are chosen or recommended for extensive listening (Gilliland, 2015). Another significant point concerns the *purposes* of extensive listening. The learner does their extensive listening mainly to grasp their general understanding of listening texts, enrich knowledge, take pleasure and foster their confidence and critical thinking (Field, 2008; Graham & Santos, 2015; Rost, 2016; Baruah, 1991). Last, extensive listening is different from intensive listening. Extensive listening encourages learners to listen for the overall comprehension of a spoken text and derive pleasure from getting involved in meaning-based activities. By contrast, intensive listening requires learners to focus on "precise sounds, words, phrases, grammatical units, specific information, and details" (Rost, 2002, p.138). Intensive listeners are expected to listen with more concentration and in a less relaxed way than extensive listeners (Shafaei, 2010; Rost, 2016).

BENEFITS

As a matter of fact, extensive listening has still been under-researched and considered "the sister to Extensive Reading" (Extensive Reading Foundation, 2011, p.12). Therefore, researchers have tended to develop the concept and presumed the benefits of extensive listening based on those of extensive *reading* (see Renandya & Farrell, 2011; Chang, 2012; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016).

The possible benefits of extensive listening can be categorized as follows. To start with, extensive listening is expected to have the potential to improve L2 learners' listening; specifically, their comprehension, automaticity in recognizing spoken language, and listening fluency (for example, Ridgway, 2000; Blyth, 2011; Renandya & Farrell, 2011; Chang et al., 2018). As Renandya & Farrell (2011) succinctly put it: "We believe that just like reading, listening is best learnt through listening." (p.56) How can extensive listening be so beneficial? Possible answers can be linked with its potential to enhance the learner's ability to catch up with speech rate, recognize words, develop bottom-up skills, sensitize sound blending and deal with certain features of speech such as fillers, false starts, fixed phrases, etc. Also, L2 listeners can listen to a recording as many times as they wish and do ample practice with various listening inputs, including authentic ones (Renandya, 2011; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016; Gilliland, 2015).

So far, there has been a paucity of research on extensive listening (Chang et al., 2018), thereby there is little empirical evidence that confirms the presumed potential of extensive listening to enhance the learner's listening competence and fluency. Let us consider the empirical evidence, albeit little, that has been contributed by several researchers, including especially Chang (2012), Chang and Millet (2014), Chang, Millet and Renandya (2018). The potential of extensive listening is investigated in different input modes such as 'reading only', 'listening only', 'reading while listening' and 'reading while listening plus listening'. These researchers considered reading while listening as extensive listening with the external support from reading a written text. In Chang (2012), the effectiveness of extensive listening for improvements in listening among 31 Chinese university

students of English was investigated. These students read while listening to 15 audio graded books for 26 weeks for general understanding. They were provided with explanations of certain important words in the books and were asked to complete a worksheet with comprehension questions after having read and listened to an audio book. Meanwhile, an Intensive Group of 24 students read three books thoroughly, wrote a dictation, listened without reading, listened again while reading, learned grammar, pronunciation, culture, provided explanation about a book chapter and lastly listened without reading. With the use of a TOEIC listening test, it was found that the Extensive Listening group could listen considerably better than the Intensive Listening group. The effectiveness of extensive listening in improving listening competence was attributed to two main factors, namely the learner's having control over their listening and the interesting scenarios of the listening material. In another study, Chang and Millet (2014) examined the effects of extensive listening in enhancing listening fluency among 113 university students of low intermediate EFL. These students had their exposure to 10 audio graded books over a 13-week period through one of the three modes, namely reading only, listening only and reading while listening. It was found that the participants who adopted the last two modes, especially the reading-while-listening mode, experienced their improvements in listening fluency. Thus, there is evidence that extensive listening, especially that with textual support has the potential to enhance listening fluency. This evidence is consistent with further evidence for the potential of extensive listening reported by Chang et al.(2018).

Apart from bringing about improvements in listening competence, extensive listening has the potential to enhance the learner's overall language proficiency. To

be specific, extensive listening helps L2 learners to improve not only their L2 listening but also their speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. This claim can be first justified through the fact that learners have massive exposure to comprehensible spoken input when they listen extensively and comprehensible input is of great importance in one's language acquisition. As Harmer (2003) puts it, "Students need to be exposed to the English language if they want to learn it, and one of the best ways of doing this is through listening." (p. 29). Comprehensible input is even more strongly underscored by Krashen (1982) when commenting: "The best methods [for language acquisition] are therefore those that supply "comprehensible input" in low anxiety situations." (p.7). Furthermore, extensive listening can be beneficial for one's language acquisition in the sense that it can help the learner to improve their extensive reading. To be specific, learners can grasp a correct understanding of a written text when they can listen to the text first or simultaneously listen and read the text. As elaborated by Stephens (2011), when listening to the text, the learner can rely on non-verbal cues such as intonation, tone and pitch to identify what the text actually means. Regarding evidence for enhancement in language acquisition, there are learner self-reports about improvements in vocabulary, reading and speaking through extensive listening (see Renandya, 2011; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). In Dupuy (1999), the learners of French at a university in the USA reported their gains in vocabulary after listening repeatedly to recordings that were of the same familiar topics and contained speech features such as redundancies, false starts, and self-corrections.

Finally, extensive listening can offer the potential for an increase in confidence, motivation, metacognitive awareness, learner autonomy, etc. (Dupuy,

1999; Field, 2008; Lynch, 2009; Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Onoda, 2012). This potential can be justified with the facts that extensive listeners have chances to practice their listening in extensive listening projects or in favourable conditions as mentioned in the principles of extensive listening, especially the following principles 2, 3 and 6 (Gilliland, 2015, pp.16-17).

> *Principle 2: Learners choose listening opportunities based on individual interests*
>
> *Principle 3: Listening texts should be at "i minus 1" level for maximum comprehension.*
>
> *Principle 6: Learners should develop metacognitive knowledge about their own listening processes*

To sum up, the extensive listening approach has great potential to enhance not only learners' listening but also their language proficiency, positive affect, and sense of learner autonomy. With such potentials, this approach is strongly recommended by researchers such as Renandya and Farrell (2011) and Stephens (2011). Nevertheless, it should be noted that further hard evidence is needed to verify and/or contribute better understanding of these potentials. For example, research findings concerning the potential of extensive listening to enrich vocabulary are not conclusive and further research is needed there. For example, Brown et al. (2008) reported participants' low rate in acquiring vocabulary, especially in retaining vocabulary and that the participants could learn and retain words most effectively in a reading-while-listening mode and least effectively in a listening-only mode. In fact, none of the 28 words that were introduced to the participants could be retained after 3 months of listening to three stories only. Several explanations for the difficulty in acquiring vocabulary through the listening-only mode were put forward, including

lack of familiarity with spoken English, difficulty in recognizing words and word boundaries, lack of vocabulary and recordings of great length. Last, L2 listeners may not only listen to comprehensible input for pleasure in informal settings but also listen to L2 for academic purposes such as listening to a lecture at university. This listening is briefly reviewed as follows.

2.2.6 Academic Listening Skills

The notion of academic listening has been used to refer to listening to lectures with follow-up note-taking, but now has a broader sense and encompasses "reciprocal (two-way) listening events in academic settings, as well as (one-way) listening to lectures." (Lynch, 2011, p.79). Two-way listening can be interactive lectures, student presentations, seminars, discussions and one-to-one academic interactions between a student and his/her tutor or supervisor. Meanwhile, one-way listening refers to listening to such sources as university course-embedded real lectures, conference presentations, scripted mini-lectures such as audiotapes of real or simulated university lectures accompanying a published textbook of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (see Lynch, 2011).

On the one hand, there has been some research on academic listening, mainly conducted in the following directions. To be specific, some research has focused on and contributed to our understanding of the nature of input, such as linguistic and discoursal features. Some other has attempted to provide understanding of academic listeners such as their perceptions of lectures and lecture note-taking difficulties, language knowledge, mental processes, effective and ineffective listeners, etc. (see the review by Lynch, 2011; Hsueh, 1988). Testing the learner's academic listening is

also of interest to some other researchers (Aryadoust, 2013; Taylor & Geranpayeh, 2011; Wei & Zheng, 2017). The last direction of doing research on academic listening is providing support for the learner so that they could listen to lectures or academic discussions more effectively. Several examples of learner support are strategy training programmes (i.e. Graham, 2011; Li & Hasegawa, 2014), models or approaches to academic listening (Field, 2008), provision of authentic samples of three genres (lectures, seminars, casual conversations in student accommodation) and suggestions for making use of them to explore the features of academic spoken language (Jones, 2004). Picard and Velautham (2016) provided online self-access listening materials that simulated real academic settings and encouraged learners to process academic listening texts in both bottom-up and top-down ways, both cognitively and metacognitively.

On the other hand, for the whole picture of L2 research, academic listening has still been under-researched and even neglected (Lynch, 2011; Field, 2011). According to Lynch (2011), the possible explanations for this could be: (i) the complexity of listening that involves the interplay of listening processes and numerous external and internal factors, thereby discouraging researchers to pursue research topics related to academic listening and (ii) "the complexity of conducting effective research into listening, given the inaccessibility of listening and the variety of influences on the success or failure to understand spoken language" (p. 80). In addition, there is a call for research into the cognitive engagement processes of academic listeners: one which recommends research directions into lecturer characteristics, lecturing style, multimodality, autonomy and the role of technology and listening strategies (Field, 2011; Picard & Velautham, 2016).

For many learners, L2 listening is the most challenging language skill (Graham, 2006). In fact, the difficulties that L2 listeners may encounter have been examined by many researchers. It has come to my realization that the challenge and difficulties felt in relation to the activity itself may be one of the variables accounting for students' low engagement in out-of-class L2 listening. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the nature of these potential difficulties in L2 listening to guide more informed design decisions in relation to resources

2.2.7 Potential Listening Problems of EFL Learners, Particularly in Viet Nam

To many language learners, listening to English as a foreign language is the most difficult of language skills. In fact, listening and speaking are the most fundamental communicative skills that need to be mastered by Asian learners while being the least successfully achieved (Chapelle & Curtis, 2000). In principle, effective listening is teachable and to help learners improve their listening, teachers are advised to understand the potential difficulties in listening first and then strive to find solutions. Underwood (1989) points out seven potential problems. The present study confronts some of those listening problems.

(1) Lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak

A common complaint among learners is how quick the speech is and, therefore, how difficult it is to follow what is being said. Underwood gives the underlying cause of this problem, that is, either too much obsession over a segment of input that they miss to catch or ignorance of the whole chunk of spoken input. Considering this problem, Ur (1996) advises to be relaxed and sensible to catch the

main points, instead of trying to understand all the details. Learners should have chances to be exposed to everyday informal speech to address this.

(2) Not being able to get things repeated

In many real life listening situations such as listening to the radio or watching television, learners cannot ask for repetition. Even in the classroom, it is the teacher that decides to stop or replay the record and, in many cases, the teacher does not replay the exact parts that the student wishes to listen to again. To explain, it is generally challenging for the teacher to judge which pieces of information his/her students miss. This problem can be solved when learners are given chances themselves to "control their own machines and proceed in whatever way they wish" (Underwood, 1989).

(3) Trouble with recognizing sounds and words

As Ur (1984) puts it, "As a young teacher it took me some time to realize that my students actually did not perceive certain English sounds with any accuracy because these did not exist in their own language". This is also true in the case of Vietnamese learners. Vietnamese has no affricates sounds / tʃ/, /dʒ/, fortis fricatives /ʃ/, /θ/, lenis fricatives/ð/, long vowels and approximants /j/, /w/. As a result, Vietnamese students find it challenging to distinguish 'train' from 'chain' or 'change', 'sheep' from 'ship' or 'bean' from 'bin'. Even though certain sounds are shared with English, they are pronounced in a different way and put in a different position (Tang, 2007). In addition, all Vietnamese syllables stand separately like independent words and are spoken and written separately. For example, the syllable 'toán' can stand alone and acts as a word whose meaning is 'mathematics'. Thus, a

Vietnamese learner just needs to listen to only one syllable in their language whilst he/she has to collect all the four syllables to identify what subject it is. Another language difference is that there is no syllable and word stress, whereas English speakers do not pronounce all the syllables or words equally clearly and strongly, giving primary stress to only one of the syllables or to certain words in a sentence, thereby Vietnamese students may try to listen to every syllable and word, instead of catching stressed words which contain important messages. Learners' working out the message conveyed may also be impeded by significant differences in word order in phrases and questions. Let us consider the word order in a noun phrase as an example. In English, adjectives precede nouns (e.g. "an excellent student") whereas the equivalent is in reverse order (e.g. một học sinh (student) xuất sắc (excellent)). Words are often contracted, even almost omitted. For example, "Have you seen it?" may be spoken like "Vyou seen it?". Elision, schwa and assimilation are common in informal speech (O'Sullivan, & Thurlow, 2002). Last, English homophones and homonyms are confusing to learners. Consequently, learners may fail to recognize even familiar words spoken by native speakers.

(4) Inability to concentrate

Concentration is considered essential to perform listening tasks well. "Even the shortest break in attention can seriously impair comprehension" (Underwood, 1989, p.19). Lack of concentration may come from failure to recognize words, catch an answer to a question, or guess a new word. Long listening passages and noise are also a main cause.

(5) Bad habit of trying to listen word by word

There is a myth among many learners that everything that is said is equally important and therefore, listening word by word clearly is necessary. Ur (1996) warns that "the effort to understand everything often results in ineffective comprehension, as well as feelings of fatigue and failure". She places emphasis on practice in selective ignoring of heard information.

It can be understood from the abovementioned problems that the learner him/herself can be a potential source of his/her own difficulty in L2 listening. Apart from the learner factors, other factors such as text, task and physical environment are well documented. Regarding the text and task factors, Buck (2001) presents a detailed list of certain characteristics that may make a text or task easy or difficult to understand or complete, based on previous research findings. The list was later adapted by Lynch and Mendelsohn (p. 191 in Schmitt, 2010) in a condensed form and with highlighting on the characteristics that might increase the difficulty of a text or task, as in the Figure 2-2 below. Their list shows that input can contribute to the L2 listener's problems with its characteristics regarding language, explicitness, organization, content and context. As for a task, problems may be encountered due to its demands such as processing many details.

INPUT CHARACTERISTICS **Language** • Speech rate. • Unfamiliar accent. • Number of speakers. • Similarity of voices. • Use of less frequent vocabulary. • Grammatical complexity. • Embedded idea units. • Complex pronoun reference.
Explicitness • Implicit ideas • Lack of redundancy
Organization • Events narrated out of natural time order. • Examples preceding the point they illustrate.
Content • Unfamiliar topics. • Number of things and people referred to. • Unclear indication of the relative importance of protagonist in the text. • Shifting relationships between protagonists. • Abstract content.
Context • Lack of visual or other support.
TASK CHARACTERISTICS • Tasks tend to be more difficult when they require: • Processing of more details. • Integration of information from different parts of the text. • Recall of gist (for example, writing a summary) rather than exact content. • Separation of fact from opinion. • Recall of non-central or irrelevant details. • A delayed response, rather than an immediate one.

Figure 2-2 Input and task characteristics

In summary, I have reviewed fundamental knowledge and research findings about L2 listening, and the teaching and learning of such listening. This review will serve as a theoretical foundation for me to make informed decisions on how to engage students to listen to the target language (English). Additionally, as emphasized by Coates (2006), "Any discussion of engagement incorporates a manifest or implicit assumption about the phenomenon of learning… Any assumptions made about learning will heavily influence the contents, dimensions and

functionality of a conceptualization of engagement" (p.25). In this research, student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening is underpinned by Vygotskian sociocultural theory. Accordingly, out-of-class L2 listening is viewed as a social activity and learners engage in L2 listening within their social interactions with their teacher and peers.

2.3 Theoretical Background of Sociocultural Theory

This Section introduces the sociocultural theory in general and Vygotsky's theory in particular. The basic themes and construct of the Zone of Proximal Development are described in detail.

2.3.1 Sociocultural Theory and Second/foreign Language Learning

In the past few decades, there has been increasing interest in adopting sociocultural theory as a framework for the further understanding of additional language learning and acquisition and their sound pedagogical implications (Kao, 2010; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2013). As emphasized by Lantolf and Thorne (2006), sociocultural theory is a theory of mind or mental development, originating in German philosophy in the 18 and 19th centuries. From the sociocultural perspective, individual learning and development are not only greatly influenced by and "inextricably bound" to dynamic social and cultural contexts but also are *social* phenomena because individuals will participate in social interactions and culturally organized activities and employ these for co-constructing and internalizing knowledge and skills (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Orterga, 2013; Palincsar, 1998). The interdependence between social and individual processes during knowledge co-

construction becomes a focal point in this learning theory (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Sociocultural perspectives are considered to challenge and address the limitations of previous perspectives, namely behavioural and cognitive ones, in explaining learning.

Among various sociocultural theories, Vygotsky's theory is acknowledged to be a seminal sociocultural approach, making it "the strongest contributions to SLA [second language acquisition] thus far" (Ortega, 2013, p.218). Indeed, in the light of Vygotskian learning theory, foreign/second language learning has experienced "the social turn in SLA" (Block, 2003) or the inclusion of a social dimension. Such main concepts as output, interaction, meaning and negative feedback have been reconceptualised. For example, the sense of meaning which used to be primarily referential (signifier and signified) and identified in the signs themselves, now entails nuances of meaning created by interlocutors when they make their interactions to fulfil a goal-oriented activity (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Another example is the reconceptualization of negative feedback as "help that is jointly negotiated between experts and novices" (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994, p.480). Hence, studying predominant themes and central concepts of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is of great significance.

2.3.2 The Basic Themes and Construct of the Sociocultural Theory

According to Wertsch (1991), three basic themes that are consistently discussed in Vygotsky's writings are: (1) the adoption of genetic, or developmental, analysis to understand mental functioning; (2) the social origins of higher mental functioning in the individual; and (3) the mediation of tools and signs over higher mental

functioning and human action, on both social and individual planes. In Vygotsky's view, it would be misleading to analyze only "static products" of cognitive development. Instead, investigating mental functioning in its process of change is of the essence (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Four inextricably linked aspects of developmental analysis are elucidated by Wertsch (1991), namely phylogenetic, cultural/historical, ontogenetic, and microgenetic analyses. Adopting these aspects of analysis means considering things that distinguish humans from other animals such as humans' use of tools, especially language, "rudimentary" and "advanced" higher mental functioning, cultural practices, learner characteristics, and the "actual processes of interactions between the individual and his or her environment" (Palincsar, 1998, p.354). As regards the second theme, underpinned by Marxist theory as well as other ideas from social researchers such as Pierre Janet, Vygotsky claims that individual cognition has its origins in sociality, which is clearly articulated in his "general genetic law of cultural development" as follows:

> *Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition … [I]t goes without saying that internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Vygotsky, 1981, p.163)*

It can be inferred from this statement that knowledge and higher mental functions are constructed and developed at an interpersonal level first and particularly when a learner participates in a joint activity (Palincsar, 1998) interacting with other people (his or her teacher, peers, etc.). In other words, they arise as a result of the joint

activity that characterises social interactions around tasks and problems. Thereafter, such decisions and action as occur in these problem-solving 'systems' are internalized within the individual learner such that the learner acquires knowledge and skills such as those associated with language, critical thinking, problem solving, and skills of conducting key cultural practices. It should be noted that internalization is not "a direct and simple copy of socially organized processes" (Wertsch, 1991, p.27) but "the process in which this plane [the psychological plane] is formed" (Wertsch & Stone, 1985, p.163). Also, the learner plays an active role at both stages, social interaction and internalization.

The last theme in Vygotsky's writings identified by Wertsch (1991) is that higher mental functioning and human action are mediated by tools, physical and psychological (signs, symbols, language, etc). To be specific, the tools are considered resources, assisting human beings in co-constructing knowledge, developing mental functioning and conducting cultural activities. The tools themselves are social in origin (Ortega, 2013) and the use of these tools is an "appropriation", such that "it is adequate for using the culturally elaborated objects in the novel life circumstances he encounters" (Leontiev, 1981 cited in Newman et al 1989, 63). Language is considered the most important of symbolic tools, mediating all mental activity (Ortega, 2013, 219). Private, social and inner speeches in foreign/second language (L2) learning have been investigated in much research (de Guerro, 2005; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). L2 research shows that language plays a role in L2 learning in the sense that one's L2 learning can probably be improved by practising using the language to express, negotiate meanings. For instance, in the study by Tocalli-Beller and Swain (2007), two ESL students participated in a joint

activity to discover the meaning of the English word "lean". Conversing with each other in English (social speech), each contributes one meaning of the word and gets to know another meaning from the other. Both maintained good retention of the two meanings, even seven weeks later. In relation to the current research, listening spaces to be designed would encourage learners to listen to English socially or in interaction with peers. They can share, discuss, and negotiate their interpretations of a listening clip or ways of listening in the target language or mother tongue (if necessary or for comfort) to better understand a clip, improve listening skill and/or their target language. Noticeably, new technology is perceived as significant cultural artefact enhancing language learning, such as to "imbue us with ever increasing power to think" (Lantolf, 2000, p.79).

The Construct of Zone of Proximal Development

The construct of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is theoretically conceptualized by Vygotsky (1978) as

> *the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers* (p.86)

'The actual developmental level' can be interpreted as the level at which a learner can acquire knowledge and skills independently and confidently, whereas 'the level of potential development' as the one that the learner can attain "under optimal circumstances and with the best possible support from the teacher and others in the environment" (Oxford, 1997, p.448). There has been acknowledgement that this construct is of great significance, even of the greatest influence (Chaiklin, 2003;

Kinginger, 2002). Indeed, with this construct, a more comprehensive picture of development and the relationship between development and learning is depicted. First, learner development from the Vygotskian perspective entails both the development that has been attained by the learner (a retrospective account) and the one that is "currently in an embryonic state" but "in the process of maturation" (a prospective account) (Vygotsky, 1978). Whilst the traditional view of learning just provides the former. In addition, the zone of proximal development is in a dynamic state (Wells, 1999), being dependent on the learner's active interactions with other people in a joint activity and with the context in which the interactions take place (van Lier, 1996). It is suggested in much research that interacting with less capable peers, or peers of lower language proficiency, may be beneficial for learning and development because: "this encourages the creation of different kinds of contingencies and discourse management strategies" (ibid., 193). Van Lier (1996) proposes the employment of different resources for learners' progress across the ZPD, including: (a) assistance from more capable peers or adults, (b) interaction with equal peers, (c) interaction with less capable peers (adopting peer teaching, for example), and (d) inner resources such as knowledge, experience (p.193). The last identifiable important merit of the ZPD construct is that it illustrates the complementary relationship between development and learning. Based on current development and through active social interactions, learning occurs and leads to the level of potential development in ZPD. As proposed by Vygotsky, it is necessary that learning be in advance of development, "somehow one step ahead of the innate schedule of growth, the genetically coded program of the person's development" (van Lier, 1996, p.191). It is evident that Vygotsky's view of learning and development highlights their unity and interdependence and the pivotal role of

learning in contrast to Piaget's perspective which claims that "maturation is viewed as a precondition of learning but never the result of it" (Vygotsky, 1978, 80).

In the light of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening is approached in terms of its social dynamic and how the design of a listening practice can invite the learner's active interaction with teacher, peers and others. The interaction might be facilitated by taking full advantage of Internet-based resources and Web 2.0 tools, such as ESL/EFL listening websites and social network sites. Therefore, we turn to consider these next.

2.4 ESL/EFL Listening Websites and Social Network Sites

In this section, the potentials of ESL/EFL listening websites and social network sites for L2 learners' listening and engagement are reviewed as part of this research's process of proposing its own socially mediated listening design.

2.4.1 ESL/EFL Websites

This section acknowledges certain benefits of ESL/EFL websites and highlights the expected role of the teacher for learners' effective use of the websites.

2.4.1.1 Benefits of Listening through an ESL/EFL Websites

Recent years have witnessed "a plethora of Web sites for language teaching and learning that incorporate the multimedia capabilities of the Web and present information in the form of visuals and audio in addition to text" (Chun & Plass, 2000, p.151). The availability and free accessibility of websites for language

teaching and learning have brought about favourable conditions for listening enhancement.

First and foremost, learners can hear spoken English more frequently and be exposed to more varieties of English and spoken texts (Murray & McPherson, 2004) and to linguistic functions beneficial for language learning (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995). By doing this, they can be better prepared for real life listening and identify the features of natural discourse in spoken language, familiarizing themselves with different accents, pauses, hesitation and backtracking of a spoken text.

In addition, numerous ESL/EFL websites have been created by ESL teachers and included with instructional materials; therefore, they are of pedagogical concern and reliability. Indeed, audio and video texts in many ESL/EFL sites have been classified by themes or level of difficulty and accompanied with transcripts. For beginners, audio recordings and video clips are shorter or delivered at a slower pace. Advanced learners are provided with opportunities to listen to interviews, reports or discussions that "exemplify natural features of authentic spoken discourse" (Murray & McPherson, 2004, p.28).

Furthermore, language websites offer students flexibility, prompts and access to materials that can supplement their coursebook. The Internet as a delivery system offers considerable flexibility to both learners and teachers in terms of when they work and especially - if they are equipped with a home computer and modem - where they work. As Jor (1999) puts it, "it creates new learning spaces and expands learning hours" (p.25). It thereby enables them to have maximum exposure to a target language, satisfying learners' needs of language practice, fulfilment of their

course requirements and communication with a target language community. Also, learners can pause at will, and listen and read a transcript (Peterson, 2010). Apart from accomplishing tasks of a certain ESL/EFL site, they can access other online resources that help them to achieve the learning tasks assigned at each lesson when their links are included on the webpage.

Another important merit of language web sites is their potential in nurturing learners' independent learning. In McGrath's words, it "offers conditions that are facilitative of autonomy" (2002, p.133). Indeed, the learner can work on materials appropriate to his/her own learning pace, style and level. In fact, such discreet differentiation and individualization can be regarded as impossible in traditional face-to-face language classes. By using a certain web site, if well designed, learning can reach a depth unlikely to be attained in the face-to-face lessons, because students can invest as much time and effort as required, each according to his or her learning tempo. Noticeably, the learner can check his or her own progress and, more importantly, reflect and exert control over their own learning. This is particularly the case when (automatic) immediate feedback to students is included in the website, as well as hints and directions on how to continue in case of mistakes.

Moreover, website exploitation is a useful way of facilitating learning through (and as a result of) communication. Technology can provide not only presentational and organizational functions, but it can also support communication, feedback and interaction between students and teachers (Oliver & McLoughlin, 1999). In a one-to-one relationship with the teacher, the learner may not hesitate to ask questions and admit to difficulties that might have been concealed in class (McGrath, 2002). Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) enables a language

learner to communicate with his/her peers and even authentic native speakers at will and with convenience. Patterns of communication including asynchronous, synchronous and one-to-many communication are plausible, thereby increasing chances for sharing information and experience with more people (Warschauer, 1996).

Last, learning websites are of great value in *motivating* students to learn the target language. A well-built website with the adoption of multimedia technology offers the learner chances to access not only a variety of media (text, graphics, sound, animation, and video) but also hypermedia - when multimedia resources are all linked together and that learners can navigate their own path simply by pointing and clicking a mouse. In addition, engagement in meaningful authentic exercises is plausible in a single classroom or in various classrooms (via e-mail, message boards, list serves, etc.), a flexibility which promotes enthusiasm and motivation (Sheerin, 1997). Notably, taking a listening activity with current news from certain language websites can bring about "a dimension of immediacy to listening practice" (Peterson, 2010, p.140).

2.4.1.2 Teachers' Role in Facilitating Learners' Effective Use of ESL/EFL websites

There is a consensus in CALL research that teacher and pedagogy play a central role in ensuring successful adoption of technology in language teaching and learning. In an Internet-connected teaching and learning environment, teachers are expected to be better prepared for "new ways of structuring tasks, establishing exchanges, guiding and monitoring interaction, and evaluating performance, not to

mention mastering the relevant computer applications" (Kern, 2006, pp. 200-201). Warschauer and Whittaker (1997) make a list of teachers' roles in learner-centred, network-enhanced classrooms, including "coordinating group planning, focusing students' attention on linguistic aspects of computer mediated texts, helping students gain meta-linguistic awareness of genres and discourses, and assisting students in developing appropriate learning strategies" (p.371).

For effective use of English learning websites, the teacher's role is considered indispensable. Researchers Chun and Plass (2000) consider the structure of hypermedia as a potential source of cognitive overload because it is coded in the form of links between nodes and thus must be decoded in a different way. What's more, teachers' intervention in learners' use of websites is of great importance, dealing with such issues raised by Jor (1999) as learners' difficulties in self-evaluating information on the Web and abuse of Internet resources such as pornography, dangerous and false information, lies and libels.

2.4.2 Social Network Sites (SNSs)

This Section reviews the reported potential of social network sites to promote student engagement and enhance learning in the literature after a brief introduction to social network sites.

2.4.2.1 Introduction to social network sites (SNSs)

Given dramatic changes in the social and technical landscape of social network sites, Ellison and Boyd (2013) have proposed a definition of these platforms as follows:

> *A social network site is a networked communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-provided data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site. (p. 162)*

These researchers contend that "social network site" is a more accurate term, compared with others such as "social networks", "online social networks", "social networking", and "social networking sites". As emphasized by them, 'social network sites' are the sites allowing individuals to publicly build and present their social network which refers to a group of users they share connections with and view others' social networks as well. Meanwhile, "social networking sites", in their view, may suggest emphasis on the activity of seeking and connecting with new people on these sites. The articulated social network is often pre-existing (people have already known each other) and publicly traversable by others. In other words, an SNS user can view and "traverse the network through friends of friends of friends" (Rennie & Morrison, 2013) by accessing an individual's profile. This profile is uniquely identifiable and dynamic because it entails not only identity information provided by the user but also content uploaded by others and/or the system.

In essence, SNSs serve as a communication platform and the primary rationale for SNS use is to communicate and share information and experiences. Thanks to the embedded communication-oriented features of SNSs, communication can occur in such modes as one-to-many, one-to-one, synchronous and asynchronous, textual and media-based, public (e.g., with (with features for publicly sharing comments) or more private (e.g. with private messaging or chat features) (ibid.).

In terms of SNS development, these platforms can be traced back to the late 1990s, with SixDegrees.com launched in 1997 as the first recognizable example (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). At present, there is a wide array of social network sites, among which MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Plus, and especially Facebook have gained great popularity. Since its first launch in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and several fellow Harvard students for those who had university email addresses only it had already had two billion monthly active users (according to [1]www.telegraph.co.uk). Importantly, there has been a shift of focus from profile-centric to media-centric practice. Users can easily share and update media content in the form of texts, photos and videos in spaces for media sharing like Facebook's News Feed, instead of surfing individual profiles (Ellison & Boyd, 2013).

2.4.2.2 Social Network Sites and Student Engagement

In the past few years, there has been recognition of the potential of social network sites to enhance student engagement in learning, including language learning (Junco et al., 2011; Lam, 2012; Mandernach & Taylor, 2011; McBride, 2009; Rutherford, 2010; Wang, et al., 2013; Wankel & Blessinger, 2012). For instance, Wang et al. (2013) report that both Facebook groups with a total number of 134 students from Advanced English Course demonstrated their high level of engagement both inside and outside the classroom and satisfaction with their instructors, peers, and institution. Moreover, Facebook was acknowledged to establish and facilitate personal relationships and interactions among instructors, students, and the university. Besides, the amount of time spent on Facebook is

[1] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/06/27/facebook-now-has-2-billion-users-mark-zuckerberg-announces/

positively correlated with academic grades. Their research findings are consistent with those in Junco et al. (2011). An experiment was conducted by them with a sample of 118 pre-health professional majors from seven sections of a one-credit first-year seminar course (65 in the experimental group and 53 in the control group). Research results reveal a significant causal relationship between Twitter use and student engagement and grades. However, these studies' findings about the positive significant relationship are inconsistent with those of other studies (Lubis et al., 2012; Mingle and Adams, 2015).

Social network sites possess several strengths that can contribute to student engagement. First, these sites serve as a channel of communication, efficiently promoting peer interactions and faculty-student interactions beyond the classroom (Heiberger & Harper, 2008; Mandernach & Taylor, 2011) via the wall function, the forum, instant messaging functions or news feeds. Accordingly, a learner can discuss course-related topics and group work, share information and aspirations, post announcements, and make requests for academic and emotional support from his/her peers and instructor (Ellison & Boyd, 2013; Wankel & Blessinger, 2012). On the part of instructors, they can employ these sites as a means of posting learning resources, initiating student-student discussions, and providing support and feedback (Mandernach & Taylor, 2011). In addition, the sites are likely to support active and collaborative learning (Hogg, 2013). The participants in Hogg's study perceived that Facebook was an important vehicle for their group activities, alleviating problems associated with time constraints for group meetings and group contributions. Increased engagement in learning could be attributed to shared learning resources and support among group members, online meeting scheduling, and visible

individual contributions on Facebook. Social network applications can also be used as a means of satisfying 'the ubiquitous human need for communication, a sense of belonging and socializing (Wankel and Blessinger, 2012), thereby engaging students in learning. Last, but not least, social network sites like Livemocha have become specialised as language learning environments in which learners can practise the target language with other online community members (Brick, 2013).

The last section of this Literature Review is to highlight the current practices and literature gaps.

2.5 Literature on Practices of Promoting Student Engagement

As stated earlier in Section 1.1, the value of student engagement is widely acknowledged, indeed student engagement is considered "a fundamental purpose of education" (Shulman, 2002, p.40). Therefore, promoting student engagement in learning is of growing interest and numerous strategies at both institutional and staff levels are proposed to help achieve this (Krause, 2005; Mann (2001). In a review of strategies for improving student engagement by Taylor and Parsons (2011), the authors conclude that the themes and ideas which are most frequently mentioned are: embedded collaboration, integrated technology, inquiry-based learning, assessment for learning, and making learning interdisciplinary and relevant to real life (p.25). Windham (2005) succinctly recommends five components for engaging learners, namely: "Interaction, Exploration, Relevancy, Multimedia and Instruction" (Sections .5.7-5.9). However, it can be realized that the effectiveness of these strategies has not been well understood, because there is a dearth of research considering students'

perspectives on student engagement (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Secondly, quantitative survey questionnaires such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Australian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) tend to measure only behavioural engagement such as time on task and frequency of interacting with the teacher and peers, the amount of academic work completed while emotional aspects of engagement attract little attention (Kahu, 2013). Kahu also recommends further research reporting qualitative data on student engagement. Besides, there are concerns such as those relating to peer interactions. For example, students can tend to spend more time discussing topics that are not related to their study (Lin et al., 2013). Furthermore, there has been a call for developing student engagement models for out-of-class contexts (Eccles & Wang, 2012), especially those for a particular domain or subject (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012). Also, there arises a question of adopting student engagement strategies in a particular context, in the sense that learners in different sociocultural contexts may demonstrate different levels of engagement within the same student engagement strategy. There is thus a need for further examination into the sociocultural factors that may affect student engagement.

One more gap that has come to my notice concerns whether and in what ways students themselves can create conditions for engaging themselves in learning. Current research is mainly concerned with favourable conditions that institutions and their staff need to provide for their students. In the last part of this Section, a review of several relevant studies accompanied by my own reflections is presented.

The first research article to review here is by Yang (2011), entitled “Engaging students in an online situated language learning environment”. I enjoyed every

moment of reading their research project. To be more specific, an online language learning environment was developed with the recruitment of both synchronous and asynchronous communication and a drama which reflects one traditional cultural value of Taiwan, that is, only the son of a family is entitled to inherit "a family's name, reputation, and property" (p. 185). This is an experimental study with a large sample of 118 students from two freshman English classes. These participants received on-site instructions to be familiar with the new learning environment, attend face-to-face lessons that are based on the drama, carry out follow-up activities that are available in the online language learning environment, and be involved in synchronous interactions with their teaching assistants (TAs). These TAs were to initiate a discussion with the students, helping them to negotiate meaning and find an appropriate English word to express what they meant, and revise their writings. Asynchronous communication between the student and a TA involved the students uploading their written work and the TA's revising that work. The study investigated how the students engaged with this piloted learning environment and the impact of their engagement on listening and reading performance. The students' behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement was tracked and recorded in their synchronous and asynchronous interactions with the TAs. They were then analyzed with the use of a Discourse Analysis approach. Besides, a pre-test and post-test on listening and reading performance, a questionnaire to investigate the participants' perceptions on student engagement in the online environment was mobilized as well. The results show that teacher-student interactions in such online situated language learning environments have the potential to enhance student engagement. The participants made significant progress in language learning. I learnt much from Yang's study, particularly the methods of data collection and analysis. Importantly, her positive

research findings partly encourage me to continue my research focus and direction. However, as noted by her, there are certain drawbacks in this study, such as the learning content and activities are based on only one drama and teacher-student interactions. There is a possibility that some students would not be interested in this drama, its topic or content. The potential of *student-student* interactions was not investigated. From my reading, further limitations can be found. First, it would have been desirable if the researcher had collected qualitative data on the participants' perceptions of their engagement in the piloted learning environment so that the student engagement processes that teacher-student interaction in this environment could enhance might have been clearer. Additionally, the social dimension of engagement or how the students interacted with their TAs was not examined. What is more, what accounts for the significant improvements in listening and reading remains unknown since the teacher-student interactions only focused on L2 speaking, writing, and vocabulary. Peer interactions can be better understood in the subsequent study.

The project by Wang et al. (2013) examines learners' activities and perceptions of Facebook instructional practices regarding fostering student engagement, the impact of these Facebook instructional practices on the students' academic grades, and the relationship between grades and the frequency of engaging in Facebook activities - as well as the processes within this relationship. Instructional methods followed the seven principles recommended by Chickering and Gamson (1987), that is: (1) encouraging contact between students and faculty, (2) developing reciprocity and cooperation among students, (3) encouraging active learning, (4) giving prompt feedback, (5) emphasizing time on task, (6) communicating high

expectation, and (7) respecting diverse talents and ways of learning. A survey questionnaire which was adapted from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was distributed to 134 students who came from two universities and took Advanced English courses. Positive results were reported. This empirical study offers further understanding of student engagement in a course-based Facebook setting. Several thoughts arise from considering it. To start with, the data collected are merely quantitative, so the answer to the question "How does the frequency of Facebook use affect the academic grades of students?" is not rich enough. Secondly, the researchers only investigated behavioural engagement in terms of the activities that the students did on Facebook, the amount of time and frequency of engaging in Facebook activities and checking Facebook, and the number of wall postings and comments. In addition, regarding the teacher's activities in this project, they were mainly clarifying some points in the course content, providing answers, coaching and monitoring students. Thus, the students' Facebook activities take place with the teacher's dominance. It is suggested that the teacher should facilitate students' creativity, autonomy and learning skills. Moreover, the students tended merely to use the 'Like' feature on Facebook as a reaction towards other groups' work, instead of becoming involved in further deep discussions on these group projects.

The last article for review (Erbaggio et al., 2010) presents the capability of online authentic materials for engaging students whose target language is French, Italian, or Chinese. My review focuses on the project named 'A French Virtual Book' that was targeted at students of French. These researchers compiled language learning materials and websites that they considered engaging, appropriate, and affordable. They then delivered the materials and guidance online by using the multi-

media capabilities of a Course Management System (CMS). The participants were requested to carry out activities such as completing tasks, making PowerPoint presentations, and discussing with the teacher and peers in discussion forums. It is reported that the level of engagement among the participants increased. In my view, leveraging authentic materials and the use of a CMS is greatly beneficial. Nevertheless, there arise some concerns. The first is that the students were not encouraged and guided such as to decide the learning materials according to their own needs and interests, but teacher autonomy support is considered significant to engage learners (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). What is more, the increase in student engagement was only measured indirectly via the proxy of student satisfaction. Finally, it would be worthwhile investigating learner preferences prior to making decisions on whether to use the CMS or social network sites in engaging learners for out-of-class contexts. Lam (2012, 211) claims that "Even though online learning platforms provide the discussion forum and messaging features, students prefer discussing and communicating on Facebook".

To sum up, a review of current practices for student engagement enhancement has been presented; three related case studies and apparent gaps in the literature have offered a better insight into the field and together provide invaluable implications for the research design that follows.

At this point I have systematically reviewed the literature on student engagement, L2 listening and out-of-class L2 listening. An underlying learning theory, ESL/EFL listening websites, and social network sites have also been presented. Based on this preparatory discussion and to attain the research objectives

as presented earlier in the Sections 1.2 and 1.4, research questions were composed and are presented in the following Section.

2.6 Research Questions

(1) What is the real situation of learner engagement in out-of-class listening among second-year English majors in certain low-resource contexts?

(2) How would the university learners of English as a foreign language engage in a social networked English listening group?

(3) What factors would affect their engagement in this listening group?

(4) How could this listening group be more engaging to the learners?

To address these research questions, the consideration of a research design best suited to their ambitions is now of importance. The chosen research design will be discussed in the next chapter.

3 Research design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the general approach to conducting the current research. It starts with a brief introduction to the two component studies, followed by a detailed discussion on research design. The chapter continues to declare underlying philosophical assumptions relating to methodology. It also describes details relating to the research site and research participants. Next, general descriptions are presented of the data collection methods employed and the data analysis approaches. The chapter concludes with discussion of validity and reliability of a case study and a consideration of ethical responsibilities.

3.2 The Two Component Studies

The current research is composed of two studies, namely a baseline ‘’listening evaluation’ study and the main intervention study. These were conducted in a sequence and are related to each other. To be specific, the baseline study was necessarily conducted first, to examin the status quo of learner engagement among a group of learners whose major was English as a foreign language (EFL) at a university in Viet Nam. The study collected its data with the use of a student survey questionnaire. Its findings were considered to make informed decisions for designing a social networked listening space that might contribute to learner engagement through social listening to English speech outside of classroom time. Subsequently,

the main intervention study was undertaken within this designed listening space, in its natural setting, with a strong interest in how the learners engaged in their L2 listening in this new listening setting. This might, in turn, inform the future design for engaging listening spaces. The sources of data for the main study were the learners' online activity and their responses in interview; these sources were both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed.

3.3 Research Design - A Mixed Methods Case Study

Research designs are defined as "types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific directions for procedures in a research project (Creswell, 2014). The current research employed a mixed methods case study design. Therefore, this Section begins with an introduction to case study and mixed methods designs. Next, the rationales for a mixed methods case study are presented. Lastly, the Section describes the unit of analysis or case in this research.

3.3.1 A Case Study and Mixed Methods Research

By definition, a case study is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p.xi). Yin (2014) puts forward a twofold definition of the case study, including the scope of case study inquiry and its features. There are key points about case study methods (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014; Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011). First, a case is the target of study. Second, a case under study is a contemporary phenomenon, not a past one, as in history research. Third, the context of a case is

taken into considerations for better understanding of its nature. A case is investigated "within its real-world context" (Yin, 2014, p.16). Furthermore, the aim of the case study is for intensive examination and in-depth insight into a social phenomenon, rather than for the generalization of the research findings. Moreover, due to the complexity of a case, "there will be many more variables of interest than data points" (Yin, 2014, p.17). Given this, multiple sources of evidence are of necessity and holistic approaches to analysing data are favoured in case studies. The last key point to mention is that "case studies are frequently sites for the employment of both quantitative and qualitative research" (Bryman, 2016, p.61). The employment is in line with the 'third methodological movement', the 'third research paradigm' or the 'third path' in the literature (Cohen et al., 2011). Research of this movement/paradigm/path is commonly known as 'mixed methods research'.

Mixed methods research is defined as "the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration." (Johnson et al., 2007, p.123). The potential of this approach has been well documented (Denzin, 2008; Creswell, 2009; Denscombe, 2008). In addition, both quantitative and qualitative features are integrated in the stages of research, including data collection, data analysis and interpretation.

In the current research, a case study with the use of mixed methods research was conducted. The mixed methods design for the main study can be illustrated in Figure 3-1.

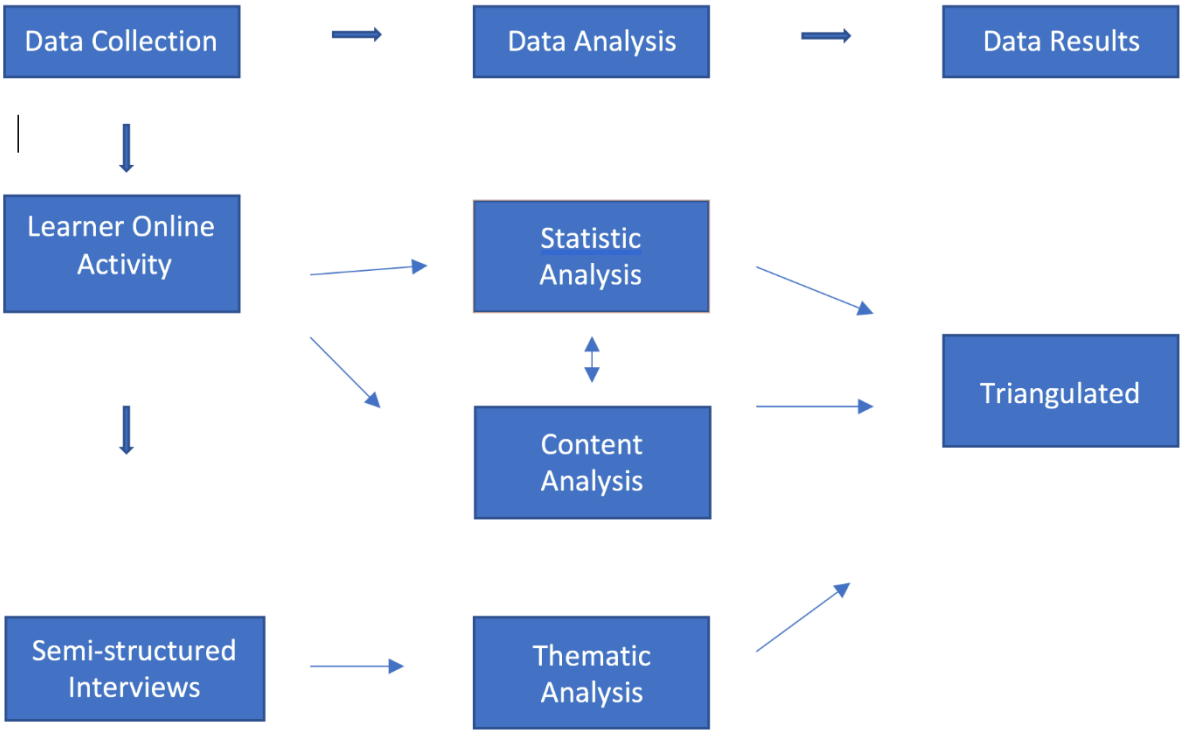


Figure 3-1 Research Design of the Main Study

In the next sub-Section, several main rationales for the conduct of mixed methods case study are presented.

3.3.2 Rationale for a Mixed Methods Case Study

The employment of a mixed methods design is underpinned by its perceived value and pertinence to my research. To start with, the phenomenon of students' engagement in a social networked listening space is multidimensional, dynamic, complex and contextualized (Eccles & Wang, 2012) with the interplay of different factors. Therefore, quantitative methods alone would not be sufficient. The behavioural dimension of student engagement can be captured in one way, whilst the cognitive, emotional and social engagement dimensions need other ways. As Newby

(2010) puts it: “mixed methods research seeks to combine both quantitative and qualitative traditions on the basis that research issues in education are often so complex that the insights of both approaches are required if we are to gain a good understanding” (p. 92).

In addition, it was the demands of the research questions that drove the researcher to employ a mixed-method case study design. According to Yin (2014), case study is considered appropriate for seeking answers to the “how” and “why” research questions. Besides, as Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) put it, “a strong mixed method study starts with a strong mixed methods research question” (p.207). In relation to the current research, the research questions are the how, what/why questions, seeking answers to how the learners engaged in out-of-class L2 listening, what factors affected their engagement or why they engaged in such a way and how a listening space design could be engaging to them. To answer them, both quantitative and qualitative data were needed. In fact, the choice of mixed methods based on the research purpose and questions is common in the mixed methods research community (Greene, 2008). The choice is concerned with necessity, relevance, fitness for purpose and applicability, ‘what works’ for a full answer to the research questions, rather than with the researcher’s methodological preferences (Cohen et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the adoption of a mixed-method case study in this research is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the learner engagement phenomenon and informed decisions for design improvements. In the literature, there is wide acknowledgement of the potential of case study and mixed methods research for allowing insights into a phenomenon such as this (Yin, 2014; Denscombe, 2008; Day

and Sammons, 2008; Creswell and Clark, 2007). As Yin (2014) puts it, “Whatever the field of interest, the distinctive need for case study research arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena. In brief, a case study allows investigators to focus on a “case” and retain a holistic and real-world perspective.” (p.4). Regarding mixed data, Creswell and Clark (2007) assert that “the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (p.5). The quantitative research paradigm may lead to objectivity through robust and objective instruments. This attribute seems to guarantee reproducibility and generalization of findings in and beyond the context of the investigation (Newby, 2010). Also, this research strategy enables researchers to condense data to see the broad picture. As regards qualitative research, it is defined as generally examining people's words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways, more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994. p.4), qualitative methods "emphasize processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency". By carrying out a study qualitatively, a researcher can offer in-depth explanation of certain data and findings.

The last main reason for the use of a mixed methods case study is that there is a good chance for the researcher to triangulate evidence and compare results in a complementary way (Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Reams & Twale, 2008). For example, quantitative data of frequency and patterns of identified engagement categories could be better interpreted in reference to the qualitative data that might be obtained in semi-structured interviews.

3.3.3 The Unit of Analysis or Case of the Current Research

The unit of analysis, or the "case", is one of the components of a case study method and it needs defining and bounding. The case can be individual persons, programs, specific events, etc. (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). As Stake (1995) indicates, "Case study research is not sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case." (p.4). The current research aims at obtaining an insight into the phenomenon of learner engagement, so the case or unit of analysis is this contemporary phenomenon. The case is bounded by the following:(1) a group of university majors of English as a foreign language in Viet Nam, (2) the domain of out-of-class L2 listening, (3) the learners' usual self-study L2 listening space (in the baseline), (4) the project's social networked listening space (in the main study) and (5) the project's period of 6-9 weeks. The boundedness of the case enables this research to investigate the case in depth and in its context. Also, it is of practical value since this phenomenon is complex, dynamic, multi-faceted, it would not be possible to investigate it among all learners, in all learning settings, or at any time, etc. Moreover, while investigating the learner engagement phenomenon, particular attention will be paid to the tendency, patterns, processes (i.e. why they got more or less engaged) for better understanding of how a design could be engaging to the learners.

3.4 The Underlying Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions are considered one of two important components to a research approach (Creswell, 2014). These assumptions are referred to in

different terms such as worldview, paradigms, epistemologies and ontologies, or broadly conceived research methodologies (ibid.). They are defined as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p.105).

The philosophical assumptions underlying the process of the current research belong to the social constructivism and pragmatism interpretive frameworks (Creswell and Poth, 2018). From the social constructivism world view, individuals "can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons"; therefore, the researcher is to "look for the complexity of views" (ibid, p.24). In this research, the interviewer mainly will use open-ended questions and encourage the interviewees to construct their listening experiences and expresse their perceptions of listening in the project's social networked listening space. Varied, multiple perceptions or realities must be registered, interpreted and reported with evidence - such as quotations from the learners' voices and demonstrated online engagement behaviours. While constructivist researchers take into consideration the participants' particular circumstances, such as their historical and cultural contexts. My interpretations of the research findings must be partly shaped by my own experience, and from understanding of the participants from what will be maintained contact in prolonged fieldwork with them also from understanding of their English language teaching and learning contexts and cultural traits.

Apart from social constructivism, the current research was also conceived in the pragmatism framework. Pragmatism is considered "a worldview that arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in post

positivism)" (Creswell, 2014, p.10). This worldview allows for a flexible approach to research, free of commitment or reliance on certain philosophical beliefs of the world and knowledge (Creswell, 2014; Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism has gained popularity in social research with the rise of mixed methods for its practical realisation (i.e. problem solving, fitness for purpose, applicability) (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005; Johnson et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2008; Cohen et al., 2011; Morgan, 2014). In this research, pragmatism was demonstrated in the use of different methods of data collection and analysis, both quantitative and qualitative data and approaches to obtain both objective and subjective meanings of the learners' engagement experiences and importantly to seek answers to the research questions.

3.5 The Research Site and Participants

As mentioned earlier in sub-section 3.3.3, the learner engagement phenomenon under investigation has its boundness. This Section makes a detailed description of two factors that bounded the phenomenon, namely the research site and the participants, followed by the rationales for choosing the research site and the participants, and my way of gaining access them.

3.5.1 The Research Site

The project was conducted in the Faculty of Foreign Languages of a public university in a province of Viet Nam. The university was founded in 1967. A wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes are offered by the university. Specifically, there are BA and BSc teacher education programmes of 15 majors (such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, English, Chinese, History,

Literature, and training teachers to work at all school levels, ranging from early childhood to the tertiary level for Viet Nam's northern provinces), BA and BSc programmes of 11 majors, taught MA and MSc programmes of 12 majors and doctoral programmes of 3 majors (Analytic Mathematics, Primary Education, Theoretical Physics & Mathematical Physics). As regards the Faculty of Foreign Languages, it was officially established in early 2007, with the mission of teaching English to undergraduate and postgraduate students of other academic faculties and providing BA in English and BA in Chinese programmes so that English and Chinese majors may become teachers, translators or interpreters once they have graduated from the university. From the academic year 2013-2014 onwards, the enrolment of English majors was about 400 each year.

3.5.2 The Research Participants

The target population of the research is tertiary learners of English as a foreign language in disadvantaged areas. The number of participants was 78, drawn from two different groups (44 second-year students and 34 third-year students). Most of them were 19 or 20 years old, female dominated, and coming from the country. They had just completed their two or four 2-credit listening courses, whose objectives were to prepare them with necessary listening skills and strategies (listening for main ideas, listening for specific information, identifying stressed words and reductions, getting meaning from the context and intonation and drawing inferences), vocabulary, language functions and knowledge of familiar topics (i.e. learning styles, education and student life, health, entertainment and the media, and cultures of the world). The researcher's field work was implemented for 6 or 9

weeks. At the time of the project, the second-year participants were taking their listening course which required them to attain the intermediate level of listening. Their listening course book was 'Interactions 2 Listening and Speaking', by Tanka and Baker (2001). Meanwhile, the third-year participants were expected to attain the upper-intermediate level and to acquire note-taking strategies for listening to recorded lectures. Their course book was 'Listening' by Campbell and Smith (2009). The perceived common obstacles to out-of-class listening of Vietnamese students in general, and this sample in particular, were the neglect, even exclusion, of this language skill at schools, the unavailability of language learning self-access centres, libraries and tailor-made materials for out-of-class listening and few chances of communicating with English native speakers. Most seriously, it was not unusual for many of them to have a lack of self-regulated learning skills, misconceptions of listening beyond the classroom.

3.5.3 Rationale for the Choice of the Research Site and Participants

One principal reason was that the second or third-year English majors of this university can be good representative of their counterparts of other higher education institutions. As a matter of fact, there are just a few universities in the big cities of Viet Nam which have favourable language learning conditions (that is, English libraries, learning and communication opportunities with English native lecturers) and attract gifted students who have passed the national university entrance exam with the minimum total mark of 30 out of 40. By contrast, the second or third-year English majors of many other universities, including my chosen university cannot

access the facilities conducive to English language learning and their input marks are rather low, in the range of 13-19 out of 40.

Both purposive and convenience sampling were adopted to select the participants for the main study. In this way of selecting participants, hopefully, the students chosen would enable me to "maximize what we can learn" about the case of learner engagement phenomenon (Stake, 1995, p.4). Eligible participants are necessarily the second or third-year majors of English as a foreign language and the former were expected to attain the pre-intermediate language proficiency in listening skill and the latter the intermediate level. The criteria of eligibility are based on three main facts. The first one is that the second or third-year learners may have more experience in self-study and listening beyond the classroom that they might share. After school years of being heavily dependent on their secondary school teachers who are expected to make decisions on learning focus and materials and frequently supervise their work, they may have had 'hard times' to be self-regulated and responsible for their own study. In addition, they had already known each other and might have been prepared with necessary listening skills and strategies, as well as certain vocabulary and background knowledge, which was expected to bring favourable conditions for the implementation of the intervention program which highlights individual and collaborative listening activities. Last, there may be greater demand for student engagement with out-of-class listening when they are required to attain the intermediate level and there is a considerable increase in the challenge level of their listening course materials.

Furthermore, as presented in Section 3.2, the baseline study and the main study were conducted one after another and, together, composed the current project.

These studies also involved some of the same participants. Such recruitment of participants is critically reviewed here to suggest it has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, recruitment intentionally aimed to create opportunities for the main study to provide an engaging out-of-class L2 listening programme that could well address participants' status quo of engagement as well as their needs and preferences. It would have been no use designing and imposing an irrelevant programme on participants. In addition, recruitment should enable the designed programme to serve its target population and, since the participants in the baseline were part of the research's target population, they were still considered eligible for the main study. Furthermore, recruiting the same participants as in the baseline study helped the current research to elicit (i) how these participants actually engaged in the project's social networked listening space and (ii) thepotential of the designed programme to foster their engagement in listening to English beyond classroom. On the other hand, with sequential recruitment, the baseline study might have had some influence on the participants' reporting of their attitudes and behaviours in the main study. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the influence was at a low level since the findings of the current research were drawn from data triangulation from different sources - such as the participants' actual online activity and their interview responses. In fact, their online activity took place over a prolonged period of time and showed that many of them were active users of the project's listening space. In addition, the instruments and purposes for data collection in the two sequential component studies were completely different. In other words, the main study did not employ the status quo survey questionnaire that was used in the baseline study. Also, the baseline study was to investigate the status quo of learner engagement in their usual self-study settings, whilst the main study was to

examine the phenomenon of learner engagement in the project's listening space. To sum up, that the two component studies recruited some of the same participants reveals both strengths and limitation. The current research was aware of the limitation and attempted to deal with it as outlined above.

3.5.4 Access to the Research Site and Participants

The gatekeepers were the university rector, the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and three teachers of EFL listening skill. For an increased chance of being approved, I prepared and clearly presented an information pack, including the research purpose and design, the benefits, tentative schedule for data collection and the treatment of data obtained from the research participants in both spoken and written forms. Besides, I was patient in convincing them via e-mails and face-to-face meetings that I would be guaranteeing the university, faculty and participants' entitlements to confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. I was also responsive to their inquiries about this research and the detailed notes, with the approach of being "truthful, but vague and imprecise" suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1998). The last recourse is communicating a strong desire to be a respectful listener of the participants' experiences and perspectives and a helper for their meaningful and enjoyable out-of-class listening experience.

