

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**



Undergraduate Research:

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE INTERMEDIATE INTENSIVE ENGLISH I STUDENTS IN
THEIR PERFORMANCE OF THE LISTENING SKILL AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE
DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR, SEMESTER II, 2015.

To obtain the degree of:

Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés: Opción Enseñanza

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Acknowledgements

To my beloved beings...

I want to give the honor, praise and glory to God father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost because without their will, I hadn't completed this achievement.

I also want to thanks to my mom Hilaria Pineda because she is always my right hand in everything I do. Her support, help and motivation are always there.

Also to my dad, Juan Hernandez, who was always supporting me during my whole career.

To my dear and beautiful daughter Alisson Hernández, who was always trying to show her patient toward me.

Finally my gratitude is also extended to these who were always leading through the path... all my teachers, especially to my advisor José Ricardo Gamero Ortiz, M.A. who guided us till the end of our research project.

*Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer
or withheld his love from me!*

Psalm 66:20

Patricia Beatriz Hernández Pineda

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank to:

God for giving me life, health, strength and wisdom to develop and complete this graduation work.

My parents Ricardo Hernández and Rosa de Hernández who have been my motivation, thank you for your unconditional support and sacrifice that made me have the opportunity to accomplish this important stage in my life.

My brother Ricardo and his family for their support and concern during the development of this project.

My aunt Carolina for her constant support and understanding.

My advisor José Ricardo Gamero M.A. for his professional advice and also for his help during the development of this graduation work.

Patricia Ascención Hernández Vásquez

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the possibility to complete this research project.

First of all a special gratitude I give to God who is always providing me with "faith and wisdom". Secondly I would also like to thank my parents Santos Aragon and Maximiliano Gómez because without their support this could not be possible; also the amazing chances they have given me over the life; I really appreciate all the opportunities that they have provided me as well as, the sacrifice that they have done to bless me with the best education.

Furthermore I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the crucial role of my sister Patricia Gomez who was always guiding and supporting me. Special thanks goes to my team mates, and also friends Beatriz Hernandez and Patricia Hernandez I really appreciate the patience that they had and the friendly way that they behaved in all this process.

Last but not least, many thanks go to our dear research project advisor Ricardo Gamero Ortiz, M.A. For all time that he spend providing Guide to Finish the research project; and also all the teachers that granted me the knowledge that I have now.

This entire people make it possible and I just want to say is thanks at all.

Marwin Enrique Gómez Aragón

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was carried out with the objective of investigating the internal and external factors that were influencing Intermediate Intensive English I students in their performance of listening skill. The participants were four groups of the students already mentioned from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The data were gathered through a diagnostic test, open-ended questionnaire and non-participant observations. Findings revealed that among internal and external factors affecting students' listening performance are: motivation, lack of vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, anxiety, lack of concentration, type of passage, authenticity, noise and distortion, speech rate, speakers' accent and environmental noises. As a result it was clearly evident that these factors are deeply implied in the development of the students listening performance.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is the capacity of listening and understanding what we hear at the same time, Nunan (1997). It means that listening is one of the most important skills when learning a second language in order not to misunderstand the message; therefore, being listening a very important process in the learning of a second language (in this case English), it is important to identify factors that influence in the intermediate Intensive English I Students' performance in listening skill at the foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

The following study contains a wide description of the internal and external factors that influence the Intermediate Intensive English I students in their Listening performance, the study was carried out at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

For this study a qualitative approach was adopted and a descriptive type of the study was applied. The sample for this research project was four groups of intermediate intensive English I students; moreover, three types of instruments were used which are: a diagnostic test, open ended questionnaire and non-participant observation guide and the data gathered by these instruments was analyzed through an interpretive study.

Lastly, the findings of this research project were used as an important source to generate some recommendations that will help students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador to improve their performance in listening skill.

I TOPIC

TOPIC

Factors that influence Intermediate Intensive English I Students in their performance of the listening skill at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, semester II, 2015.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Listening is one important skill when learning a second language, because is the first skill children started to develop when they are babies, just by learning to listen to people who already can speak the language. Based on this, it is evident that listening skill possesses a high importance in the learning of a foreign language so, as a result to the low listening performance that students obtained in the diagnostic test, the researchers carried out a qualitative study in order to determine the factors that influence students' listening performance of the Intermediate Intensive English I, at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM (AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND)

A previous related study carried out in the Foreign Language Department in 2012, proved that among the four major skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) applied in the learning process of a second foreign language, the weakest of all them is listening. Likewise when researchers from this study started analyzing the students' performance in this skill through a diagnostic test, the results were totally devastated, meaning that the internal and external factors influencing the students listening performance of the Intermediate Intensive English I courses were turning into strength barriers, and these barriers were blocking the students' listening learning process. Based on that fact, this study describes the factors that were affecting students' listening performance in a high range and at the same time it explains some alternatives or recommendations that can help students to improve their development of the listening skill.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of this research study was to identify what were the internal and external factors that influenced students' listening performance in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses; moreover, through the development of this study, researchers were able to get valuable information that supports them to give some recommendations that can help future students generations from the Foreign Language Department of the University of el Salvador to improve their listening performance.