3.6 The Methods of Data Collection

The mobilisation of different research methods in this research can be justified by its potential for "the development of converging lines of inquiry" (p.120, Yin, 2014). As Yin (2014) puts it, "any case study finding or conclusion is likely to

be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a similar convergence" (p. 120).

3.6.1 Survey Questionnaires

The popularity of questionnaires is because they can be easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly. The questionnaire was designed with a mixture of both closed questions and open-ended questions. These were specific open questions, clarification questions, sentence completion items and short- answer questions. As Gillham (2000, p.34) concludes, these questions "can be motivating for the respondent, and they enable the researcher to trawl for the unknown and the unexpected". The data collected offer all the learners an opportunity to express their perception, difficulties, beliefs, experiences, etc. freely.

3.6.2 The YouListen Website and Social Media Activity

Another important source of data is the learner's online posts or messages in all the discussion sub-spaces of the project's listening space, namely on the YouListen website itself, on VoiceThread and on Facebook. This method enables us to explore all the affective, behavioural, cognitive and social dimensions of their engagement. It can be a potential alternative (Yang, 2011) for in-class direct observation for which data are reported of low reliability and hard to obtain (Peterson et al, 1984).

3.6.3 Semi-structured Interviews

The last main qualitative research method for the intervention research will be interviewing. In an endeavour to investigate and interpret the phenomena of learner engagement with the YouListen project and examine the factors that might affect such engagement, this further research method - interviewing - will be employed with an interpretive constructionist perspective. As Wellington (2000) puts it, "Interviews can reach the parts which other methods cannot reach … We can probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives" (p.71). Regarding the present research, the interviews are intended to solicit information about how the YouListen project is perceived and experienced by the participants: namely, their views and underlying contextual factors that might affect their engagement with out-of-class English listening in general and this project in particular. Additionally, the interviews are to be conducted in a semi-structured form. This design "enables the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee" (May, 2011, p. 134). About the interview questions, they would be mainly open-ended; encouraging interviewees to express and elaborate their experiences, perceptions and views, thereby enabling the researcher to better interpret participant posts on the sites and, finally, the responses in their completed weekly listening logs and survey questionnaires. There would also be variations and flexibility in the order and range of questions, and emergent questions based on the interviewees' responses. Following the instructions by Savin-Baden & Major (2013), an interview protocol was created uniquely for this research.

3.7 Data Analysis

This section describes in brief mixed approaches to analyse the data with the inclusion of the purposes or rationales for the employment of them.

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Data collected from the survey questionnaire in the baseline study and data obtained from the content analysis in the main study regarding the frequency of learner engagement behaviours were statistically analysed with SPSS software (versions 22 and 24). Specifically, descriptive statistics were derived, including frequencies, percentages, cross tabulations, means, ranges, standard deviations and correlations. These statistics would capture the frequency and patterns of learner engagement in out-of-class L2 listening in their usual self-study setting and in the project's social networked listening space. To explore whether there is a relationship between two variables of engagement behaviours and between the high activity and low activity groups of learners in terms of their engagement category distribution, Pearson product moment correlations coefficient were used.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Following descriptive statistics analysis on the learners' participation and contribution to the project's listening space, content analysis and thematic analysis were conducted. In this Section, a brief introduction and rationale for the use of content analysis and thematic analysis are presented respectively. The main procedures to conduct these approaches are described in detail in Sections 7.2 and 8.3.

3.7.2.1 Content Analysis

By definition, content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2013, p.24). This definition highlights the usefulness of content analysis and requirements regarding reliability and validity. The requirement that content analysis is necessarily quantitative is omitted in this definition, which is in line with Weber (1990)'s suggestion for mixed method analysis of texts. Another seminal definition to mention is the one by Holsti (1969), which is considered supportive of analysing 'latent content' and phenomena beyond mass media and mass communications (Bryman, 2016).

In the current research, content analysis will be employed to identify and make inferences about the learners' engagement behaviours and patterns from their online publicly shared messages. Engagement behaviours can be any behaviours that show their behavioural, cognitive, emotional and/or social involvement with the tasks. Apart from allowing for inferences, content analysis "can handle unstructured matter as data…can cope with large volumes of data" (Krippendorff, 2013, pp.46-47). Besides, content analysis is widely used in the literature of computer conferencing (De Wever, 2006) and considered helpful to "analyse the social, psychological and cognitive dimensions of the exchanges" (Henri, 1992).

3.7.2.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a widely-used approach to analysing qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001; Braun and Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), it is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns

(themes) within data." (p.79). The active role of the researcher in identifying the themes is stressed (Ely et al., 1997; Braun and Clarke, 2006). The principal reasons for my choice of this method to analyse the research's interview data are its flexibility and usefulness. Regarding flexibility, it can be employed regardless of epistemologies and research questions. Regarding usefulness, it "can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (Braun and Clarke, p.78) and "produce insightful analysis that answers particular research questions" (Braun and Clarke, p.97) if done in a rigorous manner. In the current research, learner engagement is a dynamic, malleable and complex phenomenon (Fredricks et al., 2004). Thematic analysis would be expected to help me to gain better insight into the learners' engagement experiences, the way they make meanings of these experiences and contextual and learner influences. A convincing, well-organized, rich, detailed story of the learners' engagement in L2 out-of-class listening based on the identified themes was the aim of thematic analysis in this research.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of a Case Study

As empirical social research, the quality of case study is necessarily judged in terms of validity and reliability (Riege, 2003; Yin, 2014; Cohen et al., 2011). Riege (2003), Yin (2014) and Cohen et al. (2011) offer syntheses of the suggestions in the literature to increase construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability for a case study. Construct validity or measurement validity is concerned with "whether a measure that is devised of a concept really does reflect the concept that it is supposed to be denoting" (Bryman, 2012, p.47). Following the suggestions in the literature, this research employed the accepted definitions and constructions of the student

engagement construct. Besides, multiple sources of evidence, such as the participants' online activity messages, interview transcripts, and field notes were used. Regarding internal validity, Yin (2014) raises the concern over "the broader problem of making inferences" (p.47). In the current research, inferences related to the participants' learner engagement such as the ones about the factors that might have affected their engagement were either explicitly expressed by the interviewees or inferred based on the evidence found in their interview responses and online activity transcripts. As for the external validity, a case study's findings are not readily generalizable to other cases or a population beyond the case (Yin, 2009, 2014; Bryman, 2016). However, it is argued that the cases are not "sampling units" and analytic generalization of the findings of a case study would be more pertinent than statistical generalization (Yin, 2009, 2014; Robson, 2002). As Yin (2009) puts it,

> *"Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a 'sample', and in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)."* (Yin, 2009, p.15)

In relation to the current research, it will attempt to analyse the situation and arrive at possibilities that might explain the ways the participants were engaging in the social networked listening space, i.e., the YouListen platform.

Apart from contribution to theory expansion or generalization, the findings of a case study are argued to generalize or transfer to other concrete situations (Yin, 2014). As van Lier explains,

> *Insights from a case study can inform, be adapted to, and provide comparative information to a wide variety of other cases so long as one is careful to take contextual differences into account. Furthermore, if two cases provide apparently contradictory information about a certain issue…, this contrast can provide much food for thought and further research, thus being of great benefit to the field* (van Lier, 2005, p.198).

The last research criterion to mention is reliability, that is, whether the same findings could be obtained if the same case study is repeated with the same procedures. For reliability, full documentation of procedures is required (Yin, 2014). This research report endeavoured to provide a detailed description of the research design, data collection and analysis steps.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The design satisfied and complied with research ethics approval requirements and procedures set by the School of Education at the University of Nottingham for permission to conduct a study. This approval was achieved prior to undertaking work at the research site. Participation invitation letters (Appendices A1 and A2) were first sent to the students of EFL. Once they accepted the invitation, they were handed informed consent forms (Appendices C1 and C2), whereby information was provided concerning the researchers, contact details, the research focus, methods and procedure, the activities they were requested to do, risks and benefits, that participation was voluntary. The confidentiality of the information provided by them was stated clearly. They were thus informed that they could still withdraw from the research, even when they had signed the form and they could do so without any negative consequence. All their personal information and the information provided by them were to be "kept confidential and not disclosed to third parties…Participant

confidentiality would be ensured by utilising identification code numbers to correspond to research data in research paperwork and computer files" (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cas/researchsupport/ethics.aspx). Moreover, pseudonyms were also used to ensure their anonymity. Their entitlement to privacy was respected, in that they could refuse to answer questions or provide certain information at will and permission for our presence was always sought. Activities were conducted in full negotiation with the participants.

3.10 The Researcher's Role

The researcher's role is a key 'instrument' of his/her research (Wellington, 2015; England, 1994). As Wellington (2015) puts it, "a rule we might call the 'Education Uncertainty Principle': the researcher influences, disturbs and affects what is being researched in the natural world, just as the physicist does in the physical universe" (p.100).

I had a mixed role: both insider- and outsider- researcher in this research. Before conducting this research, I had worked at the university research site as a lecturer for eleven years. Additionally, I had prior knowledge of the context of teaching and learning foreign language and L2 listening in Viet Nam as well as knowledge of Vietnamese culture. My past experience and knowledge as an insider-researcher offered me advantages of obtaining approval to conduct the research and accessing and building initial rapport with the students. However, I complied with the research ethics guidance. Also, I was aware and attempted to avoid bias related to

this experience and knowledge. I took Yin (2014)'s advice of being a good "listener". By "listening", he meant

> *receiving information through multiple modalities – for example, making keen observations or sensing what might be going on – not just using the aural modality. Being a good listener means being able to assimilate large amounts of new information without bias. (p. 74)*

I employed a mixed- methods design which involved survey questionnaire, participant observation, and interviews. I attempted to make interpretations of results based on evidence, triangulation and theories. Regarding 'outsider-researcher', during my PhD I was no longer in an official position or no longer had any involvement in doing the teaching or assessing students' performance at the research site and thereby no authority over the participants. I anticipated that they could feel free to do their listening and interacting with peers in this listening space to their preferences and, thereafter, could freely share with me their experiences, thoughts and suggestions for the project. Given the prevalence of high power distance between the teacher and the learner, if I had been their teacher, they might have become more reticent or might have given answers to please me.

Regarding my roles during the fieldwork, I was a facilitator, a participant observer and data collector. Specifically, I facilitated the implementation of the project's listening design. Besides, I conducted my overt observation of the participants' online activity with "inquiry from the inside" (Evered and Louis, 2001) and minimal participation in their discussions. Prior to this observation, I had collected informed consent and notified them that their online activity was observed for research purposes. To alleviate the problem of disrupting the natural setting (Cohen et al., 2011), I attempted to gain trust and establish rapport with the

participants, so that they could feel comfortable to have me join their listening group and observe their activity. These attempts were maintained when doing the interview work. Besides, I managed to create a comfortable, informal atmosphere and did listen to the interviewees with respect, empathy and an inquiring mind. My acknowledgement of the interviewees' sharing of their engagement and suggestions for the project was explicitly articulated prior to, during and after the interview. Accordingly, it was anticipated that the interviewees could be aware of the significance of their sharing and that attending the interview was a chance for them to let their voice be heard. This acknowledgement was like a supplication which "involves exposing and exploiting weakness regarding dependence on whoever is being researched for information and guidance…shifting a lot of power over to the researched" (England, 1994, p.243).

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has described and explained the employment of a mixed methods case study design, the research site and the participants. The underlying social constructivism and pragmatism that inspire this project have also been presented. Regarding the mixed methods of data collection and mixed data analysis approaches employed by this research, they have been presented in brief in this chapter and are presented in detail in following Chapters 4, 7 and 8. The last part of the chapter has been devoted to the discussion of the commonly-used research criteria of a case study and a consideration of ethical responsibilities.

4 The Status Quo of Learner Engagement in Out-of-class L2 Listening

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports findings obtained from the analysis of a status quo questionnaire responses. The findings serve to lay the foundations for the research design of a social networked listening place: a context in which the intervention of the main study could take place. Prior to a presentation of findings, the status quo survey questionnaire is described in detail. The latter part of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the findings which addresses the first research question.

4.2 The Status Quo Survey Questionnaire

A *status quo* survey questionnaire relevant to the ambitions of a listening intervention was designed and administered to the target research population (Section 3.5.2). The survey questionnaire (appendix H) consisted of four sections. The first was to investigate the students' demographics, including their gender and duration of learning English as a second/foreign language (L2). The second section was an examination of their existing engagement in listening to English beyond the classroom, with a focus on their frequency, time investment in listening, frequently encountered feelings and frequency of doing certain listening activities. Following this section was an inquiry into their perceptions of the challenge level of this listening skill, their own listening performance, out-of-class listening, their self-

chosen listening resources, the factor(s) that most affected their engagement in out-of-class listening and their greatest difficulty in listening (if any). The last section of the survey questionnaire examined their preferences when listening to English beyond the classroom. Answers to these questions would furnish a 'current listening' snapshot that would map the extent and urgency of the design challenge.

For the final version of the status quo survey questionnaire, this instrument was piloted. This procedure was necessary to check the time it took to complete, possible ambiguities, the gathering of feedback and suggestions and, thus, to make necessary revisions to the questionnaire. One colleague and five students of the target population were invited to participate in the pilot work. The pilot was conducted with the colleague first. She read the draft questionnaire and sent me her feedback, and I made necessary changes. The pilot with the students was one by one, with the use of a think-aloud method. The pilot work with students was conducted at their convenience and via Skype. Prior to the pilot work, emails had been sent to them, introducing the purposes of piloting the instrument and giving instructions on what they were requested to do. They were given a few minutes to skim the questionnaire before starting their thinking aloud. After completing the questionnaire, the students were requested to give feedback either freely or based on the suggested feedback form of the research, either in the pilot session or later at their convenience.

The survey questionnaire was completed and returned by 127 out of the 133 students approached. Hence the response rate was 95%. Thereafter, all the completed survey questionnaires were processed, and descriptive analysis was conducted with the help of SPSS software v.22.

4.3 Findings

This Section presents findings in detail, summarising them in relation to the four main sections described above.

4.3.1 Learners' Background Information

Of 127 respondents, 123 were female (97%) and 4 were male (3%). These figures reflect a very common ratio in favour of females among majors of English. The other background information collected showed that the number of years they had been learning English was 10 years. Most of the respondents started learning English when they were at primary school. The information about their duration of learning English was considered a starting point for the main inquiry into their specific language skill - the concern with listening. Answers were sought specifically about their engagement in listening beyond the classroom and across the four dimensions and presented in the following sub-Section.

4.3.2 Learners' Reported Engagement in Out-of-Classroom L2 Listening

This Section presents findings on self-reported learner engagement. Their behavioural engagement is discussed first, followed by cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and, finally, social engagement.

4.3.2.1 Learners' Behavioural Engagement

These results relate to their time investment and frequency of choosing listening materials and activities by themselves.

Time Investment

One striking feature is that there were significant variations among the respondents in the amount of time they spent in out-of-class L2 listening. In fact, the average duration for each listening ranged from just 10 minutes to as high as 300 minutes, although half an hour and one hour were the common durations reported by nearly two thirds of the respondents – see Table 4-1.

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The duration for each listening	127	290	10	300	59.35	42.645
Valid N (listwise)	127					

Table 2 Behavioural engagement as time investment

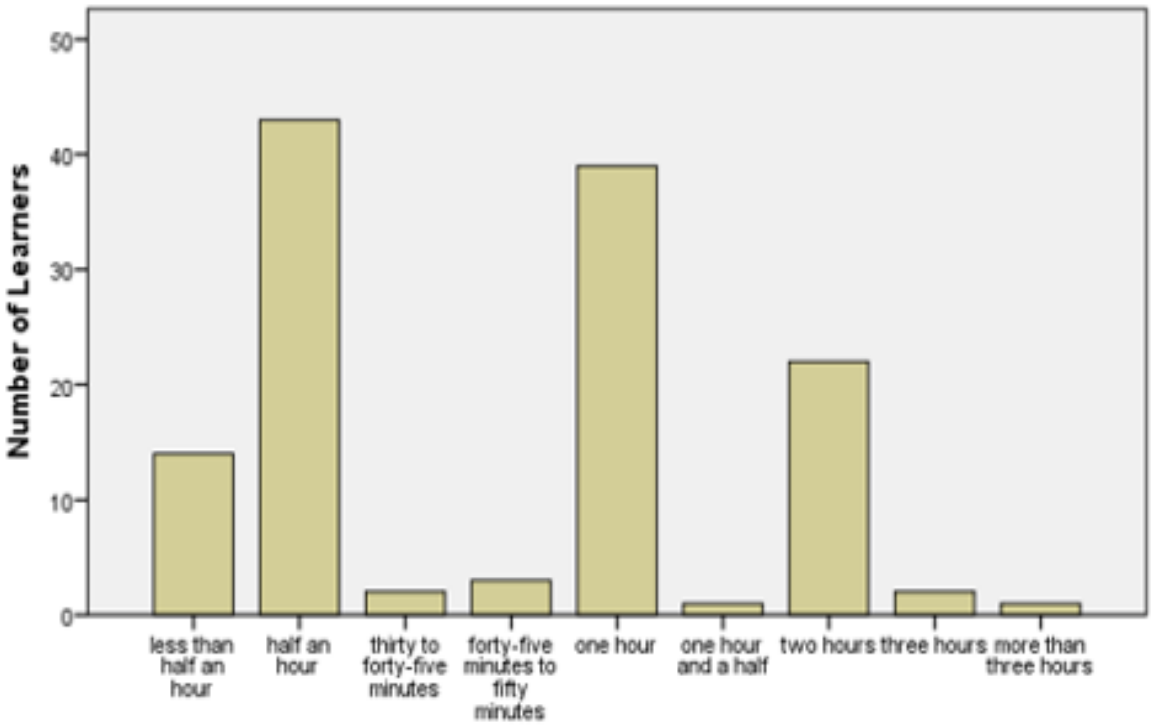


Figure 4-1 Amount of time spent on each listening

Additionally, the results showed that they did their listening practice at different frequencies. More than half of them did not listen to English frequently, just twice a week at most. There were even 20% of the respondents who just practised listening once a week, or less than once a week. When examining their time investment against their listening course's requirement of a minimum of 200-minutes study time per week, it was revealed that nearly 45% of them (57 out of 127 respondents) did not spend the amount of study time that was required. Importantly, a significant positive correlation was found between the learners' frequency of listening to English and their perceived listening performance ($r = .238$, $n = 127$, $p < .001$) whilst it was not found between the duration of each listening episode and their perceived listening performance.

Evidently, there must be some concern regarding their lack of time investment and the necessity to engage them to listen frequently and with an adequate amount of time for each listening episode.

Selecting Resources and Activities at Will

The results reveal that 60.6% of the respondents appeared to be proactive, self-directed and comfortable to take charge of their out-of-class listening by always or often selecting the resources and activities according to their preferences. However, a rather large remaining proportion (nearly 40%) just 'sometimes', 'rarely' or even 'never' chose what to listen and what to do with listening resources. They might have had difficulty in finding resources to listen. Alternatively, they might have been either low engaged in listening to English, passive or reactive, or dependent on their class teachers to assign homework or recommend listening resources. The last finding is that there was a significant positive correlation of this behaviour of engagement with the following: their feelings of comfort ($r = .249$, $n = 127$, $p < .001$), perceived confidence ($r = .183$, $n = 127$, $p < .005$), and perceiving a self-selected listening resource as interesting ($r = .246$, $n = 127$, $p < .001$). These findings suggest that it would be feasible and good for the project's intended intervention programme to encourage the respondents to get more involved in choosing listening resources and activities. Doing so, those who did not frequently select resources and activities for their out-of-class listening could benefit from their active peers and get more engaged in listening and even initiate what to listen or what to do as a good return.

4.3.2.2 Learners' Cognitive Engagement

The learners' cognitive engagement was captured through results regarding their frequency of adopting effective ways of listening and doing reflection on their listening. Learners, in general, appeared to be aware of the importance of effective ways of listening or listening strategies. As reported, listening strategies were reported as adopted "often or sometimes" by about three-quarters of the respondents. Also, the same large number of the respondents reported their doing some reflection on their listening. There were significant positive correlations of their perceived listening performance with their frequency of adopting effective ways of listening ($r = .241$, $N = 127$, $p < .001$) and with their frequency of reflecting after listening ($r = .268$, $N = 127$, $p < .001$).

However, one puzzling point is that only 7.9% of respondents perceived that they had good performance in listening, although they "often or sometimes" adopted ways of listening that could be categorized as cognitive and metacognitive listening strategies and they had been learning English for quite a long time. This might raise an issue of the effectiveness of their employing listening strategies or an issue that they might have not employed listening strategies frequently and flexibly enough, or done so just at the surface level.

4.3.2.3 Learners' Emotional Engagement

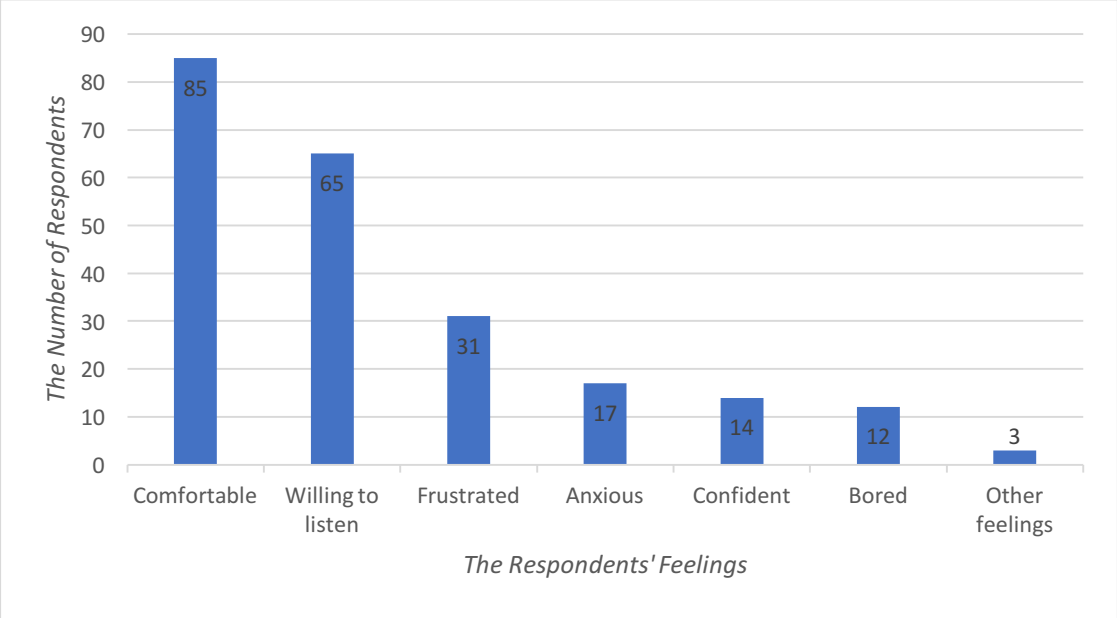


Figure 4-2 Respondent's feelings about listening beyond the class

Overall, as can clearly be seen in Figure 4-2, the respondents mainly experienced positive feelings when they listened beyond the classroom. Indeed, their feeling of comfort was the most frequently reported, followed by their willingness to listen. Triangulated with the finding about limited time investment among many learners in the Section 4.3.2.1, it seems that these positive feelings might not have been sufficient conditions to ensure that the learners would do the listening in practice. By contrast, negative feelings, namely boredom and anxiety, were expressed by just a small number of the respondents. Possible explanations could be that the respondents did not have to listen under pressure of time and assessment and they could freely choose listening resources of interest and at the appropriate level. Another striking feature is that their feelings, positive and negative alike, were found to be significantly correlated with their perceived listening performance, in which the former correlated positively and the latter correlated negatively. Also, a very similar

correlation pattern was found between their feelings (except for their perceived confidence) and their frequency of listening to English beyond classroom. Their detailed significant correlations are summarized in Table 3

Feelings	**Listening Performance**		**Frequency of Listening**	
	r value	**p value**	**r value**	**p value**
Comfortable	.450	< .001	.248	< .001
Confident	.282	< .001		
Willing	.378	< .001	.259	< .001
Bored	-.329	< .001	-.198	< .005
Anxious	-.240	< .001	-.228	< .005
Frustrated	-.539	< .001	-.375	< .001

Table 3 Correlations of listening and affect

Thus, the learners' feelings seem to occupy a significant relationship with their learning outcomes (listening performance) and they correlate with their investment of time and effort. In this respect, the emotional dimension seems to be related to both the behavioural and cognitive dimensions.

Furthermore, many of their feelings significantly correlated with each other. For example, a significant correlation was found between their perceived comfort and their willingness to listen, or between frustration and boredom, but comfort and frustration correlated negatively with each other. Given these correlation patterns, one possible implication for the coming intervention can be drawn: namely that it would be desirable to create a listening and sharing space that potentially helps the

learner feel comfortable, willing and confident to listen to English and interact with peers.

On the other hand, it should be noted that there was a quite similar proportion of the respondents who were willing and those who were unwilling to listen (51% vs. 49% respectively). There is a concern about the large proportion of unwilling respondents, since there was a significant positive correlation between their willingness to listen and their frequency of listening ($r = .259$, $N = 127$, $p < .001$) and between their frequency of listening and their perceived listening performance - as mentioned in the previous Section. The last important point to mention is that most of the respondents (89%) did not feel confident and 24% of the respondents reported frustration when listening beyond the classroom. This provides strong motivation for an intervention of the kind discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, it can be inferred from this that these respondents were possibly thinking about their previous unsatisfactory performance in listening tests or having trouble in self-directing their out-of-class listening, understanding a listening material, completing a listening task, etc. Given the learners' loss of confidence and experienced frustration and correlations of these feelings with their perceived listening performance, there is a need to scaffold them towards fostering their confidence and, thereby, to mitigate the frustration.

4.3.2.4 Learners' Social Engagement

(1) Listening Pattern

The results (Figs 4-3 and 4-4) showed that roughly half of the respondents took their out-of-class listening experiences in their individual, private space rather

than in a social space. The other half tended to sometimes follow the pattern of listening individually first, then listening and/or discussing in pair/group or the pattern of listening in pair/group. There were slightly more respondents choosing the latter listening pattern than the former. (52% compared with 49.6%).

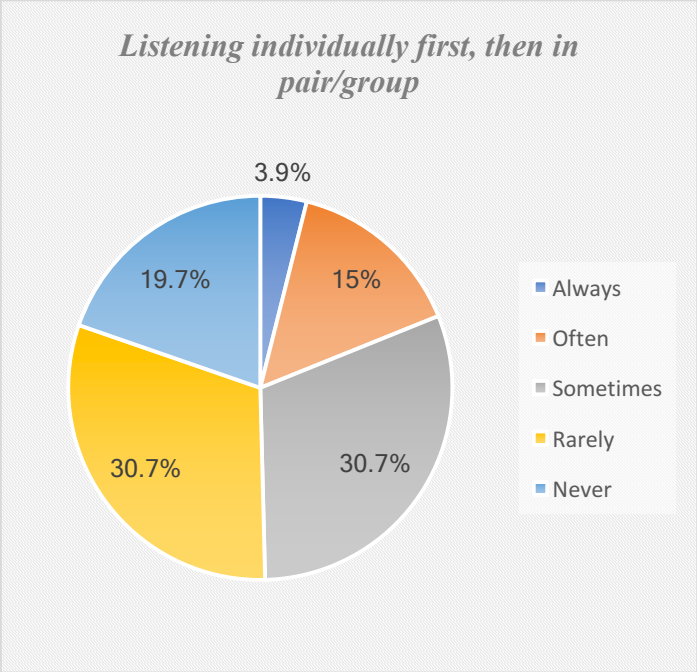


Figure 4-3 Social conditions of listening

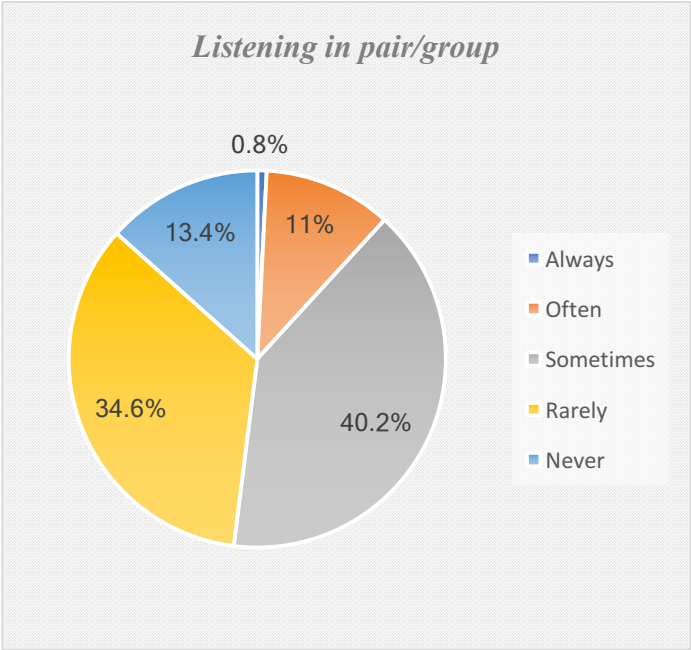


Figure 4-4 Social conditions of listening

(2) Sharing listening experiences

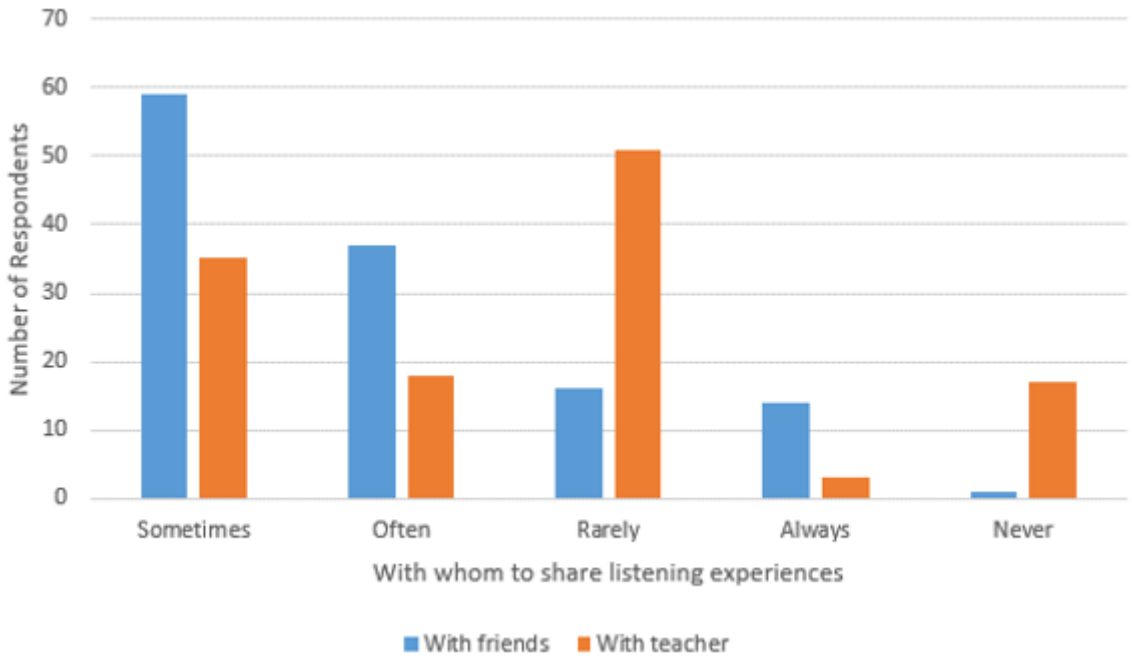


Figure 4-5 The respondent's sharing listening experiences

It is revealed (Figure 4-5) that respondents tended to frequently share their listening experiences with their friends, rather than with their teacher. In fact, the number of the respondents "always, often or sometimes" sharing listening experiences with their peers was nearly double the number of those sharing with their teacher (110 vs. 56 respondents). Furthermore, more than half of the respondents rarely or never did the sharing with their teacher whilst one-tenth did so with their peers. Thus, it can be inferred that the respondents seemed to have more chances to interact with peers than with their teacher and felt more comfortable doing so. These differences might also be traced back to the cultural trait of power distance to which the teacher is considered as the "fount of knowledge" and there is felt a one-way direction of passing knowledge from the teacher to the learner (Hofstede, 2010; Nguyen, 2005; Ngo, 2015), such that the learner might have felt reluctant to share what they have learnt from their own listening experiences. Lastly, that the majority "often or sometimes" shared listening experiences indicates that they did engage socially in listening beyond the classroom.

So far, the learners' engagement in listening to English beyond the classroom has been sketched. To obtain a better interpretation of these learners' engagement data and to get the planned intervention more informed in relation to its design, the survey questionnaire was employed for further inquiry into the learners' perceptions of their L2 listening. The results concerning the learner's perceptions are presented in the next sub-Section.

4.3.3 Learners' Perceptions

This sub-Section presents the learners' perceptions of the challenge level of listening skill, their own listening performance, out-of-class listening, their self-chosen listening resources, the factor(s) that most affected their engagement in out-of-class listening, and difficulty in listening beyond the classroom.

4.3.3.1 Perceptions of Challenge in L2 Listening Skill and Listening Performance

The results showed that all respondents perceived this language skill to be challenging. Importantly, there was a significant correlation between the perceived level of challenge and their perceived listening performance: the higher challenge perceived correlated with the lower performance perceived ($r = -.298$, $N = 127$, $p < .001$).

4.3.3.2 Perceptions of Out-of-Class L2 Listening

There were several important findings about learners' perceptions of out-of-class L2 listening. First, all respondents appeared to be aware of the importance of out-of-class listening. In fact, it was rated "extremely important" or "important" for improvements in their English by nearly three quarters of the respondents and for improved listening skill by 80% of the respondents. The statistical results showed that there was a significant correlation between the perceived importance of out-of-class listening in English progress and the length of time they spent on each listening ($r = .181$, $N = 127$, $p < .005$). Likewise, its high perceived importance to listening skill improvement correlated with longer durations of each listening episode ($r = 179$,

N = 127, $p < .005$). However, no significant correlation was found between the perceived importance of out-of-class listening and the learners' frequency of listening outside classroom, from which it can be inferred that neither was there a significant correlation between the perceived importance and the learners' time investment in listening outside classroom. Second, learners seemed to be familiar and comfortable with practicing listening to English alone, with 69% of the respondents refuting the idea that out-of-class listening is listening in isolation - in the sense that listening alone does not mean that one would feel isolated or unhappy, which seemed consistent with their reported positive feelings mentioned earlier in Section 4.3.2.3. This might create interest in exploring how they would engage in a different listening pattern. Last, it is noteworthy that many learners seemed not to be ready for their autonomous L2 listening. In fact, about half of the respondents were not sure of what to do with out-of-class listening. They were just wondering whether it was mainly to complete tasks in the workbook, practice test books or following teacher's assignments.

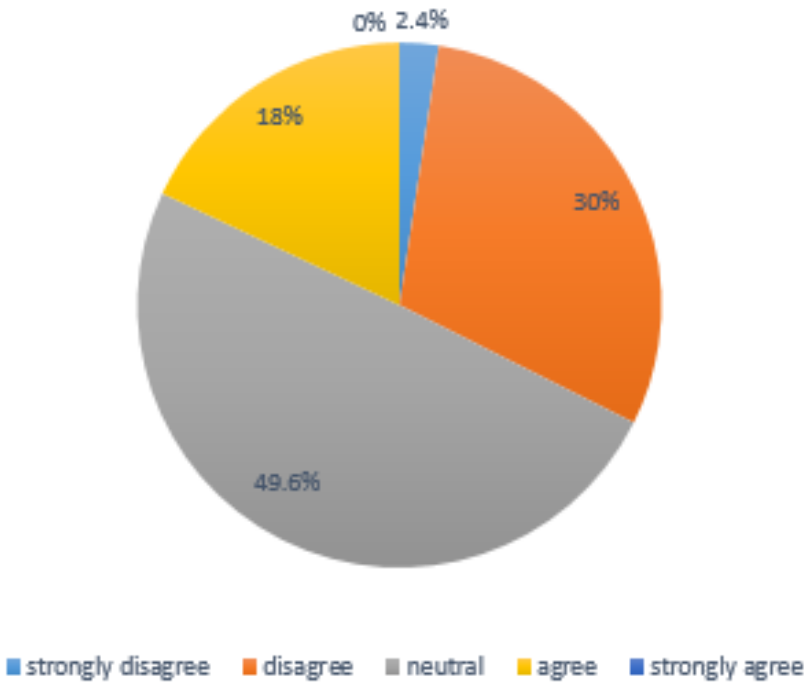


Figure 4-6 Whether out-of-class L2 listening is mainly to complete tasks in the workbook, practice test books or those assigned by the teacher

In addition, one third of the respondents perceived that their teacher still played a dominant role in their out-of-class listening, rather than themselves, while another third was “not sure”.

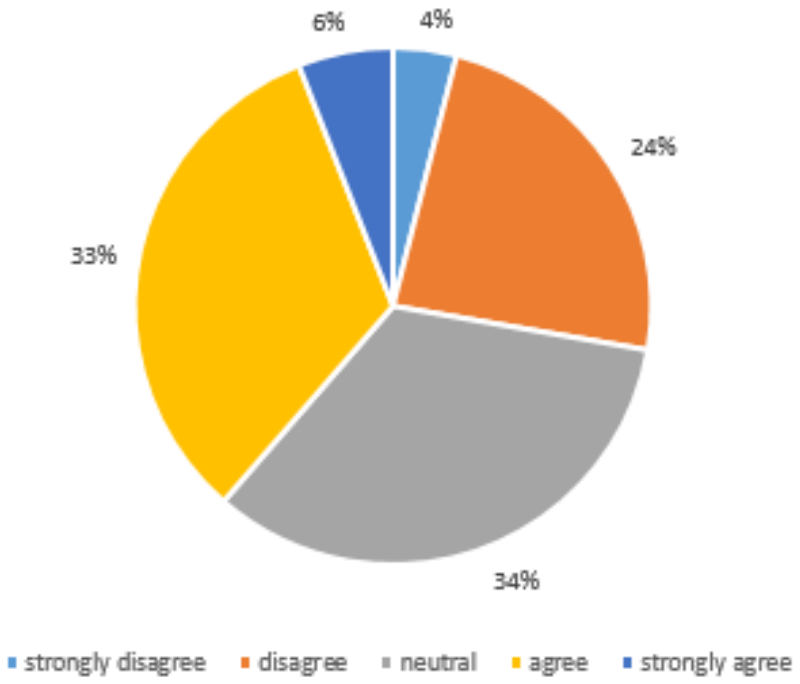


Figure 4-7 Whether the teacher still plays a dominant role in the learner's out-of-class L2 listening

4.3.3.3 Perceptions of Their Self-Chosen Listening Resources

The results indicated that all respondents seemed to be satisfied with the listening resources they selected by themselves in terms of interest level. 59% of respondents rated their self-chosen listening resources "very interesting" and "extremely interesting". Additionally, there was a significant positive correlation between their perceived interest level and their selecting materials at will ($r = .246$, $N = 127$, $p < .001$). One possible suggestion to be drawn from these findings is that the participants of the planned intervention should be encouraged to select the resources by themselves.

Regarding their perceived accessibility to listening resources, "*quite accessible"* was the most frequently rated, by nearly 42% of the respondents and "*slightly accessible"* and "*not accessible"* were the least frequently rated - by 17%.

This might suggest that the learners may not have had much difficulty in collecting listening resources but it would be desirable if they could be given organized support so that they could have more access to such resources.

Last, it is surprising that almost all the respondents perceived the listening resources selected by themselves as challenging, with "*moderately challenging"* being rated most frequently (by 54% of the respondents).

4.3.3.4 Perceptions of Factors Affecting Engagement in Listening beyond Classrooms

The bar chart (Figure 4-8) presents the factors that were perceived as having the most influence on the learners' investing time and effort in out-of-class listening. It will be noticed that there was an interplay of both internal and external factors that affected their dedication of time and effort in out-of-class listening.

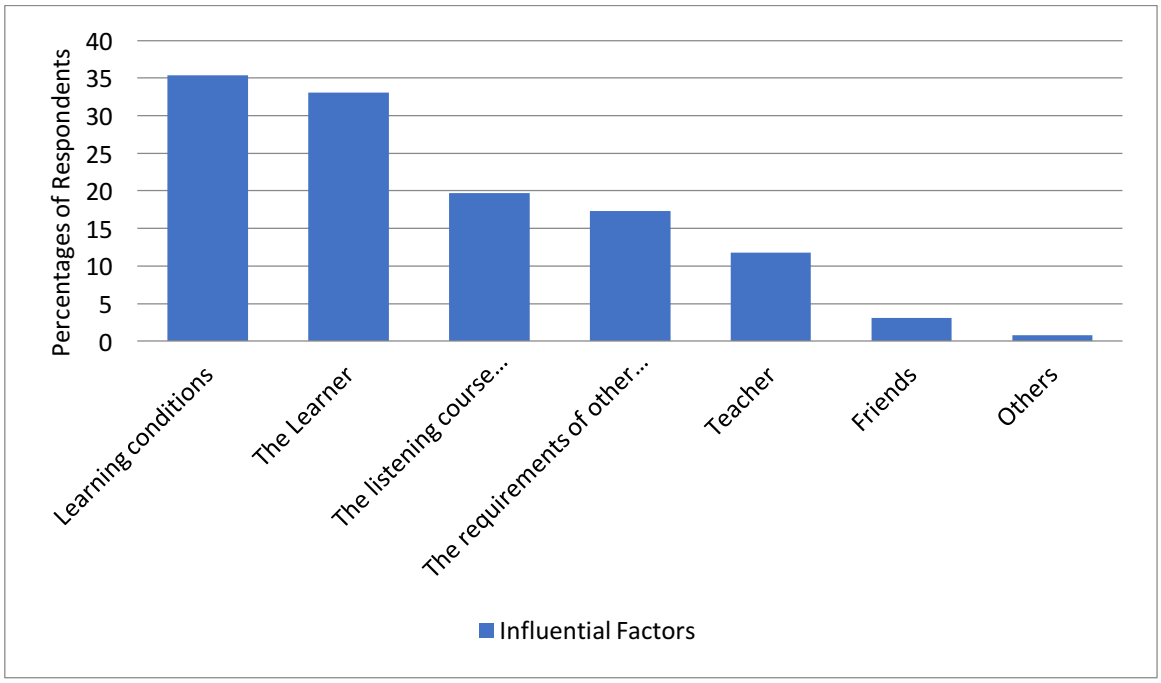


Figure 4-8 The most factors that were perceived to have the most influence on learner engagement in out-of-class L2 listening

That 'learning conditions' were the most frequently acknowledged can be considered as a hint for the planned intervention design – namely, to offer affordances conducive to their listening practice. The factor *Friends* was just acknowledged by 3% of the respondents whilst the *teacher* factor was acknowledged by more (12%). This might be traced back to the fact that the learners tended to do their out-of-class listening on their own, rather than with their peers (see the sub-Section *Listening Pattern* in 4.3.2.4).

4.3.3.5 Perceptions of their Difficulty in Listening beyond the Classroom

As can be seen in Figure 4-9, the challenge of catching up with the speed of recordings or speakers was the most frequently reported difficulty, by 83.5% of the

respondents. Next were the difficulties in giving up the bad habits of listening word by word and translating while listening.

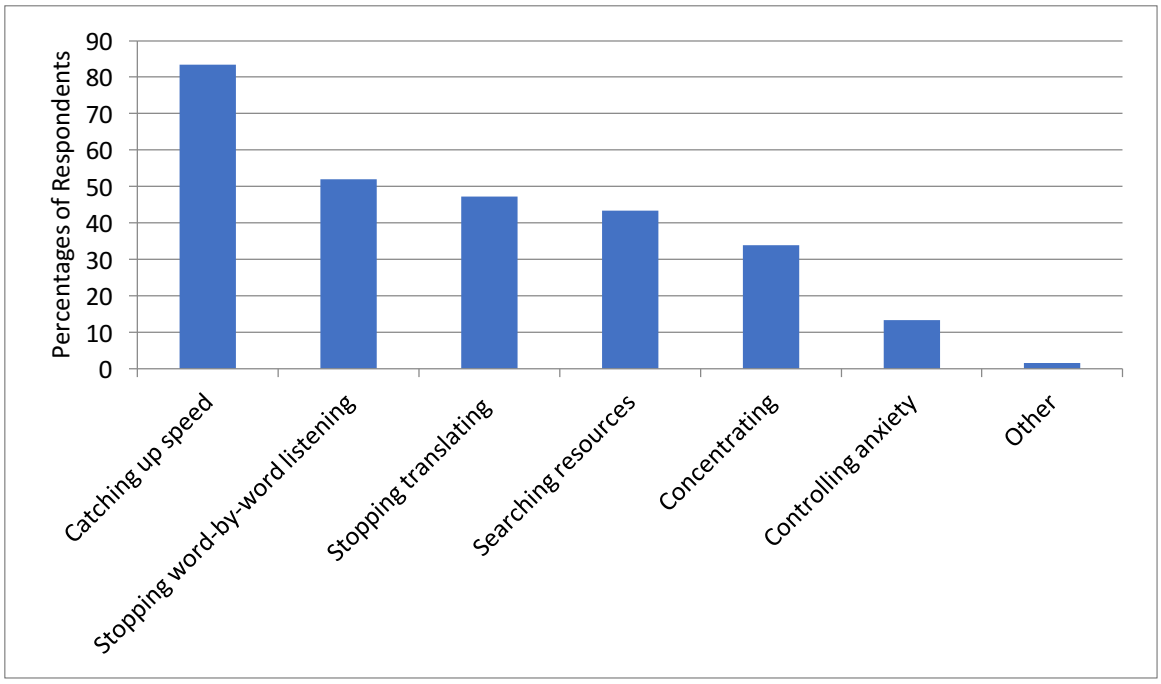


Figure 4-9 Participant's Greatest Difficulty in Listening to English

All these difficulties seemed to suggest that the learners had over-reliance on bottom-up processing of a recording. The report of difficulty in searching appropriate listening resources by 43% of the respondents partly explained why nearly 40% of the respondents just “sometimes”, “rarely” or “never” selected listening resources and activities by themselves, as mentioned in sub-Section 4.3.2.1. Last, it is noticeable that the difficulty in controlling anxiety while listening was the least frequently reported, which might be because when listening beyond the classroom, the learners could listen in their own learning space, at their own pace, and free of stress.

Given the learners' self-reported difficulties, it would therefore be desirable if the intervention planned could contribute effective listening resources, support learner autonomy in deciding what and how to listen, create a comfortable space, suggest some activities that encourage the learner to listen selectively and flexibly such as obtaining the meaning and necessary information rather than words, flexibly inferencing and elaborating, etc.

4.3.4 Learners' Preferences

4.3.4.1 Preferences Related to Their Teacher

Regarding what respondents would prefer their teacher to do for them when they listened outside the classroom, a considerable number of them tended to show dependence on their teacher and were somewhat test-oriented. On dependence, half of the respondents still preferred their teacher to provide rules, strictly supervise his/her out-of-class listening and decide what they should listen to "very much", "much" or "quite a lot". Only about one tenth completely rejected the teacher's supervision and control. Furthermore, the teacher's guidance on self-study skills was preferred by almost all the respondents and even 81% of the respondents expressed their very strong or strong preferences for that guidance. This might suggest that they doubted their autonomy, or doubted how well-prepared or self-directed they were for their out-of-class L2 listening and so would wish scaffolding from their teacher. This finding was consistent with those concerning their perceptions of the teacher as mentioned in sub-Section 4.3.3.2. As regards their test orientation, even 57% of the respondents would prefer their teacher to assess their out-of-class listening with

proficiency tests like TOEFL, IELTS “very much” or “much” whereas only 7% of them disapproved.

The tendency to depend on the class teacher and a test orientation among half of the respondents implied a great context-related challenge facing the planned intervention, since it aims to create a listening and sharing space that does not have the teacher involved but that encourages the listener to ‘relax’, out of their listen-and-test routine.

4.3.4.2 Preferences Related to Their Peers

The results showed that all respondents expressed their preferences for peers’ sharing experiences and effective ways of listening, in which nearly 90% of them preferred peers’ sharing “very much” or “much”. This offers a significant suggestion for the research: namely, to encourage sharing activities among its participants as an important part of the intervention design. There arose the question of how to orchestrate their sharing activities. To make informed decisions regarding this, the survey questionnaire considered what the learners would like or expect of their future L2 listening group. The answers sought from this inquiry are presented in the following sub-Section.

4.3.4.3 Preferences Related to The Future L2 Listening Group

It was shown that the asynchronous mode for interactions with peers beyond the classroom was supported by all the respondents, three quarters of whom expressed their “very strong” or “strong support”. This encourages such a mode of interaction for the planned intervention. Besides, every respondent liked to choose

partners, rather than being assigned, which should influence intervention design when orchestrating sub-group activities. Last, the results regarding their preferred resources to listen in a future L2 listening group revealed that they would still like test-oriented resrouces, consistent with results mentioned in sub-Section 4.3.4.1. Apart from the test-oriented resources, the respondents expressed their preferences for resources that would help them to get better prepared for listening to English in real life. These 'real life' oriented resources seemed welcome, being preferred "much" or "very much" by nearly 87% of the respondents, compared with the test-oriented resources by nearly 74% of the respondents. These findings seemed to encourage the wisdom of assembling real-life oriented resources, such as ones that are spoken quite naturally, of different accents, monologues, dialogues, updated news, commonly encountered situations of communication, and so on.

4.4 Discussion and Conclusion

Analysis of the survey responses helps to gain better insight into the *status quo* of engagement in listening to English beyond the classroom among these second-year majors of English. Overall, there were considerable variations of engagement among the learners and many of them demonstrated rather low engagement across the four dimensions. Let us discuss their engagement manifestation in detail.

In terms of time investment, there has been much emphasis on the necessity of academically engaged time as a strong predictor of desired learning outcomes (Caldwell et al., 2012; Coates, 2005; Gettinger, 2012; Kuh, 2001, 2009). Meanwhile,

it was revealed in the current research that many of the respondents did their L2 listening practice with low frequency and in a short period of time. Poor time investment in out-of-class L2 listening was also reported in previous studies (Davis, 2013; Fukuda & Yoshida, 2013; Goh, 2002; Vu & Shah, 2016). There arises a question of what factor(s) affected their time investment. In the current research, the four most frequently reported factors in descending order were, learning conditions, the learner themself, the listening course requirements and the requirements of other courses. Their limited time dedication may be rather puzzling at first, since they seemed to have good reasons for listening practice. All of them acknowledged the value of out-of-class listening for improvements in their English and their listening skill and they found their chosen materials interesting. Also, most of them felt comfortable and many found it not too hard to seek a listening resource. What's more, they had their peers to share listening experiences with. However, based on their perceptions of the challenge of listening skill, their own listening performance and confidence, and in the light of the expectancy-value theory (Eccles et al., 1983; Green, 2002; Liem et al., 2008; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), one plausible explanation lies in their lack of confidence in understanding a clip or completing a task well. In other words, it is more likely the case that they may not have been willing to invest time and effort in L2 listening practice since they perceived the listening skill challenging and did not expect that they could understand or complete a task well or improve their listening skill.

As regards the use of learning strategies (Fredricks et al., 2004; Guthrie et al., 2004), it was found that many learners employed listening strategies frequently but inflexibly, with over-reliance on bottom-up processing and the surface strategy of

translation. This over-reliance is considered to potentially result in frustration, fatigue and feelings of failure (Helgesen et al., 2007; Ur, 1996). In the current research, the perceived challenge of the listening skill, poor listening performance, loss of confidence, frustration and problems in listening were reported by many respondents. The problems that they frequently encountered corresponded to the first and seventh problems on the list by Underwood (1989), namely lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak and established learning habits. This finding lends support to previous studies that have concluded that less-skilled listeners were more over-dependent on bottom-up processing (Goh, 2000; Ngo, 2015; Shohamy and Inbar, 1991; Vandergrift, 2003). Another important finding is that many of them had low levels of self-regulation and learner autonomy, but out-of-class listening is inherently autonomous, self-directed listening activity (Rost, 2016). They tended to prefer their teacher to guide, plan and assess their out-of-class listening, instead of exercising their autonomy in planning, monitoring and evaluating their own listening progress. This finding corroborates what Vu and Shah (2016) found in their study. As they put it, "Vietnamese students in surveyed universities are not sufficiently ready to study ELS [English listening skills] on their own" (p.53).

When it comes to the learners' emotions, there are some noteworthy points. First, they generally experienced positive feelings for their out-of-class listening practice, especially the feeling of 'comfort'. This finding might indicate the potential advantages of the independent, informal learning setting. For example, they may have had more control over a recording, such as when and how to listen, or the number of times that they could play it, while free of assessment or test-related anxiety. The learners report feeling comfortable in their out-of-class listening.

Nevertheless, they also report invetsing time in this listening. Thus, feeling comfortable with the practice seemed not to be enough to ensure that it would be frequently adopted. Indeed, one might look to the adequacy of the conditions for listening that these learners are routinely finding.

Thus, their informal learning setting may not have had enough features for them to get more engaged in listening practice. In addition, it was revealed that many learners did not tend to be ready for autonomous listening (see section 4.3.3.2, Figure 4-6, Figure 4-7), so they may not have made full use of the comfort and autonomy support that their informal learning space potentially offers. Second, the analysis showed that all the six feelings significantly correlated with learning outcomes (their perceived listening performance) and five of them (except for the confidence feeling) significantly correlated with their frequency of listening to English outside of the classroom. These findings resonate with those of previous studies (Pekrun et al., 2002a, 2002b). Past research in L2 listening mainly reported the negative correlations between anxiety and listening performance (Berkleyen, 2009; Chang, 2008; Golchi, 2012; Zhang, 2013).

The current research contributes to L2 listening empirical evidence that not only anxiety but other feelings (comfort, confidence, willingness, boredom, frustration) significantly correlate with listening performance. To explain these correlations, the Affective Filter Hypothesis by Krashen (1982) may shed light. The hypothesis highlights the impact of the learners' affect about their language environment on their success and the 'affective filter' serves as an imaginary barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language from the available input. According to the hypothesis, depending on the learner's state of mind or disposition, the filter limits

what is noticed and what is acquired. The filter will be 'up' (blocking input) when the learner is stressed, self-conscious, or unmotivated. For example, a learner who is tense, angry, anxious, or bored may 'filter out' input, making it unavailable for acquisition. The filter will be 'down' when the learner is comfortable, confident, etc. Pekrun (2014) indicates how emotions influence learning, "by affecting students' attention, motivation, use of learning strategies and self-regulation of learning" (p.12), with explication. Third, it was found that there were interrelationship patterns among the feelings as mentioned in the sub-Section 4.3.2.3. This finding arises from the need for the learners to regulate their emotions. Past research offered suggestions to boost positive emotions and mitigate negative ones, such as emotion-oriented regulation, appraisal-oriented regulation, competence-oriented regulation and situation-oriented regulation (Matthews et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2009; Pekrun, 2014). Last, the finding that most of the respondents did not feel confident raises concern because of its potential influence on listening performance. Our finding concerning a significant positive correlation between confidence and listening performance is consistent with Mills et al. (2006). Graham (2011) highlighted the potential of increased confidence to "cope more effectively with authentic oral input" (p.113). Moyer (2006) indicated that confidence is "poorly understood as a construct" (p.267) in the literature of second language acquisition and called for greater attention as it deserves.

The last findings under discussion relate to the learners' *social* engagement in out-of-class listening. Although the learners tended to conduct their listening practice in their own private space, the majority did some listening socially by sharing their listening experiences, mainly with their peers. Our research provides further

empirical evidence for Hyland's (2004) finding regarding the learners' choice of private space to focus on a language activity (i.e. listening, reading, speaking, and writing). As Hyland (2004) viewed it, "The private domain may be a valuable setting for language learning and it is one which is both less threatening to both group and personal identity and is also easier for the student to control." (p.197). Still, most of the respondents actually made interactions with peers by exchanging listening experiences, as self-reported by them. Their tendency to interact with peers rather than with their teacher was also reported by Ngo (2015). Finally, it is noteworthy that nine out of ten respondents expressed their strong or very strong preference for sharing listening experiences with peers, whilst only four out of ten reported that they did "much" or "very much" sharing.

The answer has been sought for the research question, "*What is the status quo of learner engagement in out-of-class listening among the second-year English majors?"* It can be said that low engagement was rather common. Given its importance for learning, there is a need for greater attention and scaffolding from administrators, class teachers and researchers. In the L2 listening literature, intervention programmes have mainly been to provide explicit listening strategy instructions (Renandya and Farrell, 2011). Thus, the teacher would play a central role in these programmes. The abovementioned findings can base the planned intervention upon better informed decisions regarding listening conditions, activities and resources. Specifically, a desirable listening and sharing space would be one that provides comfort, rich resources, autonomy and peer interaction support. The planned intervention should deploy sources of support: in particular, the learners themselves and their peers, by encouraging them to make interactions, build up

shared reflection and listening practices, and support and engage each other to do richer listening practice. These proposals are made in the light of Vygotsky's theory of learning, with its stress on learning from within social systems of joint activity. It is nevertheless anticipated that the intervention may face several potential challenges such as many learners' test-orientation, limited language and listening proficiency, and lack of readiness for learner autonomy. The next chapter explains the intervention design and implementation.

5 Intervention design and implementation

5.1 Introduction

The chapter describes the research's intervention programme for supporting out-of-class listening. The present Section describes two main components of the project's intervention programme, the YouListen listening space and the procedures of implementing the programme and collecting data.

5.2 A Description of Several Terms

Hereby is the explanation of several terms that are used in the research design.

(1) Comment

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a comment is "a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction." This definition is applied in this research to refer to the online messages that were publicly shared in response to a listening clip and/or peers, conveying opinions, reactions, feedback, suggestions, etc.

(2) Peer-recommended resources or collected listening clip uploads

In the YouListen listening space, the learners were encouraged to exercise their autonomy in what to listen to and engage their peers. In fact, they uploaded the free listening resources/clips that they had collected. They did this activity mainly in Facebook and VoiceThread sub-spaces, with the intention of recommending these resources to peers in the project's listening space.

(3) *A Post*

A post is "a piece of writing, image, or other item of content published online, typically on a blog or social media website or application." (Oxford Dictionary). Adopting this meaning, this research refers to a post as any message that the learner publicly shared. A post can be a comment, a collected listening resource/clip upload, or a prompt for further discussion.

(4) *View*

The number of views refers to the number of times a post is visited or accessed. A view can be tracked with web analytics.

(5) *Lurkers*

In this research, lurkers refer to "individuals who read messages or browse a site, but never or rarely contribute" (Beamish, 2010, p.38). In the literature, there are different perspectives on lurkers, negatively or positively (see Beamish, 2010; Isomaki et al., 2012).

(6) *Profile picture*

A profile picture can be defined as, "the image that represents a social media account in all its interactions across a platform."
[2](https://www.bigcommerce.co.uk/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-profile-picture).)

[2] https://www.bigcommerce.co.uk/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-profile-picture

(7) *Common sub-space and private sub-space*

The common sub-space is used to refer to the YouListen website itself, where both the second-year and third-year students did their listening practice, sharing, and generating other interactions. Meanwhile, the 'private sub-space' refers to the Facebook or VoiceThread sub-spaces, which were chosen by the second-year students and the third-year students respectively.

5.3 The YouListen Listening Space

A web-based listening space termed 'YouListen' was designed based on the student engagement status quo survey and with consideration of promoting interactions celebrated in socio-cultural learning theory, the literature on student engagement, and the literature relating to L2 listening and social networking sites (Chapter 2).

The YouListen listening space was to serve as a portal for a group of L2 students at a university in Viet Nam such that they may become engaged in listening and interacting with peers for their development in a zone of proximal development. Being part of a small, informal online "listening community", their L2 listening would be furnished with rewarding listening experiences involving their peers, rather than a solitary experience of 'listen-and-test' routine. Importantly, from the Vygotskian perspective, they could have chances to co-construct their understanding of a listening clip and build up shared practices of listening and language learning. To partly cultivate this community of "collaborative listening", a website, 'YouListen.com', was designed. It offered listening resources and was embedded

with social media tools. This was the learners' own listening environment: a free, private, safe, informal, voluntary, autonomy-supporting portal for L2 listening and interactions. The listening space had user/password protection and was only accessible by the volunteering learners, whose user accounts were registered by the project. Regarding the learner activity, the participants were encouraged to listen to a set of available resources composed by the researcher. Such resources were based upon attaching a sound clip to a picture whereby the picture was explored by the spoken English. Subsequently the participants would reflect and share their listening experiences, thoughts or reactions to these resources. They would seek and provide support with other listeners or initiate other activities associated with the resources - all in their own way and time and, if they desired, using other social media tools that were linked to the site.

In addition, the learners, either as individuals or in small groups, were also encouraged to take the initiative of exercising autonomy in engaging with their *own* collected listening resources and self-designed activities. In this sense, they were offered chances to engage in listening and carrying out activities according to their preferences and needs, to make personal contributions, and to have a sense of ownership of the listening space. Furthermore, encouraging the learners to creatively engage was expected to facilitate interactions and discussions in the whole listening group or in small groups, so that they could orchestrate their public posting regarding a topic, and develop resources and activities for their peers to listen and discuss. Moreover, learners were encouraged to freely lead and maintain their discussions, regardless of uploading a post, thereby supporting their autonomy and multiple centralities or web-connected interactions (Zhu, 2006). By getting learners involved

in the listening space, the current research had a chance to observe, document and gain insight into how they engaged in this social networked arena and explore in what ways the character of the listening space might have shaped their engagement. In turn, the insights arising would contribute to informed suggestions for future designs for fostering of student engagement.

There follows a description of the YouListen listening space. The space consisted of web pages that identified three listening sub-spaces, namely: (1) the YouListen platform itself, (2) the social media site, Facebook and (3) the social media site, VoiceThread. The first space, the 'platform', furnished image-based sound clips which were provided by the project for participant commentary. But this platform also served as a launching point for access to listening sub-spaces (2) and (3).

After logging on to the YouListen website, the current selection of platform listening clips would appear, each attached to a related image and with information about the date and time, author and the current number of comments for each clip. This allowed the learners to be notified of the available listening clips, especially the most updated ones. Figure 5-1 shows a current set of clips and their associated images that a visitor could select from.

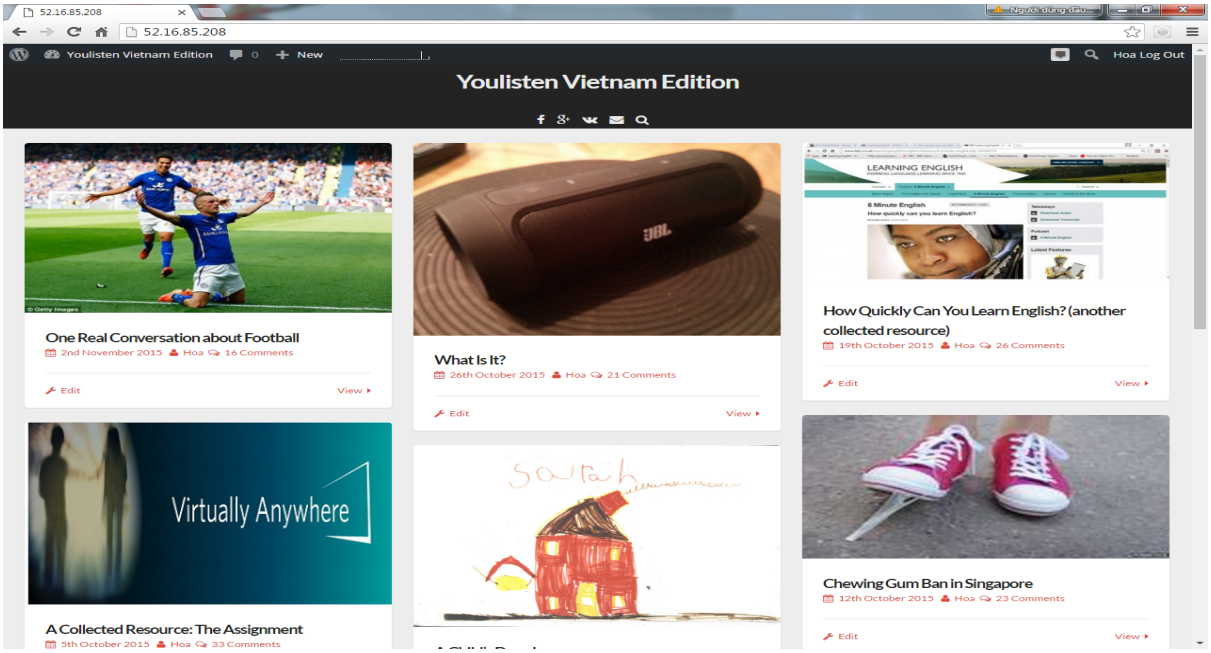


Figure 5-1 The YouListen platform array of listening clips options

An interaction with a chosen clip is illustrated in Figure 5-2. The available clips on the website were introduced by the project, with one new listening clip uploaded every Monday. They offered learners chances of exposure to diverse listening resources. They were either monologues or dialogues, and of various accents - which differed from the familiar accents in their course books or practice test books. They covered everyday topics with content that could hopefully trigger the learners' reflections in some way.

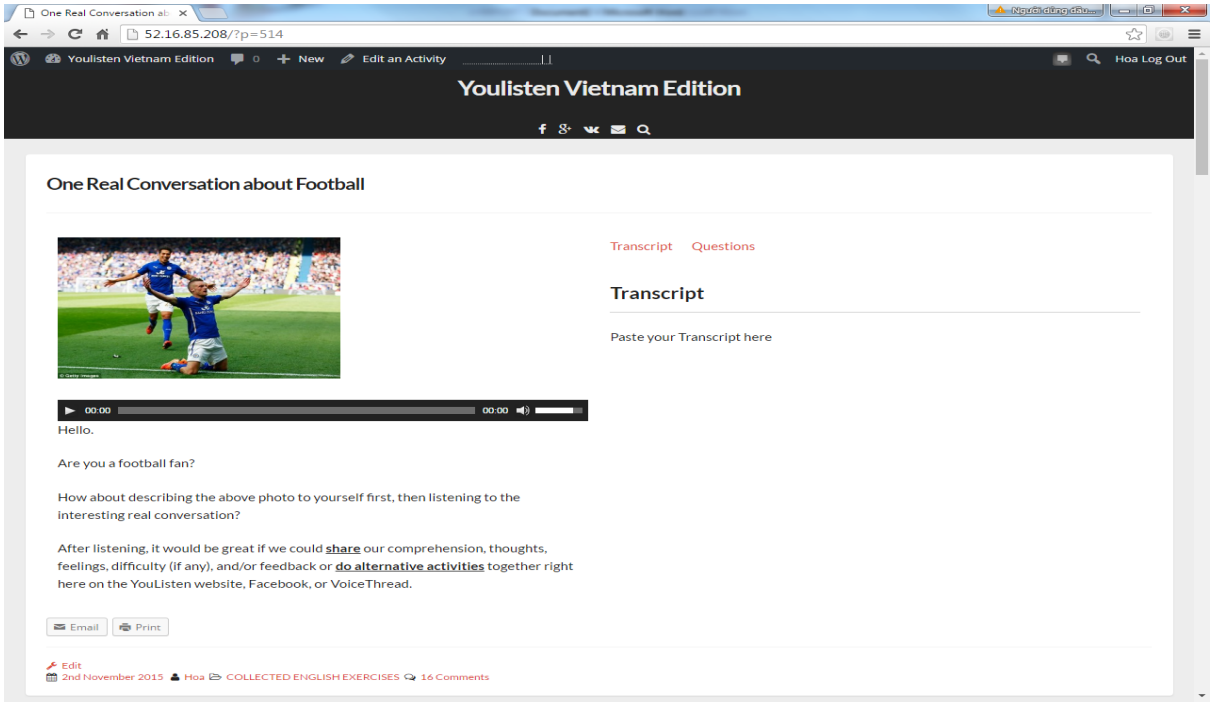


Figure 5-2 Engaging with a chosen listening clip

Besides this, there was also a screen introduction and invitation that encouraged learners to engage in reflective processes and, thereafter, join discussions that were open, informal and centred round the topic and content of a clip or, otherwise, their general listening processes and experiences. For the first few listening clips, suggested activities were provided as initial scaffolds to help the learners become familiar with the context and to mitigate the risk of feeling lost when using the listening website at the outset. A 'transcript help' option was provided such that half the clips were provided with a full transcript whilst half were provided with just part or even no transcript. This provision was done purposefully to explore the impact of this help option on learner engagement. The other features of the website were a discussion space, main social media links to the two specific social media groups, as well as a link for constructing email correspondence (see

Figure 5-1 and Figure 5-2). These affordances were considered indispensable for facilitating "collaborative listening".

Regarding the other two listening sub-spaces, YouListen, Facebook and VoiceThread were chosen by the third-year and second-year sub-groups respectively as spaces in which they could freely contribute listening resources of their own construction, do more listening practice, share and discuss with peers and continue to extend discussions from the YouListen website. Their choice was made after the sub-groups had been given a one week period for exploring the major social media platforms that were introduced by the project as on-screen links: Facebook, Google hangouts, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, VoiceThread. Third year learners explained that they would wish to use Facebook in the YouListen listening space for its convenience, user-friendliness and because it had already been part of their life. While the second-year students were excited to try VoiceThread, because it was completely new to them and it offered different commenting options.

According to the voicethread.com website[3], "VoiceThread is a cloud application, so there is no software to install. The only system requirement is an up-to-date version of Adobe Flash." This application allows its users to create, upload, discuss or leave comments around single item multimedia materials that they or their peers have uploaded. The viewers of these shared multimedia materials can leave their comments in five different ways. As can be seen in Figure 5-3, the commenting options from left to right include text, audio from a telephone icon, audio from a microphone icon (leaving a comment with our voice), video from a webcam icon, audio or video from a pre-recorded file. Users can comment and edit on their

[3] http://voicethread.com

materials before uploading them. The application can be installed on iOS or Android mobile devices. These features of VoiceThread offer the user more choices in creating and sharing their materials or comments. However, it is noticeable that because publicly shared comments are normally hidden in the initials of a user's name, the learners might have difficulty in maintaining and extending their discussion.

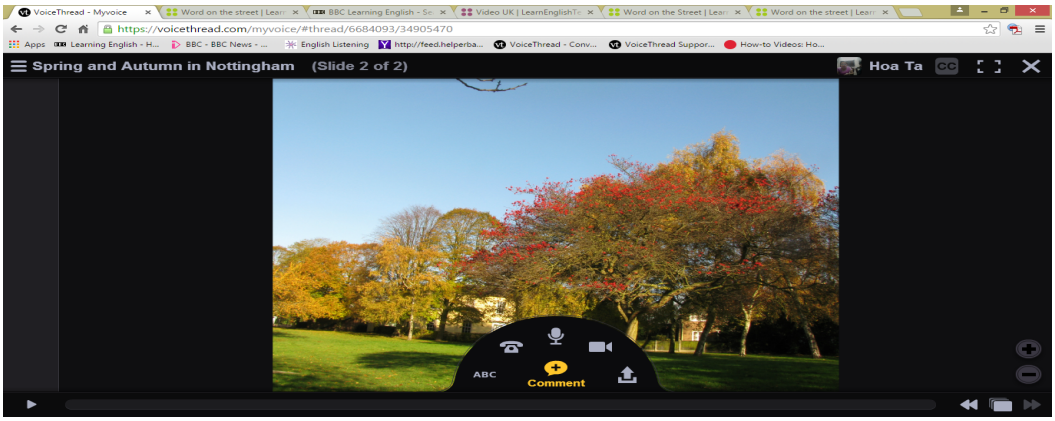


Figure 5-3 Five options of leaving comments on VoiceThread

In response to the choice of the second-year and third-year learners, a VoiceThread group and a Facebook group were created for them respectively. Hereby are some screenshots of their activity in these two sub-spaces. The screenshots in the figures from 5-4 to 5-9 show what and how the learners used the social media sub-space VoiceThread. Specifically, they mainly worked in small groups of 3-5 to do their group posting a collected listening resource with accompanied listening activities/tasks. As shown in the screenshots, the small group 1 (Figures 5-4 and 5-5), group 4 (Figure 5-6), group 5 (Figure 5-7), group 6 (Figure 5-9) and one individual (Figure 5-8) made their posts in the form of Power Point presentations that consisted of slide(s). The topics of their posts were about listening

(difficulty in listening, tips for listening), culture (British culture) and environment (how to save energy). The listening tasks designed by them were listening comprehension questions (Figure 5-8), open sharing of feedback on their post and listening tips (Figure 5-5) or mixed (Figure 5-9). The uploaded resources and peers' comments appeared along the slides.



Figure 5-4 A group's self-introduction (with their chosen group name and representative image) and invitation to enjoy their post

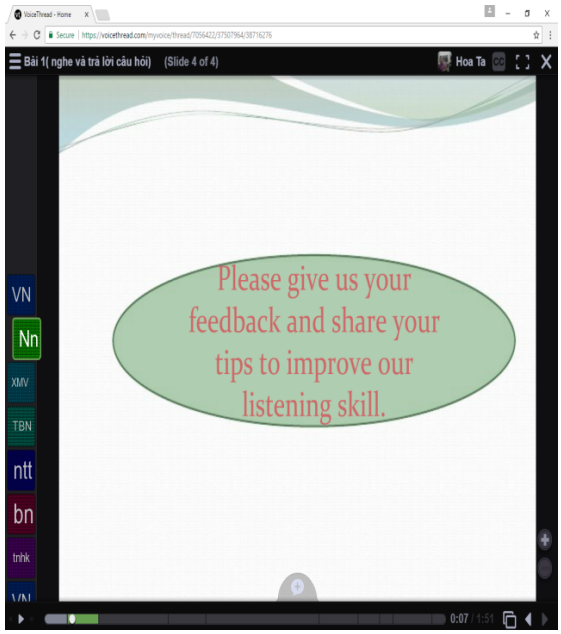


Figure 5-5 The designed activity/task of open discussion and sharing

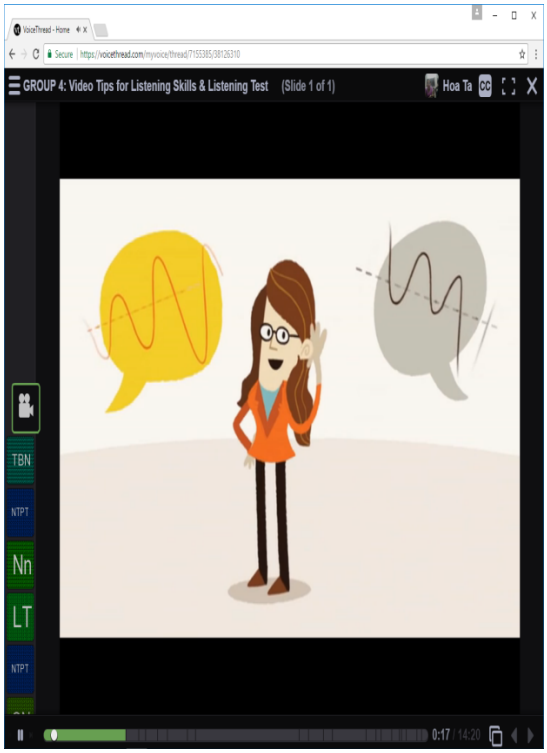


Figure 5-6 The topic of listening skills and listening tests



Figure 5-7 The topic of target language culture

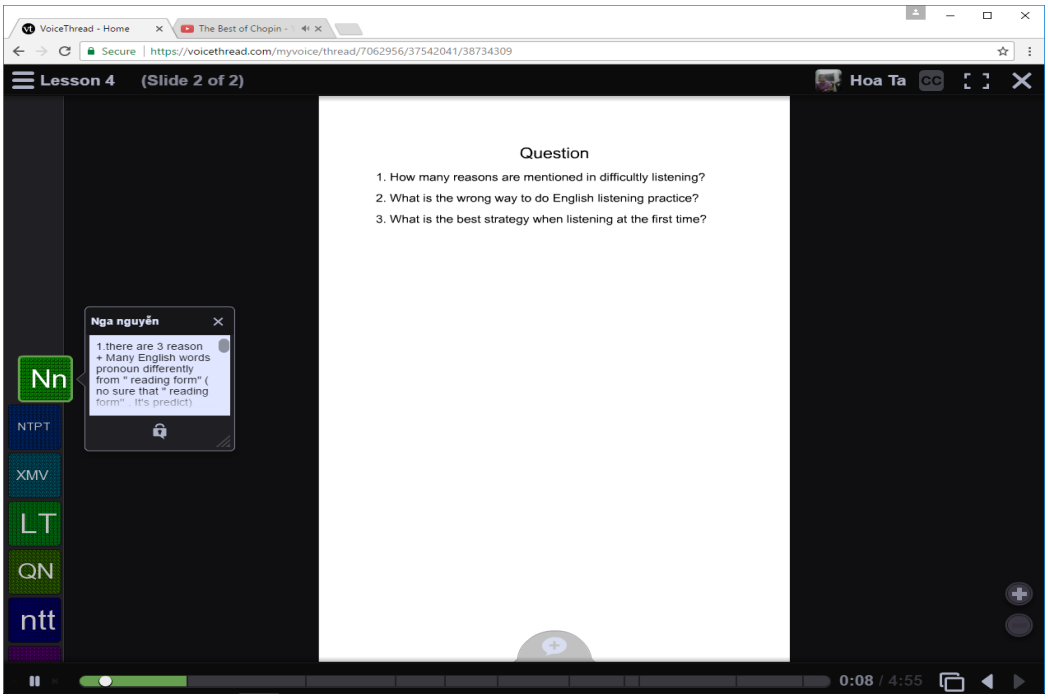


Figure 5-8 An activity/task which centred on listening comprehension questions

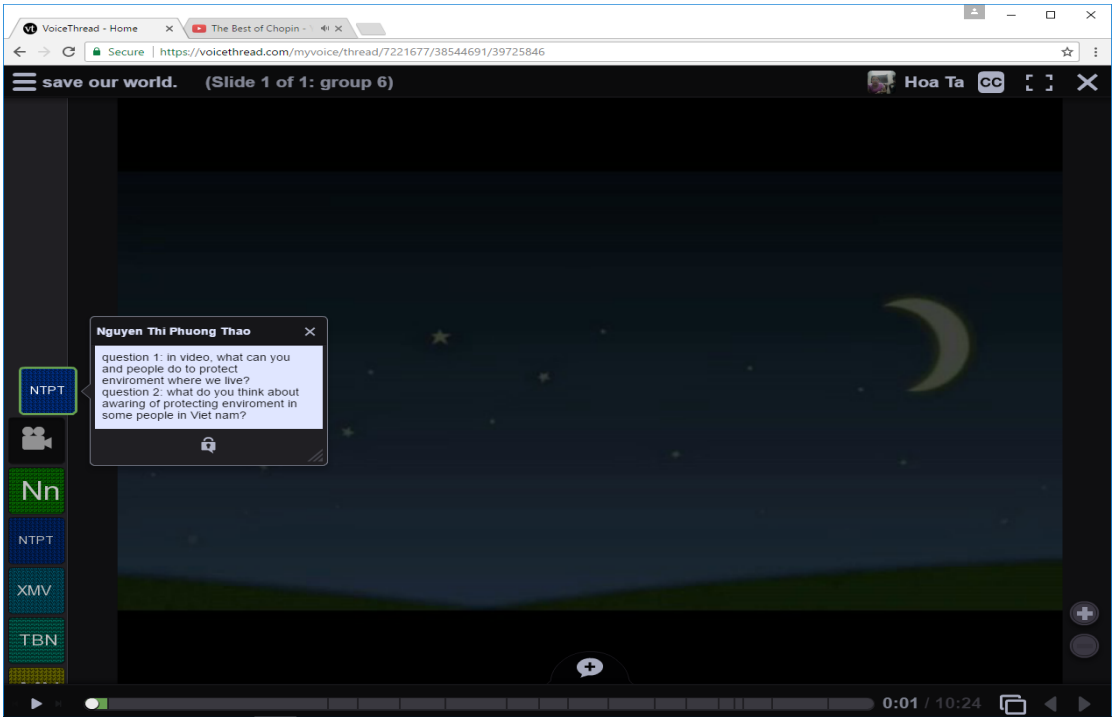


Figure 5-9 The topic of environment and mixed designed activity

As regards the learners' online activity in the Facebook sub-space, it is well illustrated in the following extract which was part of an extended discussion of 38 comments as their reactions to what the speaker in a listening clip said and the clip poster. The speaker shared his experience that listening with subtitles was not effective for him and the poster invited her peers to share their experience and suggestions. The extract showed that they were actively engaged in expressing, challenging each other's opinions, finding a solution on how to use transcripts effectively.

> ***Sim:*** *thank for your sharing. but i don't think it is a wrong way to improve level in listening and pronunciation in speaking event it is one of the usefull ways to do this and it makes listener feel exciting with learning english and no stress. for example, when you watch a us film which have eng-sub and you like, it is happier than listening other tasks or bored conversation in book. It is my opinion .:)*
>
> · Reply · *2 September 2015 at 17:20*
>
> ***May*** *Are u sure that listening with subtitle can enhance your level of this skill? Or for entertaining only? while the other is reading more quickly? Welcome your reply!*
>
> · Reply · *3 September 2015 at 04:00*
>
> ***Ha*** *depend on individual, I mean try to listen on the test at home 2 times fisrt without transcript then you check your listen in the third time :D*
>
> *Like* · Reply ·
>
> *1 · 3 September 2015 at 04:05*
>
> ***May*** *Absolutely right,dear! This experience is exactly!* *Like* · **Reply** · *3 September 2015 at 04:07*

All the sub-spaces afforded such features as asynchronous communication, threaded discussion, multimedia message support and analytics or records of details about a post. The first feature, asynchronous communication, would allow more time for reflection and articulation of thoughts or reactions, especially for the leaners of English as a foreign language - who might have difficulty in expressing their intended ideas in English. The threaded discussion support feature would enable discussions to be maintained or extended and the learners could address certain discussants when leaving their messages as well. The next one would allow the learners to share their collected resource as a main post or a reply to peers' messages in various forms such as audio, video, picture apart from text. This feature can be considered to liven up the discussion boards, to provide more listening cues to understand a listening clip in the main post and to enable discussants to contribute listening resources directly in the comments rather than starting a new thread or post. Last, regarding the post detail record, the sub-spaces would enable the current research to document the date, time and author of a post and the number of comments for each discussion session, which is considered useful in capturing the overall engagement of the whole listening group and individual learners.

5.4 The Procedures of Implementing YouListen and Collecting Data

The fieldwork period for the project implementation and data collection started on 10 August 2015 and ran until 27 April 2016. This Section describes the procedures of implementing the research project and collecting data in a chronological order.

The first two weeks was devoted to necessary preparations prior to the start of the project. I had two separate meetings in which I made PowerPoint presentations on the research project to the class teachers and the target students with strong emphasis on the possible benefits from participating in the project, the research purposes, the safety and privacy of the project's listening space and the researcher's respect for the rights and dignity of research participants. Participation information sheets and consent forms were presented, explained and distributed to the students. Next, I provided answers to questions raised by the teacher and students. At the end of the meetings, sixty-two students completed and returned the signed consent forms. Also, contact details including name, phone number and email address (if any) were requested from those who showed their interest. These contact details were typed, given to them for double checking and collected two days later. Sixteen more students returned their consent forms and provided their contact details. Thus, after two meetings, there were 78 students (44 second-year and 34 third-year students) recruited. The follow-up correspondence with an introductory email was sent with four main purposes:(1) to acknowledge their willingness to participate, (2) to highlight the good intention of the project, (3) to request them to provide preferred usernames for their account on the project site and their social media identity (if any and if they felt comfortable to provide it) and (4) to inform them the schedule of releasing listening resources on the project site. The learners were then asked to double check their chosen username. In the second and third meetings for each group, I first encouraged the participants to share information about their L2 listening, their favourite listening materials and activities, the social media that they had known, their purposes and experiences with social media use. Then, I briefly introduced more popular social media tools and encouraged them to explore them at

home and discuss their preferred activities and discussion board(s) for leaving comments and interacting with peers in the planned listening space one week later. The last preparations for the official implementation of the project involved the web designer's registering participants as users of the project's listening space, my enlisting the participants who preferred the same social media for discussing and sharing. "Friend" requests were also sent to them to invite them to join the project's listening "community" on their preferred social media, links to which which had been embedded on the project's website. Besides, to manage this big group, contact the participants more easily and facilitate their collaboration, they were asked to register themselves in small groups of 3-5 members for their group work in these social media sub-spaces and encouraged to discuss the topics and activities that they would like to do in their self-chosen social media sub-spaces.

In the third week, the project's listening space was officially launched and since the space was new to the participants, I provided them with on-spot training and support in their classroom with the use of a projection screen. I demonstrated how to log into the space and make use of the available features on the site, i.e. how to access an available listening resource, a social media link, how to leave a comment, make a reply to a previous comment on the project's website and on available social media embedded on the website. Thereafter, the participants were encouraged to experience the listening space first-hand. About ten participants of each group volunteered to do the steps as demonstrated by me. Next, the participants had their first practice, listening to one available listening resource several times, reflecting on their listening experience, sharing their comments and discussing in their small groups. They were then encouraged to share their thoughts about these

activities and to put forward other preferred activities with the listening resource. An invitation to the project's second listening resource was made in the meeting and via email. Moreover, to ensure that participants could log in and use the listening space, especially the project's website and VoiceThread, my instructions with illustrative screenshots were sent together with the invitation.

The next 6-9 weeks was the period that the participants used the listening space for listening practice, reflection, interactions with peers, and their preferred activities. I played a role as a facilitator and participant observer. I released one listening resource every Monday on the project's website with an invitation sent via email and to their chosen social media, Facebook and VoiceThread. I also sent them emails to check whether they had a difficulty (i.e. in logging in the YouListen website and VoiceThread, playing a listening recording, leaving comments, group work, etc.). Furthermore, I kept encouraging them to give any feedback related to the project's listening resources and activities via email and/or in the project's website, to initiate activities and use the listening space at their preferences. My observations of their online activity were normally carried out at the end of each day and field notes were taken. The learners' online messages were stored in my computer and categorized by date, user, and time, whether their message was an upload of a listening resource or a reaction related to their listening to a resource, whether their message was to reply to the resource poster or to other discussants, and to which resource their message responded. Their online messages were collected as online activity transcripts and used for content analysis.

Finally, twenty participants representing different levels of online message contribution were invited to the project's semi-structured interviews. Seventeen of

them were willing to attend the interview on Skype at their convenience. Participation information and consent forms were sent via email to each of them: they all gave consent for the interview to take place. The interview lasted about one hour and focused on their L2 listening experiences in the project's listening space and their suggestions (if any) for a future engaging social networked self-study group. The details of the interviews are presented in the Section 8.2.

To sum up, the procedures for the project's implementation and data collection were conducted and can be summarized into preparations, on-spot training and support, learner participation facilitation, maintained contact and support, frequent learner online activity observation, documentation and interview arrangements. The findings from the analysis of their online activity and messages are presented in Chapters 6 and 7. The findings from the interview data are presented in Chapter 8. In the coming chapter, descriptive statistics findings about the learners' behavioural engagement with the listening space are reported.

6 Behavioural engagement with the listening space

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings about the whole listening group's behavioural engagement with the project's listening space. Their behaviroural engagement was demonstrated with such behaviours as leaving comments, uploading a collected listening resource, viewing, etc.

6.2 Findings

This findings Section first reports the finding about the variations in contribution level among individual learners. The remaining part of this Section presents the whole listening groups' publicly shared comments, listening resources and their times to make a post in the discussion boards.

6.2.1 Variations in Contribution Level among Individual Learners

It was revealed that the majority of the listening group demonstrated their involvement in the project's listening space, but with considerable variations.

A learner's contribution	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of Contributors	64	1.00	59.00	14.06	13.42
Valid N (listwise)	64				

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Variations in Contribution among Learners

The variations and the groups of contributors can be illustrated in the following graph (Figure 6-1).

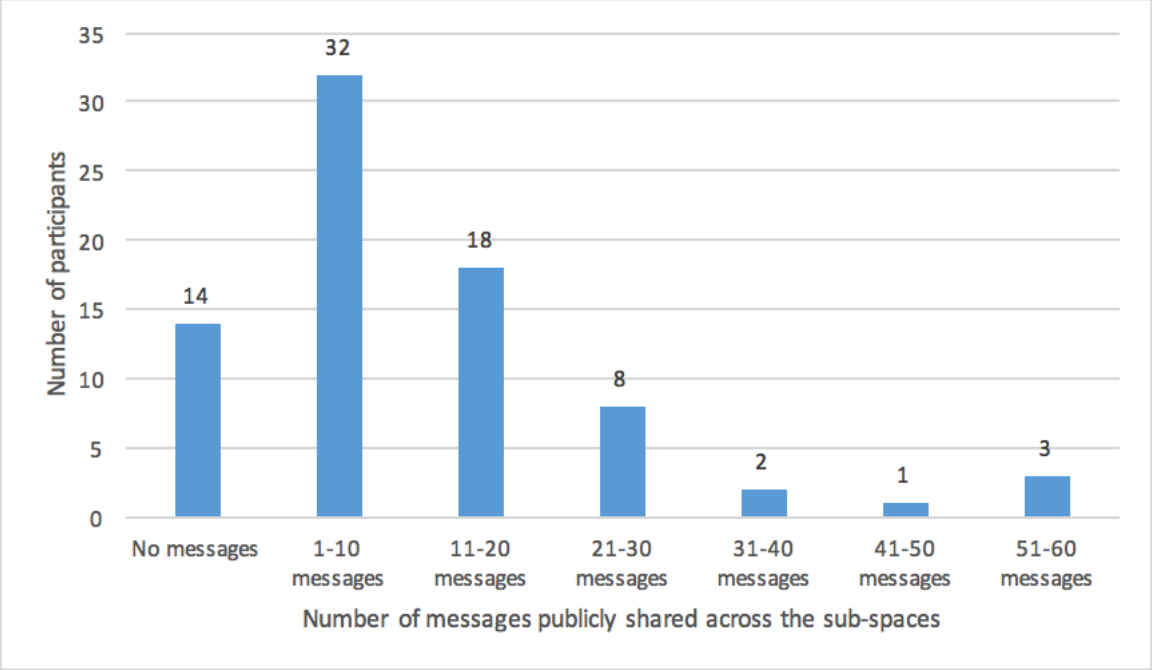


Figure 6-1 The Variations in the Contribution Level among the Learners across the Sub-spaces

On the one hand, there were visibly active users. As demonstrated in their posts, several participants were technophiles, managing to share relevant videos as their reply to a listening clip on the YouListen website and VoiceThread, and four participants did post their own real photos as profile pictures, apart from inserting emotion icons in their comments, as many others did. On the other hand, there were those who demonstrated no, or very low, activity online. 18% did not contribute at all and 13% just left 1-2 comments.

6.2.2 The Whole Listening Group's Publicly Shared Comments

The groups'publicly shared comments is considered evidence of their engagement. There are several main points relating to this behaviour. First, regarding the number of comment leavers: their participation rate was quite impressive, 64 out of the 78 participants left at least one comment in a sub-space of the YouListen space. Besides, as can be seen in Figure 6-2, many of them left their comments in two of the sub-spaces (i.e. the YouListen website itself and their group-chosen social media, that is, VoiceThread or Facebook).

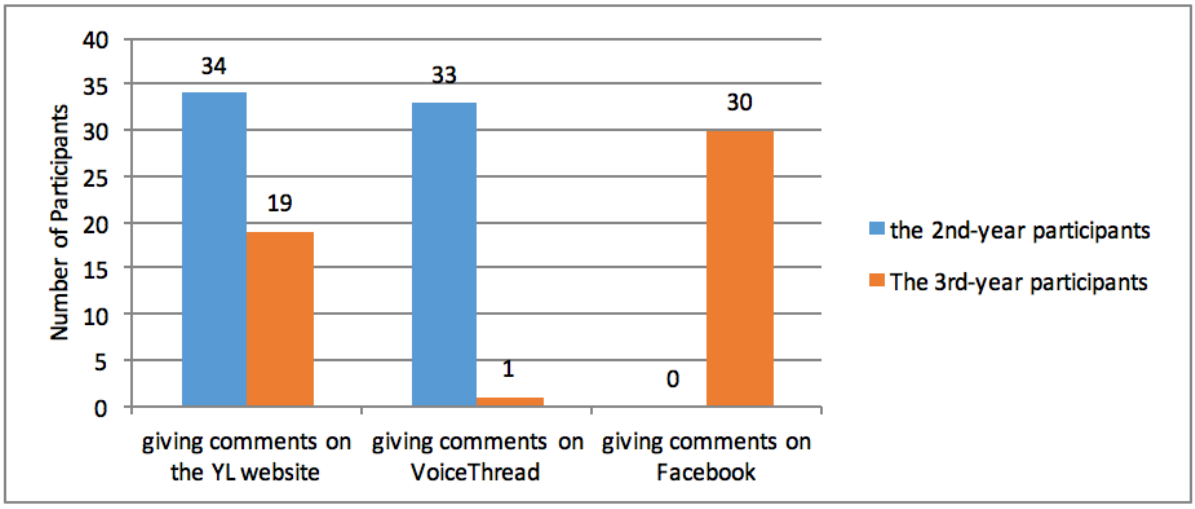


Figure 6-2 The Number of the Participants Publicly Sharing Comments

Thus, the listening group made use of both the common and private spaces offered: the former was used by about two-thirds of the participants. VoiceThread and Facebook were preferred as a private sharing space by roughly 75% of the second-year group and 88% of the third-year group respectively. The number of their comments publicly shared in the sub-spaces seemed to suggest that the second-year

learners' engagement was equally represented in both sub-spaces. The number of their comments publicly shared in the sub-spaces seemed to suggest that, for the case of the third-year learners, some learners' active engagement on Facebook appeared to be at the expense of their activity on the YouListen website.

Second, in terms of the number of comments, there were 809 comments in total, of which 299 were posted on the YouListen website, 295 on VoiceThread, and 215 on Facebook. Therefore, the group was quite engaged in listening and sharing, especially since the Facebook sub-group could not commit to participating in the project for a longer period due to the disruption of their practicum and exam pressures.

Third, despite the availability of verbal commenting options (audio and video recording), only one participant left a voice comment, which was then transcribed immediately by her. It seems that the participants were still hesitant and unconfident to share voice comments or speak English to their peers.

Furthermore, the whole group's engagement behaviour of leaving comments was dynamic, experiencing considerable fluctuations in the number of comment leavers. The below chart (Figure 6-3) shows a considerable weekly change in the number of the second-year and third-year comment leavers over and after the period of the project.)

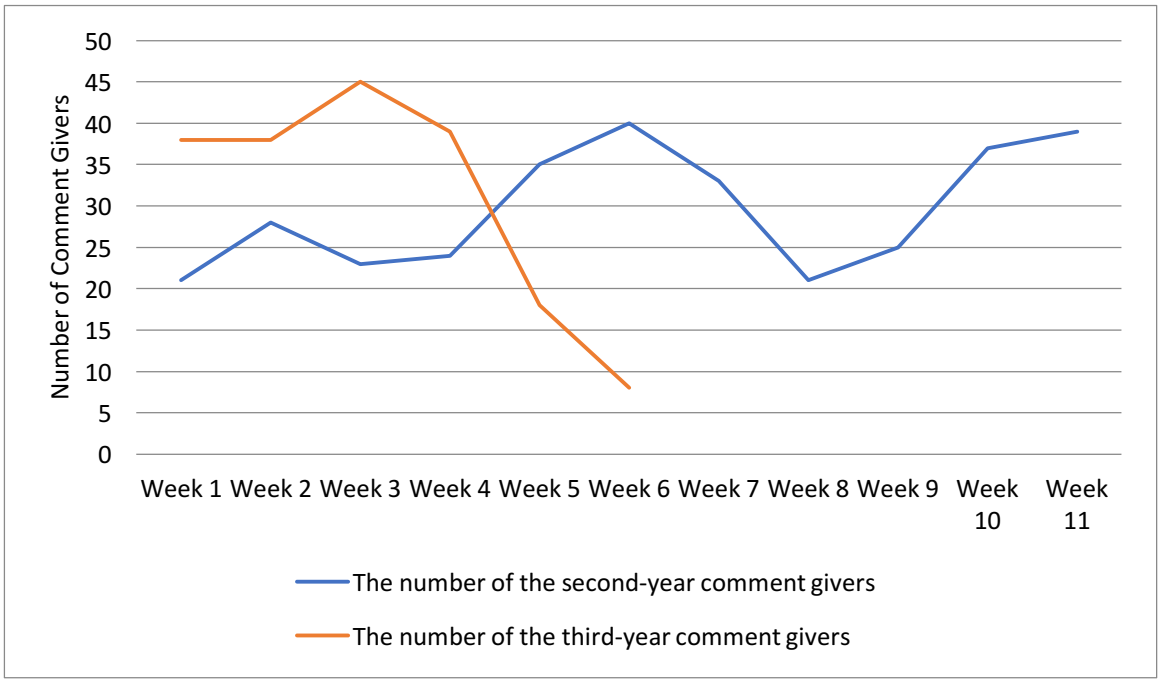


Figure 6-3 The Number of Learners Leaving Comments by Week

It is apparent that there was a downward trend among the third-year participants, as opposed to a slight upward trend among the younger participants. The number of the third-year participants leaving comments plummeted to 8 in week 6, when the participants were busy with their practicum as pre-service teachers. It should be noted that the participants were informed that the project's period was nine weeks and week 11 was two weeks *after* the project period. Thus, they were still active after the project finished. The second-year students' increased engagement patterns in weeks 5-7 and after the project was over (weeks 10 and 11) their interest seemed to be associated with the VoiceThread sub-space. Examining the content of their discussions in weeks 10 and11, it seems that the participants may have felt more comfortable to leave comments, sharing feedback and replying to each other. Meanwhile, a plunge of the number of comment givers in week 8 might be because the participants gave priority to their mid-semester tests.

6.2.3 The Whole Listening Group's Recommending Listening Resources

A description of the behaviour of uploading listening resources to peers was mentioned earlier in the Section 5.2. The results showed that learners exercised their autonomy and listened to English beyond the classroom in the sense of proactively sharing their collected listening resources individually or in collaboration with their peers.

The number of resources uploaded varied by the sub-group and time. As clearly illustrated in the pie chart (Figure 6-4), the third-year or Facebook sub-group uploaded twice as many resources as the second-year or VoiceThread sub-group (30 vs. 16 resources). The explanation could be that the two sub-groups orchestrated or arranged their activity of uploading listening resources differently. In the VoiceThread sub-group, their listening resource uploads were by small groups rather than individuals and mainly on a weekly basis or one resource upload a week.

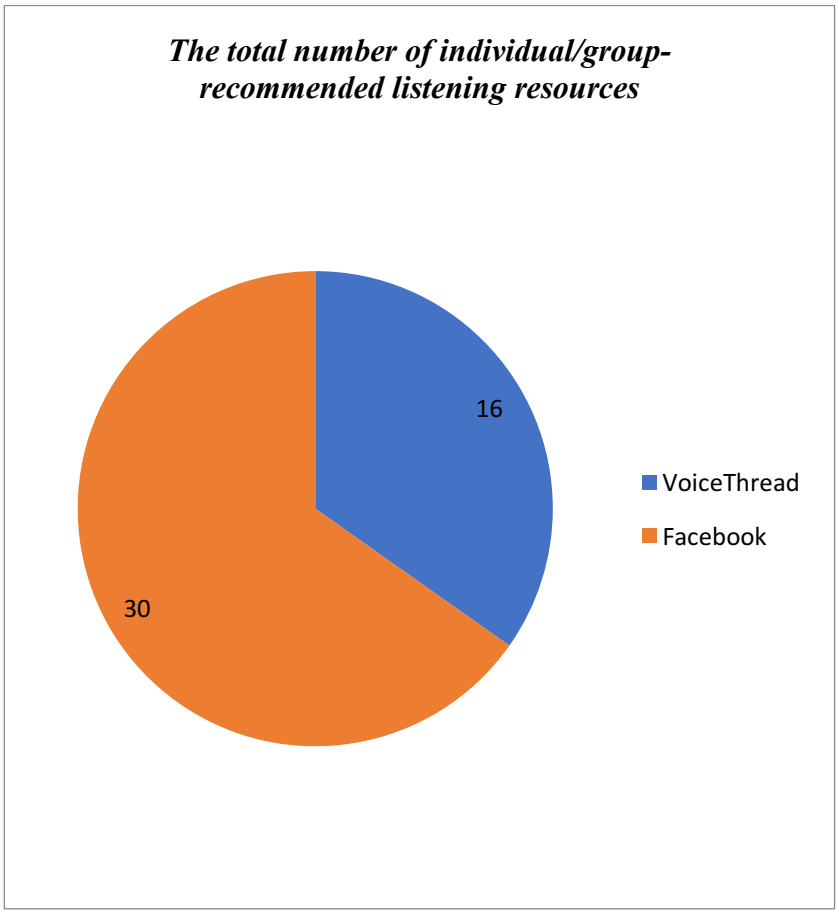


Figure 6-4 The Number of Listening Resources

6.2.4 The Whole Listening Group's Time to Share a Post

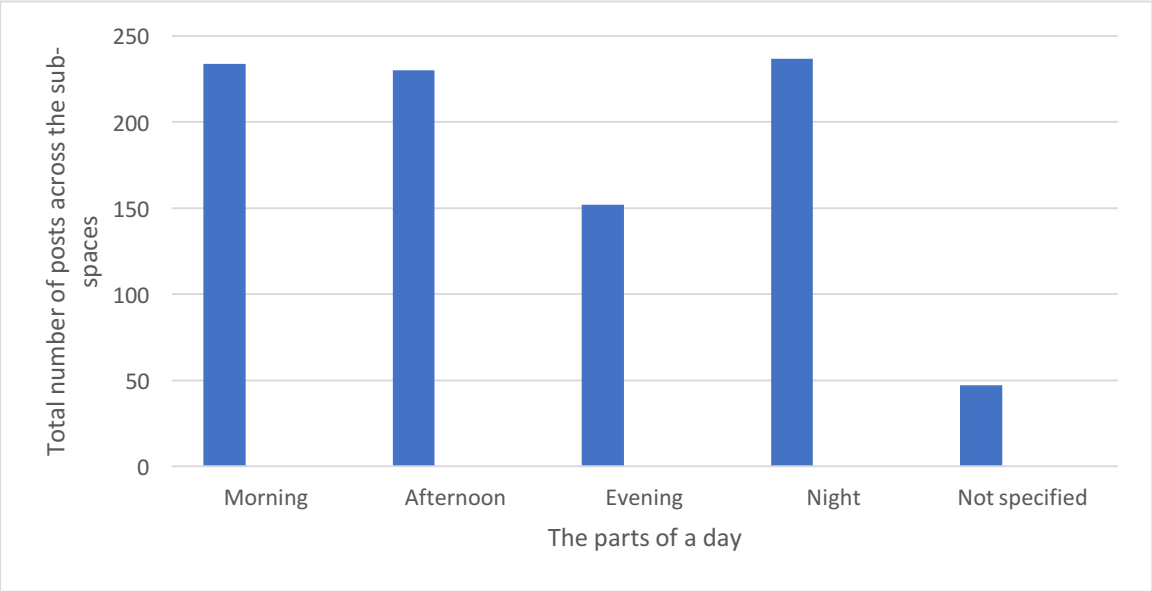


Figure 6-5 The Group's Time to Share a Post

It can be seen from the above bar graph that their comments were shared at any time over the long course of a day, even very late at night and very early in the morning.

6.3 Conclusion

In summary, the findings for the whole group's behavioural engagement have been obtained with descriptive statistics regarding their visible contribution to the project listening space. The data on their contribution of posts (i.e. comments, resource uploads, etc) and times to make contributions suggest that most of them appeared to show significant engagement in terms of time and effort investment. However, there were variations in engagement among individual learners, between the second-year and third-year sub-groups, and by time. Several contributing factors

were proposed, including familiarity, interest and other commitments. Engagement can also be characterised in terms of its other dimensions, namely cognitive, emotional and social ones. These are presented in the next chapter.

.

7 Cognitive, Emotional and Social Engagement in the listening space

7.1 Introduction

The manifestations of cognitive, emotional and social engagement were considered in two selected sub-groups of learners: namely high activity and low activity participants. The chapter first presents a description of the procedures of conducting content analysis. Then a detailed analysis of a high activity group's engagement in cognitive, emotional and social dimensions across the sub-spaces is presented. The last part of the chapter compares this high activity group with the low activity group regarding their engagement on the YouListen website. The online activity transcripts of two groups from the sub-spaces, that is, the YouListen website, Facebook and/or VoiceThread, were collected and analysed. The analytic technique involved content analysis using NVivo 11 and SPSS 24 software.

7.2 The Procedures of Conducting Content Analysis

The employment of content analysis as a general approach for the analysis of learners' online activity is presented in sub-Section 3.7.2.1. Hereby is presentation of the main procedures for conducting content analysis in the current intervention.

(1) Defining a Context to Make Sense of a Text

As emphasized by Krippendorff, "content analysts need to make their chosen contexts explicit, so that the results of their analyses will be clear to their scientific

peers and to the beneficiaries of the research results" (2013, p.40). Research into the engagement of learners and the literature on student engagement, on language listening skill and on the use of social media for learning all play a role in contextualizing my reading of texts (the students' online publicly shared messages). Furthermore, my understanding of the participants, their context of teaching and learning English, and their listening language skill all considered along with relevant cultural traits serve as a basis for reading cues their online messages.

(2) Sampling

As reported in Section 6.2.1, learners demonstrated different levels of contribution to their listening "community". This led to inquiry into how learners actually engaged behind their contribution level. In other words, what their contribution level could reveal about their engagement. In pursuit of this inquiry, separate consideration of the learners who contributed the most and their counterparts who contributed the least was considered to provide the best insights. Based on the learners' contribution or the number of messages/posts that they left in the discussion boards and regardless of whether they were the second-year or third-year students, twelve learners whose number of messages was at the 20% top and fifteen learners whose number of messages was at the 20% bottom of the list of numbers of messages were chosen. The former was called the 'high activity group' and the latter the 'low activity group'. Examining these two groups was expected to attain part of the goal for better understanding of learner engagement in thelistening space, which might then help to inform design improvements.

When it comes to select a sample size of text for content analysis, all the publicly shared online messages by the high activity and low activity groups were

selected. The overview of the participation level of these two groups is shown in Table 5

Group	No. of learners	No. of messages in total				Range of messages	Average No. of messages per learner
		No. of messages on the YouListen	No. of messages on VoiceThread	No. of messages on Facebook	Total		
High Activity	12	113 (25%)	88 (20%)	242 (55%)	443	23-59	37
Low Activity	15	21 (68%)	6 (19%)	4 (13%)	31	1-4	2

Table 5 An Overview of the Two Groups' Participation Level

(3) Defining Recording/Coding Units

Recording/coding units for content analysis are defined as "units that are distinguished for separate description, transcription, recording, or coding" (Krippendorff, 2013, p.100). From my observation and immersion in the learners' online activity transcripts, there were often cases where a learner managed to convey and embed more than one meaning, purpose or message in her posted comment. For example, the following message could be reduced to four meaning units: expressing her positive valuing of a post, showing politeness, planning for listening for peers, and expressing her happy feeling.

> *"first of all, i think this audio is more easier to listen to…the voice is slow and clear….it also covers a practical and interesting topic….=)))))))))) thanks for your post…. and i just have some questions: 1, where does the picture take place?*
> *2, why did the speaker take this photograph?*
> *3, what are the activities that people in London's underground often do? Compare with the people in Shanghai?*
> *try to answer my question, share your own thought with me and enjoy it =)))))))))))))))" (Thu)*

This observation is consistent with previous studies (Henri, 1992; Pawan et al., 2003). In this case, I made the same decision as these researchers: namely, to employ units of meaning or speech segments as the units of analysis. A speech segment is "the smallest unit of delivery linked to a single theme, directed at the same addressee (all, individual, subgroup), identified by a single type (illocutionary act), having a single function (focus)" (Henri and Rigault, 1996, p. 62). Although units of meanings may be at risk for inviting subjectivity and inconsistency in identifying the unit, they were the most frequently used in their sample of 19 studies under review (Rourke et al., 2000). In support of this unit of analysis, Muchielli (1984, cited in Henri, 1992, p.134) states: "it is absolutely useless to wonder if it is the word, the proposition, the sentence or the paragraph which is the proper unit of meaning, for the unit of meaning is lodged in meaning." Both Muchielli (1984) and Henri (1992) emphasise that the choice of a unit of analysis is defined by the aims of the analysis. This perspective is supported by Bryman's (2016) claim that "decisions about what should be counted in the course of content analysis are bound to be profoundly affected by the nature of the research questions under consideration" (p.289). In the current research, the aim of content analysis is to explore the student engagement phenomenon whilst acknowledging it is a multidimensional construct. The nuances

of this phenomenon might not be counted if other units of analysis like messages were used.

(4) Coding

Coding is considered "a crucial stage in the process of doing a content analysis" (Bryman, 2016, p.293). By definition,

> *"A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2016, p.4).*

The following similarities between a code for a chunk of qualitative data and a title for a film/book/etc could offer a better sense of what a code means and how to make a code,

> *"Just as a title represents and captures a book, film, or poem's primary content and essence, a code represents and captures a datum's primary content and essence" (Saldana, 2016, p.4).*

Before coding the data set, the first activity that was conducted (Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) involves immersion in the whole data corpus to become familiar with it and to obtain an overall understanding of the listening group's interaction contexts and its members' engagement experiences. Research notes about these were taken for the subsequent reading. Thereafter, similar activities were carried out for the data set or sampled online activity transcripts, but with more subsequent readings. The sampled transcripts were read after the clips had been listened to in their communication contexts and in relation to the research inquiry. Krippendorff (2013) indicates two reasons for starting with research questions, namely efficiency and empirical grounding. The suggestion by Howell-Richardson

and Mellar (1996) of self-asking: “What is the purpose of a particular utterance?” was followed when reading and coding the learners’ transcripts of discussion and sharing. Initial codes and categories were created, such as: ‘sharing interpretations of a listening resource’, ‘sharing personal reflections on its content’, ‘giving remarks to other discussants’, ‘sharing learning tips’, ‘doing peer-recommended activities’, etc. Subsequently, there was deployment of knowledge relating to the student engagement construct and L2 listening comprehension (Sections 2.1 and 2.2) and pre-existing codes and categories in the literature that is concerned with analysing online asynchronous discussion transcripts. Specifically, this research employed and adapted the components of engagement and their indicators as reported by Finn and Zimmer (2012), Fredricks et al. (2004), Appleton et al. (2008) and Guthrie et al. (2004). It also drew upon the taxonomy of listening comprehension strategies by Vandergriff (1997), the interactive and cohesive categories and their indicators by Rourke et al. (2001), the metacognitive categories by Henri (1992) and Gunawardena (1997), connecting ideas synthesis by Garrison et al. (2001) and working respectfully (that is, following the group’s norm or etiquette like showing politeness, respect) by Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2012) , This deductive approach was of great help in grouping the codes and categories into higher-order, more abstract forms. Thereafter, a coding scheme, or manual (Bryman, 2016), was designed. In this research, the scheme includes the following gthree parts: the possible categories of engagement (which are subsumed in the cognitive, emotional and social dimensions), the indicators (or sub-categories) subsumed under each category and a sub-category definition. The guidance provides definitions or explanations regarding the indicators and examples (Appendix K). The definitions and examples were cited, adapted from

the literature (i.e. from Rourke et al, 2001; Vandergriff, 1997) or from the learners' online activity transcripts.

Regarding validity, "categories will need to be exhaustive to address content validity" (Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher provided all the possible categories and sub-categories to another coder.

For the reliability and consistency of the coding scheme, the following procedures were adopted. First, during the whole process of coding and creating categories, the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis was applied (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), along with the help of Nvivo 11 software. This software enabled me to move back and forth among a code/node, chunks/incidents of data collated within the code and their origin sources/transcripts. This way, I could always access the context of the coded chunks/incidents and understand them well. With this feature, to code a segment of data or an incident, I clicked on its potential code(s) that I had already created and read all other segments or incidents coded this way, made comparisons, and decided whether it could fit or would need to be coded another way. I could also review and check generated codes against each other for the possibility of combining them into a more general or abstract code or removing one of them. Moreover, I was aware and attempted to avoid the overlap among the categories and sub-categories while following the constant comparative method. The second procedure conducted was to pilot the coding scheme for three learners' online activity transcripts. This procedure is highly recommended for double-checking small samples of text and determining whether there is an emergent problem or a difficulty in applying a coding scheme and thereby advising the content analyst to make amendments if necessary (Weber, 1990; Bryman, 2016). There were several

amendments in the coding scheme of this research from the pilot work. For example, the category “information exchange” was found too general. As a result, the category did not allow for much discrimination among many engagement behaviours. Therefore, this category was removed, and its sub-categories were moved to other categories withbetter fitted. Another example is the case of “thank you for your video” messages. They were previously coded in the ‘*positive valuing of a post’* category, but were found to mainly function as an act of courtesy at the beginning of the learners’ messages, thereby being moved to the ‘*working respectfully’* category.

After the iterative processes of coding, reviewing codes and categories and making amendments, a final coding scheme was formulated and employed to analyse all the samples of text. The following table is a part of the final coding scheme, whose full version is in the Appendix K.

Category	Indicator/Sub-category	Definition	Example
Use of cognitive strategies The mental processes used to manipulate the target language to accomplish a task	Inferencing	Using information within the text or conversational context to guess the meanings of unfamiliar language items or unknown words, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information	I use other words in the sentence. I try to think of it in context and guess. I guess, using tone of voice as a clue.
	Elaboration	Using prior knowledge from outside a listening clip and relating it to knowledge gained from the clip to predict outcomes or fill in missing information	I heard some famous names in sports, so I think I know what sport they were talking about
	Resourcing • visual aids accompanied with a clip • Making use of available transcripts or subtitles	Using available reference sources of information about the target languages	I look in the of picture. I used the transcript for the words that I could not catch.
	Word-by-word processing	Processing a listening text with reliance on sound and word recognition. A serious consequence can be that the information gained is just disjoined.	in this audio, I hear speaker talk that" well this is paragraph I trust on sun house matter, we trust London we call…in America we call some way it's the reason I trust on paragraph, because I cut no sign how many people in china… small beautiful to by sit smart phone

Figure 7-1 A segment of the final coding scheme

(5) Inter-rater Reliability

Another coder was requested to code half of the speech segments (686 segments). Before she started coding, I introduced the project and its research inquiry and delivered two training sessions. In addition, to assist understanding the speech segments in their communication contexts, the segments were accompanied with their listening clips and remained in the full online activity transcripts from which the speech segments were extracted. Once she finished coding, her coded speech segments were compared with mine. The percentage of agreement was 86%. Cohen's kappa was not calculated in this research since chance agreement would be negligible with a coding scheme that consists of many indicators/sub-category (Rourke et al., 2001).

(6) Calculating and Presenting Statistics

With the help of NVivo 11 software, the frequency of each code, sub-category and category was determined once the data had been coded. This showed how frequently a behaviour of engagement was demonstrated for the high activity group and the low activity counterpart. The percentages and mean numbers of instances or occurrences of the engagement behaviours were calculated for each of the groups. These statistics were presented in cross tabulations and charts.

(7) Summarizing and Making Speculative Inferences

Once the content analysis results had been obtained, the follow-up work involved summarizing the main features of the student engagement phenomenon demonstrated by the two groups and then positing possible explanations for the identified phenomenon. To do this, I looked within and across the categories, went

back and forth within the collated data by category and attempted to make sense of them and identify the patterns and connections between the categories. Possible explanations were sometimes inherent in the learners' online messages. Additionally, considerations into the listening space features, the learners', and their cultural traits were a great help in explaining the phenomena. Last, the summary and inferences were illustrated with quotes from the learners' messages, charts and statistic results.

To sum up, content analysis was conducted following the abovementioned procedures. The next Section reports the findings how the high activity group engaged, cognitively, emotionally and socially.

7.3 The High Activity Groups' Engagement across the Sub-spaces

The group's behaviours of engagement are presented in a descending order as shown in Figure 7-2. The results showed that the high activity group which consisted of both the high activity second-year and third-year students (see sampling in the Section 7.2) demonstrated their active engagement in various aspects and across all the sub-spaces.