OBJECTIVES

General objective:

To identify the main factors that influence the performance of the Intermediate Intensive English I Students in their listening skill through a class observation in order to provide some recommendations to develop a better teaching-learning process for this skill.

Specific objectives:

1. To determine the internal factors that influence Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.
2. To identify the external factors that influence the performance of Intermediate Intensive English I students in their listening skill.
3. To propose some recommendations that can help students to improve their performance in listening skill.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

General research question

What are the internal and external factors that influence the listening performance of the Intermediate Intensive English I Students of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?

Specific research questions:

1. What are the internal factors that influence Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill?
2. What are the external factors that influence the performance of Intermediate Intensive English I students in their listening skill?
3. What kind of solutions can help students to improve their performance in listening skill?

JUSTIFICACION

The focus of this research study was to find out and describe the internal and external factors that influence the Intermediate intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill. This research project not only inform students about the factors that influence their listening performance, but also the findings gathered through this research study were used as a basis to propose some recommendations that will help students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador to improve their performance in listening skill.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This research study was developed with the aim of identify the factors that affect students listening performance. This descriptive study was carried out at the University of El Salvador, in the Foreign Language Department, the data was gathered from four groups of Intermediate Intensive English I, and the research was executed in a period of six months. As it was mentioned before this is a descriptive study so that, it just describes the findings as they were found. A limitation of this study was that it had a low possibility of having a huge number of participants in the sample.

ETHICAL ISSUES

For the development of this research study some ethical considerations were taken into account, those are outlined below:

- All information pertaining to participants remained the property of the researchers and was not used for any purpose except for execution of this study.

- Students' names were only used for the identification of the grades in the diagnostic listening test, and these were also treated as confidential data.

- Students were not obliged to participate in the research study if they did not want to do it.

GLOSSARY

- Listening skill:** is a basic skill for learning a language. It differs from hearing. It includes a wider meaning and achieved through different ways and means.
- Internal factors:** are basically guided by the attitude of an individual. That is the physical and emotional condition which affect the listening process is known as internal factors.
- Motivation:** is an internal process that makes a person move toward a goal.
- Lack of vocabulary:** the fact of not having an extended knowledge of the words.
- Background knowledge:** information that is essential to understanding a situation or problem
- Anxiety:** a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.
- Lack of concentration:** the inability to focus the mind on one thing at a time.
- External factors:** external factors are the factors outside the students that influence them in their listening activities.
- Characteristics of the passage:** these are passage-based factors that can make listening comprehension difficult.
- Authenticity:** is a piece of real language created by a real speaker for a real audience in order to convey a message of some sort.
- Distortion:** is the alteration of the original shape (or other characteristic) of something, such as an object, image, sound or waveform.
- Noise:** any unwanted sound that is unintentionally added to a desired sound.
- Speech rate:** is the term given to the speed at which you speak. It's calculated in the number of words spoken in a minute.

Speaker accent: is a manner of pronunciation peculiar to a particular individual, location, or nation.

Environmental noise: is the summary of noise pollution from outside, caused by transport, industrial and recreational activities.

II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

BACKGROUND

Listening has been the Cinderella skill in the second language learning. All too often, it has been overlooked by its elder sister, speaking. For most people, being able to claim knowledge of a second language means being able to speak and write in that language. Ever so often, however, listening comes into fashion in the 1960s; the emphasis on oral language skills gave it a boost (Nunan, second language and learning, 1998).

WHAT IS LISTENING?

There are numerous definitions of listening; however, it is important to start with a standard definition of this term, Michel Purdy, 1997, states that Listening is the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by others human beings.

According to Howatt and Dakin (1974) Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This process involves understanding a speakers' accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning.

The process of listening is often contrasted with hearing. Lundsteen (1979) considered hearing a physical act and listening a mental act. Hearing she said had to do with our physiological capacity to receive and process sounds. Problems with our ability to hear could hinder our listening. Hence, it behooves each of us to have our hearing checked if we think it could be affecting our ability to listen. In contrast to hearing, listening has to do with assigning meaning to the stimuli received by our brain. To listen, is to attach "meaning to the aural symbols perceived" (Michael Purdy, 1997).