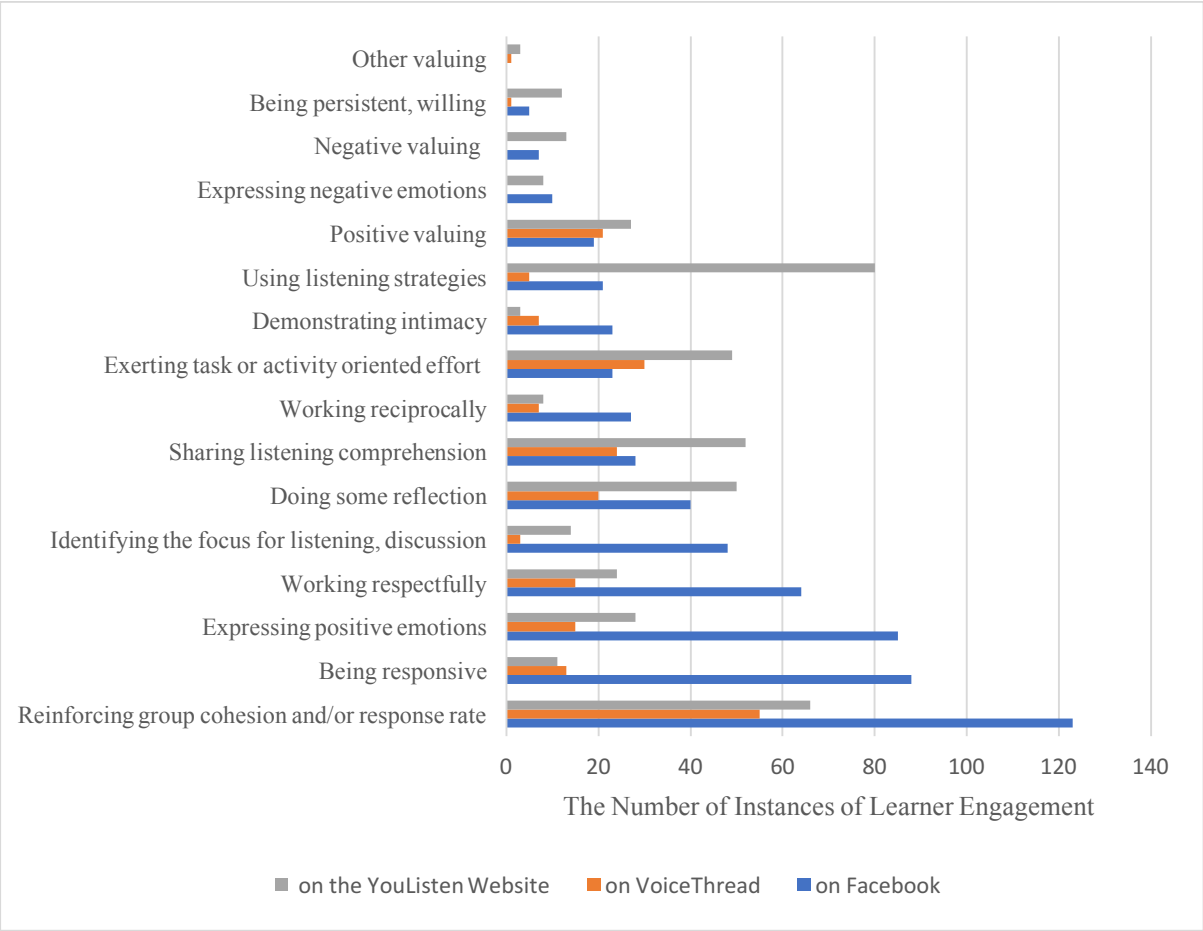


Figure 7-2 The High Activity Group's Engagement across the Sub-spaces

In addition, Facebook witnessed the most frequent demonstration of engagement, with 48% of their grand total engagement instances. Facebook was followed by the YouListen website, 35%, and ranking bottom was VoiceThread, holding 17%. Thus, the Facebook sub-group or the third-year learners may have been busy with listening and interacting with peers. There is also a possibility that the learners' active participation in one sub-space might have compensated for their less active participation in the remaining sub-spaces. The prominence of a dimension of engagement varied among the sub-spaces. To be specific, social engagement was the most frequently expressed dimension on Facebook and VoiceThread. On Facebook, more than half of the group's total engagement instances found in this sub-space

were dedicated to this dimension (nearly 58%). On VoiceThread, the proportions were about 53% for social engagement. Unlike these two sub-spaces, the YouListen website attracted the greatest proportion for the cognitive dimension, with nearly 46%.

7.3.1 The High Activity Group's Cognitive Engagement

As can be seen in Figure 7-3, the group demonstrated cognitive engagement most frequently on the YouListen website in four out of five cognitive engagement categories (except for the identifying the focus for listening, discussion). Let us examine their behaviours of cognitive engagement in detail.

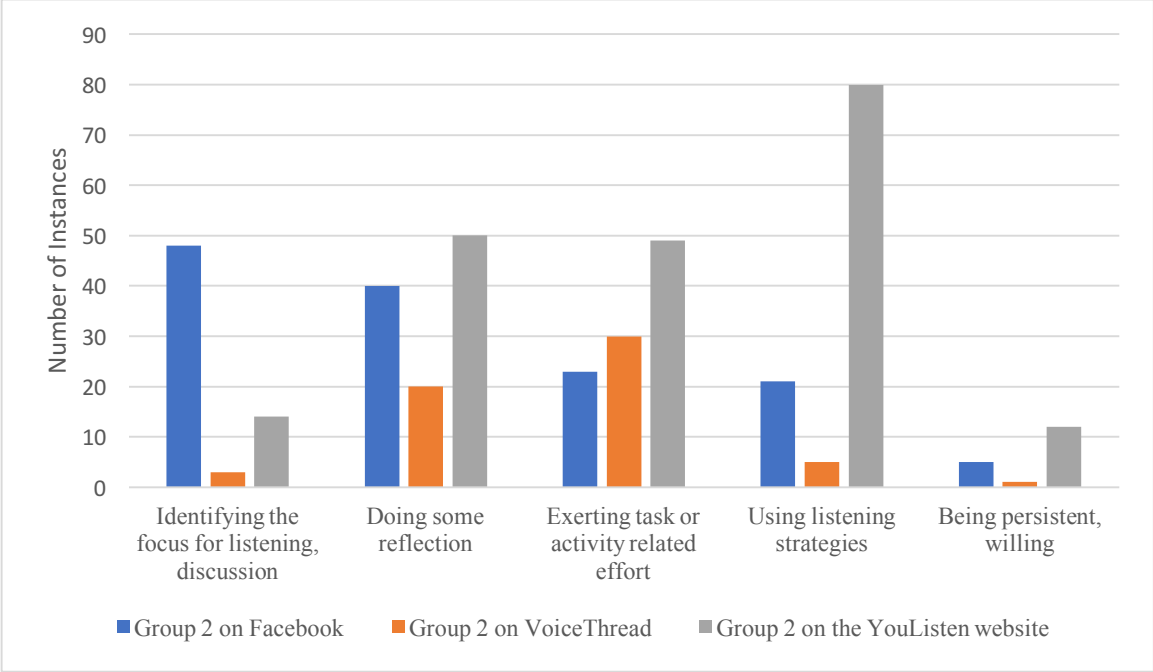


Figure 7-3 The High Activity Group's Cognitive Engagement

(1) Identifying the focus for listening and discussion

Identifying the focus for listening and discussion was the most frequently demonstrated behaviours on Facebook, about 35% of the cognitive behaviours in this

sub-space. About two thirds of the instances of this behaviour found on Facebook were horizontal questioning or inviting peers to join open dialogues, doing further sharing. For instance,

> *improving listening skill is along term process. it takes time, hence people often quit before they get result. what about u????? Do u have the same problem? Don't practice listen in ur free time. Do it when u really get ready* 🙂 *=)))))))))))))) (May)*

> *Do you agree with this law [the chewing gum ban] or have any comment about it? let's share your thought below. thanks! (Na)*

On VoiceThread, there was little evidence of this behaviour (3 instances of invitations to further sharing), which may have been because the VoiceThread sub-group did this behaviour weekly in their own small groups, rather than individually. Surprisingly, there was evidence (14 instances) that the group attempted to identify the focus for peers to listen or discuss related to the listening clips which were introduced by the project and normally accompanied with open-ended invitations and suggestions already. The focus put forward by them was mainly listening comprehension questions about these listening clips.

> *i just have some questions: 1, where does the picture take place?*
> *2, why did the speaker take this photograph?*
> *3, what are the activities that people in London's underground often do? Compare with the people in Shanghai?*
> *try to answer my questions, share your own thought with me and enjoy it =))))))))))))))))* (Thu)

More surprisingly, such focus gained rapturous acclaim from both groups. Indeed, there were many instances of doing peer-recommended activities/ focus in total. Thus, this seems to indicate that they exercised their autonomy in using the listening

space as they wished. On the other hand, they appeared to have a greater priority for task or test-oriented listening practice and needs for specific, clear-cut answers. Also, they might have believed that by doing so, would their listening to the clips be more purposeful and would it be easier to leave comments whilst the project's open suggestions might be rather general, so they might have had difficulty in coming up with what and how to comment. The next behaviour of cognitive engagement under discussion is doing some reflection related to listening experiences.

(2) Doing some reflection

Doing some reflection after listening were the second most frequently demonstrated behaviours of cognitive engagement across the sub-spaces, accounting for 29% of the cognitive behaviours on Facebook, 34% on VoiceThread and 24% on the YouListen website. With a closer look at this behaviour, it is noticeable that their doing reflection on the content or topic of a listening clip was the busiest. For example, on the YouListen, there were 29 instances of this reflection, occupying a significantly greater proportion than relating with their own or witnessed experiences and reflecting the changes in their knowledge or way of thinking (58% vs. 26% and 16% respectively). In addition, half of the instances showed that the learners shared their thoughts or reactions to a clip with justifications. For example, Na was reflective after listening to the post, *The Assignment*, in which two students argued over the location to work together on their group assignment of a course.

> *In my opinion, working in group is very good, it help us developing many skills, we can give our opinion fairly about problem, can agree or disagree with it, so when we do something, working in group may be the best choice.* (Na)

Another example is Ha's following view about the sight that some Chinese commuters were obsessed with using their smartphones on the underground after listening to the post, *Shanghai metro*.

> *Many people not agree with this phenomynon [phenomenon]. I, however, think that it is depended on the way we use the smart phone on public means.*
> *At first, it is very silent so that not disturbing anyone. It can spend more space for individuals in their work. Secondly, It also a time for people reduce their stress all along day. It exactly a time for listening music, updating information or even learning by using Internet on smartphone. Sometime they must do that bacause they can not interupt their work and must contact to another one.* (Ha)

About the other manifestations of doing reflection, they had the most instances identified on the YouListen website, with the total of 21 instances whilst there were 16 instances on Facebook and 7 on VoiceThread. When listening to certain posts on the YouListen website, they reflected on their own or witnessed experiences such as encountering group work related issues (the post, *The Assignment)*, having heard about the information related to *The Dress of Colours* clip, experiencing or witnessing sad travel stories due to their use of the phone on the bus their own learners (the post Shanghai Metro), drawing funny pictures during the childhood (the post A Child's Drawing), experiencing being stuck with chewing gum (the post Chewing Gum Ban in Singapore), etc. Their reflection can be well illustrated in several messages as follows.

> *i've had a presentation which i had prepared in group of 3. we didn't share our ideas or practise together before the real presentation…so, of course our work is not good because it had no time for us to check ourselves or sharing new ideas to make it better. although the score the teacher gives us is not too bad, i feel very upset = ((((((((((because i can't find any connection among us.* (Thu)

> *I still remember a boy with the smart phone when I returned home from my unniversity. Along the trip, he always stared at his screen in the phone to play some games. He concentrated seriously such a long time and he did not know that the coach passed too far his province. After the game finished (seemly he was happy being winner, I think so), he asked the driver: "where are we now? How long?". The driver's answer made he shocked and paniked. " Why didn't you remind me?" he shouted. Finally, he had to get off and hitchhiked other coach to go back.*  *Poor him! I'm sure that it would be unforgettable lesson for him now and then.* (May)

> *it makes me remenber when i found book s in library last week and a chewing gum stuck on my sandal. i felt so angry, disappointed- why in the public place like this, people can throw chewing gun* (Ngan)

Apart from recalling the past experiences, some learners also went a further step in their awareness and expressed their changes in knowledge, ways of thinking and listening, etc. For example, having a sense of the difficulty in arranging pair work implied in the post *The Assignment* and based on her own past experiences, she came to her realization about the possible challenge and the necessity of certain norms for peer collaboration as follows,

> *after listening this recording i can figure out that it is not easy to collaborate with the other. if we want to come to the decision or work effectively we have to listen your partner ideas, understand more deeply about what they are going to do and advantages and disadvantages of these ideas.* (Thu)

To take another example, Ha acknowledged the clips, *A Dress of Colours* and *Interpreting What Speakers are Saying* for her better understanding why an object can be viewed differently by different people and the importance of noticing how people say in a listening test or real life listening. She posted the following messages,

> *And I wonder myself why many people don't see the same color to me :/. Or I'm blind- color. But after I'd read a paper then listen this audio, I understand why …*

> *I realized that the way to pronuciation not only depends on the types of the sentence (high-voices in the end of the question) but it also differ from the feeling of speakers We can have an oppotunity to find out how the feelings of speakers are? What for? --> to refer to listening in your exams and reality to more and more improve your skill both listening and understanding.* (Ha)

The last example to take is Ngan's reflection after listening to a collected resource, *how quickly can you learn English?* She drew a lesson for herself and her peers, "We should read books, newspapers, and take part in more outside activity that's much better."

It can be said that high activity group's behaviour of doing such reflection seems to indicate that they had their deep engagement in listening to the available clips. Indeed, they were reflective, may have listened much and attempted to express their thoughts in English albeit not easy due to their limited language proficiency, importantly, employed the clips in a more personal way and with metacognitive awareness and to contribute their reflections to the listening 'community'. In addition, their evidence of being reflective indicates that they supported the project's suggestions to leave their thoughts or reactions. Also, the topic or content of these resources, to some extent, were of their interest, recalled their past experiences or knowledge and triggered their thoughts. Lastly, it is noteworthy and puzzling that there were few responses from peers to the reflective messages.

(3) Exerting Task or Activity Related Effort and Being Persistent, Willing

Exerting effort in doing listening tasks or activities was the most frequently demonstrated cognitive engagement behaviour on VoiceThread whilst it ranked the third on Facebook and the YouListen website. Their effort was mainly manifested in doing peer-recommended activities. Noticeably, there was little of the group's

persistence in understanding or completing listening tasks on Facebook and VoiceThread. This is more likely the case that the peer-recommended listening resources or tasks were not too challenging for them, so they did not need to exert much effort. Some learners demonstrated their willingness and persistence to understand a clip by listening repeatedly or searching the Internet. The instances can be identified in Na and Ha's messages, for example. Na had her good deed that was not to help herself but her peers as well to better understand the clip, "One real conversation about football". Her message was,

> *well, after hearing on and on, (i heard so many times and searched some names on web* 🙂 *), I know more about Jame Vardy. the man said that as usual, football players begin very young but Jame Vardy did quite age, he played in Leicester and was discovered. he was bought by 1 million pounds. he is also one of four people score in seven successful games. that's my addition:)* (Na)

> *Last [next] week I'll come back this audio and listen it again with tapescript to get the words that I've not seen before* (Ha)

It is also noticeable that on Facebook, there was evidence albeit rather little of their responding to the available discussion prompts or suggested activities which were posted by the project on the YouListen website. Thus, the group seemed to either attempt to initiate further discussion on a project-recommended clip in another sub-space like Facebook or to express their comfort or preference for Facebook as a sub-space to do such sharing. Still, there was only one instance of effort in synthesizing, evaluating group discussion, which might cause a possibility that separate ideas contributed by different participants were not brought together and seemed to go nowhere. This behaviour was found in Ha's message as follows,

Hey guys, Thanks for answer
I'm so sorry that I want to wait a little time for other member who hadn't signed up yet . So today , it seem to be late ... Here is my answer when I check all of the thing that I listen before turn on the transcript to take the exactly answer : And I'll wait for next week to check the total of what I hear in Turn on script . You can check my answer because you might disagree with me.
** Q1: Noone have a correct answer in question 1 :)) , although it may quite easy :)) why did you hear more careful ? :))*
** Q 4 :- Dieu is the one who have a earliest answer but she lost 1 question*
– I see Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao and Tran Thi Kim Lien can answer the last question but it not exactly answer
– Do Thi Huong & Bui Hoang Yen have nearly correct but not enough (Ha)

To put the message in its context, it was shared by Ha in the discussion board two weeks after she initiated a discussion on the project's second clip about The House of Commons with four listening comprehension questions. It can be realized that since it was a discussion about the answers to the listening comprehension questions by her, she wrapped the discussion by synthesizing and evaluating her peers' answers with interest in right or wrong, full or partial answers and invited reconsideration from peers. Importantly, there were two noteworthy details. First, she did not want to synthesize, evaluate the discussion until there were more peers to join the discussion and the time she did this was believed too late (two weeks after her discussion initiation). Second, it is observed that the last person joined the discussion about nine weeks after her discussion initiation and other members tended to respond to the questions raised by Ha only. This might suggest possible reasons related to both the learners and the design for little evidence of the behaviour of synthesizing and evaluating group discussion. To be specific, the learners did not all join the discussion in a relatively the same period and importantly, even those who were

online at the same time did not tend to build on each other's ideas. Regarding the design, its openness and absolute learner autonomy support means not setting a certain span of time for a post discussion, requiring the learners or assigning certain learners to play a wrapper role.

(4) Using Listening Strategies

The category of cognitive engagement was their most frequently demonstrated behaviour (80 instances) on the YouListen website, far overtaking its demonstration frequency on Facebook and VoiceThread which ranked the fourth of the cognitive behaviours with 21 and 5 instances respectively. Their use of listening strategies together with the evidence of their persistence in understanding the available listening clips (12 instances) might suggest that the group appeared to engage much in understanding the clips, especially the ones that they perceived challenging. The listening strategies deployed by them are of cognitive, metacognitive and socio-metacognitive categories. Interestingly, the first two were the most frequently demonstrated on the YouListen website. In the case of the other sub-spaces, little was mentioned about their use of cognitive listening strategies on Facebook (2 instances) and on VoiceThread (1 instance) whereas their use of socio-cognitive listening strategies was more pronounced (9 and 10 instances respectively). Another noticeable point is that it was not explicitly expressed that the group employed the planning strategy for their own individual listening whilst planning for peers or designing activities for peers was frequently demonstrated by them.

It should be noted that their main cognitive strategy was inferencing based on the speaker's tone of voice, especially on the sounds and words that they could catch. For example,

The first context is (2) – a 16-year-old girl confessing to his father
–> because her voice is quite small, axious and in a voice choked with emotion
– The second context is (1)- A couple who have been trying to have a baby for three years
–> because her voice is so happy and it seems that she is looking forward to telling to her husband (Ngan)

Noticeably, there was evidence that the learners made use of visual aids accompanied with the available listening clips. The visual aids were used as a resource of identifying the conversational context such as who or what is in the picture, where they are, what they are doing, what is happening, what the answer [to a listening question] might be. For instance,

I think that this picture really had a lot of people who came from 4 nations and it seems that the debate took place enthusiastically. Moreover people paid attention to conversation in the picture. (Lan)

Meanwhile, their use of another affordance, the transcripts, was less known since only one participant, Ha, shared this. It was revealed from her use of the transcripts that she had made great effort in understanding a clip before using it and she had her purpose of using transcripts for checking her answers and seemingly for obtaining full comprehension of a clip as well. This is evident in her messages,

Here is my answer when I check all of the thing that I listen before turn on the transcript to take the exactly answer : And I'll wait for next week to check the total of what I hear in Turn on script 🙂 (Ha)

I can get the tape just for 70 percent, but I try to not use the tapescript. (Ha)

Still, it is evident in their messages that they had their tendency of over-reliance on sound and word-based processing of the spoken input and no or limited combination of knowledge gained from a clip, knowledge about the conversational context and background knowledge. This resulted in such problems as catching just

separate pieces of information, experiencing a breakdown of their comprehension, etc. A case in point is Na's following message in reaction to the project's post, *What is it?*

> *It'so difficult to make a guess, firstly I thought it's a kind of loudspeaker because I saw at the picture and heard that he bought it 6 months ago and it's black. But, when listen some times after, I think it's a kind of sausage, black sausage. he said that it's probably be eaten, it has clues and below 65 pounds, it's quite cheap. so that I guess it's sausage.* (Na)

It is noticeable that she depended much on the words that she could catch from the dialogue whilst she did not make use of the speakers' tone of voice and could not figure out their intention that they were just telling a joke, "It might be a sausage." Neither did she deploy the *elaboration* listening strategy like her prior knowledge, common sense, even when she did have a look at the picture and did hear that it was bought 6 months ago and has black colour. Consequently, she ended up making an unreasonable guess of the object. Likewise, Ha may not have had any doubts whether it could make sense when stating and believing, "the two purposes of this instructment [instrument]: a weapon or a peeler as the two man [men] described…" in another post, *Let us make a guess*. The object was actually a citrus zester. To take one more case as an example, it was problematic when Tu tended to rely much on sounds and words when she could not recognize the right ones and this kitchen utensil was completely new to her, as in the following message:

> *It can be spoon or a object which use to cut paper? I think so. It so big and a range hole. it also can pick up rice or soup… The speakers also tell" what would be you shouldn't attack?" I think that it is five cash…..It is a strange object. I have never seen it before.* (Tu)

These findings about the learners' use of cognitive listening strategies seem to suggest two important things. First, there could be certain factors from both the

listening materials and learners that caused a listening clip challenging to the learners. To be specific, the learners seemed to find it hard to listen to dialogues, especially when the speakers talk about unfamiliar topics, tell jokes or do not explicitly express what they meant. Besides, the learners' approach of processing the spoken input can be considered a decisive factor for their understanding of the input. The other suggestion is to underscore the necessity for the learners to expose various listening materials and employ a combination of different listening strategies and use them flexibly.

When it comes to the metacognitive listening strategies, they demonstrated that they used them the most frequently of the categories of listening strategies. Noticeably, most of these instances were dedicated to explicitly identifying their problem or difficulty in listening to a clip and the rest were for evaluating their listening performance. The problems identified by them were missing to catch certain words, phrases, struggling to grasp the meaning of a segment of utterance or to answer a comprehension question. Hereby are some of their messages

> *People see in different ways, different colors: white and gold, blue and black, and what else..(I met difficult in here). This is ONLINE DEBATE, they argue which color they saw.. (I met trouble again)The girl 21 years old (…….)shows friends in different colors (.....) Many famous people wear in (……) This attracts 29000 millions views and followers in Twitter. It's quiet phenomenon to explain what color was. People see background of dress differently. The background is limited. Everyone make guess. Where the person is standing is related to the light. Human eyes make decision(...) make judgement(...) take count of the shining on them (....)* (May)

> *I can hear the last sentence but I don't understand it.* (Trang)

> *i can't hear exactly what the girl and the boy want to do in their work…i just hear that the girl want to do sthing is that original: army or sth* (Thu)

Apart from sharing the points that need resolving to better understand a clip, some members spotted the factors that hindered their comprehension as follows,

> *I feel is very hard to hear dialogue. My listening skill is not good.* (Kim)
>
> *but I couldn't hear because he said too softly.* (Na)
>
> *I'm so excused that this field I have not much vocabulary.* (Ha)

There are several interesting points about the group's problem identification. Firstly, it was demonstrated the most frequently on the YouListen website whilst only six instances were found on Facebook and none on VoiceThread. This might suggest that the listening clip(s) on the YouListen website might be perceived challenging to them. Secondly, the group appeared to have the need to disclose their problems and feel comfortable to do so on the YouListen website. As shown in May's message, she seemed to emphasize and indicate her exact problems by adding "I met difficult in here", "I met trouble again". In Thu and Kim's messages, despite their use of opposite emoticons (happy vs. sad), they seemingly convey that I felt comfortable to disclose kind of 'that was me' or 'that's my weakness.'

However, one puzzling point is why there was little manifestation of peers' sending responses to their disclosure of these problems (just 4 instances vs. 27 instances of problem identification.) Also, the number of instances of their using socio-affective strategies was half of that of problem identification. The socio-affective strategies employed by them were seeking help or clarification and making suggestions for consideration and are illustrated by the following messages.

> *Someone help me to hear exactly what Paul gave the reason why he definitely want to sudy in the Terracotta Army , not The ancient city of Teotihuacan – like Geeta ?* 😕 *)*
> *Hope other members to support the thing that I can not hear above.* (Ha)

They said many things can be done with the blade?? 'I'm not sure about this word, just hear the sound and rewrite'?" Maybe it uses for take some small things out of wood or wall?? (May)

hopefully, you can correct my wrong spots. (Na)

7.3.2 The High Activity Group's Emotional Engagement

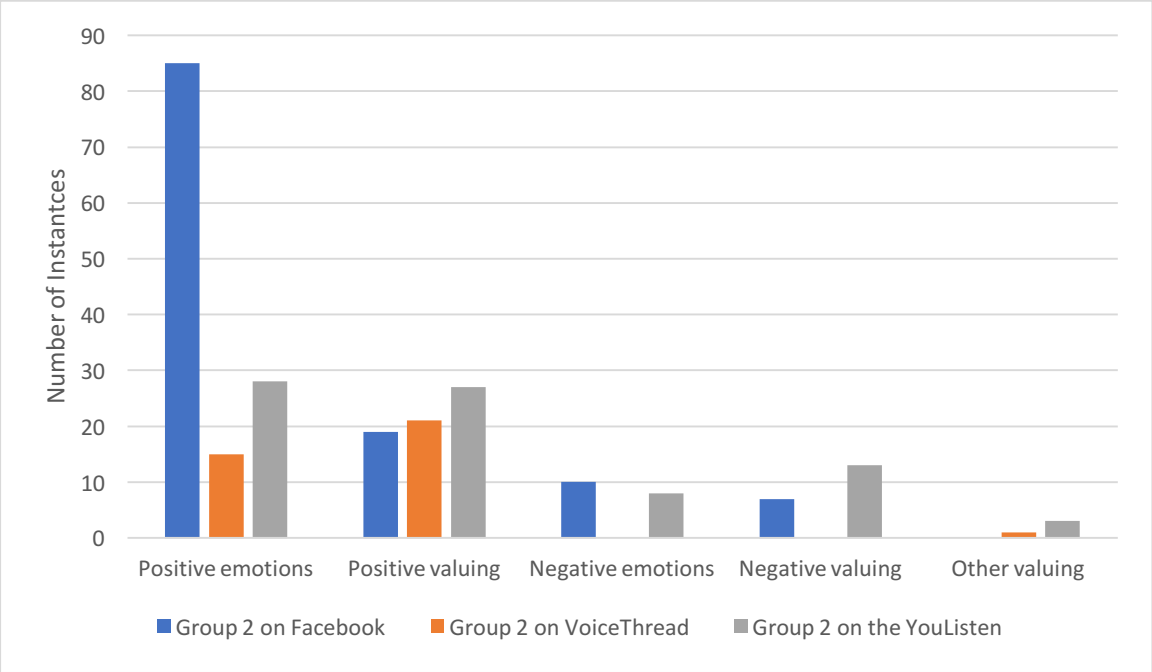


Figure 7-4 The High Activity Group's Emotional Engagement

It is immediately apparent from the graph that the group explicitly expressed their emotions and valuing a listening resource the most frequently on Facebook, with 121 instances. There were 37 instances of expressing emotions and valuing on VoiceThread and 79 on the YouListen website. Importantly, positive emotions and valuing were dominant. To be specific, positive emotions and valuing on the YouListen website held 70% of the group's total instances of emotions and valuing within this YouListen sub-space, on Facebook, 86% and on VoiceThread, 97%. In contrast, the negative emotions and valuing were at just 27% on the YouListen website, 14% on Facebook and even 0% on VoiceThread. Surprisingly, positive

emoticons, emojis, abbreviations (i.e., LOL) and other expressions of laughter (i.e. hahaha, hehe) were used with high frequency in a wide variety of circumstances which is summarized in the table overleaf.

> *well, after hearing on and on, (i heard so many times and searched some names on web* 🙂 *), I know more about Jame Vardy.* (Na)
>
> *But I think your drawing ability is really terrible* 😀*:D* (May)
>
> *He talked about the important role of listening and how to do it well.* 😀*:D I appreciate it.* 😉*;)* (May)
>
> *now. it's time for fun* 🙂*=)))))))))))))... occasionally, i found this youtube channel. it is one of my ways to enhance my listening skill...let watch and enjoy with me...thanks guys* (Thu)
>
> *thank u guy =)))))))) your answers are correct!* (Thu)

Circumstance	Description	YL	FB	VT
1. appreciating certain listening clips or peers	appreciating that certain clips are useful, interesting, easy to understand, clearly spoken, informative, updated, nice accent, changes in the type of recordings (monologue to dialogue and vice versa) or in the voice/topic or that certain peers are enthusiastic, helpful or have good idea(s), etc.	✓	✓	✓
	acknowledging peers' responses to one's own post	✓	✓	✓
2. doing the sharing with peers	sharing one's listening comprehension, a listening clip of interest, opinions, tips or experience, answer key, difficulty in listening, preferences, technical problems, etc.	✓	✓	✓
3. responding to peers' message(s)		✓	✓	✓
3.1. consensus building circumstances	clarifying or explaining (one's choice of a clip to upload, ways of listening, etc.)		✓	
	expressing agreement		✓	✓
	showing inquiring mind to peers' feedback		✓	
	Expressing or seeking rapport, empathy	✓	✓	✓
	sending phatics, teasing peers	✓	✓	
3.2. conflict-risk circumstances	expressing disagreement		✓	
	giving feedback to peers	✓	✓	
	confronting or challenging peers		✓	
4. completing 'tasks' or questions		✓	✓	
5. encouraging peers to do own tasks or activities		✓	✓	✓
6. asking the poster to check one's answers				✓
7. drawing lessons from listening to a clip or discussing with peers			✓	
8. reflection on related experiences		✓	✓	

Figure 7-5 The Learners' Emotion Expressions in Different Circumstances

In many cases, the prevalence of positive emoticons, emojis and verbal expressions, especially on Facebook can be considered the clear evidence of the group's positive emotions and valuing which are, in turn, the main categories of their positive emotional engagement. In other words, the prevalence shows their interest, excitement, happiness, pleasure, satisfaction, comfort in listening to the available listening resources, doing listening tasks, some reflection and interacting with peers. Their positive emotional engagement appeared to play an important role in creating and livening up the listening atmosphere. Even in the circumstances of sharing difficulties in listening, doing the log-in or upload or revealing one's bad habits of listening or doing other things, positive emoticons or emojis were sometimes used. Most surprisingly, the group frequently added positive emojis in conflict-risk circumstances and when they requested their peers to do their suggested tasks or activities. For example, when her peer suggested listening to music as a good way of listening, Ha refuted first, then appeared to reconcile as follows,

> *=)) really ? For me music just for relax. not improve my skill ... the song have its tones and sometimes have no exactly grammar. and I said that It's depend on you* 🙂 *:)... ok guys* 🙂*:)* (Ha)

To take some further messages as examples,

> *I'm so sorry, Thuy. This video our group did post in the first week with the topic "Bad habits in listening English" and our listening group discussed already! I'm sorry.* 😕*:(* (May)

> *Are u sure that listening with subtitle can enhance your level of this skill? Or for entertaining only? while the other is reading more quickly? Welcome your reply!* 😄 😄 (May)

> *I want to ask you some nice questions* 😀 *... try to hear them.* (Ha)

The widespread use of positive emojis in these circumstances seemingly can be traced back to several cultural traits such as their wish to maintain harmony, avoid face-threatening and

coercion. It can also be interpreted that the cheerful and congenial atmosphere in the sub-spaces was a favourable condition for the group to feel free or find it easier to conduct these speech acts. The last interesting finding is that in many instances, their positive valuing was demonstrated together with their positive emotions. Therefore, it can be inferred that they might be associated with each other in the sense that their experienced positive emotions were partly attributed to the clip or message that they valued positively. For example, there seemed to be a possibility that when they found a clip useful, they tended to feel excited or happy to listen to understand it. Apart from the dominant positive emotions and valuing, it is noticeable that the group also experienced negative emotions and valuing albeit not much, with the proportions as mentioned at the beginning of the Section. To start with their negative emotions, frustration and sadness were the most evidenced. This feeling was experienced when the learners could not catch certain words, grasp the meaning of a segment or the whole clip or complete a listening activity or task (i.e. guessing an object, answering the listening comprehension questions). For example, although Thu highly appreciated the listening clip, *The Assignment*, she experienced the ambivalence of excitement and frustration. She commented,

> *"thank to your video, i can feel more lively…it is really interesting..i like the voice and the content. there are some words that i can't hear, which annoys me much.=(((((((((((((((the change in the types of the audio make me more eager to listen ...."* (Thu)

Such feelings can also be well illustrated in May and Le's messages,

> *I didn't get the content of video clearly.* 😟*:(This video comments about benefits of standing or sitting straight and being harmful of wrong posture or about what?* (May)

> *Sorry!!!* ☹️ *I can't answer all questions.* (Le)

Furthermore, the learners also expressed these two negative feelings when their expectations of the clips or peers were not met or when they related to an undesirable experience, as in the messages by May, Ha and Na.

> *I dont here [could not hear] any tips to help Candidates doing the better listeing test??* (May)
>
> *Hey guys ! I have a ex in this Task ... Why do you not do my exs* 😟*:(* .... (Ha)
>
> *I'd planned to learn 10 new words a day but it just lasted some weeks and ended. I thinks to learn English, you must be hard working, learn and practice it every day.) :(((((* (Na)

One important point that might inform the design development is that the learners also expressed these negative emotions right after doing some negative valuing of a listening clip. It was revealed that some listening clips, especially those on the YouListen website, were challenging. For example, the clip, *Let us make a guess*, was frequently complained for its challenge level. Kim left her comment, "i think it have white handle…. the conservation is really difficult to hear:'(". As Linh explained, "it is difficult for me to listen from this audio because the speaker speak in low voice." Thu added, "The first one [speaker] is louder and clear to hear, but the other is very slightly." Hence, there arise questions about the learners and the listening resources. The learners seemingly wished to catch all the words, understand every single piece of information and/or know the final, correct answer (i.e. what exactly is the object for the posts *Let us make a guess* and *What is it?*) whilst it is hardly possible to do so, especially in real time listening. Regarding the design, it would be good to take further careful considerations into the challenge level and clarity when providing listening resources.

7.3.3 The High Activity Group's Social Engagement

When it comes to their social engagement, it is immediately apparent that the group demonstrated their social engagement most frequently on Facebook and across the six categories, except in the *sharing one's listening comprehension* indicator. The total number of instances of their social engagement on Facebook was 353. This figure nearly tripled that on VoiceThread and more than doubled that on the YouListen website. Nearly 28% of the group's total instances of engagement across the sub-spaces was dedicated to their social engagement demonstration on Facebook, roughly 9.5% on VoiceThread and 13% on the YouListen website.

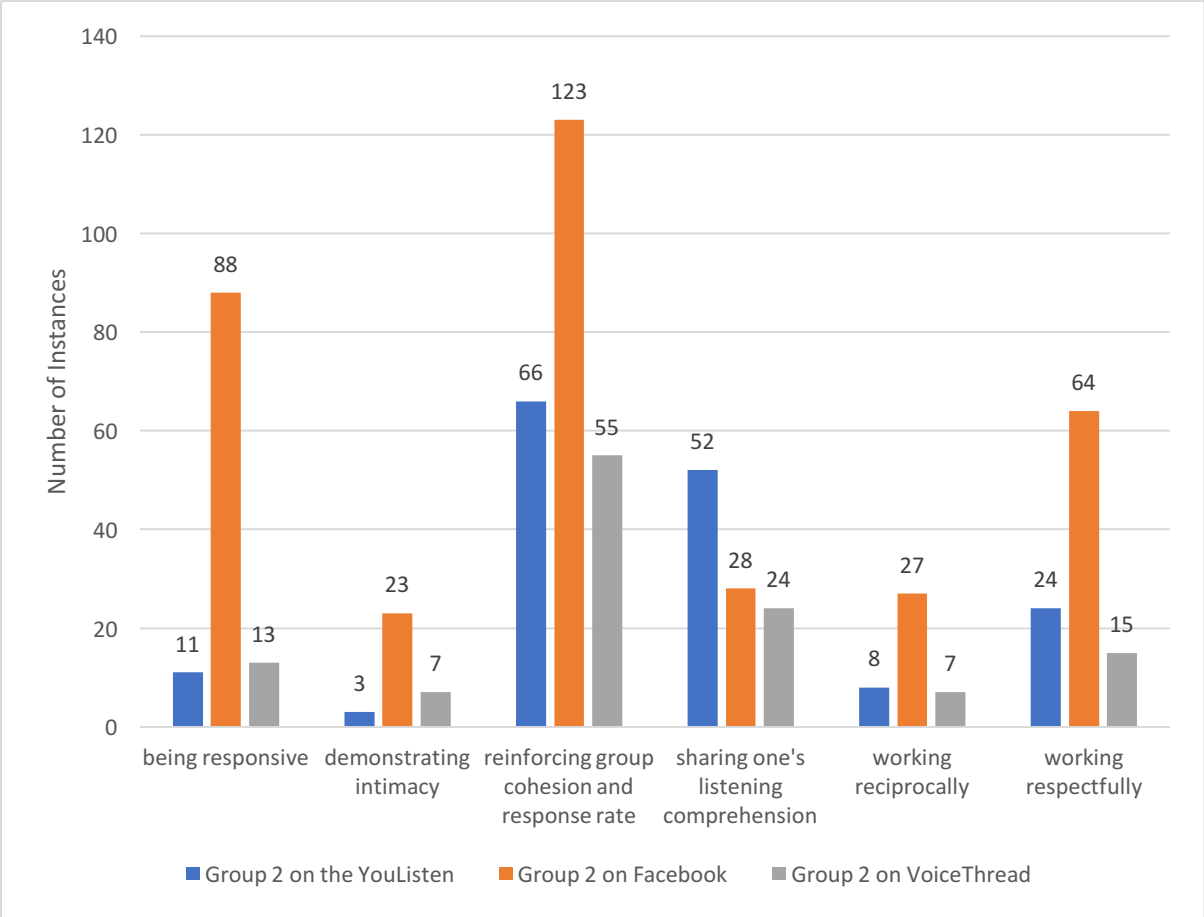


Figure 7-6 The High Activity Group's Social Engagement

Examining their social engagement at category level, all the three sub-spaces experienced similar patterns of category distribution in four of six categories. To be specific, across the sub-spaces, evidence was found the most in the category, *reinforcing group cohesion and/or response rate*. Also, the third rank in terms of high demonstration frequency was for the *working respectfully* category, the fifth rank for *working reciprocally* and ranking at the bottom was *demonstrating intimacy*. Hereby is a closer examination of the group's demonstrating these categories, starting with *reinforcing group cohesion and/or response rate.*

(1) Reinforcing Group Cohesion and/or Response Rate

This category covered approximately 35% of the six categories on Facebook, 45% on VoiceThread and 40% on the YouListen website. It is also noteworthy that this behaviour far overtook all the other dominant behaviours in regard to frequency (123 times vs. 64-88 times on Facebook, 55 vs. 15-24 on VoiceThread respectively). This category was strongly linked to their frequent use of *we* and *our* inclusive pronouns, constituting three-quarters, even seven-eighths of it. On the one hand, this might suggest that the group attempted to reinforce the cohesiveness of the whole listening 'community' and projected a sense of belonging to this community. On the other hand, this might suggest the presence of a trait from Vietnamese culture, namely, a tendency to express collectivism rather than individualism, in ways such as using inclusive pronouns. Another interesting finding was related to the group's use of vocatives which held the second greatest proportion, 19% on Facebook and 16% on VoiceThread, but was not manifested completely on the YouListen website. In detail, it is interesting that they tended to make a shift from discussing or conversing with the whole listening group to doing so with certain peer(s) by tagging them on Facebook. Evidently, their common use of vocatives highlighted the usefulness of the tagging feature on Facebook.

Besides, the learners appeared to prefer or feel more comfortable, finding it easier to continue a discussion with a small group or certain peer(s). It also seems that by doing so, there was a higher chance of receiving response(s) from the peer(s) who they directly addressed.

> *May, Thu, Chi, Chuc, Tu, Lan, Let's try to answer my question, please :)* (Ha)

Also, the group tended to use vocatives when leaving a reply to a message, which might suggest their intentions or preferences. For example, they might want to offer help, information, discuss or converse with certain peers.

> *Le , you can ask me on facebook* (Ngan)

> *Hey Ngan. Maybe that's reason :) In last speaking lesson of our group. He didn't come because he was busy* (Trang)

That no evidence of vocative use was found on the YouListen website might be related to the website's lack of the tagging feature and the presence of both the second-year and the third-year participants who they may not have known each other well and therefore, they may have felt too shy to mention each other's names on the website.

(2) Working respectfully

Facebook witnessed the group's frequent demonstration of 'working with peers respectfully', with 64 instances while there were15 instances of this behaviour on VoiceThread and 24 on the YouListen website. Within a sub-space, this category had a proportion of 18% on Facebook, 12% on VoiceThread and 15% on the YouListen website of the six social engagement categories. The group demonstrated their working respectfully mainly by the act of showing politeness, respect for peers which, in turn, was mainly expressed with such expressions as 'thank you', 'you are welcome', 'sorry' or allowing peers to decide whether to accept one's feedback or suggestion. Interestingly, their acts of

politeness were expressed in numerous situations, mainly to acknowledge their peers' sharing listening resources, designing or answering listening comprehension questions, sharing ideas.

> *i think that it is very useful for me and everyone. it give me some troubles when i listen and study english,thanks.* (Linh)

> *thank you your all idea and your question.* (Trang)

> *I'm so sorry if I'm polite when saying this thing.* (May)

Besides, Facebook was also the only sub-space that witnessed the demonstration of *showing inquiring mind*, one of two sub-categories of *working respectfully*. For example, in response to May's feedback for repeating a clip which had already been uploaded by another group, Thu left this message quite promptly.

> *thanks May for ur comments.well, i think maybe my previous video not as good as u expect....sorry. it's my mistake...* (Thu)

The group's manifestation of working respectfully can be considered good evidence that they had their positive attitudes towards the YouListen listening community and that they had a sense of and followed the unwritten norms, respecting peers when participating in the project's listening space.

(3) Working reciprocally

It is noticeable that the group did not frequently demonstrate reciprocal actions, with evidence of these actions mainly found on Facebook (27 instances). Of the six social engagement categories, this category represented insignificant proportions of the group's total instances of social engagement within a sub-space, just 8% on Facebook, 6% on VoiceThread and 5% on the YouListen website. Examining their mutual scaffolding, the most frequent reciprocal action was such help as providing answer keys and explaining the content of a clip. Interestingly, there was evidence of switching among the sub-spaces. To

take a situation on VoiceThread as an example, when Le shared her group's difficulty in uploading their own clip on this page, Ngan replied, "Le [a pseudonym], you can ask me on facebook." In this situation, Le's small group had their difficulty in uploading a clip right in the VoiceThread sub-space where their conversation was taking place, but Ngan suggested moving to another sub-space, their own Facebook sharing space so that she could offer help. Another example is that help offer was given on Facebook for a peer's log-in problem with the YouListen website, as in the following messages,

> *i'm not sure but i remember the teacher said that we can share our feelings or thoughts, etc by using fb or vk or email* (Thu)
>
> *I think the usename is nick fb [Linh's]* (Tu)

These cases might suggest that although the YouListen website was perceived a safe, relaxing space, they appeared to feel more comfortable, more convenience or prefer helping each other more in their familiar, private space - such as Facebook.

The second demonstrated reciprocal action, albeit not strongly evidenced, was *sharing related materials* (3 instances on Facebook, 1 on VoiceThread and 3 on the YouListen website). The related materials were explicitly believed or hoped helpful for their peers' understanding a clip (i.e. to better understand the clip, 'the House of Commons'), a phenomenon (i.e. that the colour of an object can be perceived differently in the 'dress clip'), listening practice and exam preparation. It is noteworthy that Lan and Thu managed to share on Facebook the videos that are related to the project's audio recordings (on the YouListen website). This can be interpreted to either increase the chance that their peers could access the videos or to encourage their peers to extend their discussions on the YouListen into the Facebook sub-space. The materials shared by Lan were accompanied with her following messages,

> *to add information about the tape http://english.youlisten.media/?p=478#questions-div , I want to share for you this video related "a dress of colors". https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AskAQwOBvhc*
> *Please pay attention and give your idea about it that also helps to support for the tape of the teacher.* (Lan)

Regarding the remaining reciprocal actions, it was observed that making suggestions and sharing learning tips were demonstrated on Facebook with 4-5 instances. For example,

> *One of the way I've done is practising tracscripts - the ways is not encouraged by the teachers. But when I practise ... In reality, my level in listening increase dramatically. I feel it really helpful …… I'm sure that you can also improve your pronunciation, familiar to the vocabulary and avoid having wrong stress in pronoucing…. But you should use them as little as possible.* (Ha)

The group's low demonstration of working reciprocally, especially on the YouListen website, even when the challenge of certain clips and the feeling of frustration were expressed, suggests inquiring into this during the subsequent interviews.

(4) Demonstrating intimacy

The group's social engagement was manifested the least frequently in the *demonstrating intimacy* category. In fact, the smallest proportion of the six categories' total instances within a sub-space was dedicated to this category, at 7% on Facebook, 6% on VoiceThread and 2% on the YouListen website. Of the behaviours that demonstrate intimacy, seeking empathy and self-disclosing were manifested across the sub-spaces. Meanwhile, the behaviours of conducting small talk, digressing from the topic of discussion, and using humour were demonstrated on Facebook only, with 5 and 9 instances respectively.

On close examination, several points can be made. First, most of the self-disclosing instances were dedicated to IT-related problems, revealing that some learners experienced and struggled with logging in the YouListen website, leaving a reply in the discussion board

on the YouListen website, recording voice comments on VoiceThread or uploading a clip on VoiceThread.

Interestingly, whilst the technical problems on VoiceThread were shared on VoiceThread itself, those on the YouListen website were not shared on this website, but in another sub-space, Facebook, instead. The learners seemed to either feel more comfortable to share their problems or believed there was more chance of receiving help in their 'private' space than on the YouListen website. The learners might have been conscious that the YouListen website was a shared space, 'a place of crowds'. Second, the two self-disclosing instances reveal the learners' other commitments, which can be considered an explanation for their less active participation, even dropout, as in the following message.

> *in this time, because We must prepare a lot of thing for training teacher in the future.so,I feel I don't care about this web.actually,* (Tu)

However, it can also be interpreted that the learners may have made great effort in engaging in the YouListen listening space since they had other commitments, as Thu's case suggests. Although she was busy and "really exhausted", she was enthusiastic about sharing her comprehension and reflection on the project-recommended clip, 'A Collected Resource: The Assignment' with three detailed messages, two of which are of great length. Some extracts of her messages are presented below,

> *last week, to prepare to become a trainee teacher in this month, i've take part in many activities which provide many experiences and techniques. as a result, i feel really exhausted. fortunately, thank to your video, i can feel more lively…it is really interesting……it is a dialog between a girl and a boy…….after listening this recording i can figure out that it is not easy to collaborate with the other.if we want to come to the decision or work effectively we have to ……. i've had a presentation which i had prepared in group of 3. we didn't share our ideas or practise together before the real presentation……may be you guys can help me, i can't hear exactly what the girl and the boy want to do in their work……* (Thu)

Her messages showed that she was highly engaged in listening and the follow-up activities. Importantly, the messages seem to underscore the importance of the interest value of a listening resource in engaging learners. Third, it is revealed in the learners' 'demonstrating intimacy' that they appeared to have concerns about making mistakes and failing to meet their peers' expectations.

> *ps: Having some mistake about pronunciation so everybody sympathizes with us Thank you :)* (Trang)
>
> *I did try to hear it but I couldnt find out anything, just forgive me!* (May)
>
> *i am sorry it's not a complete song my account requires uppgade* (Ngan)

Last, the Facebook sub-space was the only one to capture some highly responsive and relaxing conversations, with evidence of their digressing from the main topic of discussion and using humour. The following part of discussion was in response to Lan's upload of one collected video, *How to take good notes* and can illustrate such atmosphere of discussion.

> ***Lan*** *yes .it's easy to understand and see.taking notes also help us enjoy in the picture .*
>
> ***May*** *hehehe what do you mean by picture when taking- note? lol You like drawing much, right?*
>
> ***Lan*** *oh , the speaker say so. and of course, I also like draw. heheh*
>
> ***May*** *But I think your drawing ability is really terrible* 😀*:D*
>
> ***Lan*** *oh no. it's not terrible as you think :)))))))))))*
>
> ***May*** *Let prove it! :))*
>
> ***Lan*** *yes, I will prove when we meet together. :)))))))*

Tu *You should write the word which easy to understand.it is long you should write down the main point, not write all of this. Teacher also use PowerPoint to tech for children. We should use the color to underline the key words. I think it is good for everyone: d And I have a question for you how many peoples take notes when you hear this video.*

May *I'm the one of them!* :D

Tu *I like this! Love u* <3 *Other people how about you*

Lan *really, I still hear and don't take notes this video but I think it's better when we take notes in listening. I will try to use this way more*

Tu *I don't like you Thúy My* :v *you must try to apply it in listening skill: d*

Lan :v *. yes, I will try to use it so that you like me. hahaha*

Lan *thanks for your answers!* :D

It can be appreciated that May, Lan and Tu may have felt comfortable and easy to converse with each other in a natural, relaxing way. In the meantime, they still gained a productive discussion that centred round the topic and content of the listening clip, related to their own listening practices and they encouraged each other to apply the tips of taking notes introduced in the clip.

To sum up, the behaviours such as seeking and expressing empathy, having small talks, digressing from the main topic of discussion were not demonstrated very frequently. This might be due to the learners' tendency to focus on English listening-related activities, especially answering listening comprehension questions, since they were aware that they were participating in a *listening* 'community'. Nevertheless, the manifestations of working reciprocally and demonstrating intimacy on Facebook suggested that the learners engaged

socially in the Facebook listening sub-space, doing so in an open, relaxing and reciprocal way, and apart from exchanging their listening comprehension. They appeared to experience great comfort and have preferences for this sub-space.

7.3.3.1 Different Frequency Distribution Pattern of Certain Social Engagement Categories

As can be seen in the graph (Figure 7-6), the two social engagement categories, namely *being responsive* and *sharing listening comprehension*, were noticeably different in rank frequency. To be specific, the *being responsive* category ranked second on Facebook, representing 25% of the six categories within this sub-space, whilst it just ranked fourth on the YouListen website and on VoiceThread, with an insignificant proportion of 7% and 11% respectively. Likewise, 'sharing listening comprehension' was the second most frequently demonstrated on the YouListen website and VoiceThread, with 32% and 20% of the six categories within each sub-space, whilst it was just the fourth most frequently demonstrated on Facebook.

(1) Being Responsive

The three behaviours of being responsive that were the most frequently demonstrated on Facebook were expressing opinions on the content of peers' message, giving feedback to peers and explaining or clarifying, with 35, 25 and 23 instances respectively. Additionally, there was a little evidence of adding information and quoting others' messages, but no evidence was found for the behaviour of referring explicitly to others' messages. Meanwhile, the manifestation of being responsive found on the YouListen website was significantly slight, with a total of 11 instances for three behaviours, namely giving feedback to peers (7 instances), expressing opinions on peers' messages (2 instances) and referring explicitly to

others' messages (2 instances). No instances were found for the explaining or clarifying and quoting others' messages.

To start with their expressing opinions on peers' messages, the high activity group demonstrated this behaviour in such ways as expressing agreement or disagreement, confronting or challenging peers, and expressing surprise. They tended to agree with peers briefly, without justifications, such as: "I agree with you :)" (Ngan), "Absolutely right!" (May), "Of course" (Lan). Besides, they tended to confront peers and express disagreement in a polite, mild, indirect way by expressing partial agreement with peers, using positive emoticons and/or giving justifications. This may indicate that the learners wanted to be polite, show respect for peers and maintain harmony in the listening community. Their ways of expressing disagreement can be well illustrated in the following extract of a discussion.

> ***May*** *Are u sure that listening with subtitle can enhance your level of this skill? Or for entertaining only? while the other is reading more quickly? Welcome your reply!* 😄
>
> ***Lan*** *Ha, I also agree with you. however, if you listen more again , you can be bored, so you can listen english music when you feel tired* 😀:D
>
> ***Ha*** *=)) really? For me music just for relax. not improve my skill ... the song has its tones and sometimes have no exactly grammar. and I said that It's depend on you* 🙂:) *. Thank you for your advice, it's really nice.*
>
> ***Tu*** *Sometime, May: v .if you see a film,you can guess word by scenes .ha...ha.*
>
> ***Lan*** *oh no Ha, english music also helps you to improve listening skill*
>
> ***Ha*** *just waste your time if you watch a film to " improve your skill " =))*
>
> ***Ha*** *ok guys* 🙂:)

In this extract, Lan implied her disagreement with Ha about the reliance on transcripts to improve their listening skill by expressing agreement with Ha first, then putting forward her counter argument and suggestion of listening to music, ending up with a smiling emoji and emoticon. Similarly, Ha showed her disagreement with Lan and Tu about listening to music and seeing films as good ways of improving listening with reasons, positive emojis and emoticons and especially by proactively accepting the peers' opinions with her message, "ok guys :)"

Regarding the behaviour of giving feedback to peers, it was observed that the learners mainly left feedback on peers' answers to listening comprehension questions and/or feedback on peers' clip uploads or task designs. Noticeably, the former feedback was mainly observed on VoiceThread, the latter were frequently mentioned on Facebook and the YouListen website witnessed both kinds of feedback although with a small number of instances. The former was given briefly either directly or indirectly, as shown in the following messages.

> *Yến and Nga should listen again for the second question. is it correct? listen again Nga :) you can try againThuy* (Ngan)
>
> *but maybe...u should check the 2nd question* (Thu)
>
> *Hey guys ! I have a ex in this Task ... Why do you not do my exs :(.... (Ha)*

Given the high frequency of this kind of feedback on VoiceThread, the learners appeared to have strong interest in the 'product' or correct answers to listening comprehension questions. The other kind of feedback specifically centred on considering the topic, help options (i.e. with or without subtitle) of a clip for upload, considering the question types to ask, how to present a task and when to provide the answer key and especially giving constructive feedback on some peers or groups' uploading a clip that had already been shared by another peer or group. For example,

I have my own thought that I want to share you.
– You shouldn't show your answer before all of people haven't answer yet. There were only 2 members, except me,
So It had a barrier for other ones to share their answer with you ^^ (Ha)

According to some interviewees, the possible explanation for the repetition of certain clip uploads on Facebook might have been because the uploads were mainly made by individuals and with high frequency in this sub-space, therefore, other learners or groups may have uploaded the same collected clips without noticing the repetition. Meanwhile, repetition was not reported on VoiceThread and the YouListen website, which might be traced to the facts that the uploads on VoiceThread were mainly group postings and on a weekly basis or that there was normally one upload a week while those on the YouListen website were introduced by the project only.

As for *explaining or clarifying*, it was found that this behaviour was demonstrated on Facebook only and tended to be demonstrated in response to their peers' feedback regarding clip upload, especially repetition of upload. For example, upon receiving the feedback on upload repetition, Thu sent her explanation, "i just wanna share which ones that i think it is useful". In other cases, the learners demonstrated this behaviour to clarify what they meant in their messages. For example, Lan responded to her peer's message by explaining her view that reading books may not be related to whether someone likes or can do the travelling. It is interesting to notice that her message was in a discussion on Facebook rather on the YouListen website although the clip was on the YouListen site. Thus, it seems that she preferred or felt more comfortable to respond to peers on Facebook than on the YouListen website.

The last noteworthy behaviour of being responsive is referring explicitly to others' messages. This behaviour was demonstrated by the only learner of the high activity group.

There arises from this the need to determine whether other learners paid attention to peers' messages and whether peers' messages were of any help to them.

To sum up, in regard of the group's demonstration of being responsive, its evidence was found the most on Facebook and the least on the YouListen website. Several questions related to the design and the learners themselves arise. To start with the design, there are two issues: whether it is the case that Facebook has superior advantages over VoiceThread and the YouListen website and whether the frequency level of listening clip updates is associated with this group's responsiveness (i.e. the frequency of clip updates on Facebook was almost every day whilst that on VoiceThread and YouListen was weekly). Regarding the learners, whether they really did not frequently attend to peers' online messages and respond to each other, as observed in the listening space, is something that needs to be explored in the sfollow-up interviews. Furthermore, that a large proportion of being responsive instances was dedicated to giving feedback on peers' answers to listening comprehension questions seems to suggest that the learners had a great need for listening to 'answer questions' and knowing the specific, exact answers. The next sub-Section presents the high activity group's demonstration of the last social engagement category, *sharing listening comprehension*.

(2) Sharing Listening Comprehension

It is apparent that the group shared their interpretations of listening clips in various ways, such as sharing either with or without the introduction of the listening context, emoticons or outlines, sharing comprehension of a specific segment or the whole clip, etc. In addition, their writings of their comprehension were of different lengths, in the range of 10-353 words. Their sharing listening comprehension can be categorized into *sharing summary*, *sharing notes* and *sharing both summary and notes*. The first two were quite equally represented in terms of proportions, with 38% and 36% of the three ways respectively. On close

examination, one noticeable point is that there was significant dominance of brief summaries and especially of word-by-word notes. The former took about half of sharing summary instances and the latter nine tenths of sharing note instances. These categories can be well illustrated in the following messages.

a. *Sharing summary*

> *it is a dialog between a girl and a boy..all of them want to get an A grade. the girl want a grade and the first class degree to get the job that she want at the museum.and the same for the boy, but he just want to pass the course not for job..the professor want them to work in pair, but they don't like it especial the girl (i don't know her name i can hear"gei-tơ' i don't know how to write in English=)) she seems to be a bit angry and tired. the boy whose name is Paul promise to get along with her..but they still have the different ideas about what going to do and have to go to meet the professor- Dr.David to solve the problem.* (Thu)

b. *Sharing notes*

> *this audio talk about Lee Kuan Yew who died when he was 91. He turned Singapore from a small port into a global trading hub and personified the country's ban on chewing gum. When Singapore became independent in 1965 it was a tiny country, few resources. He had a survival plan: making the city state (a world oasis. Singapore was overcome other developed countries because of cleanliness, clipped lawns, and transport system. By the time the gum ban was implemented, Lee had completed 31 years as prime minister. He said: Putting chewing gum on our subway train doors so they don't open, I don't call that creativity. I call that mischief-making" and "If you can't think because you can't chew, try banana, that's things what I can hear* (Trang)

c. *Sharing both summary and notes*

> *MARTINA says: it depends on what she is doing. She listens to music of any kind when she was doing at translation because she likes it and it helps her. But when she does complex math, she has to have silence, it depends on level of concentration she has.-- RICHARCH says: it has to be completed silencefor her. Its a real problem because she lives near high school with lots of students and noise. It's very difficult to get peace and quiet. When she can't, she gets back to her parents to live out in the country. It's good cause she has lots of exams to study for and its so peace, no disturbing as in the town…. (Na)*

Reflecting on the group's behaviour of sharing listening comprehension, their significantly lower frequency on Facebook (28) and VoiceThread (24), while a higher

frequency on the YouListen website (52) might be traced back to the different activity orchestration in the sub-spaces. In fact, many individual learners or small groups tended to share a listening clip with their specific self-designed listening tasks on Facebook and VoiceThread, rather than sending an invitation to share their listening comprehension in general or with other open suggestions for sharing as was done on the YouListen website. Also, the high frequency of demonstrating this behaviour on YouListen might suggest that they supported the project's suggestions and listening resources or found them worthwhile. In addition, their sharing of detailed notes, even word-by word, indicates that they may have been highly engaged or invested much time and effort in interacting with the listening resources so that they could share. Also, their sharing might be interpreted as them wanting to make as much contribution as possible. Moreover, they seemed to believe that sharing word-by-word notes means truly understanding the listening resources well. On the other hand, a question that might arise is what if they demonstrated overreliance on the approach of word-by-word processing while listening, instead of flexibly combining this approach with top-down processing.

To summarize, the picture of a high activity group's engagement has been presented. Are this group's engagement patterns the same in shape with a low activity group? Next, a comparison between the high and low activity groups is presented.

7.4 Comparison between the Two Groups

Close examination into the two groups' engagement manifestation helps reveal similarities and differences between them in terms of engagement manifestation. Prior to presenting their similarities and differences, an overview of the frequency of their engagement categories along the cognitive, emotional and social dimensions is provided in

the following figure.

Dimension	Category	On Facebook		On VoiceThread		On the YouListen website			
		Low	High	Low	High	Low	Mean	High	Mean
COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT	Doing some reflection	1	40	0	20	14	0.93	50	4.17
	Using listening strategies	0	21	1	5	8	0.53	80	6.67
	Identifying the focus for listening/discussion	0	48	0	3	0	0	14	1.17
	Being persistent, willing	0	5	0	1	0	0	12	1
	Exerting task or activity-oriented effort	0	23	2	30	14	0.93	49	4.08
EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT	Negative Emotions	0	10	0	0	1	0.07	8	0.67
	Positive Emotions	0	85	0	15	1	0.07	28	2.33
	Negative Valuing	0	7	0	0	1	0.07	13	1.08
	Positive Valuing	1	19	1	21	0	0	27	2.25
	Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0.25
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT	Being responsive	1	88	0	13	0	0	11	0.92
	Demonstrating intimacy	0	23	0	7	1	0.07	3	0.25
	Reinforcing group cohesion and/or response rate	1	123	2	55	12	0.8	66	5.5
	Sharing listening comprehension	1	28	2	24	19	1.27	52	4.33
	Working reciprocally	0	27	1	7	3	0.2	8	0.67
	Working respecfully	4	64	1	15	3	0.2	24	2

Figure 7-7 A Summary of the Two Groups' Engagement Instances

7.4.1 The Similarities between Two Groups

Regarding similarities, there was a significant positive correlation between the two groups regarding their engagement category distribution ($r = .780$, $n = 16$, $p < .001$) on the YouListen website. Their positive correlation is shown in the table 7-2 and is illustrated in Figures 7-8 and 7-9.

Correlations

		The Low Activity Group	The High Activity Group
Group1	Pearson Correlation	1	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	16	16
Group2	Pearson Correlation	.780**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	16	16

Table 6 A Positive Correlation in the Category Frequency Distribution between the Two Groups

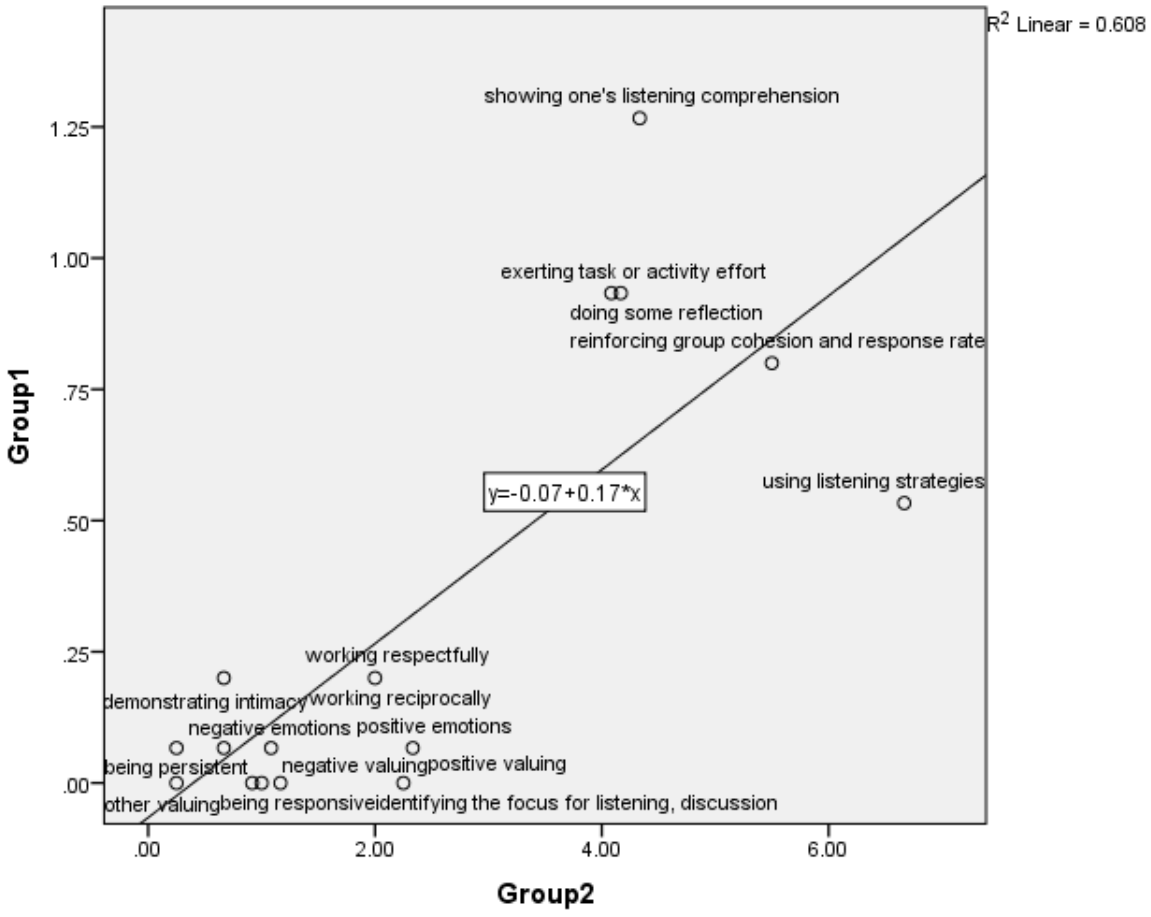


Figure 7-8 The Graph of a Significant Positive Correlations in Category Frequency Distribution between the Two Groups

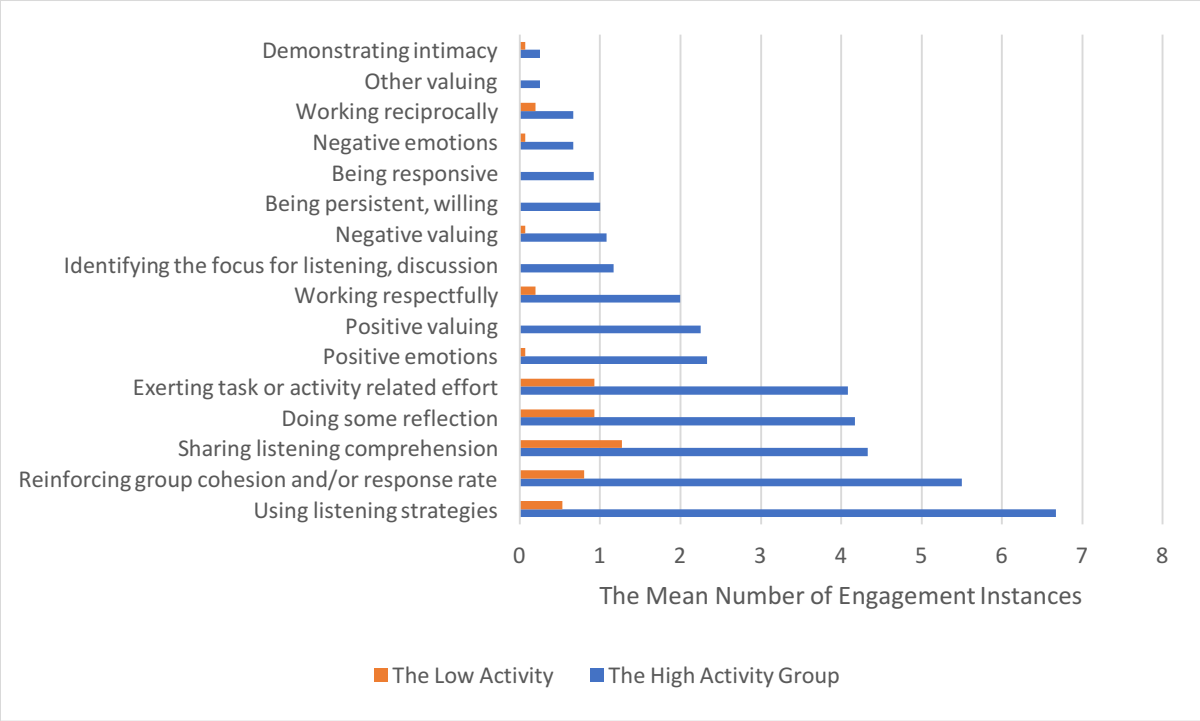


Figure 7-9 The Sequential Bar of the Two Groups' Engagement on the YouListen Website

As can be seen in these graphs, sharing listening comprehension, doing some reflection, exerting task or activity oriented effort and reinforcing group cohesion and/or response rate were frequently manifested behaviours of both groups. Besides, the high activity group showed low frequency of nine behaviours and the low activity one did similarly for five behaviours and even did not demonstrate at all for the other four: namely, identifying the focus for listening and discussion, showing persistence, showing other post valuing and being responsive. This might suggest that both groups appeared to be engaged with the listening resources and focused more on tasks or activities that were directly related to their listening. Surprisingly, both groups tended to do peer-recommended activities on the YouListen website rather than in the other sub-spaces, although the YouListen website encouraged them to join open discussions and sharing around the listening resources (i.e. their topic, content, listening processes of understanding them, etc). This might suggest that they tended to be product-oriented L2 listeners. In other words, they may have had greater

needs for listening to do specific tasks that test their listening comprehension, such that when peers designed such tasks on this website, they managed to complete them. Also, this may be evidence that they did make use of the autonomy support of the listening space to do what they wanted. Regarding their using listening strategies, both groups tended to evaluate their own listening performance and identify the problems that prevented them from comprehending a clip, which showed their engagement in metacognitive awareness. Furthermore, they appeared to have a sense of belonging and positive attitudes to the listening group and attempted to reinforce group cohesiveness. Moreover, both groups witnessed the greatest proportions of the grand total of two groups' instances of engagement in the social dimension (4% for group 1 vs. 47% for group 2), followed by the cognitive dimension (3% vs. 29%) and last, the emotional dimension (nearly 0.4% vs. 17%). This was attributed to the high frequency of two behaviours, namely reinforcing group cohesion and/or response rate and sharing listening comprehension. Regarding these, it would not be true to say that the low activity group was apathetic towards this listening group.

7.4.2 The Differences between Two Groups

Apart from the similarities, the two groups' engagement manifestation reveals several significant differences.

The first noticeable difference concerns their choice of sub-space(s) for listening and interacting with peers. The low activity group's engagement was demonstrated most and mainly on the YouListen website, accounting for 80% of its grand total engagement instances (across the sub-spaces). Their engagement was of equally low frequency in the other sub-spaces. In contrast, the high activity group demonstrated their engagement in all the three sub-spaces, with 48% of this group's grand total engagement instances on Facebook, 17% on

VoiceThread and 35% on the YouListen website. The low activity group's choice for the YouListen website arouses interest in probing several questions such as

- *whether the reason was simply that the YouListen was the main hub of listening and sharing,*
- *whether they perceived this website had the values or advantages of over the other sub-spaces*
- *whether they held certain beliefs about the use of social media like Facebook, VoiceThread*
- *whether the reason was related to the group dynamics*

In the case of the high activity group, their frequent participation in both the main, common space and a subsidiary, 'private' space might indicate that they appeared to have great enthusiasm about listening to English and interacting with peers and felt comfortable switching from one to another space. In fact, some of them attempted to make links between the spaces by discussing a post from the YouListen website in the Facebook space.

Furthermore, this high activity group demonstrated their engagement in various behaviours (sub-categories) and with significantly higher frequency, on the YouListen website alone. Meanwhile, there were 22 out of 39 sub-categories of engagement that were not demonstrated by their counterparts in the low group and the remaining behaviours were demonstrated at far lower frequency. It is noteworthy that the low activity group did not demonstrate the behaviour of 'identifying the focus for listening/ discussion', which suggesst that they seemed to either prefer a role of following the lead of other members or felt shy to do so in the discussion boards. Their emotions were very infrequently demonstrated, either. Even in the categories frequently demonstrated by two groups, the number of instances by the active group were at least 3.5 times as much as that by the other. In the *using listening strategies* category, there were 80 instances expressed by the former whilst there were only 9 by the latter. Likewise, there were 28 instances versus 1 instance for the category expressing positive emotions. This might suggest that the high activity group appeared to be more open

to do the sharing than the other group. This can be partly attributed to a gap in proportion between the two groups' engagement manifestations, at approximately 15% for the low activity group vs. 85% for the high activity group of their grand total engagement instances on YouListen. These differences seem to imply that the number of publicly shared comments in the case of the two groups could partly tell the quality of their engagement.

Further considerable discrepancies between the two groups are apparent in their engagement profiles as follows.

(1) The High Activity Group's Engagement Profile

First, the learners frequently demonstrated their engagement with both the listening resources and with peers across *all* the sub-spaces. Second, in at least one sub-space, they demonstrated their spirits and attempts to maintain the listening group by *enthusiastically* participating in the group's discussions: i.e., proactively initiating, moderating the discussions, strategically increasing peers' response rates, reinforcing group cohesion, building up a shared repertoire of listening resources and thoughts or reactions to the content or topic, working respectfully, maintaining the harmonious, cheerful, relaxing atmosphere, explicitly attending to and responding to peers' messages, giving peers feedback, encouragement and help, etc. In this sense, they engaged as core members of the listening group and engaged their peers to listen and share. Third, their engagement was dominated by positive emotions and a valuing of their listening experience and their peers' posts. Fourth, the behaviours of working reciprocally and demonstrating intimacy were at rather low frequency, compared with other engagement behaviours. Last, the three sub-spaces showed some variations in certain behaviours, including those of being responsive, sharing listening comprehension, identifying the focus for listening and/or discussion, using listening strategies, exerting task or activity oriented effort, being persistent, willing. Such variations

suggest that learners focussed more on doing task or activity-oriented activities, such as reflection on the content or topic of a listening clip, doing peer-recommended activities, sharing their listening comprehension, giving feedback to peers related to answer keys on VoiceThread and the YouListen website. By contrast, the Facebook learners tended to focus more on initiating and maintaining spontaneous discussions more driven by peers' messages, rather than by comprehension questions or suggested activities on Facebook.

(2) The Low Activity Group's Engagement Profile

Engagement by the low activity group can be described in terms of the following main points. First, learners demonstrated their engagement most frequently and mainly on the YouListen website. It is possible that this group chose to join discussion on the YouListen website, only occasionally surfing peers' discussion on Facebook and VoiceThread. If so, it is interesting that they opted for the common listening and sharing space for both the second-year and third-year students, rather than the 'private' spaces for each sub-group. Second, learners appeared ore engaged with the available listening resources than with other peers or discussants. In fact, large proportions of their engagement instances were dedicated to engagement behaviours, including sharing listening comprehension, doing some reflection and exerting task or activity oriented effort. They seemed to find the project's suggestions of sharing listening comprehension and reflecting worthwhile. They also seemed to focus directly on dealing with listening tasks and improving listening skills. Moreover, listening to a clip seemed to mean listening to complete tasks. By contrast, they were scarcely responsive to peers' messages and demonstrating of intimacy. Their task focus and their neglect of discussion with peers might be linked. Third, they had positive attitudes towards the listening group, mainly through their behaviours of reinforcing group cohesion and having a sense of belonging. They also demonstrated respect for peers and contributed a few listening materials

and tips. Furthermore, they seemed to be reticent in demonstrating their emotions and identifying the focus for listening and discussion. Last, they were 'quiet' L2 listeners, rather than discussants, initiators, or coordinators. For example, when sharing their listening comprehension, their interpretations of listening clips normally stood alone as separate messages, sometimes starteing or ending with just "I heard that", or "That's all."

Finally, the low activity group's engagement was not much in the listening space but that does not mean they were apathetic towards the listening community. They seemed to be engaged in their *individual* listening. This migh reflect the listening space's affordances, activity orchestration, group dynamics or the learners themselves (i.e. their learning needs, expectations, commitments, language proficiency, etc.). Alternatively, they might not have expressed what they actually did, felt or reacted when in the listening space, but might have done so more often in face-to-face modes.

7.5 Conclusion

Content analysis of the two groups' activity captures a picture of their engagement in different sub-spaces with several notable features.

On the one hand, there were similar patterns for dimensions of engagement across the sub-spaces: the *social* engagement dimension was the most frequently demonstrated, followed by the cognitive one and, last, the emotional one. There was also evidence of association among these dimensions (i.e. positive emotions with more demonstration of reflecting, sharing listening comprehension or negative valuing - because of the high challenge with more demonstration of using listening strategies). In addition, there was significant positive correlation between the two groups regarding category distribution in

terms of their frequency on the YouListen website. The correlation enables us to understand their tendency to do or to neglect certain behaviours of engagement.

On the other hand, there were significant variations between the groups and across the sub-spaces in terms of the variety of the sub-categories being demonstrated and the number of instances in each engagement category. These variations seemed associated with site design factors but also the learners themselves: such as their needs, expectations, preferences, language proficiency, and listening ability.

The last point to mention is that the two groups' engagement partly tells us about the learners and the sub-spaces. To be specific, both the least (the low activity) and most (the high activity) comment contributors generally appeared to be engaged in listening to the listening resources recommended by the project and peers. Their behaviours of engagement oriented towards listening comprehension, listening tasks/activities, shared listening practices and listening resource-related reflection and knowledge. They seemed to be conscious of their academic purposes to join the listening group (for listening practice and improving their listening skill rather than for socializing). Moreover, despite their demonstration of such behaviours as identifying the focus for listening/discussion and exerting task or activity related effort (see Section 7.3.1), our exploration of cognitive engagement has shown that many of them seemed to have the belief and needs for listening to do certain tasks like answering the listening comprehension. Thus, they seemed to be product-oriented listeners. It was also revealed from their use of listening strategies and their expressing negative emotions that they were struggling with understanding a listening resource and had overreliance on the bottom-up processing of the spoken input. They seemed to have a sense of belonging, positive attitudes towards the listening group, and especially to make attempts to maintain the atmosphere of harmony.

Regarding the YouListen website, I came to understand which listening clips and topics that were potentially engaging or challenging to them and what made them difficult to understand (see *using listening strategies* in section 7.3.1). Besides, it seems that the YouListen website afforded and engaged the learners to listen to English and listen reflectively and socially (by listening followed by reflections and sharing of comprehension). Regarding the Facebook sub-space, the learners frequently used its tagging and sharing features, they promptly replied to peers' posts and messages and interacted with each other in an open, relaxing and reciprocal way. The learners appeared to feel most comfortable to do sharing on Facebook. It seems that such features as the familiarity, popularity, 'privacy' and affordances that support interactions promptly were really the strengths of this sub-space. As for the last sub-space, VoiceThread, it was mainly for doing listening tasks and the feature that allows leaving voice comments was not deployed.

So far, in the chapters 6 and 7, the manifestations of student engagement along the four dimensions have been revealed, accompanied with inferences based on the analyses of the learners' online messages. Insight into student engagement is now sought from the analysis of interview data.

8 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT FROM THE LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents themes identified from the analysis of semi-structured interviews. Themes reveal how the learners' engagements were shaped, going beyond what was elicited from online observations, and makes suggestions for future engaging self-study groups. The chapter describes the semi-structured interviews, the phases of conducting thematic analysis and, finally, the presentation of results from thematic analysis.

8.2 The Semi-Structured Interviews

After the intervention, seventeen interviews were conducted via Skype. The interview work took place over nearly five weeks, from 21 March to 27 April 2016. Interviewees mainly used a laptop; some being interviewed on their phone.

As preparation for these interviews, piloting the interview guide with two participants via Skype identified possible ambiguities, defined the order of questions and addressed other problems. The pilot informed me in modifying questions such that they would be clearer and not repetitive. Following pilot work, a representative sample was finalized, based on their participation level in our project. Invitation emails with consent forms and interviewee information sheets (Appendices D and E) were sent out. This reinforced the invitation and answered possible questions. The main way of accessing and inviting them was by phone. A few days before an interview, I spent much time observing, reading and taking screenshots of

the messages that were publicly shared in the project's listening space by that learner who was next to be interviewed.

Fortunately, most were very helpful in arranging times, and providing their Skype name. Some made special arrangements for better Internet connection. Specifically, three of them arranged to attend our interview at their friend's house, another borrowed her friend's laptop (since she could not access Skype on her phone). One interviewee moved outside, sitting on a patio when it was late night to maintain the interview which was about 38 minutes long.

In terms of interview time and duration, the interviewees were encouraged to arrange a time convenient for them. Most were conducted in their evening since they had classes during daytime. Some were considerate to the difference in time zone between Vietnam and the U.K. One interview took place at 8.20 a.m, Vietnamese time (or 2.20 a.m, British time). An average interview lasted about one hour. The shortest was about 40 minutes and the longest, 80 minutes.

Regarding the nature and process of the interviews, they were informal, open, and conversational. I told them to regard me as a friend to share how the YouListen project was experienced and perceived, and what factors affect their engagementt. Their view on individual listening in interaction with peers as well as general feedback or suggestions were encouraged. All interviews started with free sharing. During their talk, I took the role of a listener, listening attentively, observing their facial expressions, making attempts to understand what was being shared then, keeping in mind the information that was emphasized or repeated and which seemed relevant and important to myself. Their sharing was followed by questions which were mainly open-ended (Appendix I). Noteable extracts of

project interactions were taken screenshots and sent to interviewees on their laptops or read out and translated for those on mobile phones. I often double- checked whether I had understood correctly what they said or meant and gave them encouragement to elaborate their answers. Necessary procedures such as keeping them informed of the research interest, aims of the interview, data recording, recording start time and finish time, their rights as a participant were presented. All interviewes, except the third, reported feeling comfortable and interested when an interview had finished. They did the sharing, expressed views, and gave feedback or suggestions freely and without reluctance. After each interview, I reflected on its key points.

Once the interview work had been completed, thematic analysis was conducted following procedures which are described in detail next.

8.3 The Phases of Conducting Thematic Analysis

Doing thematic analysis was an iterative process deploying the six phases of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) as follows.

Phases 1 and 2: Familiarising myself with my data and Generating initial codes

Before starting to code the interviews, I listened to them several times to better understand their responses or sharing, taking notes, and highlighting significant information. Thereafter, I listened for making verbatim transcripts and with attention to their facial expressions and body language. To reinforce the accuracy of these transcripts, I kept rewinding and listening repeatedly with high concentration. Transcripts were stored in Word files, with pseudonyms for the interviewees. Hesitations, pauses, false sentence starts,

paralinguistics, the interviewee's tone of voice, feelings, inaudible words or phrases were indicated. Noticeably, styles were applied as follows, Heading 2 for the interviewer and interviewees, self-created interview style for the interviewer's talk or questions, and Normal style for the interviewees' responses. The transcripts (an extract is in Appendix J) are in such a format as to be helpful for subsequent analysis, both manually and on Nvivo. After listening many times, I continued to immerse myself in these interviews by reading transcripts in a careful, active, reflective and critical way (Gibbs, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Bryman, 2016). During and after reading a transcript, I took notes or marked segments that I regarded as important, interesting, or potentially helpful. I also jotted down the interviewee's quotes, recurrent messages or meanings either implicit or explicit, and any idea or thought that came to my mind.

During the process of coding, an integrated approach was employed and I was more inclined to adopt the inductive approach first. That is, I started with an open mind, making sense of the data, asking myself such questions as *What is this item of data about? What does it represent? What is going on? What are the respondents actually saying, thinking or feeling?* and developing codes based on the data themselves. It was my hope that many codes, other than *a priori* codes, could be found, since the respondents shared their own experiences, perceptions, and ways of making meaning of such experiences.

Nevertheless, because there was a great corpus of qualitative data and the phenomenon - student engagement - itself is multi-faceted, I would recruit the literature review, my research questions and the topics in the interview guide (Gibbs, 2007) such that inductively-developed codes could be more manageable and I could be better informed of existing *a priori* codes. Reviewing the research questions and literature on student engagement, motivation,

contextual influences, socio-constructivism and formulating a sensitizing framework were considered feasible and effective solutions.

Furthermore, as Boyatzis (1998, p.63) puts it, codes refer to "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon". Therefore, in this research project, codes are attached to chunks or segments of data of various sizes and the coded chunks can be a phrase, sentence, or whole paragraph. Categories or group codes that might share a relationship after the stage of open coding were created, before moving on to the phase 3 of thematic analysis.

Coding respected the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). After coding a transcript, I wrote a memo about its codes as a way of reflecting, paying attention to important codes, and making connections among them.

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Phase 3: Searching for themes

Having generated codes, I continued to the step of identifying themes or "something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.10). For this, I reviewed the list of codes repeatedly, revisited the coded data extracts, and then sorted the codes, both on NVivo and in paper-based form. NVivo enabled me to navigate codes, retrieve their data extracts, reorganize, split and merge codes promptly, whilst hard copies offered me a feeling of comfort and a chance to further immerse myself in codes and data, highlighting certain elements, drawing lines between codes that were related to each other and jotting down emerging ideas or interpretations. Through repeated and active reading of the code list and equivalent data extracts, I could notice the frequency that codes were

mentioned, and recognize that certain codes referred to a patterned meaning or could be combined to form such a patterned meaning at some higher level. Accordingly, codes were sorted into potential themes and subthemes. For instance, I realised that the following codes (*learning benefits, autonomy support, diverse, updated and interesting clips, encourages learners to spend more time in listening to English, encourages learner's more effort in listening to English, a great help to in-class constraints)* all seemed to echo a unifying idea that the participants identified the advantages of the listening space, so I sorted them into the subtheme, *The merits of the listening space.* Similarly, when it seemed that the codes *Learners' concerns, Learners' expectations and Learners' beliefs* all served as motivational factors that reside within a learner I collated them for the overarching theme, *bringing learners' self (such as their concerns, beliefs) while engaging in the listening space...* Mind-maps and tables were also employed to organize codes and illustrate relationships between themes and subthemes. In short, phase 3 of thematic analysis resulted in a set of candidate themes and subthemes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

In this phase, a review of candidate themes and sub-themes was conducted as advised by Braun and Clarke (2006). Regarding external heterogeneity criteria (Patton, 1990), some overlaps among several themes were recognized. For instance, the themes *the use of peers' comments* and *learners' group collaboration* and the theme *interactions with peers* did not have clear distinctions and the first two actually belonged to the third one. Therefore, they were collapsed into the *interactions with peers* theme. Reviewing themes in relation to the entire data set enabled me to add more relevant data extracts that had been missed in previous coding and to realize one important code *Good spirits for the 'community'* for the theme *interactions with peers*.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

This phase involves "identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.92). The data extract collated under a theme was examined and double checked as to whether the theme was too broad, its relation to other themes and its fitness in the overall 'story'. For example, continuing the case of the theme 'interactions with peers' mentioned in Phase 4, when its collated data were examined, it appeared that the theme was too broad, capturing too diverse aspects of data. Also, this theme did too much by embracing other themes. Therefore, the theme was discarded and its sub-themes were fitted in other themes that better capture their essence. Specifically, the sub-themes, 'the use of peers' comments' and 'good spirits for the community' were fitted in the theme 'participants' hard-to-observe engagement'. At the end of this phase, the themes were defined and named.

Phase 6: Producing the report

Several recurring themes identified seemed to be related to each other and allowed themselves to be grouped into three meta themes, namely (1) *The participants' perceptions of the context and its impact on their engagement*, (2) *Learners' self and its perceived impact on their engagement,* (3) *The Hard-to-observe and* (4) *The learners' outlook for their own study group.* The first two meta-themes integrate themes that might help explain variations in level and quality of engagement among and within participants. The next reveals how the participants actually engaged with the space - as hardly elicited from the online observations (Chapter 6). The last overarching meta-theme encompassed the themes that might inform or suggest how student engagement can be fostered. Together, they appeared to contribute to better understanding of the trajectory of student engagement in a social networked listening space. To be specific, they revealed that this phenomenon can be interpreted as dynamic and malleable but subjective, and that there exist mechanisms that govern its changes and sustainability. This is considered the 'anchor' for my presentation of findings and the central message to be conveyed in taking the reader forward.

Regarding the organization of what follows, the presentation of findings starts with an introductory section; a high-level theme structure consisting of a series of logical subheadings is employed (Guest et al, 2012). Specifically, the introductory section introduces and gives an overview of the overarching themes and sub-themes in the form of a summary table and a diagram to show how they can be related. Following this is a detailed presentation of themes in a developmental sequence and in descending order of the abstract level of concepts. For each group of themes, its meta-theme is discussed first, then its constituent themes are briefly described, and details are provided for each constituent theme thereafter. To help orient to the findings, there is a brief introduction and a summary for each of the

meta-themes and themes, indicating what will be or has been covered, what can be drawn out, general impressions, comments, relation to the research problem, etc.

In terms of ways of presenting the findings, my account would be descriptive, illustrative, interpretive, and conceptual. The story of student engagement in a social networked listening space would be told with a detailed description of its context, based on concepts and my interpretation of the data, and with the support of quotes and a diagram. My use of quotes complies with the guidelines for using these by Hennink et al (2011, p. 281) which highlights considerations on their purpose, clarity, relevance, balance, length, number, selection, reference, and ethics.

To sum up, the identification of themes in this research was conducted by following the six phases as mentioned above. The detailed description of findings centred on these themes is in the next section.

8.4 Findings

8.4.1 An Overview of the Identified Themes

The identified interview themes provided fuller insight into student engagement in a social networked space. Hereby is the summary of the final themes by meta-theme.

Theme	Sub-theme	Code
Perceptions of the Listening Space and Its Impacts on Their Engagement	The Merits of the Listening Space and Their Impacts	• *Learning benefits* • *Autonomy support* • *Engaging activities* • *Shared Resources of Appreciation* • *A great help to in-class constraints* • *Positive Impact*
	The Barriers of the Listening Space and Their Impacts	• *The Challenge Level* • *Web design-related Barriers* - *Affordance-related Barriers* - *Accessibility-related Barriers* • *Positive Impacts* • *Negative Impacts*
Perceptions of Peers and Peer Impact on Student Engagement	The Merits of Peers and Their Impacts	• *Peers' Support* - *emotional support,* - *learning support and* - *technical support* • *Peers' contributions* • *Peers' Close bond and Good Rapport*
	The Limitations of Peers and Their Impacts	• *'redundant' comments* • *lurking behaviour* • *clip poster's lack of responsivity* • *lack of investment for an upload* • *use of mother tongue in interactions*

Table 8-1 Meta theme 1: Participants' Perceptions of the Context and Its Impact on their Engagement

Theme	**Code**
learner's concerns and their impacts	• *the fear of making mistakes with grammar, spelling, pronunciation* • *the fear of sharing wrong comprehension* • *the fear of sharing wrong opinions* • *Positive impact* • *Negative impact*
Learners' beliefs and their impacts	• *Learners' Beliefs about Listening in Interactions with Peers* - *Learning benefits* - *Socializing benefits* - *Positive impact* Learners' Views on the Listening Materials - *Priority over test-oriented materials* - *Learning benefits* - *Positive impacts*

Table 7-2 Meta-theme 2: Learners' Self and Its Impact on Their Engagement

Theme	Code
Use of Peers' Comments	• *For better listening comprehension* • *For better ways of listening* • *For enriched general knowledge* • *Providing responses or feedback for peers* • *Avoiding repetition* • *Positive impact*
Good Spirits for the Listening 'Community'	• *Willingness to do the sharing and/or discussing with peers* • *Investment in doing the sharing and/or discussing with peers* • *Making contributions in the interest of peers* • *Making contributions in the interest of the listening 'community'* • *Making contributions in the interest of oneself*

Table 8-3 Metatheme 3: Participants' Hard-to-observe Engagement

Theme	Sub-theme	Code
Outlook for the learner's own self-study group	Optimistic Pessimistic	• *Obstacles related to time budget and arrangement* • *Other commitments* • *Lack of interest* • *Difficulty in collecting listening resources* • *Difficulty in group activity orchestration*
Conditions for the development of the learner's own self-study group	Domain-related conditions	Shared purposes, interests or needs
	Group-structure conditions	• *Small group size* • *A close bond or an existing bond among learners* • *Leader and core members* • *Other members' good qualities*
	The teacher's role	• *Traditional role (i.e. providing directions, guidance, assessment, etc)* • *Source of emotional support* • *Learner autonomy*

Table 8-4 Meta theme 4: Participants' Outlook for the Learner's Own Self-Study Group

In the following Sections, these four meta-themes are discussed in sequence. To start with the first one, the participants' narratives, there occurred simultaneously activities of perceiving both the listening space and their peers while they were interacting with them. Noticeably, their perceptions seemed to affect the level and quality of their engagement with the project. The next two Sections discuss the participants' perceptions of the listening space and perceptions of their peers respectively.

8.4.2 Participants' Perceptions of the Listening Space and Its Impact on their Engagement

The 'listening space' refers to any or all the project's spaces, that is, the YouListen website, the VoiceThread page and the Facebook page. Explicitly and frequently expressed in the learners' responses was their appreciation of the positive qualities of the listening space but also critique of certain limitations. In the first part of this Section, the merits of the listening space and its impact as perceived by the learners are presented. The remaining part reports the perceived barriers of the listening space and their impacts on learner engagement.

8.4.2.1 The Merits of the Listening Space and Their Impacts

All interviewees enthusiastically expressed acknowledgement of the listening space at times during interview, even when the interviewer had not asked a leading question. The thematic analysis reveals several frequently expressed positive qualities of the space. These are presented in order of their frequency, namely: autonomy support, learning benefits, engaging activities, diverse, updated and interesting clips, and a great help to in-class constraints.

(1) Autonomy support

The word "autonomy" is employed, based on meaning, "the ability or opportunity to make your own decisions without being controlled by anyone else" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English). There is a repeated message that the YouListen space did empower and facilitate the participants to make their own decisions on participation in general and, more specifically, their sharing of materials, and leaving of comments.

The appreciation of the voluntary nature of participation is well illustrated in the following quote

> *We could participate in the space, no assignment, no duty to be in charge, but that it is beneficial for ourselves; the more we listen, the more we get/benefit" and if we do not listen, there is no coercion at all.* (Hang)

Another interviewee implied that this voluntary nature was preferable to obligation, but expressed her doubts about the potential of this feature to increase the learner's participation:

> *I suppose that one would get less engaged if not obligatory. Because it is not obligatory, it does not matter to listen or not to listen to the clips, … If it had been obligatory, I would have accessed the site for listening more regularly, but I feel that I would not like that obligation (laugh).* (An)

In addition, all eight mentions on material sharing convey the interviewees' acknowledgement that they could share or post clips at their own volition. Their acknowledgement is reinforced with such recurring phrases as 'on our own' or 'by ourselves', 'self search [listening materials]', 'self video recording', 'self upload', 'self post', 'feel free', 'as we wish', etc. in their comments. Hang regarded this support of the YouListen space as one of its strengths. She mentioned the impossibility that a teacher could introduce a listening clip that interested or satisfied all his/her learners and the likelihood that learners themselves would better understand each other:

> *Indeed, a teacher cannot find all the topics of her learners' interest, I meant, often fail to understand her learners' favourites or interests. However, they are all students, so they can sometimes find quite interesting clips.* (Hang)

Moreover, of the six interviewees mentioning another important autonomy support of the YouListen space, five highly appreciated that it facilitated their freedom to leave comments in their own way, without:

> *I did not see any barriers; we did not need to be scared to express our thoughts because we could not listen well.* (Trang)

> *There are many ways of leaving a comment, and I could even share a video comments with my peers, not just the written ones.* (Hai)

It is noted that whilst five of the six interviewees held a positive attitude towards this support, An did not welcome it, commenting that,

> *It does not matter whether to leave a comment or not to leave a comment but just reading peers' comments, which I did not find it interesting.* (An)

One further exception found in Ha's comments is concerned with YouListen's open sharing suggestions. She raised her concern that "the learner might not have specific objectives to aim at" and believed that

> *If the project had offered comprehension questions, it would have been good and easier for those who are not good at listening to give their answers.* (Ha)

Apart from freely participating, sharing materials and leaving comments, one respondent further valued that the space supports them to listen at their own time:

> *We accessed the site, we felt comfy, we could practise listening at any time we wished, when we were free or at any time and we were free of any pressures like time pressure.* (Hang)

Overall, there was a strong consensus on the value of the YouListen space in supporting the learner's autonomy, with two exceptions as mentioned above. The appreciation of the autonomy support reached its highest level when one respondent succinctly commented, "*We were the owner of the site.*" (May).

(2) Learning benefits

There was much acknowledgement that the listening space was helpful for English language learning in general but listening skill improvement in particular. Many respondents reported it helped them to improve their grammar, vocabulary, intonation, and especially

listening and writing skills. There were buzzwords mentioned by them such as *useful, interesting, like, excited, good, very good, happy, comfy, we can*, etc.

The gains mentioned were of different aspects of English language learning, namely grammar, pronunciation, speaking, especially vocabulary and writing. For instance, Mai reported her improvements, "I find the YouListen project quite useful… I could learn to listen and speak, grammar, vocabulary and my [language] skills have been improved (smiles)." Na reported her gain in vocabulary, "When listening to such clips, I could learn much topic vocabulary." Tam stated that she had enriched vocabulary considerably and knew how to use them flexibly. Hang seemed to go beyond getting to know the words by reporting that she could retain them:

> *I found many key words of a clip new to me. When I looked them up in the dictionary, I could remember them very long since I needed to know their meanings to comprehend a clip.* (Hang)

As for writing skills, Hanh reported her progress: "Although I did not have rich vocabulary, I wrote it again and again, I got used to writing and then gradually, I was able to write longer comments." These improvements in writing were widely acknowledged as associated with activities of sharing thoughts in English with peers. As May elaborated, these activities encouraged thoughtful considerations so that their ideas could be well articulated

> *Normally, we had never written in English before (except as required by their writing courses)… I needed to leave a comment with written language to convey what I meant and make sure those reading my comments could understand it… rather than just sharing phrases or words that I could jot down… when we left a comment, we had to consider whether it was right or wrong, whether it could convey what we meant or when it could articulate our thoughts, we double-checked our use of words.* (May)

In addition, there was consensus that the listening space played a role in enhancing their English *listening* with several frequently expressed justifications. First, the space was

perceived conducive to listening practice and discussing things that are related to the skill of listening, helping them to become more independent in listening. They confirmed that they did practise listening and join discussions centred on the clips that were shared in the space, the tips or techniques of listening, the misconceptions of listening, the common mistakes in listening, etc. Certain improvements were reported, like improvements in listening for details, taking notes, doing gap-filling and multiple choice tasks, better awareness and recognition of synonyms and paraphrases mentioned in speech. The following comments by Lan and Cuc illustrate this.

> "*I had learnt much, getting to know how to listen more effectively. Then, we got more self-regulated with our self-study.*" (Lan)

> *The shared listening clips and techniques helped us to enhance our listening skills. Indeed, there are clips that I had listened 2-3 times since they are very helpful… I listened and applied such tips, techniques. For example, I felt that I made my progress in listening thanks to the tip of spotting synonyms in the clips by you and peers on Facebook. I found this tip very effective.* (Cuc)

In addition, some respondents explained its benefit was simply because it offered in terms of chances to listen to the clips as shared by their peers.

One notable justification given by Na was related to a practice of the listening space, namely listening with the follow-up activity of leaving comments. This practice was seen as more beneficial than solitary listening. She said, "Such a way of listening and leaving comments helped my listening get better, better than just turning on my phone and just listening." One possible explanation for the usefulness of leaving comments after listening might be its potential for encouraging learners to simply spend more time in listening, applying concentration and exerting effort to understand and thus prove their comprehension of a clip in their comments.

Thus, the listening space was acknowledged for its improvements in language learning in general and listening skills in particular. Importantly, this value appeared to be one of the reasons for their serious engagement. Sinh shared that she once had the thought of withdrawing because of failures to log in at the start of the project, but she continued since she "found it useful for my learning."

(3) Engaging Activities

One of its most widely perceived merits is that the listening space played a role in increasing time and effort in listening.

First, it was commonly indicated that its introduction drew from them more attention to and investment in listening, even "a trend to listen to English" (Ngoc). Compared to previously, Lan reported spending more time in listening and confessed that "Normally, probably just… apart from listening in class, at home we…, honestly we were lazy listening." Another respondent asserted,

> *If I had not accessed the site, I would definitely not have listened to English, I would have done something else, instead.* (Minh)

Besides, as Na elaborated, the space served as their regular "drop-in". She said:

> *We had the YouListen site, so we would access it weekly. Before that, very often we … With the availability of this site, we logged in weekly to listen for practice, which increased our time spent in listening* (Na)

One more commonly mentioned elaboration lay in the variety of listening materials. Since listening clips were uploaded by both the project and by peers, the space got updated frequently:

> *Information was updated very often on the YouListen, so we could maintain our daily listening practice.* (Cuc)

> *It was often the case that when I was in the bed, about to get to sleep, I noticed a new upload and decided to listen to it. I suppose that was also listening practice despite listening to it just once, so I was more hard-working then.* (Hang)

Apart from encouraging learners to invest more time, the space was also repeatedly valued for encouraging effort in listening, with its features of public comment sharing and the sharing of listening clips. Thanks to public sharing, they reported how much they had a chance to read each other's comments. This, in turn, seemed to trigger them to compare and contrast themselves with their peers - in terms of views and listening comprehension and thereby to exert effort in listening.

> *When I found that my peers could do that, could complete all the tasks there [the listening tasks designed by learners themselves on the VoiceThread page] whilst I could not, I would try to listen to understand [a clip].* (Ly)

In addition, the invitation to leave comments on the space encouraged learners to spend more time and effort in listening. As Na explained, leaving comments could maximize her time investment and effort: because to share a comment publicly, she needs to understand a clip as well as she can. Meanwhile for a good understanding of it, it is necessary for her to listen several times and with high concentration and great effort. Similarly, Mai shared:

> *I also wanted to leave comments for others to comment on, so I often listened. To share a comment, I found it necessary to provide my peers with information about a clip and check whether I had listened correctly or not. [Because of] These things, I was more self-aware, accessing the site more often to listen.* (Mai)

Figure 8-1 illustrates how leaving comments and sharing collected clips could encourage them to spend more time and effort in listening to English.

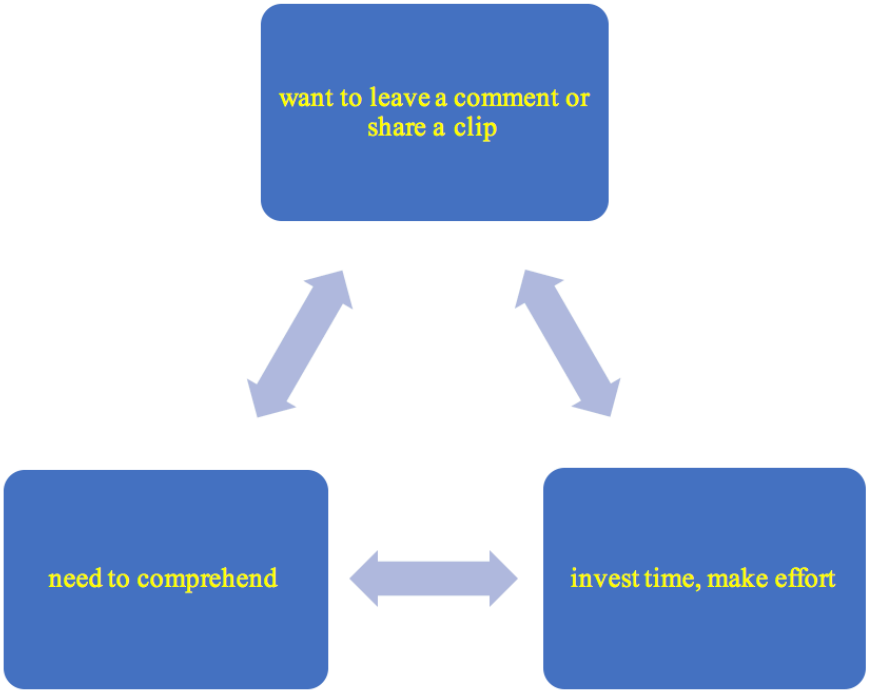


Figure 8-1 The increase in time and effort related to leaving comments and sharing collected clips

Thus, there is evidence from self-report that a social listening space has the potential to increase student engagement in terms of time and effort. Indeed, some sustained their listening, with not only practice tests but also extensive materials. Although some others reported a decline in time investment. These two opposite engagement patterns can be illustrated in Ngoc and Ly's responses.

> *Now I am spending more time, whenever I am free… I am starting to listen more, spend more time in order to relax and to become accustomed with the speaker' accent and intonation.* (Ngoc)

> *The amount of time I used to spend in practising listening [in the YouListen listening space] is now used for doing other things.* (Ly)

The reported decline in time investment among some learners might have been associated with their motivation or readiness for taking charge or their out-of-class L2 listening. The decline seems to suggest that more ongoing endeavours like the current project would be necessary. The next merit of the listening space that was frequently mentioned was the valued listening clips.

(4) Shared Resources of Appreciation

The shared resources were appreciated for their interest, currency with everyday life topics, diversity and value. The *interest* attribute was much mentioned, as leaners' general reaction to the resource but mainly it referred to the individual items. For example, Sinh commented that, "Joining the YouListen the first time, I found that the website had many interesting listening clips." Noticeably, some respondents reported that they got motivated and engaged with such interesting listening resources. As Na put it, "Many listening clips provided much interesting information, so I often wanted to know more information from such clips."

Regarding the *currency* attribute, the respondents were strongly in favour of clips that helped them to update current and everyday life events.

> *The YouListen opened a direction of listening, that is, quickly updating what is happening. I remember the audio clip about a dress the most, a blue dress, that colour. A few days before, I got to know about that dress, then an audio of that dress was uploaded [on the YouListen site] several days later, which was very interesting to me.* (Tam)

Indeed Thu showed her interest in everyday clips and indicated that they worked by serving three purposes, namely, to update information, to entertain, and to learn. Hang indicated that such everyday life information is rarely mentioned in their class.

The diversity of the listening resources was mentioned in terms of both form and content. Diversity of form appeared to meet different learning preferences for audio or video clips or learn-to-listen documents. Apart from being diverse in form, the resources were appreciated for providing information about different cultural details. Cuc shared that, "the resources are really diverse, of different topics. To take an example, we could access clips about history or culture."

The *value* attribute of the listening resources referred to the usefulness and uniqueness of these resources. Their usefulness was discussed above. Their uniqueness was for self-recorded listening clips and self-designed activities by the project and learners themselves. Cuc's following succinct comment well illustrates their appreciation regarding this attribute,

> *Such resources are invaluable, since we would definitely not be able to get them anywhere else.* (Cuc)

To sum up, the listening resources were widely acknowledged by respondents for their perceived interest, currency, diversity, and value. This important component of the listening 'community' was reported to positively affect learner engagement in terms of behaviour and emotion. The last often-cited value was expressed when the listening space was viewed in contrast with perceived in-class constraints.

(5) A great help to in-class constraints

The most mentioned constraint to in-class listening was the limited time budget: only a 100-minute of listening session a week. Consequently, there was a common complaint that they could not have enough listening practice, listen thoroughly, or discuss with peers.

> *In class, time for listening is very short, which does not allow enough time to understand [a clip] well and listen for details.* (Mai)

In view of this constraint, May considered the listening space helpful. She said,

> *I find our listening space very useful because I… we did not have time to discuss in class, but beyond classroom, we could self-study at home, we did not need to go to class for group work like other subjects. Instead, we could still do the listening at home, then discuss directly online with each other.* (May)

Another constraint indicated by some was the routine of listening to complete listening tasks. As Trang put it,

> *Before that [before the introduction of the listening space], I learnt in class, just in a way that my teachers taught first, then I did gap-fillings. Next, I reviewed it at home and finally listened to a new listening lesson.* (Trang)

She further compared the class routine with the activities in the listening space and commented, "We had never had such activities [the projects'] before, the activities that we could be active and could do online."

To sum up, the listening space was welcomed and perceived to bring about further listening practice and experiences that their listening classes failed to afford. However, as the other side of a coin, several respondents mentioned certain limitations of the space. The following Section is a detailed presentation of the barriers.

8.4.2.2 Barriers of the Listening Space and Their Impacts on Student Engagement

The reported barriers are mainly focussed on the YouListen website. The most frequently mentioned barrier was the challenge or difficulty level of certain clips.

8.4.2.2.1 The Challenge Level and Its Impact

Evidently, the perceived challenge varied across learners. For example, whilst Ha perceived that "their speech rate [that of the YouListen clips] is quite O.K, some a bit

difficult to listen", Trang complained that "For many clips, I rewound again and again, but I could not listen [comprehend]."

Why were certain clips perceived challenging? The common explanations given centred on several auditory features but also the learner's own dispositions. To start with auditory features, it was frequently mentioned that certain clips were spoken with *fast* speech rate and/or difficult-to-hear voice.

> *It seemed that they spoke quickly…. In general, it was impossible to take notes, to react timely enough to have an idea of what they were talking about. They spoke kind of too fast.* (Lan)

> *Their speed of speaking and voice, speaking very softly; it was unclear, so I could not listen.* (An)

Such feedback was once mentioned on the project' discussion board and the speakers were then willing to make some amendments. However, for better interpretation of the learners' perception of challenge related to these auditory features, two possibilities can be considered. First, the learner might not have been accustomed to listening to such 'real' spoken Englishs, so they might have felt that the speed was unusually fast or not clear enough even when a clip might be spoken at a normal speed and with an authentic accent. Instead, they might have only been familiar with English spoken clearly and slowly - as in one of their class resources. Further evidence can also be found in several interviewees' responses. For example,

> *I often listen to VOA, it's very slow. I cannot listen to BBC, the Youtube is O.K. I listen to englishvid as well, they speak very slowly.* (An)

Second, a clip might be perceived too fast when a learner's listening purpose went beyond merely listening for conversational comprehending or when they desire to listen for every word. As in Lan's case - she wanted to take notes. This action of taking notes was actually writing down any words or details they could listen for - even writing a dictation or

transcribing rather than grasping or jotting down the main ideas only. Therefore, her complaint, "it was impossible to take notes" (Lan) implies that the clip was too fast for writing its content *in detail*. They also reported that they did translate what they heard while listening.

Apart from the auditory features, the learner's characteristics were also indicated as a factor in listening challenge. The characteristics reported were the learner's lack of topic vocabulary and general background knowledge, and limited L2 and L2 listening proficiency. For example, Ha found the listening clip, *The House of Parliament*, difficult since she does "not have much vocabulary about the Parliament." Sinh, shared the view that clips were beyond her current listening ability. She said, "Almost all the clips were difficult … difficult for my level." The learner's limitations as an explanation seemed to be corroborated with the fact that there were far more third-year reporting the challenge of the listening clips than the second-year counterparts (7 vs. 4 respondents respectively).

The Impact of Challenge Level

Perceiving the challenge of certain clips, the respondents had their own reactions accordingly. Noticeably, their reactions revealed that, in many cases, the listening challenge level and positive learner engagement were somewhat inversely proportional. This negative association was demonstrated in a self-reported decline in the level of participation and interest in listening to a clip and experience of negative emotions. The negative feelings of boredom, anxiety and especially frustration were frequently expressed. To illustrate, Sinh indicated how her participation level varied in accordance with how she perceived the challenge of listening clips as follows,

> *"On the YouListen site, the clips were generally difficult, so I felt reluctant to participate. Instead, I joined my classmates [on the VoiceThread page] since they shared easy-to-listen clips."* (Sinh)

Further responses below given by Hai can also illustrate the negative association. Listening to a difficult clip, she no longer had a feeling of excitement, but boredom and frustration and ended up giving up listening to it after several attempts.

> *There was a clip that I could not comprehend at all, I felt frustrated then… When I could understand, I wanted to continue listening the next clip. Still, when I kept listening but I could not understand it, when I listened the third time, but it was still no use, I was bored, frustrated, quitted… When I could listen, I felt excited, but when I could not, I felt frustrated.* (Hai)

Having the same experience as Hai, Lan repeatedly highlighted her challenge-related negative feelings. She said,

> *Very often, I felt stressed, frustrated just after a while of listening since I did not know what they were saying.* (Lan)

Whilst the negative association between challenge level and student engagement was indicated in many cases, it was not in Na's case. This noticeable exception was reported in the survey, "The clips were rather difficult, but when I paid attention on them, I could comprehend them, felt happy and continued to do more listening." Thus, in Na's case, perceived challenge encouraged her to become more engaged cognitively (high concentration), emotionally (happy feeling) and behaviourally (more listening practice). In the interview, she said "For easy clips, I listened twice and for rather difficult ones, I listened many times." She also placed emphasis on the necessity of paying concentration and spending more time in listening in the face of listening challenge. She said,

> *When I first learned to listen, clips were like pearls in 'cast pearls before swine' ("dan gay tai trau" in Vietnamese). At first I felt frustrated, but when I could listen, I felt happy… If they focus heart and mind, more time, more concentration, I suppose they could attain what they wish, like me.* (Na)

To sum up, on the one hand, the project's clips were appreciated for their merits as analysed in the Section, *The Shared Resources of Appreciation*. On the other hand, they were reported as challenging from rather 'difficult to very difficult' by two-thirds of the respondents.

In the face of the perceived challenge, many respondents had reactions that revealed their limited engagement emotionally and behaviourally: such as frustration, lack of interest and decline in participation. Besides, it is evident that when a clip was perceived difficult, the learner experienced negative emotions first and this low/negative emotional engagement appeared to play a role in the decreased behavioural engagement.

Cognitively, there was little evidence that showed their cognitive engagement when challenged as being at a high level, more just actions of listening to a clip perceived as difficult several times. In terms of their social engagement, some reported that they did share their difficulty with their peers and seek their peers' help, which can be considered evidence of their making use of the social character of the project's design. Nevertheless, as Trang said,

> *We asked each other, it did not work much since my peers found it difficult and so did I; we could not help each other much with too difficult clips*. (Trang)

The learner's deployment of this social/affective strategy seems to show their positive social engagement to some extent. Its limited effectiveness, as reported by Trang, might be attributed to the interplay of different factors (such as the 'out-of-reach' difficulty level, the learner's listening objectives, peers' listening ability, the lack of combination of different listening strategies, etc.). With a close look at Na's case, which is mentioned above, it is interesting that becoming highly engaged ("heart and mind" focus (don tam tri), time investment and high concentration) was an effective way of comprehending a difficult clip.

So, when she could obtain comprehension, she felt happy. Hence, her case showed a positive and interdependent relationship among engagement, sense of competence and challenge. In many other cases, the situation seemed to get more challenging with the unavailability of transcripts for some difficult clips. The perceived lack of this resourse and other technological (design-related) barriers are considered in the following section.

8.4.2.2.2 Web design-related Barriers

The barriers relating to web design were in terms of affordance. With reference to affordance limitations, the lack of transcripts for several listening clips, notification features and synchronous feature was indicated.

Affordance-related Barrier: The Lack of Transcripts for Several Listening Clips

The project's clip transcript offer was implemented in such a way that some clips were accompanied with full transcripts, some with part transcripts and some without a transcript. The unavailability of transcripts for certain clips was raised by a few respondents. For example, after exerting effort with repeated listening to a clip which was "very difficult and friends could not help much", Trang "did want to click on that [the transcript section], but they were not available." This limitation in transcript offering seemed to be implied in some others' responses that expressed difficulty in comprehending a clip without a transcript. Minh shared that, "I found the clips uploaded by my peers had sub [subtitles], so they were easier to understand." In addition, the unavailability of transcripts for some listening clips was considered by Ha as the main disadvantage of the listening space when her listening purposes were not just to comprehend them. She wanted transcripts to check comprehension, to learn missing vocabulary and identify a speaker's reduced sounds. Her needs were explicitly expressed with the following comments.

> *One or two weeks later, I logged on to double check [her answers], but I could not find the transcript. I wanted to check what percentage I could listen for… Without transcripts, I could not check which of my answers was wrong... We were just students.* (Ha)

> *When I did the double check, I wanted to read a transcript … to listen to its clip again for full [catch of words, even sounds]… [in her last go at listening after reading its transcript] I could listen for the speakers' sentences, words, even their voiceless sounds.* (Ha)

The impact of the *unavailability* of transcripts for certain clips on learner engagement was hardly mentioned or implied by the respondents, except for Ha. It was revealed that the unavailability of transcripts considerably impeded her participation. She implied this by giving a hypothetical condition, "If there had been transcripts, I would have logged in very, very frequently."