Goss (1982) stated that listening is a process of taking what you hear and organizing it into verbal units to which you can apply meaning. Applied to speech processing, listening requires that you structure the sounds that you hear and organize them into words, phrases, sentences, or other linguistic units.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING WHEN LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Listening is a significant and essential area of development in a native language and in a second language; therefore, Bentley and Bacon (1996) present a view toward the concept. The authors state that listening, an important part of a second language learning process has also been defined as an active process during which the listener construct meaning from oral input.

Learning a foreign language is commonly associated with speaking that language, and learners are enamored with speaking the language immediately. As for teachers, they are more than likely to plunge students right into speaking. Children have months of listening to their native language before they even utter their first word. But when a person is taught a foreign language, he is expected to speak the language from day one.

In contrast Listening should be the first and foremost skill to be acquired in learning a new language. Understanding spoken words is prerequisite to speaking, reading, and writing; in other words, comprehension should precede reproduction (Cheung, Yun Kul, 2010).

Listening is the primary means by which incoming ideas and information are taken in Gilbert (1988), Nevertheless, it is evident that listening plays a significant role in the lives of people. Listening is even more important for the lives of students since listening is used as a primary medium of learning at all stages of education. (Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 2, September 2011).

WHAT IS LISTENING COMPREHENSION?

Dirven and Oakeshott-Taylor (1984) described listening comprehension as follows: the term listening comprehension is a typical product of teaching methodology, and is matched in phonetic and psycholinguistic research by expressions such as speech understanding, spoken language understanding, speech recognition and

speech perception. Bowen, Madsen and Hilferty (1985) defined listening as: Listening is attending to and interpreting oral language. The student should be able to hear oral speech in English, segment the stream of sounds, group them into lexical and syntactic units (words, phrases, sentences), and understand the message they convey.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Listening knowledge of a foreign language is often important to academic studies, professional success, and personal development. Listening in a language that is not the learner's first language, nevertheless, is a source of considerable difficulties for L2 learners. Some authors (Underwood, 1989; Thompson and Rubin, 1996; Goh, 2000) indicate that problems with foreign language listening maybe either listening problems or language problems, depending on the listener learning abilities and skills.

It can be seen that at the beginning L2 learners have to deal with a great deal of difficulties in listening comprehension as listening in somehow is a receptive skill. However, the listening process is often described from an information processing perspective as "an active process in which listeners select and interpret information that comes from auditory and visual clues in order to define what the speakers are trying to express" (Thompson and Rubin, 2006). Considering various

aspects of listening comprehension; language learners may encounter some difficulties in understanding the incoming speech. Hedge (2005) divides these difficulties into two as internal and external problems. Internal problems can be listed as lack of motivation, high level of anxiety, lack of knowledge of the topic under discussion, lack of concentration and unknown vocabulary of what is being heard. On the other hand, external problems are related to listeners' failure in understanding as a result of the characteristics of the passage (type, authenticity, distortion and noise speed rate) speakers' accent and environmental noises.

INTERNAL FACTORS

Base on the studies and findings made by different experts in listening, we can list internal factors as: motivation and listener characteristics (lack of vocabulary, anxiety, concentration and background knowledge) these factors are considering internal because they are within the listener or the EFL learners.

Motivation

When students are not interested in learning English, especially listening subject, their low interest in the learning process causes their attention to the material taught becomes low. Their low interest can be caused by their low learning motivation. According to Ur (1998), students' motivation loses more easily because of monotonous, apparently pointless activity. Consequently, the low motivation can

cause unsatisfactory result in learning. Previous research shows that learners who have low learning motivation tend to get unsatisfactory achievement or low achievement.

In foreign Language learning field, to be motivated means that the learner needs to have something to look forward to, a purpose related to goal or objective. This objective would be learning a foreign language. There must be something that the learner wishes to accomplish or gain, being the target language the vehicle to attain it. The learner's reasons for another language could vary from achieving a sense of success (Garner, 1985).

According to (MacIntyre, 2001), motivation is defined as an attribute of the individual describing the psychological qualities underlying behavior with respect to a particular task. This goal-directed behavior shows itself through distinct actions of the motivated individual. The motivated individual expends effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals, desires and aspirations, enjoys the activity, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, makes attributions concerning success or failure, is aroused, and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals. Motivation should be viewed as a hybrid concept, an internal attribute that is the result of an external force (Z. Dörnyei, 2003).

According to Elliot, ET al. (2000) there are two types of motivation; intrinsic motivation and extrinsic one. Intrinsic motivation is the desire of students

themselves to learn, without the need for external motivation. When motivation generates interest and enjoyment; and a reason of performing the activity lies within the activity itself, this indicates that the motivation comes from the learners' needs, wants and desires for their own sake. This motivation exists when the learner learns because of an inner desire to accomplish a task successfully, whether it has some external value or not.