There seemed to be a risk of her dropping in response when she believed that it would be no use listening if her answers were not checked [with the use of a transcript or by the teacher]. In this case, she said, "she preferred to self-study with the materials collected by myself."

To sum up, a few respondents raised the issue that some clips were not offered with transcripts. Such learners tended to depend on this resource when they had a difficulty in comprehending a clip and wanted to double check their comprehension. Interestingly, although transcripts were sought, the respondents held different views on the necessity of transcripts. For example, whilst Ha highlighted the necessity for a full transcript for every single listening clips, Trang did not find the offer of this help option very important, except for very difficult clips only. In An's case, she seemed to hold a contradictory view. Indeed, she and her group did not want to provide subtitles for the clip uploaded by them "so that the peers could practise listening skills more", she herself "read the subtitles while listening" since "if I had not used the subtitles, I would have found it very difficult to understand, I

could not listen." It seems that their views depended on their listening objectives and beliefs. What's more, it was revealed that different respondents used a transcript/subtitle differently. To illustrate, Hai took an approach that "First, I would cover sub [subtitle], did not look at it, then I would turn on sub and read it for the difficult segments of a clip and remember those words [the words that she could not catch without reading the subtitle]." In contrast, Minh followed the opposite approach, "For the videos with subtitles, I would focus on reading, would read them first, then I would listen." Their responses seem to trigger further considerations into how transcripts could be offered and used effectively and whether a priority would be for better temporary comprehension or for listening improvements in the long term. Whilst the unavailability of certain transcripts was mainly perceived as a barrier for individual learners' listening comprehension and objectives, the absence of a notification feature was highlighted by several active participants and indicated to impede their participation in the listening space and interactions with each other.

Affordance-related Barriers: The lack of notification feature

Participants were not informed of their peers' responses to their comments and in turn, their peers were not updated with their replies. Owing to this design limitation, May shared that "we could not know [responses] when we did not log in." and "to check whether anyone responded [to her comment], I had to scroll far up and down." Similarly, Trang said, "I had to revisit that clip and the comments to check whether anyone replied or not." In Ha's case, she mentioned the delay in updating their online discussion, "I used to leave my comments at the beginning of a week and log out. Until the weekend or the following week did I read their responses." She also took an example that she replied to Thu's comment and wondered, "Why were there no notifications such as 'Ha replied your comment'?"

Thus, none of the interlocutors were notified on how their 'conversation' was happening. Interestingly, regarding this limitation, a contrast between two sub-spaces, the discussion board on the project's site and the group's Facebook was made. The Facebook was reported to afford this feature well. As May said, "When I was just opening the Google page and typing the letter F for Facebook, soon appeared the notifications."

Notification and Learner Engagement

With attention to their mentions about this notification, it can be inferred that respondents experienced frustration to some extent because of spending unnecessary time and effort in retrieving peers' responses. The impact of the absent notification feature on learner engagement was evident in May's responses. She reported how she and her peers got engaged in the discussion on Facebook and became interactive when receiving notifications as follows,

> *It was a habit that when we opened Facebook and there was a notification, we would view it sooner or later… to check what it was about. And when we had viewed it, we would express our approval or disapproval, everyone would continue to comment.* (May)

Regarding the case of the YouListen page, its notification limitation seemed to discourage her login activity and extended discussion in this sub space by its failure to keep her informed of her peers' follow-up responses. This seemed to be implied in her suggestion that a notification feature should be afforded. She said,

> *For the YouListen page, how it could be that I could still know that there was someone responding to my comment without logging in so that I could discuss my comment in detail. I would log in only when I get to know that [her peer' response].* (May)

In short, the unavailability of the notification feature seemed to affect the learner's participation and interaction quality as the absence of this feature made it hard to know what

their peers were discussing or who were following their comments, and who, consequently, could not join their discussion or reply to peers' comments promptly. This effect was also partly supported by the fact that there was considerably greater frequency of access and interactivity on the group's Facebook. The limitations of asynchronous affordance only were also mentioned by one respondent, An.

Affordance-related Barriers: The limitations of asynchronous feature only

The interviewee, An, indicated a difficulty in making an online conversation with her peers due to the availability of asynchronous feature only, "It was not the case that my peers logged in while I was staying online". Besides, the content of a discussion had already got "too out of date" at the time she logged in. What's more, whilst she preferred synchronous conversations in the form of speech, she and her peers "just wrote things down". Noticeably, highlighting these limitations, she expressed her lack of interest in joining a discussion in the listening space. She said,

> *I did not find it interesting to write. It would be better to talk… I could respond them, but it was just after a period of time, long delay in responding, so I was not interested.* (An)

Thus, this respondent had preferences for immediacy or instant, synchronous communication and speaking. Importantly, it seems that only asynchronous availability was perceived to affect the expected interactivity of discussion among the learners and failed to match different learner preferences, which might have partly affected learner engagement.

8.4.3 Participants' Perceptions of Peers and Peer Impact on Student Engagement

In the social networked listening space, apart from the available resources and features, peers were the main, important individuals that a participant interacted with. In the

respondents' narratives, it was frequently mentioned how they perceived their peers and that peers contributed to their engagement in the listening space. It is evident that the respondents highly appreciated peers' merits or good points that were reported as getting them more engaged. Meanwhile they were critical of the unexpected behaviours and attitudes among several other peers. These were expressed to discourage them from less active engagement.

8.4.3.1 Peers' Merits and Their Impacts

There are three frequently mentioned merits about peers, namely *peers' support*, *peers' contributions* and *good rapport and close bond* to the listening 'community'.

(1) Peers' Support

Peers' support focuses on the support many interviewees acknowledged to receive from their peers. It can be suggested that the support frequently mentioned by them falls into the categories of emotional support, learning support and technical support. Many reported to have received the first two types of support and some said that they received support of all these types. Moreover, the picture of peers' support became clear with vivid accounts of occasions when a respondent got support from peers. Noticeably, their responses reveal that they appeared to have received much support from peers at the "backstage" of the listening space, not just on the website with various modes of delivery. Most importantly, upon perceiving peers' support, the respondents explicitly and frequently expressed their enquiring mind and acknowledgement of its usefulness in increasing their engagement, especially emotional engagement. Hereby is the analysis of the findings about emotional support, learning support and technical support respectively.

To start with, the perceived emotional support was reported to involve various nuances, such as peers' encouragement, friendliness and support of one's posts. In more

detail, peers' emotional support was well perceived and manifested in their acts of comforting such as reassuring their friend when she felt hesitant to leave a comment or had a difficulty in comprehending a clip. Let us consider Mai's acknowledgement of this support in her process of sharing a comment on the sites. Initially, she had a mixture of nervousness, shyness, lack of confidence and worries arising from possible face-threatening acts among peers. She shared, "I was afraid that everyone might remark that I am wrong, saying 'that's wrong', or my level is lower." Then, her fear of losing face was reported to be mastered since her peers were friendly, reassuring her that "everyone makes a mistake" and "it does not matter [when making a mistake]." Peers' emotional support for Ngoc could also be a typical example. When she confided to her peers that she could not understand a certain clip, her peers shared with her that they had also experienced the problem at first and comforted her that there was a high chance of overcoming it. As she put it,

> *I asked them, "I found it very difficult to listen. Why could you listen whilst I could not?" (Laugh). They shared that, "initially we all had such a problem, but you could better understand it if you listen to it many times and do more practice.* (Ngoc)

Another respondent, Cuc, highlighted the encouragement offered by her peer in the way that she was encouraged to 'stretch out' her potential or try her best for improvements in language skills in general and in expressing thoughts in English in particular. She said,

> *She [May] texted me a message and encouraged me to do the sharing, to speak English, to articulate thoughts, to collaborate effectively [with her] so that both of us could improve different [language] skills.* (Cuc)

Apart from the acts of comforting, reassuring and being friendly, peers were also perceived to provide emotional support by listening and doing activities with their small group's upload. The frequently mentioned and highly appreciated manifestations of this welcoming were leaving comments or answering the questions accompanied with the upload. It can be said that these manifestations are peers' welcoming with 'actions', not with just 'words' [i.e.

positive attitude]. Some respondents indicated that this welcoming was perceived as a source of support since the welcoming seemed to convey a message to them that their upload was worthwhile in the sense that the upload was useful to peers and the upload created a chance for more sharing or discussion. This can be well illustrated with the following comment by May, whose upload attracted 38 comments.

> *It was incredible that my upload was that much commented and paid interested in. Some showed their agreement [with the opinions in her shared clip] and some wondered how to improve [language skills], which provoked more discussion and opinions*. (May)

Secondly, in relation to *learning support*, peers were commonly perceived to provide this support with their feedback, help and experience related to language use and listening. Specifically, it was reported that peers gave feedback and did some adding or correcting when one made her mistakes such as grammar errors or failing to catch or correctly comprehend certain words or pieces of information or giving incorrect answers to the questions or tasks accompanied with a clip. For example, Mai found her peers supportive in telling her the correct answer to a listening comprehension question when they read her answer. She said,

> *Once the information that I could catch from a clip was not the right one to answer a question on the VoiceThread whilst other peers could listen for its right clues. They left comments and answered the question for me.* (Mai)

Trang added that her peers "explained in detail and enthusiastically" when she could not understand a clip. Different from this dominant pattern of help and feedback, the feedback that Cuc received drew her attention to the use of language forms and recommended her to use more written language. The feedback was, "You are always using the spoken language. Please use the written one."

Peers were also perceived to provide learning support by sharing their experience or good ways of listening effectively. The respondents reported to have been given this support when confiding that they found it difficult to understand or they could just catch words of similar sounds to the words that were actually spoken in a clip. Doing more practice, making a guess, recommending certain websites or programmes were several ways that were mentioned by them. The support mentioned by Ngoc in the following comment can be representative of this support.

> *Apart from the dialogues or clips there [in the listening space], I was recommended to do more listening with this and that to improve my listening skill…. Another peer [who could answer a listening comprehension question which was considered too difficult for her] told me that she made a guess, she listened for some key words and did the guessing.* (Ngoc)

Thirdly, in terms of the *technical support*, there was evidence of it when some respondents encountered technical problems such as log-in problems, difficulty in playing or downloading a clip, or making a post in the listening space. Let us have a look at several responses. Ngoc acknowledged this support as follows, "I said that I could not log in, so my peers made a try for me [to access the YouListen website with her account]." Similarly, An indicated that it was Na that helped her to sign in. Her acknowledgment of Na's helpfulness reminded me of the correspondence between me and Na in which Na requested my help, regarding An's log-in problem. Thus, Na's support can be said to go beyond her help "at hand" or within her ability and to have been done with great enthusiasm and determination. Perceiving peers' support, An also valued another peer in editing her group's collected clip at their wish. The last response that exemplifies well peers' technical support highlights how peers' practical support was given by Trang. In her case, she experienced the problem of poor Internet connection and, fortunately, her friends were hospitable and offered her to use the Internet.

Their responses showed that they were open-minded to their peers' feedback and experience sharing. Reviewing their own work or comments, listening again and taking chances of learning from peers were reported by them. This can be exemplified with the following comments.

> *I felt very excited [after receiving her peer's encouragement], so I tried to express about that clip…. I started to look back at mine [her comments] and started to use the written language more than the spoken.* (Cuc)

> *I listened again to double check whether their information [provided by her peers] was correct or not, whether such words were mentioned in the clip.* (Mai)

> *I gained experience for myself [from listening to a clip]. Also, my peers shared their experience, I made use of them, so I could enrich experience.* (Cuc)

> *They [her peers] did share with me what were the words actually spoken in the clip or indicated that they could easily be confused with other words and that the speakers [of the clip] pronounced them that way, so I learnt from those peers.* (Ngoc)

Peers' Support and Learner Engagement

When it comes to the role of peers' support in increasing learner engagement, some reported their increased level of listening and leaving comments public. For example, Trang reported that she did much listening and actively participated thanks to her friend's help with the Internet connection. Mai's engagement was also reported as experiencing an increase when she felt supported with her peers' emotional support. She said, "I went ahead [to leave comments public] … I just went ahead to participate enthusiastically (laughs)."

Apart from the increase in listening and sharing comments, positive emotional engagement was commonly and explicitly expressed when feeling supported by peers. In fact, such negative feelings as nervousness and fears related to listening or leaving comments were reported to ease, even disappear. Instead, their responses reveal the prevalence of happy feelings that they experienced when the phrase 'very happy' became their buzzword. To

illustrate, May expressed her joys when many of her peers followed her upload of a collected clip. She seemed to further emphasize this feeling by acknowledgement of peers' support when giving an imaginary situation in which peers' comments had not been given. She said,

> *Imagine now that we make a post without anyone paying interest in, just viewing or leaving a 'like'. It would be boring since this would possibly mean many things, like they left 'like' so that we could have a feeling of less self-pity.* (May)

Like May, Trang was very happy since her peers welcomed her group's posts. She said,

> *Very fortunately, our peers were sympathetic, so I felt very happy … I found it very interesting and fun. Receiving our peers' responses [to our posts], I felt very happy, we were not criticised at all*. (Trang)

It is also evident in Trang's following comment that she had other positive manifestations of emotional engagement, namely willingness to invest time in doing collaborative work and sharing. Besides, peers' support for her group's clip upload was perceived to increase her sense of community. As she put it,

> *Thanks to it [peers' support of one's upload], I had a feeling, feeling more motivated to participated, helping to increase spirits and time in doing group work, sharing with each other.* (Trang)

(2) Peers' contributions

Peers' contributions to the listening 'community' is a theme concerned with the recognized contributions that many peers made for the listening 'community', including sharing listening clips, showing enthusiasm in discussing and engaging others to listen and doing fun 'community' activities.

Let us consider peers' contributions of listening clips first. It is a fact that peers shared clips which were either collected mainly from free download resources on websites like on the YouTube, or they were made by themselves. It is immediately apparent from the responses that their contributions of listening clips were widely acknowledged. To justify this

acknowledgement, some indicated that they might not have had chances to get to know such clips, or useful information mentioned in the clips, without peers' recommendations. Trang said, "I found that my peers managed to find 'strange' ['never seen before'/unique] videos or audios that I had never watched before." Similarly, May talked to herself or had her inner speech as follows,

> *Oh, yes! Why had I not been able to find that?*
>
> *Why had I not known it before?*
>
> *In the listening clip, there are tips that until now have I got to know, they have already known about it for ages.* (May)

Their acknowledgement of peers' contributions can also be traced back from numerous perceived merits of these peer-recommended listening resources. The most frequently indicated merits were their appropriateness, 'test approval', usefulness and interest. The appropriateness mentioned by the respondents refers to the appropriateness of contributions in terms of their listening challenge level or suitable topics or topics of their interest. Meanwhile, Minh's comment below illustrates well another meaning of appropriateness, "I find that those videos [the videos shared by peers] are appropriate, about the kinds of things that we often make mistakes."

As mentioned by Sinh, the possible reason why her peers could recommend the clips of an appropriate level lies in the fact that they were their classmates. Another respondent added the same age factor. How could the same class and the same age be attributes to peers' choosing appropriate clips? Both gave exactly the same answer: namely that, thanks to these factors, their peers probably understood how well they could listen. They commented as follows,

> *We are of the same age, my peers could understand what our listening level was like, and so they uploaded the listening clips that are more suitable for our level, for our age.* (Na)

> *On VoiceThread, they and I learn together in class, so they know what my listening ability was like. We could listen to them though they were not very simple. Almost all of their clips were selected to suit our listening ability.* (Sinh)

Thus, it can be realized that peers' potential to recommend appropriate clips was recognized. This potential seems to be attributed to the fact that the learners had similar backgrounds and had previously participated in activity and other 'communities' together.

As regards the interest and usefulness, these merits were mainly concerned with the topics and content of clips. They were mentioned repeatedly but often briefly, as overall impressions or general comments. Some provided more details, indicating that they were useful since they focused on listening skills, especially on how to improve this language skill. Let us take Minh and Sinh's comments as examples.

> *There [on the Facebook page], the peers shared their videos. I found them useful, those are about ways of listening better.* (Minh)

> *I found that the peers' listening clips were virtually about the listening skill, improving listening. I found them very correct and useful.* (Sinh)

Noticeably, there seemed to be trust in peers and their recommended listening materials among several respondents. In fact, peers' recommended clips were considered reliable in terms of interest and usefulness when it was commonly believed that they had already been endorsed by peers. This belief or trust appears to have contributed to the respondents' positive attitudes towards listening materials, which, in turn, possibly affects their engagement in listening to them to some extent. The following comments can be representative for this trust.

> *I thought it [a clip] must have been interesting enough for my peers to share with everyone. I find it very useful to listen to such clips.* (Na)

> *I liked to listen to the clips introduced by my peers. It was likely that only when my peers had listened and found it O.K, did they share it public. Therefore, such information was grounded and in fact, thanks to it, we did not have to search for it, to verify it.* (May)

Peers were commonly perceived to contribute to the shared resources, an important component of their listening 'community'. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the acknowledgement was not for all peers' uploads and certain uploads could be viewed differently, even conversely by different respondents. To illustrate, whilst many respondents acknowledged listening skill-related clips as mentioned above, some others did not. For example, Ha showed her low interest in 'how to' clips. She explained that

> *Let's say videos about the ways of listening or reading effectively, there are so many ways. However, it is impossible that they can be suitable for everyone. I wanted to find out a way that works for me by myself.* (Ha)

She also commented that some clips were too easy for her. Further understanding about the lack of acknowledgement is also evident in An's comment, "There is nothing special about those videos [videos also uploaded by peers in the Facebook sub-space]." Thus, it seems that whether peers' contribution of listening material is recognized depends much on the learner's needs, listening ability, preferences, etc.

Peers' Contributions and Learner Engagement

The last striking feature about peers' contributions of listening clips is that while making acknowledgements of these, the respondents shared more details which revealed some evidence of their positive engagement relating to this acknowledgement. For example, May and Minh expressed feelings of curiosity and eagerness about peers' sharing listening materials, as mentioned in their following responses.

> *First, I felt curious, did not know what my peers shared, so I had a go [at listening].* (Minh)

> *I did look forward [to videos to be shared by peers], to see what their videos or sources of listening materials would be like.* (May)

Minh added that she paid attention to listening and spent time in listening when her peers shared listening clips. In another case, Mai's response reveals her active engagement in listening and her effort in extending listening chances. Specifically, she came up with the idea of downloading the clips shared by her peers for future use, managed to store them on her phone, and maintained her listening practice with them. She said:

> *I used to download the videos that my peers uploaded, I would… continue to listen to them even when they updated new clips.* (Mai)

Apart from acknowledging peers' contribution of listening materials, the respondents explicitly and repeatedly commended that the majority of peers were active or enthusiastic. This perception is considered an important finding, since learners' presence or enthusiasm might not be fully revealed and observed from their online activity. It is noted that the respondents mentioned their peers as a collective noun. In other words, the respondents tended to refer them to either their small sub-group or the peers in general, not specific individuals. Therefore, the subject 'peers' used by them should be understood accordingly. It was evident in the respondents' comments that peers' enthusiasm was shown in doing group work, discussing, and engaging others to listen and discuss. Indeed, it was much highlighted that many peers actively searched, listened to clips, shared their comprehension and provided feedback for each other. Here are several representative comments.

> *There were so many active peers.* (Cuc)

> *Without a doubt, they were very active, sharing 'I could hear this, I could not hear that' and sharing thoughts, views with each other.* (Trang)

> *I found some groups were really enthusiastic. They did quite a great job. They discussed together, then started to study, to search videos and shared them with their groups.* (Hang)

Noticeably, it was mentioned that several peers were active in making announcements about an update in the listening space and mobilizing their friends to listen and join a discussion that was related to the newly uploaded clips, as in the comments by Hang and Ngoc.

> *They also told us in class, "Today, we have just uploaded a clip. Log in and enjoy it.* (Hang)

> *They gave a notice, encouragement, "There has been a new clip. Those who have not listened to it, please listen, then we can discuss."* (Ngoc)

Another noticeable manifestation of peers' enthusiasm is the third-year participants' extending their project-related discussions beyond the project's listening space, mainly in their classroom and other social media like Facebook and Zalo. As reported by Ngoc, her peers used to discuss their thoughts of clips, their listening comprehension or answers to certain questions about the clips available in the listening space, difficulties or problems related to listening right in their class and on the class's Facebook page. She said,

> *On that page [the YouListen website], there was no answer key, you know. I found that my peers… one expressed this, another expressed that. They had a discussion, kind of not being sure who is right, who is wrong, kind of debate, discussion.* (Ngoc)

Importantly, their peers' perceived that active, enthusiastic participation seemed pervasive such that learners became more engaged in the listening space. Increased engagement in terms of more active participation, positive emotions, motivation and willingness to listen and participate were reported.

> *Many peers participated, so I participated enthusiastically, too.* (Ly)

> *I felt very happy when my peers actively contributed their opinions.* (Na)

> *Some peers gave comments on the same listening clip so many times, they were very hard-working. I thought I had learnt to work hard from them… I felt motivated [to listen and discuss.* (Sinh)

Another example is that, although their peers' project-related discussion seemed to remain at the surface level and focussed more on the wrong or right answers, it seemed to have the potential of engaging learners. This was indicated in Ngoc's comment, "Hearing peers talking [having abovementioned discussions], I felt like having a go." The last commonly expressed attribute to peers' value is their *bond and rapport*.

(3) Peers' Close bond and Good Rapport

A community of peers was perceived to bring about a sense of bonding. Noticeably, this feeling of strong relatedness was indicated to come from both the learners' own pre-established groups and the project's listening group. Their existing groups were their class, university, and close friends. Based on the respondents' comments, it can be inferred that since they had already been in these groups, they continued to have a sense of relatedness or bond with each other in their 'new' group - which is the project's group. They even felt closer to each other.

Mai repeatedly mentioned that the members of the VoiceThread sub-space were familiar from the group that had already existed; that is, from their class. She explicitly expressed her feelings of relatedness: "on the VoiceThread page, the members are our own class, all classmates only. I felt closer to my classmates." She seemed to acknowledge and express her preference for having a boundary for the listening group, or just her acquaintances, or those she shared a bond with through participating in the listening group with her. Meanwhile, Na's response showed that peers could bring about a sense of bond by being collaborative while doing group work and maintaining a conversation or discussion in the listening space. As she put it:

> *We searched listening materials to upload on the site together, which reinforced our friendship… there might be a case that we did not talk to each other in class, but in this listening space, my peers left comments and I replied, so… better relationship.* (Na)

It seems that comfort and participation level depend on how well the members had already known each other before joining the listening group. Mai reported that she felt more comfortable and motivated to participate on the VoiceThread page since there were only her classmates on this page. Meanwhile, there were others that she did not know [the second-year group] on the YouListen site, so she felt shy to do her sharing.

Regarding peers' rapport, a mutual understanding and an easy, natural communication were reported. Apart from peers' good understanding of one's listening ability (which has already been mentioned in the *peers' contributions* section), a better grasp of what other interlocutors meant and even their shared thoughts or points of view were evident. Cuc's response illustrates this. She shared that she and her peers like May seemed to tune into their own and each other's lines or streams of thoughts about a listening clip and, as a result, they could maintain a natural, responsive conversations and attain their own aims of making these conversations. As she put it,

> *We had a feeling that we were following a direction, a line of thoughts about the materials, so we could interact with each other that naturally.* (Cuc)

8.4.3.2 Several Limitations of Peers and Their Impact

It can be said that the interviewees' perceptions of peers were a picture of contrasts in which some peers were acknowledged with their merits and others were criticized for their limitations. The critiques were given to either individual peers or posting groups and focused on peers' engagement on the Facebook or VoiceThread pages.

At the individual level, the most common complaints centred on peers' surface interaction - in the ways of contributing simply redundant comments, just lurking and/or free-riding when collaborating with other members for a clip upload. The redundant comments were those that were lacking useful information, ceremonious, or non-discursive. They also referred to comments that were drawn from the previous contributions, as mentioned by Trang: "several previous comments had already covered what to say, some peers just seemed to summarize those comments." Examples of lcomments that were too were repeatedly given, such as "this video is interesting", "thank you", "yes", "no" or 'like' comments. These comments attracted strong disapproval for their failure to create or maintain an in-depth discussion on a listening clip or listening experiences among the learners. An, one of the strong critics of such comments shook her head and remarked that,

> *I found that they mainly accessed the site to listen, not much discussion… I found that my peers left a comment, "this video is interesting", general*. (An)

Similarly, Cuc complained that some of her peers said "just 'thank you', 'yes' or 'no'" and condemned such comments. She said, "I did not need 'like' comments or 'thank you' at all."

There might be an argument that these critical judgements could be useful in building up an affective structure for the 'listening community'. However, for these participants, the need for social interaction that had little to do with listening and content appeared secondary. Instead, their priority seemed about taking the chance of leaving comments to co-construct knowledge related to listening in general and the content of a listening clip in particular.

Another manifestation of peers' surface interaction that seems to have gained more criticism was their 'lurking'. Some active participants spent much of the interview complaining about this, with recurring phrases such as *just viewed*, *just read*, *did not share*, *very reluctant to share, did not reply actively*. Typically, Cuc complained, "They did not

share with me, they just read my comments." Hang even reported that, "some logged out as soon as they had finished listening [to a clip]." Thus, some peers seemed to even show apathy towards interacting with peers.

Apart from the prevalence of inactive interaction in the discussion boards, the existence of free-riders in small groups was reported by some. These respondents did not use the term 'free riders' but complained about some peers for being absent from group work discussions, dependent, irresponsible, inactive or making no contribution. The portrait of free-riders became highly visible when some respondents cited these peers' direct speech such as

> *Some did not want to take responsibility, saying, 'come on, you do it …you do it for me since I am very busy these days … 'there are some people in my group, not only me, so just leave work for them.'* (May)

> *Some just listened [to the videos collected by group] and said, "Oh, you guys can choose whatever [clip] you want …just choose one to upload."* (An)

At the group level, other limitations were indicated. For example, a lack of responsivity to viewers was reported by Ha: "Some peers uploaded that clip, but did not check our comments, did not care whatever we said." Ha may have identified this limitation because she and other members who left comments for that clip may have felt unsure whether their comprehension of the clip was right: they needed final answers from the posting group. Besides, the lack of investment for an upload such as spending little time in collaborating or discussing with each other was mentioned.

There were some groups where each of their members assigned a share of group work to do or study, then the members just put their work together rather than spending time to discuss with each other. It seems that there was concern about the quality of peer posting and the need for further discussion and negotiation while doing group work. Hang added a

common problem of peers' using their mother tongue instead of English, the target language, saying "They also spoke Vietnamese. My own group, too, doing group work but just used Vietnamese." The possible reasons for this problem might be that they felt unconfident to use English in discussion, or they might have had a fear of making mistakes in speaking English. The last limitation is related to designing and presenting listening tasks for a clip to be uploaded. Hai mentioned this limitation, "Some did not know how to create a task for us. Also, I could find their answer key right next to their post… They may have forgotten [separating them]."

Evidently, there were still members who were perceived as not active and interactive enough in both the whole community and their small group activities. Importantly, it seems implied in these complaints the expectations of peers and posting groups and so there were perceived impacts of peers' limitations on their variations in engagement in the listening space.

Interwoven in their complaints are possible explanations that they thought applied to some peers and small groups. Interestingly, the respondents stated freely many assumptions behind the possible reasons for their peers' surface engagement. They were all related to these peers' own characteristics and the *voluntary* nature of the listening 'community', rather than to social relationships among the members. They can help us to understand processes underlying the learners' engagement in the project's listening space.

Reasons for superficial engagement in online discussions given by the interviewees can be grouped into reasons related to design, to the learners themselves, to logistic reasons and to cultural traits. First, there was a design-related reason: whilst the voluntary nature of the project was well appreciated and understood to have a positive impact on learner

engagement (as discussed earlier in the sub-section 8.4.2.1), it was presumed by some interviewees to have a counter-acting effect for some of their peers. As Cuc puts it,

> *Since there was nothing compulsory, nothing affected them [i.e. not course requirements, no assessment, marking scheme], they tended to be dependent [on others], not to participate actively.* (Cuc)

Regarding learner-related reasons, interviewees made their presumption that some peers' low responsiveness was because of: their listening purpose and approach, limited listening ability, lack of good spirits for community, self-consciousness of own social identity, personality, and low frequency of access to the listening space or low motivation for L2 listening.

> *They are always listening [IELTS practice test books] from book 1 to book 9, try to practise listening to those all the time ... they are apathetic about such topics [topics about life, etc.]* (Hang)

> *I suppose they did not log in frequently, so they did not notice others' comments.* (Hanh)

Furthermore, some peers' low interactivity in online discussions was thought to be for logistic reasons such as going back to their hometown or exam preparations.

Apart from reporting the existence of surface engagement in discussion and posting among certain peers and giving possible explanations, respondents shared their negative changes in participation and their feelings associated with perceived thwarts of peers. Noticeably, these perceived thwarts can affect different learners differently - in ways that some were just affected emotionally, some even a decline in participation level and some others even deciding to quit sharing comments. The respondents seemed to be conscious of the value of interaction with peers. The commonly experienced negative emotions were

frustration, sadness, disappointment and boredom (losing interest). For example, Cuc shared that she "was frustrated very often" when her peers just sent too many surface comments, instead of creating a thread of clip or a listening-focused discussion. Trang reported her feeling of sadness when a posting group did not respond to her difficulty in playing the clip uploaded by that group as follows,

> *I felt kind of that they [the posting group] did not care …No response of theirs, I felt sad, I did not say any more [in the comment section on the VoiceThread for the clip], feeling a bit self-pitied.* (Cuc)

Such negative emotions appear to affect learners' engagement. As Ly put it, "Feeling rather sad about their low participation, I felt less motivated to participate."

From mentioning that the perceived limitations of peers affected learners' behavioural engagement, a sucker effect (Kerr, 1983) can be inferred among some participants. In their responses, they indicated that their peers' surface engagement was responsible for their less active participation. Indeed, Ha, a very active participant, shared that she did have lurking behaviours of just skimming too general comments. Two further exemplifying comments are as follows,

> *There were just a few of us, several active participants. Since we were active whilst those peers did not participate, we were rather frustrated … I logged in less frequently. (Cuc)*

> *It lies in the fact that not many participated actively, some peers like me felt reluctant, participated less actively. (Thu)*

Tthe sucker effect did seem to be temporary and not serious, so it did not contribute to the active participants' attrition. This might be because the active participants may have enjoyed more intrinsic motivation when participating in the listening space.

To sum up, interviewees reported that there was inactivity among members and small groups in the listening group. Their surface engagement was 'visible' with the manifestations discussed above and were judged to make online interactions "not very useful" (An) and, more seriously, to leave a negative impact on other members' engagement, behaviourally and emotionally (decreased engagement and negative emotions experienced). Therefore, the respondents' critiques of certain peers as 'rotten apple spoils the barrel', could be understood. It seems that meaningful interactions among the members of the 'community' were desired and defined a favourable condition for sustaining learners' engagement in the listening space.

8.4.4 Learners' Self and Its Impact on Their Engagement

Learners' self or subjectivity expresses the idea that a learner imports their own "self" such as concerns, beliefs, etc. when participating. This "self" appears to help learners make informed decisions on the level, quality and manner of their engagement. The "self" is also considered to mediate the influence of the context on student engagement.

8.4.4.1 Learners' Concerns

One of the most noticeable themes identified is the learners' concerns about the right or wrong of their public comments, although they knew that the listening space was for free sharing and discussion and there was no assessment of right or wrong. Specifically, they were concerned whether they themselves or their friends applied correct use of grammar and vocabulary, correct pronunciation or comprehension of a listening clip, etc.

Owing to these concerns, participants tended to have certain behaviours accordingly. Indeed, some were conscious of their mistakes and tried to correct them. As Hai, the only participant to leave her voice comment on the VoiceThread page, shared,

> "*I left a comment as a reply to their question What is it, giving my answer right away, but then I noticed that my grammar … and my speaking … Therefore, I deleted all that comment, then wrote it out (laugh), then I read it again (laugh).*" (Hai)

Meanwhile, others took the chance of leaving comments in order to have their mistakes corrected by peers. For instance, Mai explicitly explained that her purpose of leaving comments was to invite everyone to correct mistakes for her. With this use of comments, the comment section of the listening space became "the hub for peer correction", as Hạnh commented.

Noticeably, there was one high level of concern mentioned by many. That was the fear of making mistakes with grammar, spelling, pronunciation, or the fear of sharing wrong comprehension or opinions. Their fear appears related to their self-perceived language proficiency, as Mai shared, "My grammar is poor and I do not have much vocabulary, so although I could listen for a word [in a clip], I did not know how to write it down". In other cases, the fear seems to arise from their wish to save 'face'. Indeed, 'perfect' comments were to be made because "it is like there are others better at English. If I make a mistake, I will feel shy, like that, very likely to feel shy." (Tam). Some reported that they were afraid of making mistakes because their peers might spot them (Hai), might think that 'my [listening] performance is worse than theirs' (Mai), or even might reprimand them (Trang). Thus, making mistakes really matters for them, since they believed that their 'face' could be threatened. Also, the fear of 'face' threatening seems to be both the source and the subsequent result of a fear of making mistakes. In other words, since learners wish to save 'face', they are worried about making mistakes. In turn, once they have the fear of making mistakes, they tend to experience the fear of losing 'face' as well. The fears seem to be interwoven.

Talking about such fears, respondents openly revealed the impact of these fears on their engagement. To be specific, the fears seemingly allowed some participants to go ahead, even to become more engaged but, in many cases, could considerably discourage them from actively engaging. Starting with the positive impact: some reported that they therefore spent more time and effort to get a satisfactory comment or a clip ready for sharing with their peers. This can be illustrated in the following comments.

> *(Laugh) In fact, when I made a post on the Facebook page, I had had considered very much, I meant I had considered each word.* (Tam)

> *Before loading our video clip, we rehearsed many times, listened again andagain.* (Trang)

> *Our writing [comment] represents us, therefore always so, when we express, write, say something, that is to represent our perspective, our identity, so we must think carefully, we do not let others easily judge us (Laugh).* (May)

By contrast, it was commonly expressed that there was hesitation, fear, even decision not to post a clip or leave comments (especially voice comments), owing to such fears.

> *Like me, my peers may have felt reluctant; because of nonstandard pronunciation and incorrect grammar, they did not like to leave a voice comment…. I am afraid of pronouncing incorrectly and being noticed by peers.* (Hai)

The negative impact of the fears partly explains why some infrequently, even rarely, left a comment. One respondent reported that her engagement increased considerably when she came to understand that she was at low risk of losing 'face'

> *There [in the listening space], everyone made mistakes, not only me; therefore, I just wrote out what I could listen for, gradually I participated much.* (Mai)

Thus, fears do seem to be related to withdrawal of engagement among several participants. Their alternative activities were listening, viewing and discussing with their own small group, which were considered to mitigate their fears. As Ngoc said,

I still listened but discussed with only those … my group of friends. I felt less reluctant and ashamed of my listening performance. (Ngoc)

All things considered, it is evident that learners' concerns about right or wrong are common. They arose during the time they engaged in the listening space and had impact on the level and manner of their engagement. One explanation for such concerns might be that they had already been accustomed to a way of thinking that listening to English meant doing practice tests. In doing such tests, they would be mainly interested in whether they are doing right or wrong. Another possible reason is that the intrinsically shared nature of the space might make a learner conscious that what he/she shares is viewed and judged by others. Their concerns about right or wrong in their comments or other uploads seem to be a matter of saving 'face'. Noticeably, different learners had their different, even contrasting, behavioural engagement in response to their concerns about right or wrong. For instance, some paid more attention, exerted more effort for their posts, were willing to share, and were open minded and perceptive to peers' feedback. Meanwhile, others chose to be cautious, to lurk, even to withdraw.

8.4.4.2 Learners' Beliefs about out-of-classs listening

Some learners' opinions seem to be inherent already in themselves and some were seemingly shaped by their interactions with this listening space. This theme is of great significance since it can relate to the possible advantages as well as challenges that the listening space might have presented in engaging participants. It can therefore furnish a useful understanding of why participants engaged in the listening space in a certain way and level.

8.4.4.2.1 Learners' Beliefs about Listening in Interactions with Peers

There was a strong positive consensus on the principle of a listening practice that involves individual listening followed by interactions with peers. It can be concluded that they valued this potential, in contrast with the practice of solitary listening. There were only a few mentions about its function for merely socializing or entertainment, whereas its learning value was very frequently indicated. The social function can be well illustrated in Thu's comment, "I would have chances to talk more to my friends and would feel closer to them." In terms of its learning value, learning from peers was widely acknowledged. To be specific, it was their belief that they could obtain better comprehension of a certain clip while interacting with peers. In addition, the perceived learning values were gains in listening experience, improvements in their English listening and a broadened understanding of issues raised in clips. As Ly put it,

> *I suppose if there is discussion, sharing with peers, we could learn more their experience, therefore we could improve, make progress in study and gain more experience…. the result would be better.* (Ly)

According to them, these learning values could be anticipated because of three main opportunities to take during interactions with peers. Firstly, it was the chance to compare each other's listening comprehension of a clip and negotiate its meaning. This can be well illustrated in Hai's response. She gave an example of how a thorough understanding of a clip could be obtained from negotiation with peers as follows,

> *I could ask my peer how she could listen for that information, what the words I could not catch were, why she chose this answer, not another answer like mine. We could discuss like that to see whose answer was right. We could not know whether our answer was wrong or right when doing solitary listening. Even checking answer key, we could just know the answer, we could not understand why the answer should be so.* (Hai)

Another good opportunity of peer interaction frequently highlighted was the chance of helping and supporting each other. Highlighting this opportunity comes from common situations in which "this peer could listen but that peer could not" (Lan) or "there are some peers whose listening method is not effective" (Ngoc). In these situations, interacting with peers was considered helpful, since one could receive sharing and support such as answers and explanation from peers, or one could join peers to "make correction and contribute ideas" (Hanh). Ngoc further emphasized this advantage of peer interaction by considering solitary listening only as a situation in which poor listeners are neglected. She said, "It is like that 'it is you that helps yourself, no one helps'. If so, I feel that those who are good listeners can still listen well and those who are poor listeners can either make progress or still listen badly." Tam indicated her awareness of learning benefits from helping peers such that the act of helping can be beneficial for both those who offer help and those who receive it.

> *I find helping peers is like one time of learning… one can remember [what has been learnt while helping peers] very well and for a very long time, better and longer than learning alone.* (Tam)

Finally, the opportunity that was mentioned most was the chance of building up and making use of the shared reservoir of clip-related information, thoughts, experiences, listening materials of interest - as well as the learners' own listening experience, general knowledge and ideas. The shared resources were identified as helpful in gaining a more comprehensive view of listening-related issues or issues raised in the content of a clip, improving one's listening, or enriching one's knowledge and experience.

> *I find out that each person has his/her own view of an issue and one more point is that the opinion I put forward might not be right or interesting… I can find this source [of listening materials] while other peers can find another source. Therefore, to some extent, I could better understand about the world; thanks to others, my level of understanding could increase.* (Thu)

> *For example, I draw my own experience from listening to a clip and my peers have their own experiences, too, so I could gain further from theirs… If we just had our own experience, we could never develop. I think sharing [experience] is better.* (Cuc)

Nevertheless, belief about the potential of interactive listening practice might not ensure that a learner would prefer to adopt it for their out-of-class listening. Yet 14 out of 17 expressed without reluctance their interest and desire to listen with interactions within a group owing to its benefits. While two of the respondents, An and Minh, expressed their preference for solitary listening and asserted that they had no intention of doing listening practice in a group. An showed her apathy towards self study within a group despite perceiving the activities of sharing and discussing as helpful. She said,

> *It is good to discuss, do the sharing since there is some [information] that one cannot listen for whilst peers can, but still not a listening group [she shook her head]… I think that for the solitary listening, I could get to understand a clip if I keep listening. Still, if there is discussion with peers, I think it can be clearer, better.* (An)

To justify, An said that this group was because of her particular personality. Although other things said imply her apathy might also come from a disappointing experience in the project's listening space, when some of her peers did not satisfy her expectations. Likewise, in Minh's case. Although she found it quite interesting and useful to share thoughts about listening materials with each other, she preferred to "act alone" and had "no intention of sharing her thoughts". She also said that "if you [the project team] post listening clips, I will listen to them, but if you tell me to do group work, it is more challenging." In her view, when she listened alone, she "would pay more concentration" and continued to indicate that "For working in groups, I found it ineffective." Moreover, she perceived herself as quiet and "more suitable for solitary learning". She seemed to imply that being active or inactive by nature involves different engagement patterns in the following comment.

> *I found your project's activities suitable for those who are active and enthusiastic, which I find interesting. However, for those who are less active, they would feel reluctant to participate. Those who are like me just prefer viewing, watching other peers doing activities.* (Minh)

In comparison with An and Minh, Ha was more inclined to the interactive listening practice. She indicated some conditions for her participation in this practice. That is, work checking should be afforded, individual listening should be done before they gather to discuss and peer interaction should be interactive dialogues. Her following comments illustrate this.

> *But it [peer interaction] would not be effective if my answers were not checked. In this case, I would rather listen alone with the materials collected by myself. (*Ha)

> *I find learning in interaction with peers… I suppose it would be more effective if I self study alone since it would be … to gather to listen. (*Ha)

Learners' Beliefs about Peer Interaction and Learner Engagement

Learners' belief about the potential of peer interaction appeared to match with their practice of maintaining and extending the YouListen project-related discussions face-to-face (mainly in class) or on other social media such as Zalo and Facebook. Their discussions were specifically about the clips on the sites, listening content, technical problems (i.e. problems of sign-in, playing a clip, editing a clip for upload), and difficulty in understanding a clip or catching certain words in a recording, post updates, and mutual mobilization/encouragement. Noticeably, three interviewees, Tam, Sinh, and Hanh confided that making interactions with peers had already now been employed by them as a way of learning for improving their English in general and listening skill in particular. They had their own small English self-study groups whose members were close friends. Specifically, Tam had a 2-member face-to-face group for IELTS preparations, Sinh's group was on Zalo, consisted of 9 members, and

had been maintained for more than one year. Hanh's group made use of both Facebook and Zalo, with the number of members fluctuated within 3-9.

Importantly, some respondents articulated their beliefs in the benefits of peer interactions for their positive feelings. Several common negative feelings that are experienced when doing the solitary listening were believed to mitigate or be absent. Instead, such positive feelings as interest, and happy feelings were anticipated. The sources of such positive emotional changes were indicated to come from the chances of together sharing ideas and supporting each other. May's responses illustrate this. She anticipated experiencing a feeling of interest because the interactive listening practice "requires understanding and defending one's own opinion" and involves how "one puts forward an opinion, others leave comments." For her, a feeling of interest seemed more unlikely to be experienced in the solitary listening practice. She said,

> *I would feel more interested, compared with just sitting alone, isolated, sitting then just understanding it a little, failing to fill in the gaps [she might have taken an example of completing a specific listening task, that is, a gap-filling task], then feeling frustrated. I would prefer listening practice that has interactions, has peers with me.* (May)

Similarly, Lan implied the potential of the interactive listening practice to mitigate the feeling of frustration that she faced when listening to a difficult clip alone. She said,

> *Imagine we learn in a group, the peer who can listen explains to the peer who cannot. By contrast, in the situation of listening alone, sometimes I feel really frustrated when I do not understand anything [about a clip].* (Lan)

Another negative feeling, anxiety, was believed unlikely to be experienced by Ngoc. As she put it,

> *If I do not understand a clip, I will have a discussion with peers and might not feel nervous or afraid for failing to listen, since if I do wrong and my peers correct for me, I will be open-minded.* (Ngoc)

She further added that peer interaction might play a role in motivating her to exert more effort since it was considered a chance for her to contrast herself versus others. She said,

> *I suppose if I participate in this [listening in interactions with peers], I will make more effort to listen or ask peers since I feel unconfident, feel that I cannot listen.* (Ngoc)

To sum up, all the respondents held positive attitudes towards the practice of listening to English in interactions with peers. This interactive listening was believed to bring about certain social and, especially, learning values by potentially affording three main chances. They are the chances of self and mutually monitoring listening comprehension, helping and supporting each other and deploying shared resources. The respondents' positive attitudes appeared to be echoed in their extending project-related discussions face to face or discussing on other social media. However, positive attitudes may not necessarily *ensure* that learners would prefer, deploy and get highly engaged with the interactive listening or encourage development of a group in the future. There seemed to be an interplay of different factors affecting willingness to follow the interactive listening practice, such as the learner's personality or characteristics, previous experience, belief in utility value, and spirits for their community. The final interesting key finding is that there seemed to be a prospect of increased emotional engagement among learners in the interactive listening, especially when one faces a difficult-to-understand clip, as some respondents contrasted this listening practice with solitary listening and frequently mentioned their anticipation of experiencing more interest and excitement and less frustration with the interactive listening.

8.4.4.2.2 Learners' Views on the Listening Materials

In the learners' responses about their view of materials for out-of-class listening, it was evident that they became engaged differently in accordance with different types of materials. Specifically, although both test-oriented and extensive listening materials were valued, the former was given greater priority by most of the respondents.

Cuc and Hang noted that giving priority to test-oriented materials was too common among the learners. Cuc said, "As students, we all always target at practice test books." Minh can be seen a typical case of prioritizing these materials. She commented: "During exam preparation time, I used to listen to the set of 10 Cambridge test books" and directly made a request to the interviewer, "if you have any links to books like Cambridge IELTS, please share them with me so I could practice with them on my own."

By contrast, on the one hand extensive listening materials were considered helpful for improving listening, practicing pronunciation and enriching vocabulary, such usefulness seemed not enough for them to be a priority. Cuc highlighted the potential of test-oriented materials on the other hand.

> *There are loads of different topics in extensive listening materials. One who is hard-working, determined to listen can enrich vocabulary and improve listening skills… might still get good marks without need to focus too much on listening for tests.* (Cuc)

However, she stated her strong preference for test-oriented materials later, "I like practice test materials very much." (Cuc). In other cases, this type of material was considered "not very necessary" (Mai) and was done in free time and with the computer already turned on (Ha). Also, many learners were reported, "to do little listening for topics about social issues or others" (Hang). Regarding the future use of these materials, Ly only intended to pay more attention or make more investment in extensive listening when having attained a certain level

of performing listening tasks. As she put it, "I think if I can do most of the listening tasks assigned by my teacher, I might do more extensive listening."

Importantly, more effort and concentration when listening to the former was reported by some and predicted by others. For instance, Minh stated, "when listening to those materials [test-oriented ones], I would concentrate and exert effort as much as I could." Thu anticipated the chance that one would invest more concentration, since when listening to the test-oriented resources he/she "knows what to focus on, or what to listen for." Meanwhile, some reported their experience of positive feelings like interest, relaxation, sense of competence when listening to the latter - the extensive listening materials. These positive feelings were elaborated with reference to comprehensible input, diverse topics and recording forms (i.e. videos), pressure and boredom free from answering comprehension questions.

> *Seeing films can be less monotonous than just listening and writing answers.* (Ngoc)

> *I sometimes like to listen extensively since I am not forced to answer this or that, but just write out what I can listen for. Also, such free topics make diversity, there are numerous genres [of clips].* (Trang)

Surprisingly, it seems that learners tended to accept the monotony, pressure and tiredness and even exert more effort and concentration when listening to test-oriented listening materials. Conversely, they tended to get less engaged or even give up if they found extensive listening materials challenging, which is mentioned in the sub-theme *Learners' Perceptions of the Challenge Level of the YouListen Clips*. In addition, it appeared that the learners held the belief that the feeling of interest and sense of competence with extensive listening materials cannot reassure them that they do not have to be worried when they faced real listening tests.

> *I find listening test books of a higher level, more difficult, I must try to listen, put more effort.* (Minh)

> *I can sometimes listen and understand all of a clip when listening extensively… when sitting an exam, there is a possibility that I cannot listen for anything or I may feel pressured.* (Hai)

Even in May's case, she expressed her boredom and stress with listening to test papers but added her prediction that these materials might increase learner's concentration. She said,

> *The exams like TOEIC, IELTS or TOEFL, they just allow to listen, not to see [clips for tests are in audio, not in videos], which is boring; listening to complete tasks, do the gap filling makes my brain very strained … but I guess listening that way seems to enhance listening ability since one must concentrate much.* (May)

Thus, learners' attitudes and engagement with listening materials seemed to be influenced by their test-orientation. In fact, respondents' elaborations of why the test-oriented materials were given priority, and why more concentration and effort were put into listening to these materials, appeared to be related to their test-orientation. Mai stated: "every student prefers good marks." Hang mentioned a possibility that her peers might have a conception that "practising listening means listening to do tests or to prepare for final exams". Noticeably, the respondents frequently mentioned what they considered as the superior value of test-oriented materials. It was often cited that these materials could better help them to "prepare for exams" (Mai), to "get high marks" (Cuc) and improve their language skills, compared to the extensive listening materials. As Trang said, "Listening targeted at tests will help to improve listening and writing skills better."

> *When I listened to those materials [the test-oriented], I would do more listening tasks; the sentence structures and words were from easy to difficult; I could encounter and get more familiar with the sections of a listening test. I find I could practice more effectively.* (Minh)

The belief in this great potential of test-oriented materials was not only justified with their providing chances to get familiar and practice with common question types of a test but also chances for focused or purposeful listening and monitoring one's listening comprehension. As elaborated by Thu and Ha,

> *Listening practice will definitely be more effective since one can get to know what to focus, what to listen for… one must pay high concentration. I think one can improve [the listening skill] faster than with extensive listening.* (Thu)

> *I prefer the Cambridge IELTS books since there is answer key for quick check.* (Ha)

By contrast, some mentioned that extensive listening materials would not get learners familiar with test question types, were purposeless and just for entertainment. As commented by Ly, "there are many types of tasks or questions in exams that normally I do not practise when listening extensively." In Thu's belief, "doing extensive listening, one normally does not have a purpose … just to get acquainted with the target language."

To sum up, most of the respondents appeared to get more engaged with test-oriented materials than with "extensive listening materials". It was frequently expressed that priority, effort and concentration were given to these materials. As for extensive listening materials, all the respondents valued them and there was evidence that they had the potential of enhancing learners' emotional engagement. Still, they were regarded as secondary. Evident in the respondents' elaborations, the learner's test-orientation, beliefs about listening and beliefs in the utility value of test-oriented materials were potentially attributed to the positive attitudes and engagement with this type of material. In reaction to the prevalent test orientation, Hang gave her refutation,

> *One must also learn for communication… I think practicing listening should not be just for exams. If listening practice is just for exams, one might understand in the exam room, but might not understand what a foreigner says… out there, they may use slangs or a word might be used in different contexts.* (Hang)

8.4.5 Participants' Hard-to-observe Engagement

8.4.5.1 Participants' Use of Their Peers' Comments

The theme, *participants' use of their peers' comments*, refers to their making use of comments that were publicly shared by their peers for certain purposes such as for better understanding of a listening clip, more knowledge of ways of listening and general knowledge, more effective discussions with peers. All respondents mentioned their deployment of peers' public comments without being asked about it. Moreover, and, importantly, it is impossible to elicit this deployment by only observing their online activity.

It was frequently observed that peers' comments were perceived as a helpful recourse for better comprehension of a clip. For example, in the face of difficult-to-hear clips, Trang tried searching related information on the Internet, but reported that,

> *Normally, I just relied on my peers' comments… They were very useful. I used to scroll down to read their comments first; relying on them, I continued to listen with the hope of finding further details.* (Trang)

To illustrate, she indicated the usefulness of some learners' comments that shared links related to the project's clip "A Dress of Colours" in helping her better understand the clip. Like Trang, Sinh "read peers' sharing for reference … and could listen for the content of a clip more clearly." She justified her use of peers' comments that "their sharing was more [than mine], they could listen more [listen for more details than me]."

Apart from the purpose of better understanding a clip, the following reasons for deploying peers' comments were also mentioned, albeit by just 1-2 respondents: namely, to broaden one's mind in terms of general knowledge and ways of listening, to answer peers'

questions, to give peers feedback and to avoid repetition. These reasons were shown in the following comments.

> *There are many things I do not know. Viewing their comments, I have broadened my horizons… They have their own methods [learning/listening methods]… I find it necessary to learn from them.* (Cuc)

> *One may not give an opinion that seems unreasonable, the next person might read it and leave feedback.* (Hanh)

The last striking feature about the learners' use of their peers' comments is that, based on their reported behaviour, they appeared to get more engaged with listening behaviourally and cognitively when using this resource. There were reports about listening again, monitoring one's own listening comprehension, correcting mistakes, and drawing experience. For example, Ngoc reported, "Having listened [to a clip], I used peers' comments to check what I had listened for, to check whether it is correct or not." (Ngoc). Another metacognitive activity done by several respondents was comparing and contrasting themselves versus their peers in terms of listening ability. Encouragingly, increased engagement in the aspect of effort was reported. As Ly put it, "When I found that my peers could do that, answering the questions about a clip whilst I could not, I would try to listen to understand it." Ngoc shared her changes in engagement from low emotional engagement with feeling ashamed of herself to positive behavioural engagement.

Based on the respondents' reports, all of them appeared to show their active engagement with peers' comments and listening. Within their thinking, there occurred appropriation of peers' thoughts and knowledge, monitoring of one's own listening comprehension and comparing and contrasting them with their peers. This can be interpreted as their strategy to better understand a clip or a manifestation of their cognitive engagement. Again, these are issues that can hardly be extracted from online observation. Moreover, some

learners' responses showed that using peers' comments did not necessarily mean simply 'taking' them but there were behaviors of 'giving' - by sending feedback to the owners of the used comments, responding to peers' questions raised in their comments or avoiding repetition in discussions.

8.4.5.2 Good Spirits for the Listening 'Community'

Evident and recurring in many learners' responses was their good spirits for the listening 'community'. These were most frequently expressed in their willingness and investment in sharing and discussing with peers in terms of time and effort. They expressed their willingness to share

> *thoughts and comprehension of a clip… ideas of how to improve listening based on a clip*. (Cuc)
>
> *whatever I could listen for* (Mai)
>
> *what I have experienced, have learnt* (Tam)
>
> *a video perceived as "quite interesting, mentioning our thorny problems [of listening]* (May), etc.

As for time and effort investment in sharing a comment or a listening clip, there were reports about extensive searching on the Internet, repeated listening and updating peers' replies. This can be well illustrated in Cuc and May's responses. Cuc said, "I had to search, try and select [a clip] before posting it… Once I made a post of a clip, I always 'prowled' to log in and to reply to my friends." Also, she showed her further enthusiasm by designing questions about her uploaded clips "to make sure that my peers viewed what I shared with them or not... and obtained the main idea of the clip I shared." Interestingly, in May's case, she even managed to upload her own image instead of a pre-set avatar for her peers to better recognize her and

thereby their discussion was hopefully extended, apart from the purpose of building her self-identity. She elaborated this as follows,

> *There are many people who have the same name. When I changed the avatar, those who know me might have said, 'this is May'… It would be better to have a photo there, since it might sometimes inspire to discuss or exchange more in the case of meeting a classmate or acquaintance.* (May)

According to the respondents, their spirits were, on the one hand, in the interest of their peers first. They believed that their peers could learn or withdraw something for them from their sharing thoughts, opinions, experienced comprehension of a clip, knowledge of a topic, etc. They even believed that their peers could benefit more from the clips shared by them since they had already tried and 'certified' by them.

> *I think those clips were really useful and my peers must have a go at them… or they might learn something from our comments.* (Cuc)

> *I left comments, hoping my peers who read my comments could get to know more about the possible answers to a comprehension question and could listen for further details.* (Trang)

> *I felt very happy since I had shared further information that might help peers to learn better… improve their listening skills.* (Ly)

> *I guess my peers might learn better from the materials that had already been edited by us than the ones available on the Internet.* (Hai)

On the other hand, it was frequently indicated that inherent in their good spirits was their wish to get more sharing, extended discussions and to learn more from peers. As articulated by Trang, "I hope my peers would read [her comments], reply and then we could communicate with each other to learn more." Similarly, Lan did look forward to peers' feedback on her post and wanted to see what else her peers could learn. Besides, her purpose of designing comprehension questions was stated to "encourage the activities of sharing and discussing together." Noticeably, May expressed the necessity and benefits of being pioneers

in doing the sharing or making contributions. In her words, “Not until we share, would others possibly follow and do the sharing in return.”

Apart from the often-cited good spirits of wanting to share comprehension, thoughts or clips with peers, there was the presence of attempts to create a congenial atmosphere for the listening group or to show respect to peers in several responses. To be specific, Lan shared that she did tell jokes in her interactions with peers. Mai reported her writing comments that involved greetings and showing regards to peers and believed that “writing such comments, kind of friendliness, might create atmosphere that is more sociable, friendlier.” Cuc articulated her good intention of leaving responses to her peers’ posts, “we respected them, respected their posts, so we would listen and leave a reply.”

To sum up, the learners whose participation in the project was in the range of very to moderately active revealed their good spirits for the listening ‘community’ or collective interests. The most frequently cited manifestations of such spirits were their willingness to share with peers and their time and effort investment in leaving a comment or uploading a clip. Their good spirits for the community are considered to partly explain the observed high frequency of clip upload on the VoiceThread and Facebook pages and dense of prompt, interactive comments, even jokes on the Facebook page.

8.4.6 Participants’ Outlook for Their Own Study Group

8.4.6.1 Perceived Outlook

When being asked about the possibility that learners might establish and develop a listening self-study group, the respondents held varying beliefs, with fewer being optimistic. Tam and May indicated their strong faith in the likelihood of a self-study group for those who

"really want to improve" (Tam) or "really like" (May). Tam took her own case as an example. That is, she and her friend aspired to make good preparations for their coming IELTS examination, so they agreed to exchange notes that they took from having done solitary listening to the same IELTS practice audio as a way of better understanding the clip and "forcing each other" [to do more practice, her own words]. She believed her group with the friend "will definitely be maintained". She added,

> *If they [learners] really want to improve, it [the possibility that one's group is developed] will definitely happen in the future*. (Tam)

By contrast, a gloomy picture about a learner-created listening group appeared to be articulated or implied by many other respondents. To illustrate, Tam was cautious about claiming the possibility for learners *in general* since she found that, "Actually, this is a rather hard question since it depends on them [learners]." Lan said, "To be honest, there are few or none [listening groups]." An even asserted, "We may never think about that [establishing their listening group]." How might the picture be "gloomy"?

Several obstacles were indicated by the respondents. To start with, a seemingly unavoidable obstacle was related to the learner's time budget. Lan articulated this as follows,

> *We participated in this site [the YouListen space]. However, normally, we have different class time schedules … there is time mismatch. Also, for example, today we learn listening, tomorrow we learn other subjects, so we do not have time, such a kind of thing, it is very difficult to create a group.* (Lan)

She also added another obstacle, that is, her peers may have other commitments., An's response revealed a low chance of developing their own learning group, even after a situation that they have managed to establish it, since its members may show a lack of interest and commitment. She said,

> *It would be very difficult since I often change my mind; this point of time, I may like to practise listening very much, but I may get bored later. When collaborating with them*

[other learners] in doing listening practice, they may also … our group may collapse. (An)

The last obstacle was evident in Hanh's response, "we had our intention of learning the listening skill together, but it is rather difficult to seek sources of listening." It is implied that difficulties in collecting listening materials were regarded as an obstacle, since there may be a risk of few shared resources being built up, these being a main component of a listening 'community'.

This somewhat gloomy outlook seemed to be prominent, since respondents frequently mentioned the conditions for the development of a self-study group. The analysis of these mentions is available in the next Section.

8.4.6.2 Beliefs about Conditions for Development of an out-of-class Study Group

Overall, there are two features in the learners' beliefs. First, there was a myriad of different conditions identified by the respondents and each cited at least two. This suggests the interplay of different. Second, these conditions were concerned with group domain, group structure and the teacher's role.

8.4.6.2.1 Domain-related Conditions

Regarding the domain-related conditions, the necessity of shared purposes, interests and/or needs was well articulated and even considered the top prerequisite for one's own study group. In learners' responses, the shared domain of interest was conceptualised as a tie that brings learners together. For example, An stated, "Most importantly, we both must be interested, we both have to have the needs to improve our listening skill." Another respondent, Tam, elaborated,

The most important thing for a study group, in my opinion, is its members of the same

> *sense of purpose … kind of passion or strong determination… For example, I really want to practise IELTS [do IELTS practice tests] and want to sit an [IELTS] exam next August, so I must find someone who has the same determination to take this exam next August as mine.* (Tam)

Interestingly, the domain mentioned by the respondents was specifically all about learning and improving English and listening skill. Therefore, it seems that the respondents were more interested in pursuing task-related purposes through social exchange than merely socialising.

The role of shared domain of interest in creating and maintaining a group seemed to be supported when several respondents shared how their own current self-created study group was created and maintained. A case in point is Sinh's study group. She said,

> *We had a talk in class and at break, discussing study matters together and came up with the idea [of creating their own study group]… All of us found that our listening skill was too bad, so we all agreed to create our group to improve listening skill… [Her group has lasted] for about one or one and a half years.* (Sinh)

8.4.6.2.2 Group structure-related Conditions

Apart from the domain-related condition, a set of conditions related to the group structure was often cited. Of the conditions indicated, ones referring to group size and membership were least mentioned. Although one respondent, An, explicitly expressed her acceptance of "only 1-2 close friends, not with other peers" since "it would collapse soon". Two more respondents also articulated the necessity of a close bond or an existing bond. As explained by Thu, such bonds could help them to better collaborate with each other. She said,

> *Close friends could better understand each other's ability, which would enable to identify which piece of work is suitable for each person when assigning work and thus, it means that everyone works together… Things would be fine, no more difficulties.* (Thu)

Interestingly, May and Thu put forward further conditions to membership composition by highlighting the essence of a leader and core members for their pioneering (Thu) or "great

ideas and being good at getting others involved." (May). The frequently mentioned must-have qualities of a group leader/core member were dedication with "one for all" spirit and capacity. This can be well illustrated in the following comments.

> *Always so, a study group or community must always have key members. They must be dedicated and must not just think for their own individual interests. Instead, they must act in the interest of the community first.* (May)

> *They must be capable, creatively create new attractive activities to engage others, maintain this practice of self-study since self-study is normally very boring.* (Thu)

On the other hand, May stressed a two-direction relationship in the sense that the remaining members "must be cooperative" since "if they were just dependent, bored or lazy, it would be impossible, however good their leaders were." She succinctly highlighted the contribution of every single member, "for a good community, that means the whole community must be good, not just certain individuals."

May's proposal for all group members' cooperation appeared to gain acclaim from all other respondents since these respondents mentioned their expected norms about other group members with high frequency. Evidently, there was strong stress on the necessity of self-discipline, sense of responsibility, enthusiasm, willingness, hard work, 'all for one and one for all' spirits, enquiring mind and collaborative capacity. As they put it,

> *They must be really enthusiastic and want to maintain [their group]. If everyone just has peripheral participation and is not responsible, their group would easily break up.* (Thu)

> *If learners are more self-disciplined and less lazy, it [a study group] will be very helpful, very interesting. We will be able not only to listen to complete tasks but also to do some other listening like listening to the native speakers of English, even to write [in English] better.* (May)

8.4.6.2.3 The Teacher's Role

The most frequently mentioned feature in the learners' responses was related to the teacher's role. When being asked whether the teacher's presence is necessary in one's own study group, the majority expressed their need for the teacher to join with them. To elaborate their need, respondents highlighted a teacher's helpfulness if he/she was in their group. The most commonly expected help from the teacher was to offer direct instructions such as guidance, directions for learning, summary, especially assessment, feedback, corrections or suggestions.

> *Personally speaking, I like the feedback that corrects my mistakes, spots my mistakes for me to correct more.* (Na)

> *We think that the teacher would play a role as someone who assesses and remarks what we have done well and what needs more effort, so we could gain experience.* (Hang)

There were also some mentions by Thu that expected the teacher to take his/her leadership role in a learners' study group by making a final judgement or decision, giving answer key or ensuring everyone on task. She articulated,

> *I suppose a snake must have its head. I meant, if we self-created a group, everyone would have equal rights to make a decision. There should be the most powerful person in case everyone gives his/her own opinion… There should be a person who urges since students normally need this person.* (Thu)

The teacher's role as a facilitator emotionally was also anticipated. For example, Na expressed her preference for the teacher's presence in her future group (if any) since she anticipated,

> *If she leaves a correct comment, her teacher would praise her and as a result, she would feel more motivated… would have a sense of being cared.* (Na)

The respondents' need for their teacher's participation in a learners' study group appeared to come from their perceptions of themselves and their teachers. For instance, Hang perceived her and her peers having "many defects" (her own words) and they considered their teachers as the 'know all' and the imparter of knowledge. As she put it,

> *As students, we highly respect, admire, I must say our teachers since our level, listening skill cannot be…, just a part of theirs [much lower, far more to be as good as their teachers' level and skill].* (Hang)

Similarly, Hai and Mai compared the two situations, with and without teacher's participation to underscore the teacher's role. Importantly, the teacher's role in encouraging leaners' active participation and enhancing emotions was evident in their responses below.

> *(Laugh) If we do all by ourselves, it might encourage creativeness, but the case is that (laugh) many cannot come up with ideas. Consequently, our posts might be boring and few peers would participate. If there are the teacher's suggestions, the situation will definitely different*. (Hai)

> *Without the teacher's group orchestration, peers might think that there are only a few members, so they might not be interested. Or they might not know how to make a post, what topic to choose, where to get materials. I think everyone would not be as enthusiastic as when the teacher organizes and mobilizes.* (Mai)

Whilst the majority found it necessary for the teacher to join their study group, the three remaining respondents believed in the likelihood that a learners' group could be maintained without the teacher's presence. They placed strong emphasis on the learner's role and the essence of managing and doing group activities by learners themselves. May believed in the likelihood for the cases of "those who are really dedicated" and indicated that it was learners that are doers and "only doers are decisive [a decisive factor]." since she knew "the teacher cannot always take over [the job of running learners' group] or follow his/her learners." and believed in better group outcomes if done by learners themselves. She said,

"Always so, if we do by ourselves, it would be more effective than having someone else to urge; self-discipline is always better."

To sum up, there was a common belief among the respondents that self-creating and maintaining a self-study group would not be simple and easy, but might be challenged by obstacles and could only be possible when there was a combination of conditions. The conditions about what individual members should be like and the teacher's role in such a group were much more frequently indicated than the conditions about shared domain of interest and time and space for group meetings. Interestingly, there was consensus among the respondents about the learner-related conditions, whilst there were divergent views about the necessity of the teacher's presence since some of them believed in the likelihood of self-study groups *without* the teacher's participation. Regarding the learner factor, strong emphasis appeared to be placed on good spirits among individual members, not any inclinations of 'passing the buck'. As for the teacher factor, the teacher's traditional role in learners' self-study group was frequently cited, as being many respondents' expectation and so the teacher was believed to ensure members' engagement. Noticeably, there was no mention that they wanted to discuss or make dialogues with their teacher. The prevalence of traditional approaches to teaching and learning, the learner's conceptions of their teacher as all-knowing and the learner's awareness of teacher power and authority might be possible explanations for the tendency to depend on the teacher. A somewhat gloomy picture of themselves developing a self-study did not necessarily imply that it was impossible. In several cases as, for example, May, Tam, Trang and Sinh, they were optimistic and enthusiastic. This seemed to be partly explained through their strong preferences for interactive learning, good team spirits and/or good experience with their current study groups.

8.5 Conclusion

With the conduct of thematic analysis on the participants' reflection, four meta-themes are identified, namely (1) the learners' perceptions of the listening and sharing context and its impact on engagement, (2) the learners' self and its impact on their engagement, (3) the learners' hard-to-observe engagement and (4) the learners' outlook for their own study group. The themes and sub-themes shed useful light on the researcher's observations of the learners' engagement in the project's listening space. The respondents tended to view the listening space and peers as two sides of a coin. Nevertheless, most of them appeared to have positive experiences and attitudes towards them since their comments of appreciation far outnumbered those of critique. There were only two exceptions, these arising from having expectations of peers disappointed or from making a clear-cut decision to maintain lurking behaviour. In addition, it is evident in their responses that their engagement did fluctuate, positively or negatively. Fluctuations varied from one to another and were subject to the interplay of external (contextual) and internal (learner focussed) factors. The respondents were not influenced by the context in a mechanical way. In other words, whether the contextual factors were facilitators or barriers depended on how learners had experienced and perceived them. Also, their engagement was shaped in relation to their 'self' (i.e. their beliefs, concerns, expectations, motivation). This qualitative data provided empirical evidence resonating with the idea that student engagement is a complex, dynamic and malleable phenomenon, not simply just as a matter of encouraging each other to participate. The last significant observation is that it became apparent from their self-reports that they not just engaged online in the listening space, but also much at its "backstage" (f2f, Zalo, FB, phone) and did make use of peers' comments there. This is hard to capture by just observing the learners' online activity.

9 Discussion

9.1 Introduction

The main study was conducted with the aim of obtaining better insight into learner engagement in out-of-class L2 listening when learners joined and developed a social network English listening group. To attain the aim, three research questions were put forward and the learners' online activity and interview data were collected and analysed. In this chapter, the findings from data analysis are discussed in relation to the following research questions.

(1) How would the university learners of English as a foreign language engage in a social networked English listening group?

(2) What factors would affect their engagement in this listening group?

(3) How could this listening group be more engaging to the learners?

9.2 Discussion of the Research Questions

In this section, Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 for the main study are discussed in detail. The answers sought to these questions were drawn from the results of the descriptive statistics, content and thematic analysis.

9.2.1 Research Questions 1

The learners' engagement in out-of-class L2 listening in the YouListen listening group, an informal social network, can be characterized with the following striking features.

9.2.1.1 The Learners' Being Engaged in out-of-class L2 Listening

One main finding of the current research is that the learners appeared to be significantly engaged in listening to English during their participation in the YouListen listening group (see chapter 6, sections 7.3, 7.4.1, 8.4.2.1 and 8.4.3.1). As recorded from their online activity, such behaviours as sharing listening comprehension, doing reflection and exerting task or activity-related effort were frequently demonstrated by the learners. Besides, their engagement in out-of-class L2 listening was evident in the simple fact that the YouListen listening space in general was updated with the learners' messages related to a listening clip or some other activity by most on a daily basis; indeed, some learners even contributed more than one message in a day. Also, their own accumulating and rich reservoir of shared listening resources and practices can be considered evidence of their engaged listening. Furthermore, many learners revealed a tendency to exert effort and adopt listening strategies in the face of a listening clip that was perceived challenging (see sub- Section 8.4.2.2.1). In the interviews, increased time, frequency and effort in L2 listening practice were reported in detail and with justification by all the interviewees (see *engaging activities* in sub-Section 8.4.2.1). It was known from their narratives that they had attempted seriously to comprehend the listening materials recommended by the project and peers, such as listening repeatedly, downloading the materials on their mobile phones or laptops for offline listening, searching the Internet for related information to better understand a clip, etc (see peers' contribution in section 8.4.3.1). Also, their narratives about their group postings showed that they had invested much time and effort in listening to numerous clips before deciding on a clip to share with the whole listening group (see *engaging activities* in sub-section 8.4.2.1).

It can therefore be proposed that many learners' increased engagement when they joined the YouListen listening space is an encouraging result, compared with the common

status quo of low engagement found prior to the implementation of the project. As Kuh (2001) put it, "...the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and professional development" (p.1). The current research's participants invested their time and effort for academic purposes, that is, for listening comprehension, listening tasks/activities, shared listening practices and listening resource-related reflection and knowledge rather than for a narrowlly socialising-only function (see 7.4.1). However, it is realized that although they were 'engaged' in the sense of 'busy' or 'frequent user/L2 listener', this is not the same as supposing they were *effective* in their L2 listening or in what they were doing with a listening clip. In this sense, it may still be desirable if the participants could exert more energy or effort that "is focused on learning and mastering the material" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p.64) or could comprehend a listening clip with more effective listening strategies. This point is developed next.

9.2.1.2 The Learners' Inflexible Use of Listening Strategies and Processes

Being strategic is stressed as an important constituent of engagement (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Guthrie et al., 2004). As regards participants in the current research, it was found that their behaviour of using listening strategies varied across the sub-spaces and with the types of listening strategies adopted. Specifically, such engagement was scarcely demonstrated on Facebook and VoiceThread, but frequently demonstrated in the YouListen sub-space and metacognitive listening strategies were the most frequently employed (see section 7.3.1). This might suggest their positive reactions to listening clips perceived as challenging in the YouListen website (i.e. more effort investment, more metacognitive processes involved). Neverthless, it was revealed in their online messages and interview responses that many of them had limited and inflexible use of listening strategies. On the one hand, there was

evidence of their awareness of the conversational context in the clips, making use of the associated visual aids, or the speakers' tone of voice, which might initially have helped them to comprehend a clip well (see Section 7.3.1). However, they tended not to depend on these listening cues for comprehension, but had a tendency for heavily relying on sound and word-based processing, without deploying an elaboration strategy and pragmatic interpretation. As a result, what they might often have gained was just separate words, phrases, or pieces of information and, therefore, may have failed to comprehend fully a listening clip which had implicit intent or distracting details (see *Using listening strategies* in Section 7.3.1).

This finding resonates with several previous studies that have reported the negative impact of over-reliance on bottom-up processing on listening comprehension (Goh, 2000; Ngo, 2015; Shohamy and Inbar, 1991; Vandergrift, 2003). Yet, Tsui and Fullilove (1998) reported that less-skilled listeners depended more on top-down processing. The inconsistency of such findings might be traced back to the nature of the 'non-matching' of schema or the mismatch/inconsistency in meaning between the linguistic inputs (segments of speech) in sequence. In the case of participants in the current research, their online messages showed that they tended to rely more on the subsequent linguistic input rather than utilizing both the initial and subsequent linguistic inputs to check whether their understanding was correct. Therefore, if the subsequent linguistic input had provided correct listening cues or answers, they might have obtained correct understanding or answers. Conversely, if the input had provided distracting details, they might have had a wrong understanding of what the speaker actually meant. The findings about the learners' breakdown in comprehension of a clip due to the 'non-matching' schema is consistent with the previous observations (Buck, 2001; Bloomfield et al., 2010) note that explicitness or directness may impact the difficulty of a

listening passage. As Buck (2001) puts it, “Texts in which the ideas are explicitly stated tend to be easier than texts with less explicit ideas.”

Given the negative impact of over-reliance on the bottom-up processing in the current research (see Section 7.3.1), learners should flexibly employ the information obtained within a spoken text, the communication context and their background knowledge. In other words, inferencing, pragmatic interpretation and elaboration should be flexibly combined. The pragmatic interpretation involves interpreting what is said or the intent of a message in its context (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Buck, 2001). Buck (2001) stresses that, “the interaction between what is said and the context in which it is said is an important aspect of comprehension” (2001, p.22). Elaboration in L2 listening refers to “using prior knowledge from outside the text or conversational context and relating it to knowledge gained from the text or conversation to predict outcomes or fill in missing information.” (Vandergrift, 1997, p. 393). It should also be noted that they continued to adopt ineffective ways of listening that they had employed before joining the YouListen listening space, namely translating and being too obsessed with catching word-by-word while listening (see Section 7.3.1, see challenge level and lack of transcripts in sub-Section 8.4.2.2). Thus, these ways of listening seemed to reflect well-grained listening habits, since the YouListen project intentionally encouraged them to focus on meaning, grasp key ideas of a listening clip and flexibly adopt listening strategies and models of processing the aural input. Under these circumstances, explicit listening strategy instructions and activities that focus on these listening habits might be of some help. Moreover, whilst there was much evidence of their using metacognitive listening strategies, close examination (see *Using listening strategies* in Section 7.3.1) showed that they did not go further into planning and conducting a solution after having evaluated their listening performance and thereby identifing certain points of a listening

passage that needed solving for better understanding of a clip or identifying certain factors that affected their comprehension. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) offered L2 listeners suggestions to solve comprehension problems, such as adjusting their approach of listening by "activating more appropriate strategies as required" (p.107) and doing some reflection, evaluation on the adjusted approach. In relation to the current research, its socially mediated design for out-of-class L2 listening was to afford and encourage the learners to get engaged in these activities in a natural, comfortable and interactive way (see Section 5.3).

9.2.1.3 Learners' Knowledge Construction: Different Patterns among the Sub-spaces

It was found that learners took different interpsychological approaches when doing listening practice in different sub-spaces. On Facebook, there was evidence that the learners interacted with each other in quite a responsive and discursive way, leaving quite prompt, natural and conversational comments and extending their discussions. Apart from sharing listening resources, comprehension, thoughts and practices, they normally replied to each other's messages by expressing opinions, confronting, clarifying, defending opinions, persuading, making suggestions, getting peers involved in discussions with the frequent use of vocatives (see Section 7.3.3). Therefore, their interactions can be considered dialogic, negotiated, involving an interconnected web (for the notion of interconnected web, see Zhu, 2006). Also, their interactions were similar to Zhu's (2006) observation in one of the classes under investigation. Their dialogic pattern of constructing knowledge might have been attributed to certain features of the Facebook environment which were anticipated in Section 7.5, that is, its familiarity, popularity, 'privacy' and affordances that support interactions. However, it should be noted that the discussion by the class in her study was orchestrated by its instructor with careful planning and detailed instructions. Meanwhile, the discussions

observed in the current research on Facebook were by the learners themselves and were spontaneous.

Thus, that an informal listening group gets engaged and maintains a focused and productive discussions without the teacher's presence is shown as possible. In the light of Vygotsky's learning theory, these interactions can be a favourable condition for the learners' internalization of language reasoning and their potential development in terms of such knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, the other sub-spaces, the YouListen website and VoiceThread witnessed a different form of engagement and interaction pattern. The phenomena of lurking, low responsiveness, and lack of building on each other's ideas, were quite common in the contributions. The lurking behaviour was recorded on VoiceThread, with the number of views more than double that of comments and were reported by the interviewees along with their explicit criticism. This finding resonates with what numerous previous studies have found - albeit with different references to this 'lurking', such as 'invisible', 'witnessed learners', 'passivity', and 'non-public participation' (Beaudoin, 2002; Nonnecke et al., 2004; Dennen, 2008; Arnold and Paulus, 2010). Apart from lurking, it was observed that the learners tended to respond to the individual posting a listening resource, rather than to other discussants, even when other discussants self-disclosed their difficulty in listening, enthusiastically shared their thoughts, listening comprehension and clip-related personal experiences. Their low responsiveness and lack of building on each other's ideas were especially clear on the YouListen website. The learners appeared not to pool the listening cues that they could listen for, assembling their comprehension and inferences together to understand a clip or work out answers for a task or activity. Besides, there was almost no evidence of synthesizing the whole group's discussion, except one instance on the YouListen website showing interest in synthesizing and evaluating other peers' right or wrong, full or partial answers (Section 7.3.1). The consequences revealed correspond with

the findings of many previous studies: namely, that learners tended to leave "serial monologues" rather than build upon them and get involved in a dialogic process of co-constructing knowledge and understanding (Henri, 1991; Zhu, 1996; Garrison et al., 2001; Pawan et al., 2003; Pena-Shaff & Nicholls, 2004). Moreover, it seems that their preferences for doing listening practice in interaction with peers, as expressed in the interviews, seemed not sufficient to achieve the interactivity of their online exchanges.

So far, the observed phenomena, lurking, low responsiveness, and lack of building on each other's ideas, have been discussed. There now arises a need to obtain greater insight into these phenomena. The thematic analysis of the interview data showed that the learners could be engaged in learning even when they just were lurking. Peers' messages were utilized as helpful learning resources for better understanding of a listening clip. Also, on reading peers' messages, the learners tended to become more engaged in listening by exerting more effort in listening to a clip again, or monitoring and evaluating their listening comprehension. This finding is consistent with the observations in previous studies that lurking does not necessarily mean disengagement or passivity (Beaudoin, 2002; Dennen, 2008; Arnold and Paulus, 2010). Isomaki et al. (2012) highlights those current perceptions that identify lurking as an e-learning strategy and calls for a suitable research method to study it. Nevertheless, given some interviewees' criticisms against their peers' lurking behaviour, it seems worthwhile to encourage lurkers to make contributions to the listening group; otherwise, their lurking behaviour would have negative impacts on the engagement of others. As regards the observed low responsiveness and lack of building on each other's ideas, the results from interview data showed that the learners, especially those who were not very responsive in the online discussions, did make dialogues that centred on the online exchanges and involved meaning negotiation for better understanding of a clip. This occurred at the "back stage" of

the YouListen listening space such as in their face-to-face setting or their own social media space on Facebook or Zalo. (see Sections 8.4.2, 8.4.3.1, 8.4.3.2.1, 8.4.4).

9.2.1.4 Learners' Emotions

Engaging in the social networked listening space. Ambivalent feelings were evident in learners' online messages and interview responses but, in general, their positive emotions were dominant (see Sections 7.3.2, 8.4.2, 8.4.3).

The most frequently expressed positive emotions were happiness, excitement, interest and comfort. The respondents experienced these emotions while they were doing activities such as listening to clips shared by the project and peers, making their own or group upload, discussing and sharing with peers their thoughts, listening comprehension, as well as their difficulties. It can be interpreted from their sharing that the emergence of these emotions was associated with the perceived support gained from the listening space and peers, doing the sharing and joining discussions with peers and/or with their intrinsic motivation or inherent pleasure of listening to English. Regarding their negative emotions, some others shared the sense that they experienced a decline in interest, even frustration. These feelings were indicated to be associated with log-in problems and the superficial engagement of several peers. It was found that these negative emotions soon disappeared or were mitigated after the respondents made themselves familiar with the listening space or developed an attitude of sympathy for peers. Noticeably, they generally felt confident to listen to English in the listening space. Two respondents revealed that they felt inferior to peers at the beginning of joining the listening space. It seems that the public sharing of the listening space accidentally aroused comparison and contrast between the self and others. Fortunately, they managed to overcome this emotion and exert more effort in listening and leaving comments. This good

change in their engagement might be understood in terms of these respondents having a sufficiently inquiring mind such that they exerted more effort after becoming aware of their weakness or that the listening space was perceived as *supportive*, encouraging them to try their best and overcome this emotion.

9.2.1.5 The Learners' Variations in Engagement

The last feature is that there were considerable variations in the learners' engagement in the YouListen listening group; that is, among and within the individual learners and across the sub-spaces. The results from the different sources of data showed that the learners' engagement varied by time and in terms of direction, intensity, variety of behaviours of engagement demonstrated and frequency of demonstrating them. For example, it was found that learners demonstrated their high or low online activity on certain weeks (see Section 6.2.2). They also became either more engaged or less engaged during their participation in the listening group. The learners on VoiceThread tended to give more priority to product-oriented, performance goal listening practice and mainly responded to a post and the poster, whilst those on Facebook extended their discussion such that it was spontaneous or driven by each other's messages and more process-oriented. In the face of a challenging clip, some exerted more effort and concentration whilst others adopted surface-strategy like translating, simply listening repeatedly or just gave up. The variations in engagement among the learners (see Section 6.2.1) can be well illustrated with the contrast between the high activity group and low activity group as mentioned in the Section 7.4.2. The finding seems to imply the necessity to hold a developmental view of this phenomenon and examine learner engagement in a certain circumstance over a period for better understanding of it. Additionally, the

finding contributed further empirical evidence, highlighting that engagement is a dynamic phenomenon (Fredricks et al, 2004; Bryson & Hand, 2007; Barkley, 2009; Zhu, 2006).

To sum up, the analysis of findings depicts a diverse and complex picture of student engagement in a socially networked English listening group among the university learners of English as a foreign language. A learner may have been highly engaged in the behavioural dimension but may have had low cognitive engagement. A learner may have demonstrated as a lurker online but may have been deeply engaged in a listening resource and actively discussed with peers for better comprehension offline (see section 8.4.4.1) Their learners' engagement resonates with Salmela-Aro et al.'s (2016) finding that the learner experienced both positive and negative aspects of engagement. Besides, there seemed to be quiet but active knowledge construction within individual learners, despite the observed low integration of ideas on the YouListen website and VoiceThread. Furthermore, the learners appeared to have positive attitudes and emotions while engaging in the listening group. The last point to mention is that the variations in learner engagement occurred within and among individual learners and across the sub-spaces. There arises a need for inquiry into what factors affected their engagement in this listening group. That inquiry is the second research question of the current project.

9.2.2 Research Question 2

The answers to Research Question 2 have been sought from the analyses of the interview data and the associated record of learners' online activity. The thematic analysis results showed that the learners' engagement was under the influence of both contextual and learner factors (see Sections 8.4.2, 8.4.3 and 8.4.5.1). Let us consider the contextual factors first.

9.2.2.1 Contextual Factors

The salient contextual factors identified include the listening space, peers and cultural traits. One important point to mention is that the learners' engagement did not change subject to the contextual factors automatically or in a mechanical way. In other words, the extent and direction of changes depended on how learners had experienced and perceived those contextual factors as facilitators or barriers.

The Listening Space

As revealed from the sub-themes presented in sub-sections 8.4.2.1 and 8.4.2.2, the *listening space* factor was generally perceived to affect the learner engagement with its value, affordance, autonomy support, activity orchestration, challenge and accessibility.

The Value Attribute

The value that was frequently expressed was the perceived utility value of the listening space for improvements in their English language learning in general and listening skill in particular. Specifically, improvements in grammar, vocabulary, intonation, and especially in writing and listening skills were frequently reported. This utility value was acknowledged to maintain their engagement and exert effort in L2 listening practice. The finding lends support to previous studies that have found a positive relationship between a value component and student engagement (Pintrich, 1999; Li et al., 2016).

The Affordance Attribute

The term *affordance* was first coined by Gibson (1977) and was explained as "...whatever it is about the environment that contributes to the kind of interaction that occurs" (Greeno, 1994, p.338). The current research discusses the availability or unavailability of

certain design-related features that facilitate or impede learners' engagement. There was wide acknowledgement of the YouListen listening space for its offer of chances and space to listen and do listening-related activity and for the listening resources which were mainly produced by the project and recommended by the learners themselves. As two interviewees put it, the listening space created "...a trend to listen to English" (Ngoc) and offered "things to do", a regular "drop-in" (Na). The listening resources were generally appreciated for their perceived interest, currency, diversity, usefulness and uniqueness. These affordances were perceived helpful, especially in circumstances of in-class constraints and, importantly, they were perceived to explain the learners' increased time and effort investment and those positive emotions such as interest, enjoyment. On the other hand, the *lack* of certain affordances, including transcripts for several listening clips, notification features and a synchronous feature was highlighted and thus the impact of these designs on the learners' engagement was revealed. To start with the transcript affordance, the learners held different views regarding its availability, so its perceived impact on student engagement varied accordingly. Specifically, one student would have been more engaged with a listening clip if its transcript had been provided whilst another would make more effort, deploy listening skills for clips without transcripts or subtitles. Even, in the former's case, there was a risk of her being disengaged with the project's listening resources without transcripts, since she expressed her tendency to engage with her own collected resources instead so that she could check her comprehension or answers to listening comprehension questions or learn vocabulary. Regarding the notification feature, it was revealed from both the interview responses and the online messages that this feature had a considerable impact on the learners' level of participation in the listening space and responsiveness of their online discussions. Some participants raised the lack of the notification feature on the YouListen website and explained how this limitation was attributed to their less frequent access and responses on this website

than on Facebook (see sub-section 8.4.2.2 regarding the lack of notification feature for details). Their responses were consistent with what was observed from their online activity. Facebook witnessed their highest rate of responsivity in discussions, whilst the YouListen website witnessed the lowest. Last, the limited availability of asynchronous communication only was also a factor that affected the learners' engagement. It was revealed from one interviewee's responses that this factor was likely to affect the interactivity and integration of discussants' ideas and fail to afford different learning preferences (some learners preferred speaking to writing, or real-time communication to asynchronous communication). The findings regarding the influence of the affordance factor are in line with Zhao and McDougall's (2008) findings that their Chinese students reported more participation and effective learning than in face-to-face learning settings but lack of immediate communication of asynchronous online learning.

The Autonomy Support Attribute

The listening space's autonomy support appeared to bring about comfort, confidence, and a sense of ownership because of the voluntary nature of participation and the support for autonomy through the learners' sharing of materials, leaving comments, and doing listening practice. This lends support to Lee et al.'s (2015) presumption that "...when afforded autonomy, students are engaged affectively." (p. 55). Still, one interviewee expressed the likelihood of how low or inactive participation and discussion among the learners might be due to the voluntary nature of the participation and the leaving of comments entirely at their volition. Another interviewee suggested structured activities like designing listening comprehension questions since "...the learner might not have had specific objectives to aim at" (Ha) due to the openness of the project's sharing suggestions. Having a similar observation regarding this, Jang et al. (2010) put forward their suggestions for class teachers

to provide their students with both autonomy support and structure. Moreover, based on the observations of their behaviour in leaving comments, there seemed to exist a link between the listening space's autonomy support and the considerable variations in time and date observed for the learners' leaving of comments. The unpredictability associated with such variations, in turn, might partly explain their online low responsiveness and lack of building up on each other's ideas. In this sense, autonomy support in leaving comments might have had a negative impact on the learners' social engagement.

The Activity Orchestration Attribute

The last attribute of the listening space that was perceived to influence the learners' engagement was the listening space's orchestration of certain activities. These widely-acknowledged activities included, (1) encouraging the follow-up activity of publicly sharing thoughts, comprehension, etc and interacting with peers in English, (2) allowing the learners to view their peers' thoughts, comprehensions, ways of listening, etc, and (3) encouraging the learners to seek listening resources and engage with each other to listen to English. These activities were acknowledged to engage the learners not only behaviourally, socially but also cognitively. As elaborated by the learners, to do these activities, they were encouraged to invest time, pay concentration and exert mental effort, exert thoughtful considerations for comprehending a listening clip, articulate their thoughts, or recommend peers a listening resource before publicly sharing them. This can be well illustrated in their frequent sharing of reflections and comprehension on the YouListen website. Similar findings about the learner being reflective in an asynchronous environment were found in previous studies (Pena-Shaff and Nicholls, 2004; Hara et al., 2000). Also, these activities got them involved in reflective, metacognitive, self-regulation processes after having viewed their peers' public sharing. Arnold and Paulus (2010) reported that the publicly shared work was made use of for

modelling by their participants. In addition, the observation of their online activity also revealed that there seemed to be a link between the schedule of a post (a clip or activity), the frequency of accessing a sub-space and the interactivity of their online discussions. In fact, the learners tended to access the YouListen and VoiceThread sub-spaces weekly since posting was scheduled by week. In turn, when they accessed the sub-spaces again the following week, they may have been overwhelmed by the large number of comments/messages shared by peers. As a result, they tended to reply to the poster(s) of a clip or listening task rather than to other discussants' messages. By contrast, as observed, the Facebook sub-group agreed with each other to do both group and individual postings and did their postings almost every day and not at a fixed time, so they tended to access Facebook more frequently and reply to each other's messages, making their discussions interactive thereby.

The Challenge Attribute

Challenges and high expectations are considered important components of a quality learning environment (Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Shernoff, 2016). It was revealed from the interview responses that the challenge might have either positive or negative impact on the learner engagement. It was also found that the changes in learner engagement occurred in the emotional dimension first, followed by those in the behavioural dimension. As mentioned in the section 7.3.1, the learners tended to exert effort to understand a challenging clip. One participant explained that the perceived challenge encouraged her to get more engaged cognitively (with "heart and mind focus" in her words) and her overcoming the challenge brought about the increased positive emotional and behavioural engagement in listening to other clips. However, a considerable negative impact of challenge on the learners' emotional and behavioural engagement was found in other cases. After a few attempts without

improvement in comprehension, many of them tended to feel frustrated, bored, anxious, or even paniced. Some shared in the interviews that they gave up listening to the clip, even felt reluctant to participate in the sub-space which had challenging resources.

To sum up, there was considerable influence of the listening space factor on learner engagement with its attributes. The same attributes may be perceived differently by different learners, thereby affecting their engagement either in a positive or negative manner accordingly. Apart from the listening space factor, the peer factor also had its impact on learner engagement, which is presented as follows.

The Peer Factor

The influence of peers on the learners' engagement was revealed in the interview responses and partly explained the learners' various behaviours of practising listening, leaving comments and introducing listening resources, their emotions, extended discussions offline and the fluctuations in their engagement as well. It was found that peers had their influence on learner engagement via their good or unexpected qualities. What follows is discussion of the influence of these qualities on learner engagement.

Peers' Good Qualities

The widely-acknowledged qualities were *peers' support*, *peers' contributions* and *good rapport* or *close bond*. It was revealed that peers' good qualities as members of the listening 'community' were perceived to boost the learners' engagement (see sub-section 8.4.3.1 for details).

As reported by them, thanks to peers' emotional support, learning support and technical support, they did more listening practice, felt more confident to listen and leave

comments that were public, feeling happy and more willing to share listening resources when peers supported their posts. This finding is congruent with what was found in Newmann's (1992) study. Importantly, it was found that the peer support that they reported was provided at the "backstage" of the listening space: that is, in their face-to-face settings or in their private social media spaces such as Zalo and Facebook. Also, it is noticeable that peers provided different kinds of support, doing a variety of acts of helping, such as mentoring, correcting language and expression mistakes, explaining the answers to certain listening comprehension, sharing L2 listening techniques, editing a clip before upload, etc. Thus, it can be assumed that both the learners and their peers may have been quite engaged emotionally, cognitively and socially by interacting and extending the online focused discussions but on the "back stage". Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) and Guthrie et al. (2004), whose intervention programmes had two important components, namely peer interactions and interesting reading materials, have made similar observations.

Regarding peers' contributions, it was found that peers' sharing of listening resources and active participation in discussing, mobilizing and doing fun community activities all considerably engaged learners to listen to English, to acclaim the listening resources and tasks/activities by peers and to participate in the discussion board(s) and community activities. Also, such feelings as curiosity and eagerness about peers' recommendation of listening resources and interest in listening to them were frequently expressed. Some interviewees' responses seemed to partly explain the potential of peers to engage learners with their contributions. That is, their peers were perceived to have instilled or set good examples for them to follow regarding hard work, enthusiasm or team/community spirits (see sub-sections 8.4.3.1 and 8.4.5.1). This corresponds to the phenomenon of amplification effects (Vollet et al., 2017), in the sense that the learners might have become more engaged

when aware of being surrounded by engaged peers. Another possible explanation lies in the frequently mentioned good points of the listening resources and tasks/activities recommended by them, namely appropriate challenge, usefulness, interest and "reliability" (i.e. peers were the testimony of these resources).

Finally, peers could have had a positive impact on learner engagement by helping learners to have a sense of bond and mutual understanding. Accordingly, it was reported by learners that they tended to experience positive emotional engagement (comfort), increased behavioural engagement (increased participation level) and increased cognitive as well as social engagement (responsive, discursive discussions on Facebook). One interviewee explicitly expressed her shyness to do her public sharing on the YouListen website, since there were still members that she did not know, apart from her classmates. Positive engagement experiences arising from peer close bonds and rapport is consistent with what was observed online. These experiences were especially clear on Facebook (see Chapter 5). Peer close bond and rapport might partly explain the high responsiveness, the building on each other's ideas on Facebook, as well as the low responsiveness and lack of building on each other's ideas on the YouListen website. Juvonen et al. (2012) explain that peer relationships with engaged classmates may promote student engagement by facilitating a sense of belonging within the school. By contrast, in the current research, the fact that peers were classmates, regardless of being engaged or less engaged, was sufficient for the learners to have a sense of belonging to the listening group.

Thus, it can be realized that peers could have a positive impact on learner engagement when they demonstrated their good qualities as members of the listening group and then that other learners recognized these qualities. An opposite scenario was also revealed from the

interview responses, arising from peers' unexpected behaviours and attitudes. The following section discusses this.

Peers' Unexpected Behaviours and Attitudes

Some interviewees reported unexpected behaviours of peers and attitudes that discouraged their engagement in the listening space (see sub-Section 8.4.3.2 for details). That negative impact involved amplifying effects in the direction that a participant might become less engaged when witnessing the surface level engagement of peers. Nevertheless, it should be noted that such negative impacts were found to vary among learners; i.e., some might have experienced much variation in their engagement whilst others just a little, some might just have experienced negative emotions but still maintained their active online activity, while others might have felt frustrated and decided to participate in the listening space less frequently. Such findings partly provided insight into the phenomena of low responsiveness and lack of building up on each other's ideas and the variations of learner engagement. To be specific, the view was frequently expressed that a proportion of peers and some posting groups demonstrated only surface engagement in their online discussions or group work: such as by giving too general, ceremonious, non- discursive messages, or lurking and/or free-riding in doing group work. Their surface engagement seemed to be attributed to a 'sucker effect' among active participants and/or negative feelings such as frustration or sadness. In other words, the surface engagement of some peers affected the behavioural and/or emotional engagement of other learners, albeit at varying levels. It seems that the negative impact was manifest when the learners were aware that their online exchanges hardly became extended, in-depth discussions or contributions to group work was not equal due to peers' unexpected behaviours and/attitudes. The negative impact of lurking and free-riding within group work is consistent with the implications of previous studies showing that lurking may undermine the

sustainability of an online community (Nonnecke et al., 2004; van Mierlo, 2014). This finding lends support to Nonnecke et al. (2004)'s claim that "lurkers' non-public participation somehow affects communities in a negative way, reducing the development of social capital" (2004, p. 1).

In short, it was evident that peers had influence on the learners' engagement in the YouListen social networked L2 listening group, whereby a positive influence was contributed by peer support, peer contribution, close bonds and rapport, while negative influence was attributed to peers' unexpected behaviours and attitudes. So far, the listening space and peer factors have been discussed. The next section centres on another contextual factor: cultural traits.

The Cultural Traits

Hofstede et al. (2010) succinctly emphasize that "...no group can escape culture" (p.12) and depict the differences among national cultures along five claimed dimensions of human cultures. These are: power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and short-term orientation versus long-term orientation. As their index values for each of the dimensions suggest, Vietnamese culture can be categorized into the group of large power distance (with index of 70 out of 104, p.58), collectivist (individual index of 20 out of 91, p.97), feminine (masculinity index of 40 out of 110, p.143), of low uncertainty avoidance (with index of 30 out of 112, p.194) and pragmatic or of long-term orientation (with index of 57 out of 100, p.256).

From the sociocultural perspective, the YouListen listening group's patterns of engagement might also be traced back to cultural traits. The cultural traits evident in the learners' online activity and interview responses centred on face, harmony, in-group identity,

high context, unequal relationships and uncertainty avoidance. The first four traits are among the characteristics or indicators of collectivism whereas the 'unequal relationships' trait indicates large power distance. In a collectivist society, harmony and face maintenance are of the essence, whilst confrontations and conflicts are regarded as undesirable and should be avoided (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Let us start with face saving. The notion of 'face' is defined as "...the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levison, 1978, p.66). It was revealed in the interview responses that participants appeared to be aware of either being at risk of losing face or having a chance to reinforce their face when publicly sharing messages and making online interactions in the YouListen listening group. Their responses also seemed to suggest that their behaviours such as exerting effort in comprehending a clip, their concerns about making mistakes and thoughtful considerations in expressing opinions, their articulation of thoughts, etc. can all be considered their attempts to save their own face or to avoid being judged inferior or laughed at. Some learners choosing to appear invisible online as lurkers might have been a strategy to save their negative face (i.e. free of imposition or being disturbed). Meanwhile, the high online activity of some others might have been a strategy to strengthen their positive face or to satisfy "...the need to be connected, to belong, to be a member of the group" (Yule, 2010, p.135).

Priority to harmony is a typical feature of Vietnamese culture (Tran, 1999), which might help us to understand the large number of messages that showed politeness, an inquiring mind in the discussion boards, clarifications, invitations for considerations of what they shared and the use of positive emoticons in the feedback messages. Besides, the observed phenomena of low responsiveness and lack of building on each other's ideas might be related to the face issue, harmony, in-group and high context. The learners might have

been aware of the risk of threatening their peers' face or engendering conflicts, so they tended to avoid expressing disagreement and not to confront or challenge their peers in public. A case in point is that the behaviours of confronting or expressing disagreement with peers were hardly observed on the YouListen website, the shared listening space of both the second and third-year students. This finding is congruent with Nguyen (2005)'s observation.

Interestingly, these behaviours were evident in the project's 'private' sub-spaces, especially on the Facebook sub-space as well as their own spaces. This might suggest them being conscious of which sub-space they were in, distinguishing the private space from the shared space, the "we" group (or in-group consisting of them and their classmates only) from the "they" group (or out-group consisting of both their classmates and other members that they did not know - the "we" or "they" group having been borrowed from Hofstede et al., 2010). Their strong sense of "we" group seemed to partly explain their wide use of the inclusive pronouns and vocatives and their tendency to shift to their private space for self-disclosing and for offering help. As regards high context, it seems that this cultural trait might partly contribute to the scarcity of in-depth discursive discussions on the YouListen site, and the VoiceThread low responsiveness and lack of building on each other's ideas. They might have understood well what their peers meant in their publicly-shared messages and what their peers shared might have been what they intentionally wanted to express. As Hall (1976, p.91) puts it, "...a high-context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, or transmitted part of the message." Or as Hofstede et al. (2010) say: "In a collectivist culture, the fact of being together is emotionally sufficient." (p.108). Regarding unequal relationships, the tendency to accept, even expect hierarchy in the listening group, such as desiring the teacher's presence, a group leader and core members, was all evident in

the interview responses. The absence of the leader and role assignment in the YouListen group might have explained some learners reported free-riding when doing group work. The trait of harmony and the unequal relationships acceptance and desire might be traced back to the Confucian influence on Vietnamese culture (Nguyen, 2005; Pham, 2014). Confucianism or Confucius's teachings can be considered one of the most enduring, influential legacies of China's prolonged domination for over one thousand years. This philosophy was introduced in Viet Nam since the beginning of the Christian era and lasted until the late 19th century (Nguyen,1998). Two of the key principles of Confucian teaching are (1) "The stability of society is based on unequal status relationships between people" and (2) "The family is the prototype of all social organizations." (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 237).

Last, about the uncertainty avoidance dimension, Viet Nam belongs to the low-uncertainty- avoidance group (Hofstede et al., 2010). This characteristic reflects the Vietnamese people's flexible adaptation to the changes of certain circumstances (Ly and Marginson in Ly et al., 2014). This trait seemed to be evident in many learners' active participation in the current research's intervention programme. Still, it was frequently expressed by the interviewees that they had preferences for structured learning with specific listening tasks and provided feedback or answer keys from the project. In this sense, low certainty avoidance trait seemed not to be congruent with the finding.

In summary, the second research question has been addressed. For a better insight into the learners' engagement in the socially networked listening group, "...the role of context cannot be ignored" (Christenson et al., 2012, p. v). It was revealed that there was an interplay of the listening space, peers and cultural traits on their engagement. The finding is consistent with Shernoff et al. (2016)'s finding that the learning environment played an important role in student engagement. Those authors suggest that the simultaneous availability of both

environmental challenge and support created the impact of the learning environment in which "...environmental support showed a stronger relationship with student engagement in these data than did environmental challenge." (p. 58). The understanding of the contextual influences would be helpful for informed design developments aimed at engaging L2 listeners. It should be noted that the learners were not passive recipients of the contextual influences or how the contextual factors affected their engagement depended on the learners themselves. The next part of writing is devoted to the discussion of certain internal or learner factors that might have shaped their engagement.

9.2.2.2 Learner Factors

It was found from the learners' online activity and especially interview responses that there seemed to exist many factors associated with individual differences among learners: these served to variously constrain or afford their engagement with the learning resources. The most salient factors identified are reviewed in this section. They include the learners' concerns over social identity, mastery goals, product-oriented listening, expectations, attitudes, L2 language and listening proficiency and personality.

(1) The Learner's Concerns relating to social identity

The learners sometimes expressed concerns which were engendered in the situation of publicly sharing messages in the discussion boards. This could arouse anxiety related to language/comprehension accuracy and *face* (see sub-section 8.4.4.1). The results of thematic analysis revealed that the learners' engagement could be influenced by their concerns about whether their publicly-shared comments were right or wrong in terms of grammar, spelling, pronunciation, listening comprehension or opinions. The finding regarding these concerns is consistent with Arnaiz's (2012) observation regarding the students' fears and worries about

making mistakes in the forum. With their concerns, some became more engaged in terms of time and effort to comprehend the available clips and share their comments in the discussion boards so that they could avoid being negatively judged by peers or could receive more help from peers (i.e. peers could correct the mistakes in their comments if any or help them to better understand a clip). Meanwhile, some others tended to hesitate to leave their messages online and opted for sharing thoughts and discussing with close friends at the "back stage" of the YouListen listening space. Thus, it can be realized that there was a prevalence of anxiety over contributions related to one's own social identity as exercised through the activity of publicly sharing comments. The impact of this anxiety on learner enagement generally varied among different learners, either positively or negatively. However, in the situation of leaving voice comments, almost all the learners were negatively influenced, since they did not leave any voice comments on. VoiceThread although they found this commenting option helpful. This can be a good example that the factors of individual difference among learners can serve as a mediator between the context factors and student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004).

(2) The Learners' Mastery Goals

It is indicated in the literature that learners tended to show willingness, persistence and the exertion of mental effort to attain their goals (Williams et al., 2002; Simons et al., 2004; Patrick et al., 2007; Walker & Greene, 2009). In relation to the current research, the learners' goals of improving English language, especially listening skill, were explicitly expressed in several messages on Facebook - as their reminder for peers to make listening-focused uploads. Also, the presence of these goals was evident when learners highlighted the learning values of listening in interactions with peers in general and the value of the YouListen listening space in particular (see sub-sections 8.4.2.1 and 8.4.4.2.1). These mastery goals seemed to explain the learners' active engagement in listening as discussed

earlier in Section 9.2.1. In other words, these goals seemed to drive the learners to frequently demonstrate behaviours of listening, sharing listening comprehension, recommending resources and practices related to listening and other language skills. In this sense, the goals contributed to their engagement in terms of time and effort and their listening socially (social engagement) in a positive way.

(3) The Learners' Test Orientation

The results from content analysis based on the learners' online activity revealed the learners' tendency for taking a product-oriented approach to listening (Field, 20018; Siegel, 2014). Their product-oriented listening was evident in certain frequently demonstrated behaviours, such as designing, requesting and answering listening comprehension questions on VoiceThread and the YouListen website (see Section 7.3.1). This listening approach was even maintained in the YouListen sub-space, where they were encouraged to get more involved in reflecting on their listening processes and joining content-based discussions with peers. Meanwhile, the thematic analysis of interview data showed that most participants were test-oriented L2 listeners (see *The Learners' Views on Listening Materials* in sub-section 8.4.4.2.2). Their test-orientation seemed relevant to explaining their product-oriented approach. This approach to listening, in turn, partly contributed to the low responsiveness among the discussants in these sub-spaces, since the discussants tended to wait for the final, correct answers from the task designer(s), rather than discuss how they could obtain or could not obtain their comprehension and certain answers to a listening comprehension question.

(4) The Learners' Expectations

The learners' expectations of the listening space and peers were evident in the interview responses that showed their perceptions and beliefs about the listening space, peers and the development of a study group. Also, it was found that the learners' engagement

fluctuated in response to whether their expectations were satisfied. (see sub-Sections 8.4.2.1, 8.4.2.2, 8.4.3.1, 8.4.3.2, 8.4.4.2.1). To illustrate, frustration, less active participation was reported when the learners' expectations for in-depth discussions were not satisfied due to peers' surface replies such as *like or thank you* comments. Vice versa, some interviewees got more excited and actively engaged in listening and discussing with peers during their group work when they were satisfied with their group members. Similar finding is found in Liaw (2008) that the learners' perceived satisfaction with the e-learning system had a positive significant correlation with their behavioural intention to use the system.

(5) The Learners' Attitudes

It was revealed that the learners' positive attitudes towards the practice of listening in interactions with peers seemed not to contribute much to the learners' social engagement online in terms of the interactivity of online discussions (i.e. almost all the interviewees acknowledged of the values, especially learning values of this social learning (see sub-section 8.4.4.2.1), but there was low interactivity on VoiceThread and the YouListen website (see 'being responsive' in sub-section 7.3.3.1). Still, their positive attitudes seemed to be consistent with their self-reported interactions with peers beyond the listening space. Also, that less favourable attitudes to listening in interactions with peers were consistent with their peripheral or lurking participation (see sub-sections 8.4.3.1, 8.4.4.1 and 8.4.4.2.1). Furthermore, it was the case that those who had strong good spirits to make contributions and maintain the listening "community" tended to get highly engaged in both listening to English and interacting with peers (see Sections 7.3., 7.4, sub section 8.4.5.2). The finding about the positive influence of good spirits on student engagement corroborates with what Ellis (2003) found that a student's willingness to make contributions to the forum had a good impact on their time and effort investment in preparing postings of quality.

(6) The Learners' L2 Language and Listening Proficiency

The learners' limited L2 language and listening proficiency was self-reported by the learners in both online messages and interview responses (see sub-sections 8.4.3.1, 8.4.3.2, 8.4.4.1 and 8.4.2.1.2). It was found that this factor might explain why some learners did not leave their comments or just joined the discussion boards with non-discursive comments. There was evidence that some learners decided to engage with easier listening resources in the face of challenging ones. They also tended to disclose their problems, evaluate their listening, resource help options like transcripts or subtitles, seek help from peers at the "back stage" of the listening space, etc. In the student engagement literature, the relationship between student achievement and participation or drop-out is much presumed and researched (i.e. Finn, 1989).

(7) The Learners' Personality

Last, it was found that the learners who self-perceived as less active, introvert, reticent or of lack of commitment seemed to demonstrate less visible engagement online in a social networked large study group (see sub-sections 7.4, 7.4.2, 8.4.4.2.1 and 8.4.6.1). This finding is inconsistent with previous studies' observations that quiet learners might actively participate in asynchronous discussions (Ellis, 2001).

To sum up, the learner factors under discussion helped to gain insight into why the learners had certain engagement levels in the YouListen social networked listening group. Different factors had different influence on learner engagement and the same factor had varying influence among the learners, either much or little, in a positive or negative way, in one or several dimensions of engagement.

So far, both the contextual and learner influences on the learners' engagement in the social networked listening group have been discussed and thus, the second research question

has been addressed. The finding about the interplay of both the contextual and learner factors lends support to previous studies that highlighted the influence of these factors on student engagement (Lam et al., 2012; Piki, 2012). That engagement is both an "alterable state of being" (Reschly and Christenson, 2006a, 2006b) and "an active image" (Wylie, 2009) reflects this interplay. The insight into the contextual and learner influences can be considered of importance for making suggestions to promote student engagement. The next section is devoted to the discussion of suggestions.

9.2.3 Research Question 3

How could a social networked listening group be more engaging to the learners?

This section discusses how a social networked listening group could promote student engagement. Given the importance of student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening and the learners' engagement experiences in the current research, the answers for improvements are of great importance. The answers were sought based on the learners' interview responses and online activity, the identified contextual and learner factors (sub-Sections 7.3, 7.4, 8.4.2, 8.4.3, 8.4.6.2 and 9.2.2). Accordingly, the suggestions were put forward in the categories of ease and openness of access, features, resources, activity orchestration, group structure and social qualities of learning peers. Let us start with the ease and openness of access.

Accessibility

Ease and openness of access in this section refers to the quality of a social networked listening space that supports its users to access or log in at ease and promptly, especially in the circumstances of forgotten password/username, poor Internet connection or when its users want to invite others to join them. These conditions are considered a prerequisite for the

learners' participation in a social networked listening group. Otherwise, there would be a risk of the learners' withdrawal and negative emotions. This is consistent with Volery and Lord (2000)'s finding that technology is one of critical success factors of online delivery and ease of access is its important component. In the current research, more than one third of the interviewees reported initial difficulty in logging in the listening space and recommended easier, even open access. Their narratives suggested that the possible reasons were related to their failure to understand or remember their username, poor Internet connection and rather heavy website load. In attention to the first reason, the lessons drawn are to avoid the assumption that learners must have known the seemingly simple step of logging in and must have recorded their account registration details as requested. Requesting the learners to double check and record their username and then offer on-site modelling on how to log in and use the project website were not sufficient. It would be better to email each of them their username and instruction videos. In addition, the offer of a forgotten password feature would be helpful, giving the learners a chance to re-register by themselves. Regarding the remaining reasons, it would be desirable to make the website load less heavy, enabling them to access the website even when the Internet connection is not strong enough. Also, it would be ideal if the website could be installed on their phone as an app, which would be more convenient for them to access when possible.

Affordances

Features that support learners' listening and interactions with peers are of necessity for a social networked listening group. It was found in the current research that the pictures accompanied with the listening clips were used as a reference source by the learners, but they seemed to be used to briefly understand the context of listening only, rather than being used as an important listening cue to combine with their background knowledge and information

that they could listen for (sub-Section 7.3.1). The learners tended to need transcripts as a recourse in the face of challenging clips, for the purposes of double-checking their listening comprehension and acquiring the target language by paying attention and learning pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar from the transcripts. There was evidence of a good approach to employing the transcripts, but also evidence of over reliance on this help option, reading the spoken input rather than listening to it (sub-Section 8.4.2.2). Being aware of these, it would be better to offer these help options for all the provided listening clips. In the meantime, guidance for effective use of them would be needed.

As regards the affordances that support high interactivity among discussants, a social networked listening group is desired to allow for both asynchronous and synchronous communication and to afford notification and tagging features. In the light of the media richness theory (Daft and Lengel, 1986), a listening and sharing space provided with these affordances can be considered a rich medium, facilitating the information processes, ongoing conversations, feedback and avoiding uncertainty and/or equivocality. The availability of both asynchronous and synchronous affordances would potentially tackle their limitations (i.e. asynchronous is rated as low in media richness, like lack of immediacy of feedback, whilst there is lack of reflection but much required time commitment in synchronous communication (Kreijns et al., 2003; Kash, 2009)). Besides, it was suggested from one interviewee's responses that these affordances are also of great help to cater for different learning preferences (i.e. they preferred to speaking to rather than writing to peers, or vice versa). The offer of notification and tagging features is needed since the presence or absence of these features potentially had influences on student engagement, especially their social engagement, in the current research (see sub-Section 9.2.2.1). The offer would be helpful in increasing responsiveness among the discussants. Apart from the abovementioned

affordances, it would be ideal to provide learners with more support for "private" sharing with certain peers or in small sub-groups so that the learners who are reticent, shy or highly aware of "face" would have a chance to raise their voice and their discussions at the "back stage" could be conducted right in their group's website/sharing space if they want.

Listening Resources and Activities/Tasks

Based on the learners' appreciation and engagement with the available listening resources (sub-Sections 8.4.2.1 and 8.4.2.2), the listening resources of interest, update, diversity, value and comprehensibility are potentially engaging to the learners. This is consistent with previous presumptions that learners would be willing to, concentrate and be highly engaged with these resources (Krashen, 1982; Renandya, 2012). Conducting surveys or encouraging learners to express their preferences and needs for listening resources can be considered useful prior to recommending listening resources to them. Regarding the learners' report of several listening clips in their online messages and interview responses about the influence of the challenge level of listening resources on the learners' engagement, the availability of graded listening resources would be a suggestion, so the learners would be likely to select a comprehensible input, or i+1 (Krashen, 1982), to listen with confidence. Besides, providing guidance and encouraging learners to proactively seek listening resources and engaging each other to listen are other suggestions. Based on the learners' acknowledgement of peer-recommended resources (see sub-Section 8.4.3.1), this suggestion can be considered promising. Alternatively, it would be of great help to guide the learners to flexibly employ listening strategies, set appropriate goals to attain or to make use of challenging clips in achievable, meaningful ways and actively interact with peers. In this sense, challenging or difficult listening resources are potentially of great values in fostering student engagement behaviourally, cognitively, emotionally and socially. Also, it was revealed that the listening

resources or activities that have less explicitness and non-matching of schema between the initial and subsequent segments of speech attribute to their challenge level (see sub-Sections 7.3.1 and 9.2.1). It would be good for learners to have much exposure to these resources for flexible use of inferencing, elaborating and pragmatic processing.

Activity Orchestration

It seems that more frequent updates of clips or discussion topic postings would be of great help in promoting student engagement. This conclusion is based upon the individual learners' recorded dates of publicly sharing a post or message, the whole group's uploading listening resources in different sub-spaces (see Section 6.1.3) and self-reported frequency of accessing the listening space by some interviewees (see 'engaging activities' in the sub-section 8.4.2.1, lack of the notification feature in 8.4.2.2) and the behaviour of responding to peers' comments (see 7.3.3.1 and 7.4).In addition, timing or setting a certain span of time for a post-related discussion seems necessary so that the discussion could draw learners' focus within a period, thereby getting less scattered and allowing for the synthesis the whole group's ideas (see sub-Section 7.3.1). This time setting is to be discussed and decided by learners. The last suggestion about activity orchestration is to encourage the learners to maintain and go beyond their frequently demonstrated activities. They could do this by finding a solution to improve their listening comprehension followed by making plans and evaluation of implementing a solution, actively getting involved in dialogic, discursive interactions with peers right in their social networked listening space.

Group Structure

It was revealed from the interviews that an ideal self-study group would be of small size, composed by close friends or those they knew well and pioneered by its leader(s) and core

members (see sub-Section 8.4.6.2). These conditions were believed to help maintain a group, facilitate group collaboration based on rapport among them, and to get other group members involved. Thus, the learners placed emphasis on the size, bond, hierarchy and centrality elements of a self-study group and cultural traits regarding collectivism and power distance seemed present in this case. Their preferences for small-sized group is consistent with their tendency to shift from the common space to their "private" space for further interactions with peers. Their stress on existing or close bond in a study group might be because of the high chance of feeling comfortable and seeking rapport, mutual understanding. In the case of the YouListen sub-space, which consisted of two separate sub-groups, it would have been better if the project had conducted activities that helped the two sub-groups to get acquainted with each other or create social presence and build a sense of community (Gunawardena, 1995). The finding that the learners' acceptance and need for leaders and core members to maintain and develop their group is consistent with Kukulska-Hulme's (2004) result that showed participants' inclination to follow their social network's central actors and lends support to Kukulska-Hulme (2005)'s claim, "…online collaborative groups still need leaders." (p.981). One more noteworthy point is that many interviewees in the current research desired their teacher's presence with her traditional role in their self-study group such as providing guidance, feedback, assessment, correction, suggestions, praises, etc. The teacher's role in instructional interventions for asynchronous discussion is highlighted in previous studies (Zhu, 2006; Pawan et al., 2003). In the case of an informal social networked self-study group where there is limited or no teacher presence and learners still need a leader or core members to lead their online discussions, much communication among them would be needed to together discuss and come to agreement the goals, norms, activities, procedures, etc. There are some suggestions in the literature such as sharing responsibilities of leading discussions

(Rourke and Anderson, 2002), peer coaching (Veerman et al., 2000), conducting small group discussions (Correia and Baran, 2010).

The Social qualities of learning peers

The last suggestions for an engaging social networked listening group centre on the learner. It was found that the interviewees were well aware of the reciprocal relationship between a self-study group's leader, core members and the remaining group members, apart from their emphasis on group members' shared domain. Demonstrating good spirits or sense of community, sense of responsibility, self-discipline, collaborative ability and hard work were frequently stressed expectations of the remaining members. Thus, these members were highly expected to play an important, active role in their self-study group. It is necessary that these expectations are clearly articulated and agreed upon by all the group members. Besides, given the influence of language and face-related anxiety on student engagement as discussed earlier in the sub-Sections 9.2.2.2, it would be better if they could focus their thinking on their mastery goals of the target language and listening skill and make use of chances to co-construct their understanding of a clip and knowledge of listening processes and practices. Getting involved in reflecting and sharing each other's listening processses and practices are process-oriented (Field, 2008), an alternative approach to their frequently demonstrated product-oriented listening approach which was identified to have a negative impact on student engagement (see sub-Section 9.2.2.2). Authentic tasks/activities (Newmann et al., 1992) can also be a good alternative to "listen, answer, check" pattern (Siegel, 2014).

In summary, as part of continuous endeavour in seeking ways to promote student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening, research question 3 has been addressed, putting forward several suggestions towards a more engaging social networked self-study group.

The suggestions discussed earlier are mixed from both the learners and the project researchers' perspectives. They centre on the design and the learner, showing that building an engaging environment would be desirably a joint activity among all concerned. On the one hand, they were put forward with considerations of their previous engagement experiences in the YouListen listening space, the contextual and learner factors, especially the learner's needs, personality, expectations and listening ability and approach. These considerations are in line with previous studies' suggestions (Liaw and Huang, 2007; Dillenbourg et al., 2009). On the other hand, some of the suggestions are to introduce or encourage the learners to try different approaches to listening and interacting with peers. The application of these suggestions is expected to promote student engagement in L2 listening and with peers in a social networked listening group, towards the goal that the learner could reach his/her potential development (Vygotsky, 1978) and have meaningful experiences of L2 listening and interacting with peers.

9.3 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the major findings of the main study with focus on the research questions and in relation to existing research and theory. All three research questions have been addressed. Accordingly, an insight into the student engagement phenomenon among the university learners of English as a foreign language has been obtained. The content and thematic analysis findings showed that the learners were generally much engaged with the listening resources and listening activities, with dominant positive emotions. Against this background, it can be said that a social networked L2 listening group has potential to promote student engagement in listening to English beyond the classroom. On the other hand, many learners' engagement, as demonstrated, exposed limitations - such as the lack of flexible use

of effective listening processes/strategies (limited cognitive engagement) or modest interactivity among discussants (limited social engagement). Moreover, it was revealed that their engagement experienced variations among and within individual learners and was under the influence of both contextual and learner factors, which is consistent with student engagement literature that student engagement is a dynamic and malleable phenomenon. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the learners took an active role in deciding the direction and extent of the contextual influences. Lastly, the current research contributes several suggestions towards constructing an engaging social networked listening group. Although more suggestions are related to its material design, the learner's decisive role in a social networked listening group is emphasized. Besides, given some limitations in the learners' beliefs and approaches to listening (like listening means doing listening tasks or answering listening comprehension only), encouraging learners to consider other approaches or listening purposes seems necessary.

10 Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

The current research was undertaken to gain insight into student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening, considering this along the four dimensions of engagement and thereby to propose design innovations that might further promote student engagement. To attain these aims, two studies, a baseline study and a main study, were conducted in sequence and their findings are discussed here in detail. In this final chapter, a summary of key research findings is presented, followed by consideration of the research contribution. The chapter then discusses the implications for promoting student engagement in L2 listening self-study. Finally, the chapter acknowledges the research's limitations and puts forward suggestions for future research.

10.2 General Conclusions

An overview of research findings from the component studies is presented with reference to the research questions.

The baseline study (Chapter 4) was conducted to grasp the status quo of student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening among a group of university students whose major is English in Viet Nam. With the deployment of a status quo survey questionnaire for students and referring to descriptive statistics, answers were sought to the research question: "*What is the status quo of learner engagement in out-of-class L2 listening among the majors of English as a foreign language*?" It was revealed that many of the respondents demonstrated low engagement, illustrated as limited time and effort investment, ineffective or surface strategy use, lack of readiness for taking charge of their own out-of-class L2 listening, lack of

confidence and/or lack of willingness to listen. In addition, significant correlations were found between student engagement and the learners' listening performance, also between the dimensions of engagement (i.e. emotional engagement and behavioural engagement) and within the emotional dimensions (i.e. among the different feelings expressed). Therefore, the status quo of low engagement among many learners raised serious concerns. The current research attended to this problem by considering a design that might enhance student engagement.

A further finding was that learning conditions and the learner were the most frequently perceived factors to affect student engagement most strongly. Also, there were significant correlations of their behaviour of selecting listening resources by themselves with their perceived comfort, confidence and interest in the resources. The last key finding is the learners' strong preferences for sharing listening experiences with peers, asynchronous modes of interactions, test-oriented resources, and real life-oriented resources. These findings helped to make informed decisions for this research intervention design.

The main study explored the phenomenon of student engagement in the project's own socially mediated listening space, with research objectives expressed in three research questions. To achieve the objectives, a record of the learners' online activity and their responses to interview were collected. The resulting analysis approaches included descriptive statistics, content and thematic analyses.

Research Question 1 was concerned with the ways that learners engaged in the project's listening space. A triangulation of the different data sources and analyses showed that their engagement took various and complex forms. Specifically, the variations occurred among and within individuals, among the sub-spaces, and by time. Regarding its complexity, the

learners seemed to engage in both positive and negative ways. On the one hand, the learners, even lurking participants, appeared to be much engaged in listening to English. Both high and low activity learners had their focus firmly on listening and listening-related activities - such as completing listening tasks/activities, listening reflectively, sharing listening comprehension - rather than on casual socializing. In addition, the high activity learners and almost all the interviewees seemed to engage in the listening space with emotions that were predominantly positive. On the other hand, it was revealed that many learners seemed not to use listening strategies flexibly, but tended to rely heavily on bottom-up processing of the spoken input. Consequently, there was a breakdown of their comprehension for certain listening clips. Besides, the learners seemed to construct their listening comprehension, listening practices, knowledge of the target language, general knowledge etc. in a 'quiet' way on the YouListen website itself and on VoiceThread. Instead of actively responding and building on each other's ideas in these sub-spaces, they tended to opt for reading peers' online messages for reference or making discussions at the backstage of the listening space, in face-to-face mode, or in their own private sub-spaces such as Zalo. A more dialogic, negotiated scenario was recorded on Facebook.

For better insight into the learners' engagement, Research Question 2 inquired about factors that might explain why the learners engaged in these ways. The possible factors were identified or inferred mainly from the interview responses and fell into contextual and learner factors. The seemingly relevant contextual factors included the project's listening space, peers and cultural traits. In essence, the direction and extent of influence on the learners' engagement of the listening space and peers were found to largely depend on the learners, such as their perceptions, experiences, reactions to them, learning needs, etc. Regarding the learner factors, they might be their concerns over social identity, mastery goals, product-

oriented listening approach, expectations, attitudes, L2 language and listening proficiency and personality. Thus, underlying the learners' engagement was the interplay of contextual and learner factors. An understanding of these factors is of importance for design improvements towards enhanced student engagement.

The last research question sought answers to how a social networked self-study listening group could become more engaging. The suggestions for design improvements were drawn based on the interviewees' suggestions and the obtained insight into their engagement. A detailed discussion of them is presented in Section 9.2.3. Hereby are several core ideas regarding the suggestions. First, they involved improvements in a design (i.e. access, listening and interaction affordances, group and activity orchestration) and in the user/L2 listener (i.e. social qualities of peers). In addition, promoting student engagement would be a joint activity of both the design developer/implementer and the user/L2 listener. Specifically, it would be necessary for the former to be aware of the importance of much user training. On the one hand, there should be good awareness and respect for contextual and learner factors and the potential strengths and limitations of their design. On the other hand, setting regulations like a deadline for a discussion session and offering orientations of listening resources, ways of listening, and listening activities that involve more visible interactions and are authentic, were also considered necessary for increased responsiveness, synthesis and evaluation of contributed ideas and effective, meaningful L2 listening. However, it is noted that these should be done with respect for learner autonomy and learner needs and preferences. They should be discussed and decided by listeners or group members in open discussions.

Thus, student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening was the research focus in this thesis and empirical findings about it were summarized here. The next section is devoted to a presentation of the contributions of the thesis.

10.3 The Contributions of the Research

This section presents the theoretical and methodological contributions of the current research.

Regarding theoretical contributions, this research contributes to a better understanding of student engagement as a multidimensional construct in a specific domain, that is, out-of-class L2 listening. Whilst the importance of student engagement for quality of education and individual learning and development is widely acknowledged, student engagement as a construct remains little known in the literature of second/foreign language research (Barber et al., 2016; Philp and Duchesne, 2016). To our knowledge, there has been no empirical report examining this construct in L2 listening and in out-of-class L2 listening. In this research, student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening was captured along the four dimensions of engagement, namely behavioural, cognitive, emotional and social. Therefore, there would be available a more comprehensive picture of the learner's listening to English beyond the classroom. In addition, the research provides empirical evidence that student engagement is a dynamic, complex and malleable phenomenon. Furthermore, for the insightful story of student engagement, the possible contextual and learner factors that might have shaped their engagement and suggestions for design improvements were examined and presented.

Methodologically, this research contributes to the empirical investigation of student engagement that employs multiple or mixed methods. In the student engagement literature, the self-report survey is the most widely used method. Given the strengths and limitations of

student engagement instruments, Fredricks and McColskey (2012) call for the use of multiple methods for "thick description" (Fredricks et al., 2004). This research employed mixed methods to grasp insight into the student engagement phenomenon. Three instruments were used for collecting quantitative and qualitative data: namely a survey questionnaire, online participant observation and participant interviews. Also, there was deployment of mixed approaches to analysing data, namely descriptive statistics, content analysis and thematic analysis. Furthermore, the research's status quo survey questionnaire and interview protocols might be useful for future research that is of the same interest.

The last important contribution is that this research contributes to L2 listening research on listening strategy use through its practical endorsement of the usability of online participant observation to track learners' use of listening strategies. In the L2 listening literature, numerous methods of tracking listening strategy use, or the listening process, have been mentioned - such as survey questionnaires, think-aloud protocols, and tracking software (see Hinkel, 2017). Nevertheless, the online observation method has not been considered. In this research, learners' use of cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective listening strategies could be tracked by observing while analyzing their online messages and applying content analysis.

The online message-based method is highly recommended for its benefits. Indeed, the learner's use of listening strategy could be elicited in the natural setting of their online interactions. Accordingly, there would be no interruption or pressure imposed on learners while they were processing listening input. In this sense, this method is particularly helpful, certainly when compared with the think-aloud protocol (see the disadvantages of think-aloud protocol in Jordan (1998)). The latter requires the listener to verbalize their thoughts and actions while listening to a spoken text, which is considered disruptive and stressful. In

addition, the online message-based method can be considered a solution to the limitations of self-report survey;, that is, "students may not answer honestly under some conditions….and thus, self-reports may not reflect their actual behaviours or strategy use" (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012, pp.765-766). Observing participants' online messages can be considered a good way of eliciting reliable data on learner engagement since participants would feel free to publicly share their thoughts, experiences, listening practices, etc. with their peers, rather than providing answers to please their teacher. However, it is admitted that this novel method involves qualitative content analysis for the underlying learner listening strategy use. Therefore, this method depends much on the researcher's data interpretation and expertise in listening processes and strategies. Besides, identifying particular listening strategies employed by the learner with this method is time-consuming and requires great rigour in the conduct of analysis.

10.4 Implications for Enhanced Student Engagement with Self-Study in general and with English Listening Self-study in particular

This section proposes several implications for promoting student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening for university majors of English as a foreign language in Viet Nam.

First, given the well-documented importance of student engagement for the quality of education and individual learning and development, there is a call for the support of policy makers in giving attention and priority to student engagement in listening to English beyond the classroom - in both research and practice. It might be said that the effectiveness of intervention programmes or practices for learner improvements in L2 listening would first depend on whether the learner participated with both their mind and heart.

Second, designing a socially-mediated listening space in the light of Vygotsky's conception of learning and with the use of social network sites can be one feasible way for engaging learners to listen beyond the classroom. In this research, the learners generally demonstrated their engagement in listening to English. Among their frequently expressed elaborations for justifying increased time and effort were learning benefits, peer support, the follow-up listening activities of reflecting, publicly sharing comments or collected clips, interesting and updated resources, etc (see Sections 8.4.2.1 and 8.4.3.1).

Third, it should be noted that the work of designing and implementing a socially mediated listening design might involve changes in ways of thinking and doing. To elaborate: findings from this research showed that the learner's engagement tended to fluctuate variously in a positive or negative way in accordance with how they perceived the listening resources and other features of the social networked listening space and their peers within it (see Sections 8.4.2 and 8.4.3). Cultural traits might possibly have shaped their engagement. Moreover, the fluctuations in learner engagement were seemingly prone to several 'learner factors', such as the learners' concerns over their social identity, a product-oriented approach to listening, and L2 language and listening ability (see sub-Section 9.2.2.2). Therefore, it would be necessary to take into account contextual and learner factors in order to identify their potential enablers and inhibitors, thereby ensuring informed adjustments together with the learners. In addition, the learner's considerations regarding the potential strengths and limitations of available social network sites before making their choice are indispensable factors. As regards implications for changing ways of thinking and doing, the following findings need to be considered. First, learners had concerns over their social identity, indeed some disclosed that they opted for becoming invisible in the discussion boards. In such cases, it would have been better if the learners had considered that they were making their

contributions to the whole group's co-construction of knowledge of a listening clip or listening practices. Moreover, it would be ideal if other discussants who read one's message adopted "an educational disposition: that is, the acceptance of particular attitudes towards knowledge and knowing" (Crook, 2008, p.6) such that the climate in the listening space could be supportive and free of extreme right or wrong judgements. Two other findings are (i) that the learners tended to adopt a product-oriented approach to listening and, (ii) that they used listening strategies inflexibly, with over-reliance on bottom-up processing. To be fair, these might be traced back to the prevalence of product-oriented or comprehension approaches (Field, 2008) in L2 listening pedagogy in Viet Nam (Ngo, 2015). The limitations of the product-oriented L2 listening approach indicated in the literature include its failure to animate the *process* of listening (Field, 2008; Vandergrift, 2007), "learners do not learn about strategies they can use to improve their listening ability" (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p.5) focusing more on 'testing' listening comprehension than on other listening activities (Siegel, 2014). Therefore, it would be desirable if both the teacher and the learner could be flexible, adopting other approaches and doing other meaningful, authentic listening activities as well. Open discussions and chances for the learner to make their choice of approaches and activities would be needed.

Finally, suggestions from the current research for design improvements as discussed in detail in section 9.2.3 might be a good reference for creating and maintaining a social network listening group.

10.5 Limitations of the Research

In my judgement, the current research has several limitations as follows.

First, the research was conducted at a university of Viet Nam and involved only a group of majors of English as a foreign language (EFL) who were selected based on purposive and convenience sampling. Thus, the sample of the research was not representative of the whole second-year and third-year EFL major population. Consequently, the findings may have limited generalizability to wider populations and other contexts.

Second, my project introduction and learner training sessions could not involve all the participants, since some were absent. Besides, due to the limited classroom equipment, many of them did not have a chance to do their first practice with the project's listening space on the spot. Therefore, emergent issues like some participants having difficulty in logging in were not known.

Third, because the learners had their different choices of the sub-spaces to participate. They could freely move from and to the main sub-space (i.e. the project's YouListen website itself) and another sub-space (i.e. the Facebook and/or the VoiceThread sub-spaces). It would therefore be difficult to make comparisons among the sub-spaces and between the second-year and third-year participants. For example, since the low activity group of learners demonstrated their online activity mainly in the main sub-space, it would be unreasonable to compare their engagement patterns across the three sub-spaces. Also, the comparison between the high activity and low activity groups could only be conducted in the main sub-space. In this research, the second-year and third-year participants were normally treated as the members of the whole listening group and a distinction between them was only made under certain circumstances.

The last limitation to mention is that the scope of the research is limited to one language skill, listening. As a result, a full picture of their engagement as L2 language learners could not be captured. Also, the project might have attracted more participants if it had extended to other language skills.

10.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Towards the goal of promoting student engagement for the learner's ZPD development in the target language, much research would be desirable.

To start with, the current research obtained its findings about the phenomenon of student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening in a social networked listening space within a specific context of Viet Nam. For a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, more empirical studies would be needed in other contexts.

In addition, it would be useful to examine the differences in student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening in different contexts, i.e., between the social networked listening setting and the solitary listening multimedia setting.

Furthermore, the learning benefits from engaging in the project's listening space and the possible factors affecting student engagement reported in this research were drawn mainly from qualitative data, that is, the interview responses. Experimental design would be needed to test the extent of their impact on student engagement.

Moreover, this research made great effort in the creation of the YouListen socially-mediated listening design and suggestions for design improvements in such spaces. Future

research should be encouraged to adapt and improve the design and/or to contribute more designs in the interest of the learner and to enable continuing research.

Last, it is also recommended that future research should expand the scope of this research, investigating student engagement in other language skills (speaking, reading and writing) or aspects of language (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.). By doing so, it is envisaged that a comprehensive picture of student engagement in the target language learning would be obtained and more initiatives in design improvements could be put forward.

10.7 My Personal Reflection

This PhD journey has been rewarding. Indeed, it has helped me to have better understanding of the student engagement phenomenon in out-of-class L2 listening and the process of developing a listening design towards student engagement. Specifically, it has come to my realization that the buzz words 'student engagement' in everyday use deserve attention and research inquiry as a multi-dimensional, multi-faceted construct. Besides, this phenomenon is dynamic and complex, subject to both the context and the learner. These characteristics would inspire me to dedicate more time and energy for better insight into them in the future. Furthermore, student engagement in out-of-class L2 listening can be enhanced with socially mediated listening designs. I have learnt that the work of developing such designs would need to be informed of the status quo of student engagement as well as possible contextual and learner influences. The work would also need joint activity of contributing suggestions by both the designer and the user/learner. Importantly, certain favourable conditions such as media richness and the social qualities of L2 listening group members would be necessarily considerations for the feasibility and effectiveness of a social

networked listening design. Apart from helping to enrich all this knowledge, the journey is an invaluable opportunity for me to learn and practise doing research with rigour. I had never anticipated how tough, careful and sophisticated it would need to be at every stage of doing research, especially developing a design, recruiting participants, analysing huge data and interpreting results. Regarding this, I would like to highly appreciate the tremendous support offered by my supervisors, especially Professor Charles Crook.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A1: A letter to the university's rector and the dean of the Foreign Language Faculty of the research site

Nottingham, ngày 9 tháng 10 năm 2014

Thầy kính mến,

Thầy và gia đình có khỏe không ạ?

Thưa thầy, em viết lá thư này với ước muốn trước tiên là được thăm hỏi thầy và sau nữa là em muốn xin phép thầy cho phép em có cơ hội áp dụng những điều em học được ở trường Nottingham, vương quốc Anh vào thực tế ạ. Em xin phép được trình bày cụ thể hơn như sau ạ.

Thưa thầy, một trong những tâm nguyện lớn nhất của em là tìm cách giúp các em sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh cải thiện, yêu thích và dồn nhiều tâm sức cho việc nghe hiểu tiếng Anh ở nhà hơn ạ. Với tâm nguyện như vậy, em hiện đang thực hiện một đề tài nghiên cứu dưới sự hướng dẫn của giáo sư Charles Crook và tiến sĩ Alex Ding ạ. Đề tài này dự kiến được triển khai trong hai giai đoạn, hướng tới đối tượng là các em sinh viên năm thứ hai của trường mình ạ. Ở giai đoạn đầu, em sẽ là điều tra viên chính, tiến hành khảo sát thuần túy vì mục đích nghiên cứu. Những chia sẻ của sinh viên về những trải nghiệm, nhận thức, khó khăn và tâm tư nguyện vọng sẽ làm cơ sở để đưa ra những cải tiến. Ở giai đoạn hai, em ước muốn thí điểm chương trình mang lại những trải nghiệm nghe tiếng Anh thú vị và bổ ích ạ. Đề tài này sẽ sử dụng các phương pháp thu thập số liệu, cụ thể là: phiếu câu hỏi, phỏng vấn, và nhật ký luyện nghe (nếu cần).

Thưa thầy, em kính mong thầy cho phép em được thực hiện đề tài với nhóm sinh viên năm thứ hai, chuyên ngành tiếng Anh trường mình ạ. Em xin hứa sẽ tuân thủ các hướng dẫn về nguyên tắc đạo đức nghiên cứu của Hiệp hội Nghiên cứu Giáo dục Anh quốc (BERA), nội quy của trường Đại học Sư phạm 2 và trường Đại học Nottingham ạ.

Em xin kính chúc thầy và gia đình mạnh khỏe và hạnh phúc. Em xin chân thành cảm ơn thầy ạ.

Kính thư, Ta Thi Thanh Hoa

APPENDIX A2: An invitation letter to participants

My name is Hoa. I am writing this email to invite you to join the project's listening space.

To start with, it is our strong aspiration to add a helpful "flavour" to your English listening. The project site, the YouListen, is an opportunity to share listening with your friends and fellow students. You can share your thoughts about the content of the recordings, efforts with listening comprehension, favourite listening resources or websites, etc. To facilitate your sharing, we are offering you links to some major social media platforms. You can use any of them. In several of them we have created "groups" just for youlisten-ers.

It would be great if we could receive your support, participation, and suggestions or initiatives. If you are willing to join the project's listening space, I would like to make a kind request for your choosing your username and providing contact details, and social media use (if any and if you feel comfortable).

As regards your username and contact details, I would also be grateful to you if you could double-check them and let me know whether they are typed correctly so that we can register you and you can then access the project site.

Your full name:
Your chosen username:
Your phone number:
Your email address:

We also need to know if you are registered for any of social media already. If you are, please provide your identity (i.e. your name or email address that you used when you did the registration) in the table in the attached file, *'My social media identity and preferred social media"* if you feel comfortable.

I do look forward to your confirmation of your registered username and contact details and sending back to me your social media identity and preferred social media tool (s) (if any) at your convenience.

I will give you the weblink to the project site and send you emails weekly, alerting you to a new listening opportunity on the site.

I am deeply grateful to you for joining – please feel free to email me at any time if I can help or add more information.

P.S. It would be desirable if our listening group could have more members, so I would really appreciate if you could introduce our project and invite your classmates to join us.

Best wishes,
Hoa

APPENDIX B: Participation Information Sheet

You are being invited to participate in the current research entitled *Learner Engagement in Listening to English beyond Classroom*.

The Focus of the Current Research

The research is to explore the deployment of the project's listening space. This is a simple Internet resource that is hoped to make your listening to English outside the classroom enjoyable and engaging.

The Main Aims of the Current Research

(1) It aims to investigate whether your listening to English can be an enjoyable and engaging experience, and your difficulties as well as preferences prior to the deployment of the listening space.
(2) It is to examine your engagement in out-of-class L2 listening in the project's listening space.

The Prospective Participants

The participants are second-year university students whose major is English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The Research Methods

Data will be collected from the following sources: survey questionnaires, asynchronous discussion postings, and semi-structured interviews.

The Expectations of Participants

As a participant in the current research, you will be kindly requested to do the following:

1. *Provide answers to the survey questionnaire*
2. *Possibly participate in a follow up interview*
3. *Review, provide explanation about the answers to the survey questions, and respond to the researcher's interpretation of and transcription of the interview where that has taken place*
4. *Participate in the activities of the project's listening space for about 9 weeks.*

The Process of Implementing the Project's Listening Space

The implementation may last nine weeks.

For the first few weeks, you explore and have interesting experiences with the listening space. You are kindly requested to hand in self-reports in which you share what you are sure or not sure about the learning space.

For the remaining weeks, you join activities individually and in groups in the project's listening space. You are provided with detailed guidelines and ongoing support. You are also encouraged to take your own initiatives when participating in the listening space.

Significance of your Participation, Benefits and Risks

What you share with us about your out-of-class EFL listening experiences will be significant help in reaching a better understanding of the second-year EFL majors' self-study with EFL listening- from students' perspectives. Your sharing is also considered beneficial to the development of a digital experiential learning space that can encourage students to listen to EFL more frequently, effectively and enjoyably. Thus, the data provided by you are to serve these research purposes. Additionally, it could be a good chance for you to reflect and share your EFL listening experiences as well as make plans for your own self-study. There are no risks from participating in the project. It costs you only your time to participate.

Your Participation

Participating in the current research is completely voluntary. Therefore, you choose to participate or not at will. Collecting data about you would not be permitted without your consent in writing and with your signature. You can still withdraw from our research at any time, even when you have signed the consent form, without suffering any penalty or negative consequences.

Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Privacy

We comply with the ethical guidelines for educational research provided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA), research ethics approval requirements and procedures set by the University of Nottingham and the School of Education. Accordingly, all the information provided by participants will be kept confidential. In other words, all participants' information will be inaccessible to third parties, coded, and stored in a secure place. As regards anonymity, the research results will be reported anonymously with the use of pseudonyms. Participants' privacy is highly respected. Specifically, we will ask participants' permission prior to data collection and participants can always refuse to answer certain questions and reject certain methods of recording their answers and activities in the listening space. This is a private learning environment for participants only.

The research is being undertaken by Ta Thi Thanh Hoa, a student of the University of Nottingham under the supervision of Professor Charles Crook and Dr. Alex Ding.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact her by e-mail: ttxttt@nottingham.ac.uk or tamnhinquoctevn@gmail.com or by phone: 447459214031.

You can also raise issues regarding your rights as a research participant with my supervisor, professor Charles Crook, Charles.Crook@nottingham.ac.uk or professor W.J. Morgan (Chair of the Research Ethics Committee), University of Nottingham, School of Education, john.morgan@nottingham.ac.uk

APPENDIX C1: Participation Consent Form (English version)

Project title: *Learner Engagement in Listening to English beyond Classroom*.

Researcher's name: Ta Thi Thanh Hoa

Supervisor's name: Professor Charles Crook

Please check your responses below

1. I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the researcher has explained the nature and aims of the research project to me.

   □ Yes □ No

2. I understand the purposes of this research project and my participation in it.

   □ Yes □ No

3. I am willing to participate in this research.

   □ Yes □ No

4. I understand that I will complete the survey questionnaires.

   □ Yes □ No

5. I understand that I will join the learning activities in the project's listening space.

   □ Yes □ No

6. I agree that my learning activities in the project's listening space can be monitored and analysed for research purposes.

   □ Yes □ No

7. I agree that my answers to interview questions (if any) can be audio recorded.

   □ Yes □ No

8. I understand that any information collected about me will be treated confidentially and anonymously. My identity will not be traceable when the research results are reported. My data will be stored in a secure place, in hard, electronic and/or audiotaped forms. My data is inaccessible to unauthorized people.

   □ Yes □ No

9. I understand that I can withdraw from the research project at any time and my withdrawal will not result in any penalty or negative consequences.

   □ Yes □ No

10. I understand that I can make a request for further information about the research project from the researcher or supervisor. I also understand that I can contact the Researcher Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, the University of Nottingham if I would

like to ask and raise any issues about my rights and participation as a research participant.

□ Yes □ No

11. I understand that I have my right of access to any data kept about me.

□ Yes □ No

12. I understand that the learning space ATEL is a private learning environment.

□ Yes □ No

Please put a tick √ in appropriate boxes to indicate your preferences

13. I would like to be involved in this research

13.1.

□ Just completing the survey questionnaires

□ Completing the survey questionnaires and attending interview(s), and preferring not to be contacted again.

□ Completing the survey questionnaires and attending interview(s) and being willing to be contacted for follow-up discussion(s)

13.2.□ Allowing the researcher to use photos or videos of me for research purposes.

□ Not allowing the researcher to use photos or videos of me for research purposes.

Signature: ……. Date: …….

Print Name: …….

Email/contact (optional): …….

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact her by e-mail: ttxttt@nottingham.ac.uk or tamnhinquoctevn@gmail.com or by phone: 447459214031.

You can also raise issues regarding your rights as a research participant with my supervisor, professor Charles Crook, Charles.Crook@nottingham.ac.uk or professor W.J. Morgan (Chair of the Research Ethics Committee), University of Nottingham, School of Education, john.morgan@nottingham.ac.uk

APPENDIX C2: Participation Consent Form (Vietnamese version)

BIÊN BẢN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA

Tên đề tài: *Learner Engagement in Listening to English beyond Classroom*.

Họ tên học viên nghiên cứu sinh: Tạ Thị Thanh Hoa

Họ tên giáo sư hướng dẫn: Giáo sư Charles Crook

Em vui lòng soát lại các câu trả lời sau của em

1. Em đã đọc Phiếu thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu dành cho người tham gia và học viên nghiên cứu sinh đã giải thích bản chất và mục đích của đề tài nghiên cứu cho em.

   □ Có □ Không

2. Em hiểu mục đích của đề tài nghiên cứu này và ý nghĩa của sự tham gia của em.

   □ Có □ Không

3. Em sẵn lòng tham gia vào đề tài nghiên cứu này.

   □ Có □ Không

4. Em hiểu rằng em sẽ tham gia trả lời các phiếu câu hỏi.

   □ Có □ Không

5. Em hiểu rằng em sẽ tham gia vào các hoạt động học tập ở không gian học tập của dự án.

   □ Có □ Không

6. Em đồng ý rằng những hoạt động học tập trong hông gian học tập của dự án có thể được theo dõi và phân tích vì mục đích nghiên cứu.

   □ Có □ Không

7. Em đồng ý cho ghi âm lại phần trả lời phỏng vấn của em (nếu có).

   □ Có □ Không

8. Em hiểu rằng bất kỳ thông tin nào về em sẽ được giữ bí mật và em không bị lộ danh tính trong các báo cáo (chẳng hạn như trong bài báo khoa học). Thông tin thu thập về em sẽ được lưu giữ ở một nơi an toàn, ở dạng bản cứng, bản mềm, điện tử và/hoặc ghi âm lời nói. Những người không được phép tiếp cận thông tin sẽ không tài nào lấy được thông tin về em.

   □ Có □ Không

9. Em hiểu rằng em có thể rút lui, không tham gia đề tài nghiên cứu này bất kỳ lúc nào em muốn và em sẽ không hề bị sát phạt hay gánh chịu hậu quả nào.

   □ Có □ Không

10. Em hiểu rằng em có thể yêu cầu biết thêm thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu từ học viên nghiên cứu sinh hoặc giáo sư hướng dẫn. Em cũng hiểu rằng em có thể liên hệ với điều phối viên phụ trách giám sát việc tuân thủ Đạo đức nghiên cứu của Khoa Giáo dục, trường Đại học Nottingham khi em muốn hỏi và thắc mắc về quyền lợi và sự tham gia của em với tư cách là người tham gia.

    □ Có □ Không

11. Em hiểu rằng em có quyền được tiếp cận bất kỳ thông tin nào về em mà đang được thu thập và lưu giữ.

    □ Có □ Không

12. Em hiểu rằng không gian học tập của dự án là môi trường học tập kín, chỉ dành cho những người tham gia.

    □ Có □ Không

Em vui lòng đánh dấu √ vào **02** ô thích hợp để chỉ rõ ý thích của em

13. Em muốn tham gia vào đề tài nghiên cứu này ….

    13.1.

    □ Em chỉ muốn trả lời các phiếu câu hỏi thôi.

    □ Em sẵn lòng trả lời các phiếu câu hỏi và tham dự (các) cuộc phỏng vấn, nhưng không muốn học viên nghiên cứu sinh tiếp tục liên lạc với em nữa.

    □ Em sẵn lòng trả lời các phiếu câu hỏi, tham dự (các) cuộc phỏng vấn, và cho phép học viên nghiên cứu sinh tiếp tục liên lạc với em để trao đổi thêm.

    13.2

    □ Em cho phép học viên nghiên cứu sinh sử dụng những bức ảnh hoặc đoạn ghi hình có hình ảnh của em vì mục đích nghiên cứu.

    □ Em không cho phép học viên nghiên cứu sinh sử dụng những bức ảnh hoặc đoạn ghi hình có hình ảnh của em cho dù việc sử dụng đó chỉ vì mục đích nghiên cứu.

Chữ ký: ……. Ngày tháng ký:…….

Họ và tên của em (viết hoa): …….

Địa chỉ email/số liên lạc (không bắt buộc): …….

Nếu em muốn hỏi hoặc còn băn khoăn, lo ngại về đề tài nghiên cứu, xin đừng ngần ngại liên hệ với học viên nghiên cứu sinh qua địa chỉ e-mail: ttxttt@nottingham.ac.uk hoặc tamnhinquoctevn@gmail.com hoặc số điện thoại: 447459214031.

Em cũng có thể nêu những vấn đề em bức xúc liên quan đến quyền lợi của em khi là người tham gia với giáo viên hướng dẫn, giáo sư Charles Crook qua e-mail Charles.Crook@nottingham.ac.uk hoặc giáo sư W.J. Morgan (Chủ tịch Hội đồng giám sát việc tuân thủ Đạo đức nghiên cứu, làm việc tại Khoa Giáo dục, trường Đại học Nottingham) qua e-mail john.morgan@nottingham.ac.uk

APPENDIX D: Participation Information Sheets (for interviewees)

The Focus of the Current Research

The research is to explore the learners' use of a learning and sharing space for their out-of-class English listening.

The Main Aims of the Interview

(1) To obtain better insight into your experiences, perceptions, feelings, preferences, etc., when participating in the YouListen space.
(2) To examine the (un) usefulness of the YouListen space for listening to English outside the classroom.
(3) To gain any other feedback of yours

The Interview

Interview medium:	Skype
Duration:	about one hour
Type:	open-minded, semi-structured
Recording Device:	free Skype (video) call recorder

My Kind Request

As an interviewee, you will be kindly requested to help with the following:

5. *Provide your answers to the interviewer's questions (Most of the questions are open-ended)*
6. *Help the interviewer to understand what you meant.*

Significance of your Participation, Benefits and Risks

What you share with us would enable better understanding of the learner's engagement with the learning and sharing space and contextual factors that might affect such engagement. Additionally, your information might help us to make informed decisions on popularizing or improving our design in a way that can be more engaging to EFL listeners. Also, it could be a good chance for you to reflect and share your EFL listening experiences and make plans for your own English self-study. There are no risks from participating in the project. The cost is just a little of your time.

Your Voluntary Participation

Participating in the interview is completely voluntary. You can contact the researcher to withdraw your consent at any time without suffering any penalty or negative consequences.

Nottingham's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics and research ethics approval requirements and procedures set by the University of Nottingham and its School of Education. Accordingly, all information provided by you will be kept confidential. In other words, all your information will be inaccessible to third parties; it will be coded, and stored as digital records in a secure place. Research results will be reported anonymously, with the use of pseudonyms where relevant. Additionally, we kindly request your consent prior to data collection and subsequently you may refuse to answer certain question(s) or reject certain methods of recording your answers or activities in the learning space.

Contact us

The research is undertaken by **Ta Thi Thanh Hoa**, a student of the University of Nottingham under the supervision of **Professor Charles Crook** and **Associate Professor Philip Hood**. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact her by e-mail: ttxttt@nottingham.ac.uk or tamnhinquoctevn@gmail.com or by phone: 447459214031. You can also raise issues regarding your rights as a research participant with my supervisor (Charles.Crook@nottingham.ac.uk) or the Research Ethics Committee, University of Nottingham, School of Education, (educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk).

APPENDIX E: Participation Consent Form (for interviewees)

Project title: *Learner Engagement in Listening to English beyond Classroom*.

1. I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the researcher has explained the nature and aims of the research project and interview to me.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. I understand the focus of this research project and aims of the interview as described here and my participation in it.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. I am willing to participate in the interview, including future contact by email.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. I agree that my answers to the interviewer's questions can be recorded.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. I understand that any information collected about me will be treated confidentially and anonymously. (All data will be stored in a secure place, in hard and/or electronic forms. It will be inaccessible to unauthorized people. My identity will not be traceable if research results are reported.)

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time and my withdrawal will not result in any penalty or negative consequences.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. I understand that I can make a request for further information about the research project from the researcher or supervisor. I also understand that I can contact the Researcher Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, the University of Nottingham if I would like to ask questions or raise any issues about my rights and participation as an interviewee.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. I understand that I have my right of access to any data kept about me.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature: …….…… Date: …….

Print Name clearly: …….

Print email: ……..……@.....

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact researcher **Hoa** by e-mail: ttxttt@nottingham.ac.uk or tamnhinquoctevn@gmail.com or by phone: 447459214031.

You can also raise issues regarding your rights as an interviewee with my supervisor, **Professor Charles Crook,** Charles.Crook@nottingham.ac.uk or the Research Ethics Committee, University of Nottingham, School of Education, educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk.

APPENDIX G: Questionnaire Feedback Form

The Clarity of the Questionnaire

Hereby are several potential problems with a survey questionnaire.

1. Potential Problem 1: there might be certain words or phrases that are ambiguous.

Your feedback:

Did you find that this survey questionnaire encounters this problem?

□ Yes □ No

If *Yes*, please indicate them:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Potential Problem 2: there might be questions that are not clear enough for a respondent to understand although he/she understand every single word in the questions.

Your feedback:

Did you find that this survey questionnaire encounters this problem?

□ Yes □ No

If *Yes*, please indicate them and summarize the problem:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Potential Problem 3: there might be questions that are stated in a long-winded or complicated way although a respondent can figure out what they exactly mean.

Your feedback:

Did you find that this survey questionnaire encounters this problem?

□ Yes □ No

If *Yes*, please indicate them by writing the number of the questions:

……

……

Could you suggest how the questions can be simplified?

……

……

……

……

The Length of the Questionnaire

Do you think that the length of the questionnaire is acceptable? □ Yes □ No

The layout of the Questionnaire

1. Is the questionnaire clearly organized into section? □ Yes □ No
2. Are the questions presented in a clear, easy-to-complete way? □ Yes □ No

If *No*, please indicate the specific questions that are not

……

……

Your Feelings

Do you feel comfortable when completing this questionnaire? □ Yes □ No

Your Suggestions

Are there any suggestions that you want to recommend? □ Yes □ No

If *Yes*, please indicate them:

……

……

……

……

APPENDIX H: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (for students)

This survey questionnaire is designed for better insight into your listening to English beyond the classroom. We do appreciate your sharing experiences, difficulties, perceptions and learning needs. What you share will definitely help to inform improvements for more enjoyable and engaging listening experiences. Please make your voice heard by completing the items as indicated below. All the information provided by you is treated confidentially and anonymously and is to be used for the research purposes only. Great thanks for your cooperation.

Note: The phrases "out-of-class (EFL) listening" and "listening to English beyond classroom" in this questionnaire both refer to *your listening to the spoken English as a foreign language (EFL)* ***at your off-class time, deliberately, with concentration, voluntarily and/or required,*** *and* ***for (a) certain purpose(s)*** *such as for improvement in listening comprehension, pronunciation, speaking, etc.*

Please put a tick (√) in appropriate boxes and/or fill in the information where necessary.

PART I: YOUR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your gender? □ Male □ Female
2. How long have you been learning English? _____
3. How challenging do you find the language skill 'listening'?

Extremely challenging	Very challenging	Moderately challenging	Slightly challenging	Not challenging at all
□	□	□	□	□

PART II: YOUR OUT-OF-CLASS EFL LISTENING

1. How often do you listen to English beyond classroom on average?

   □ a. every day □ b. every other day □ c. twice a week

   □ d. once a week □ e. less than once a week □ f. never
2. How long does each time of listening to English beyond classroom usually last?

   _____
3. How good are you usually at listening when you listen to English beyond classroom?

   □ Excellent □ Very good □ Good □ O.K. □ Bad □ Very bad

4. How do you usually feel when you listen to English beyond classroom?

   Please put a tick √in the appropriate box(es) ***for all that apply.***

   a. ☐ Comfortable, not stressed

   b. ☐ Confident

   c. ☐ Willing to listen

   d. ☐ Bored

   e. ☐ Anxious

   f. ☐ Frustrated

   g. ☐ Other (please specify)

5. How often do you do the following when listening to English beyond the classroom?

   Please put a tick √in the appropriate column (please see the attached Instruction Sheet)

Things you may do	Always 1	Often 2	Sometimes 3	Rarely 4	Never 5
I select the resources and activities at will.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I adopt effective ways of listening.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I listen individually first, then listen and discuss in a pair/group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I listen in a pair/group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have some reflection on my listening (i.e. reflection on what I have listened to, my performance, reasons why I have had such a performance, solutions for better listening, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I go and share my listening experiences with					
a. my teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. my friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART III: YOUR PERCEPTION OF OUT-OF-CLASS LISTENING

1. How important do you believe out-of-class listening is to your progress in English?

Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not important at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. How important do you believe out-of-class listening is to your progress in listening comprehension?

Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not important at all
□	□	□	□	□

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about out-of-class listening?

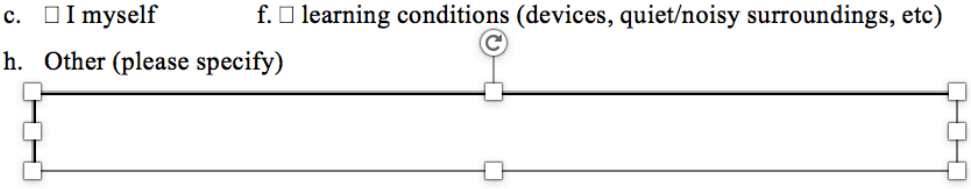
Statements Out-of-class listening …	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is listening in isolation.	□	□	□	□	□
It is mainly listening to complete tasks in the workbook/practice test books or those assigned by my teacher.	□	□	□	□	□
My teacher still plays a dominant role in my out-of-class listening (i.e. selecting resources and tasks for learners, providing rules and strictly supervise learners' work).	□	□	□	□	□

4. What is **your general evaluation on the listening resources chosen by yourself**?
*Please put a tick (√) in appropriate boxes whose numbers are based on the 1-5 scale, with **1** showing the **highest** level and **5** the **lowest** level (see the attached Instruction Sheet)*

My evaluation in terms of	1 Highest	2	3	4	5 Lowest
Interest	□	□	□	□	□
Challenge	□	□	□	□	□
Accessibility	□	□	□	□	□

5. What are the **factors that have greatest influence** on your time and energy invested in out-of-class listening? *Please put a tick √ in the appropriate box(es) **for all that apply.***

a. □ my teachers
b. □ my peers
c. □ I myself
d. □ the requirements of the Listening course
e. □ the requirements of other courses
f. □ learning conditions (devices, quiet/noisy surroundings, etc)
h. Other (please specify)



PART IV: YOUR DIFFICULTIES AND PREFERENCES

1. What are your greatest difficulties in listening to English?

   Please choose up to 3 options

   a. ☐ Difficulty in searching appropriate listening resources

   b. ☐ Difficulty in catching up with the speed of recordings or speakers

   c. ☐ Difficulty in concentration on what is being spoken

   d. ☐ Difficulty in controlling my anxiety while listening

   e. ☐ Difficulty in giving up the bad habit of trying to listen word by word

   f. ☐ Difficulty in giving up the bad habit of translating while listening

   g. ☐ Other (please specify):

2. To what extent do you prefer the followings when listening beyond classroom?

Preference	Very much	Much	Somewhat	A little bit	Not at all
I would prefer my teacher					
to provide rules and strictly supervise my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
to decide what to listen for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
to provide guidance on self-study skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
to assess my work with proficiency tests (e.g. KET/PET/IELTS/TOEFL).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
to encourage me to self-evaluate my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would prefer my friends					
to share experiences and effective ways of listening.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would prefer					
asynchronous online sharing and support (via e-mail, social media, discussion forums, class homepage, etc.) with					
my teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
my friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
choosing partners at will.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

test-oriented listening resources/activities.	□	□	□	□	□
listening resources/activities that help me to better prepare for real-life listening.	□	□	□	□	□
Internet-based resources	□	□	□	□	□

If you agree to assist us in obtaining further information on your experiences, perceptions and needs which will enable us to design more effective learner engagement programme, please provide your contact details, specifically

Your e-mail address: _____

Thank you very much for spending your time completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX I: THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Project title: *Learner Engagement in Listening to English beyond Classroom*.

Date:

Time of interview:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Interview Procedure

- ✓ *Making a brief introduction to the project, the aims and duration of the interview*
- ✓ *Acknowledging the interviewee's cooperation*
- ✓ *Confirming that the confidentiality of the data collected from the interview is ensured*
- ✓ *Mentioning the interviewee's rights to refuse to answer certain question(s) or withdraw from the interview*
- ✓ *Answering the interviewee's questions (if any)*
- ✓ *Kindly request the interviewee's consent*
- ✓

Guiding Questions

1. Could you please share your experiences with the YouListen project?
2. I would like to invite you to have a look at this extract of your interaction with your peers/one of your comments on the YouListen website/Facebook/VoiceThread. Could you please tell me more about it? (How did you do that? what did you feel then? What do you think of it now? etc)
3. In what ways did the project work/not work for your out-of-class English listening?
4. Please could you tell me about your listening practice during and after the project?
5. What do you think of listening to English in interaction with your peers?
6. Please could you tell me about listening resources for your out-of-class listening?
7. What do you think of publicly sharing a post?
8. What do you think your future out-of-class English listening should be like?
9. Have you got any other feedback or suggestions for our listening group?

Closing

- ✓ *Making a summary*
- ✓ *Saying thank you*

- ✓ *Providing contact details*

APPENDIX J: An extract of an interviewee's response

First, I would like to enrich my knowledge and improve my skills, I joined the YouListen space. Additionally, my listening skills are rather poor, so I shared with peers the information that I could listen for after having listened many times.

To be honest, I was very nervous at first, the first time I had joined peers doing the sharing. I was very nervous since I had never participated in a space whose members are all classmates.

Everybody was very friendly.

At first, I was quite nervous since I was shy since my proficiency level was low, my [language] skills were not as good as theirs, so I was afraid that everyone might remark that I am wrong, saying 'that's wrong', or my level is lower. I thought I was a bit unconfident, not as confident as others. They might say that this answer is wrong or things like that, or they might think that my level is lower.

It is as if I had something, not confident about myself, unconfident about my level/ability.

Then gradually, my peers shared that 'everyone makes a mistake', so I did not hesitate any more.

Please leave comments if one wants to learn more, no worries since everyone makes a mistake, not only me, so I went ahead, writing what I could listen for. Gradually, I participated actively.

In class, my peers said that 'it does not matter', I found them friendly, so I participated enthusiastically.

Generally, it is quite fun. (Mai)

APPENDIX K: Coding Scheme for Online Activity Analysis

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT A dimension of engagement that shows learners' listening to the target language socially by sharing, discussing their interpretations of a listening clip and making other interactions in a listening "community".

Category	Indicators	Definition	Example
Exchanging understanding of listening clips	One's understanding of listening clips	Publicly sharing what one could listen for and/or comprehend from the listening clips recommended by the project and peers in such forms as notes, summary, paraphrases, etc.	
	Quoting from others' messages	Using software features to quote others' entire message or cutting and pasting selections of others' messages	
Being responsive			
Evidence of attending to one's message/comment(s) in responses/replies	Referring explicitly to others' messages	Direct references to contents of others' posts	"As X said,…" "In A's message…"
	Giving feedback to peers	Complimenting others (for enthusiasm in making uploads, listening comprehension, idea contribution, etc.)	
	• *Complimenting, expressing appreciation 294*		
	• *Giving direct but constructive feedback 294*	Giving others negative feedback related to one's posting a listening resource, designing listening tasks/activities	
	• *Giving feedback on peers' answers to listening comprehension questions*	Giving feedback that peers' answers are correct or not or that peers need to listen to a clip again	

Category		
Exchanging understanding of listening clips	Expressing opinions towards the content of their messages	
	• *Expressing agreement*	Expressing agreement with the content of peers' messages (opinions, thoughts, ways of doing, etc.)
	• *Expressing disagreement*	Expressing disagreement with the content of peers' messages (opinions, thoughts, ways of doing, etc.)
	Confronting, Challenging peers	Asking peers to confirm, justify their opinion
	Giving explanation/clarifying	Explaining why one chose a certain clip to publicly share, why one followed certain listening tips/ strategies, etc. in order to avoid misunderstanding or to persuade peers
	Providing information	Providing information upon peers' request
Being responsive Evidence of attending to one's message/comment(s) in responses/replies ***Working respectfully*** Following the group's norms or etiquette	Showing politeness, respect	Demonstrating politeness, respect for peers with the use of such expressions as 'thank you', 'you are welcome' or allowing peers to decide whether to accept one's feedback or suggestion

Enjoying an open, informal climate of everyday exchange	Avoiding conflicts Expressing an inquiring mind	Listening to peer's feedback, being open-minded, welcoming perspectives, ways of listening that are different from a learner's	
	• *Self-disclosure, seeking empathy*	Presents details of life outside of class or expresses vulnerability (including sharing difficulty in listening to a clip, log-in, etc.)	
	Small talk	digressing from the main topic of discussion	
	Use of humour	Teasing, cajoling, irony, understatements, sarcasm	
Reinforcing group cohesion and response rate Exemplified by activities that build and sustain a sense of group commitment and increase response rate from peers	Phatics and salutations	Communication that serves a purely social function; greetings, closures (serve to confirm ties of union and include communicative acts such as formal inquiries about one's health (How are you?), remarks about the weather, or comments about trivial matters) (Cues: Phatic language/utterances Greeting expressions at the beginning of a message)	"Hi, guys" "The weather is really nice today, isn't it?
	Vocatives	Addressing or referring	"John, what

		to participants by name,	do you think?"
Enjoying an open, informal climate of everyday exchange Working reciprocally	Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns	Addresses [or refers to] the group [with inclusive pronouns] such as *we*, *us*, *our*, *group*	
A reciprocal action or arrangement involves two people or groups of people who behave in the same way or agree to help each other and give each other advantages (Cambge dictionary)	Demonstrating rapport, empathy	Expressing good understanding of peers, their feelings or situations	
	Expressing goodwill	Expressing one's good intention when making an upload of a listening clip or other resources	
Reinforcing group cohesion and response rate	Scaffolding	Providing guidance or suggestions Providing answer key Providing other help	
Exemplified by activities that build and sustain a sense of group commitment and increase response rate from peers	Sharing related materials Sharing learning tips Making suggestions	Making such suggestions as turning on/off subtitles, speeding up or slowing speech rate while listening, etc.	

COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT A dimension of engagement that involves learners' mental effort and use of listening strategies and metacognitive strategies to comprehend a listening clip and master listening skill.

Category	Indicator	Definition	Example
Use of cognitive	Inferencing	Using information within the text or conversational	I use other words in the sentence. I

strategies The mental processes used to manipulate the target language in order to accomplish a task		context to guess the meanings of unfamiliar language items or unknown words, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information	try to think of it in context and guess. I guess, using tone of voice as a clue. I read her face. I guess on the basis of the kind of information the question asks for.
	Elaboration Using prior knowledge from outside a listening clip and relating it to knowledge gained from the clip to predict outcomes or fill in missing information		I think there is some big picnic or a family gathering, sounds like fun, I don't know I heard some famous names in sports, so I think I know what sport they were talking about
	Just making a guess	A guess that is not made with the deployment of the cues from a listening clip, learning strategies, etc.	I just guess, I don't know
	Resourcing • *Making use of visual aids accompanied with a clip* • *Making use of available transcripts or subtitles* • *Not using available transcripts or subtitles*	Using available reference sources of information about the target languages	I look in the back of the book. I look it up in a dictionary. I searched it on the Internet.
	Word-by-word processing	Processing a listening text with reliance on sound and word recognition. A serious consequence can be that the information gained is just disjoined.	in this audio i hear speaker talk that" well this is paragraph i trust on sun house matter, we trust london we call…in america we call

			some way its the reason i trust on paragraph, because i cut no singn how many people in china… small beautiful to by sit smart phone (one participant's message)
Use of metacognitive strategies The mental activities for directing the learning process	Planning	Developing an awareness of what one is going to listen for, whether to attend in general or to attend to specific aspects of the aural input Paying concentration Understanding and arrrange the conditions that help one successfully accomplish listening tasks	I read over what we have to do. I listen for the key words. I put everything aside and concentrate on what she is saying.
	Comprehension monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance ***while*** listening	"This part I think is much easier than the first one. I can understand it." "There's one word, I didn't hear. Er the something is … er protects eyes…"
	Evaluation • *Evaluating one's own performance* • *Evaluating one's strategy use* • *Problem identification*	Evaluating ***after*** listening Assess overall comprehension Judging one's strategy use Explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution for better understanding or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion	"I could understand the clip quite well." "That strategy worked for me." "I'm not sure but "partager" and I'm not really sure what that means. I think that kind of has something to do with that.
Reflective Metacognitive statements illustrating the learner's serious and careful thoughts, relations, self-appraisal of learning and understanding that their knowledge or	Reflection on the content of a listening clip/topic	sharing reactions, serious and careful thoughts on the content of a listening clip/topic	
	Reflection on related experiences (personal or things witnessed) Reflection on the lessons drawn	Sharing related experiences (personal or things witnessed) Sharing lessons drawn after having listened to a clip and/or having	

ways of thinking have changed as a result of having listened to a clip and/or having discussed with peers	Reflections on changes in knowledge, ways of thinking	discussed with peers Sharing changes in knowledge, ways of thinking after having listened to a clip and/or having discussed with peers	
Application	Listening strategy application	Applying certain listening strategies after having listened to a clip that introduces listening strategies	
Use of socio-affective strategies Activities involving interaction or affective control in language learning (Vandergrift, 1997, p.391)	Seeking help, cooperation with peers	Asking if peers could help one to better understand a listening clip, to catch certain words or information, Asking if peers could check one's comprehension, Asking if peers could check one's posted message (grammatically or spelling correct)	
	Suggestions for considerations	explicitly characterizing his/her message as exploration (Garrison et al, 2001), calling for further consideration	"Does that seem about right, guys?"
	Making request for comprehension questions	Asking peers to design comprehension questions for them to answer while listening to a clip	
Persistence, willingness Persisting with difficult tasks "going beyond the minimum" (e.g. using dictionary or Internet to gain further information) (Finn and Zimmer, 2012, p.103)	Repeated listening Searching related information on the Internet or other sources	Listening to a clip again	
Initiating Initiating or prompting discussion	Designing activities for peers	Designing listening activities or tasks for peers to do	
	Starting an open dialogue, inviting further sharing	Presenting background information that culminates in a question Posting messages that take discussion in new direction	

		Calling for further sharing of thoughts, ideas, experiences, etc. from peers There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers
Responding to available discussion prompts or suggestions by the project	Responses to the project-recommended activities	Answering or following the questions, discussion prompts or suggestions which are provided by the project and attached to a listening clip.
Doing peer recommended activities	Responses to peer-recommended activities	Answering or following the questions, discussion prompts or suggestions which are designed by other commentators and are either attached to a peer-recommended listening clip or found in other commentators' comments on a project-recommended listening clip.
Answering the questions available right in a clip	Responses to the questions of a clip	These questions are not put forward by the project or peers
"Wrapping'	Responses that provide a summary or concluding remark	Making a summary or a concluding remark about peers' comments or answers in the whole discussion

AFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT A dimension of engagement that shows learners' emotions, reactions related to their experiences of listening and interacting with peers in the listening space.

Category	**Indicator**	**Definition**	**Example**
Emotions expressed Emotions related to the learner's experiences with the project (from listening to the clips recommended by the project, doing listening	Positive emotions	Positive states (e.g. enjoyment, happiness, pride,	

activities and peers and from interacting with peers in the project's listening space, reactions to peers)		satisfaction)
		Positive emotions during ongoing action, including enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity, and interest
	Negative emotions	Negative states (e.g. anger, anxiety, frustration, boredom)
	Other emotions	Other states or reactions
Valuing a post The learner's beliefs, perceptions about a post (its utility, interest, comprehensibility, clarity of voice/accent, etc.)	Positive valuing	The learner's beliefs, perceptions that a post is useful, worthwhile listening, interesting, easy to understand, and/or spoken in a clear and loud enough way, etc.
	Negative valuing	The learner's belief, perceptions that a post is of little value, boring, too difficult to understand, and/or not spoken in a clear and loud enough way, etc.
	Other valuing	Other beliefs, perceptions about a post