In the other hand extrinsic motivation is rewards and external inducements to students such as scores, prizes, and other rewards. Students' reason for doing an activity is to gain something outside the activity itself. Thus, it is clear that the extrinsic motivation exists when the learners are motivated by an outcome that is external. Extrinsically motivated students carried out task in anticipation of reward from outside and beyond themselves.

Listener characteristics

Lack of vocabulary

Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Without an extensive vocabulary and strategies for acquiring new vocabulary, learners often achieve less than their potential and may be discouraged from making use of language learning opportunities around them such as listening to the radio, listening to natives speakers, using the language in different context, reading or watching television, (Nunan 1998).

Vocabulary knowledge is generally assumed to be good predictor of language proficiency in a second or foreign language, and it has long been recognized that vocabulary size in particular play a crucial role for L2 learners' communicative competence in English. In spite of this, there is still an absence of studies exploring the extent to which vocabulary size contributes to the different language skills (Lars Stenius, 2008). However, some researchers (Bonk, 2000, Kelly, 1991 and Underwood, 1989) have identified a strong relationship between vocabulary and listening comprehension.

According to Bonk (2000) and Kelly (1991), vocabulary knowledge is important for successful listening comprehension in EFL. They state that there is a lexical threshold for adequate listening comprehension; in fact this assumption was proved in their study in which they identified some errors made by advanced EFL learners when transcribing passages from BBC radio news recordings, their findings showed that lack of vocabulary knowledge was the main obstacle to successful listening comprehension for these learners. Moreover, Underwood (1989) states seven causes of obstacles to efficient listening comprehension within those obstacles he points out the listeners' limited vocabulary; He states that when speakers choose words that listeners do not know these unknown words may cause listeners to stop and think about the meaning of these words and thus cause them to miss the next part of the speech.

Vocabulary has been considered by many listening experts as an important

component of listening comprehension; however, there is still an absence of it in many EFL learners for that reason, it is recommendable for these learners to use strategies to increase their vocabulary knowledge, of this way they will improve their listening comprehension.

Background Knowledge

The previous knowledge sometimes called "background knowledge "or "knowledge of the world" is central to the way we understand language, whether through listening or reading. The term covers a range of types of knowledge, any of which we may need to draw on in order to reach an adequate comprehension of what someone has said or written. The extent, to which we may need to exploit existing information inside our heads, when attempting to understand what someone tells us, should become clear if we consider a real life example, (Anderson and Lynch, 1988).

Background knowledge plays an important role in learning a foreign language specially in the developing of the listening skill, However, EFL students have difficulty understanding and recalling information contained in spoken and written discourse when they lack familiarity with the topic of, or the cultural elements contained in the discourse (Carrell, 1983; Connor, 1984). In addition Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) have suggested that for ESL learners, if there is a mismatch between the prior knowledge assumed in the discourse and the prior knowledge possessed by the reader or listener, a breakdown in communication will occur.

Current views on listening comprehension agree that background knowledge or prior Knowledge (also called declarative knowledge) can affect listening comprehension. To make sense of the rapid-fire "noise" that comes from oral speech, learners often try to find an overall schema. Even at the word, phrase, or sentence level students attempt to associate prior knowledge of the language with the incoming "noise."

Several studies have considered the role of background knowledge in listening comprehension.

In the study of Long D.R. (1990) a group of Spanish FL listeners were tested in order to know if they comprehend better when they possess schemata relevant to the listening topic, students completed a survey of their background knowledge about two subjects named as gold rushes and rock groups, according to the survey results, students in Long's study possessed less information about gold rushes than about rock groups, based on that finding Long suggested that background knowledge can relate to listening comprehension.

According to Schmidt Barbara (1992), the topic familiarity and proficiency level can affect listening comprehension, in her study she made students from Spanish classes listen two passages, one about a familiar topic and another about a novel topic, results showed that all students recalled significantly more information from the familiar topic.

In all these studies, background knowledge is shown to improve listening comprehension; therefore, it is important to consider the interaction between text type and types of background knowledge.

Anxiety

Many people claim to have a mental block against learning a foreign language, although these same people may be good learners in other situations, strongly motivated and have a sincere liking for speakers of the target language. In many cases they may have an anxiety reaction which impedes their ability to perform successfully in a foreign language class. Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.

In learning foreign language fields, the oral aspects of language are generally seen to be most closely associated with foreign language anxiety (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999). In discussions of anxiety in classroom language learning, speaking is the skill that has been most emphasized (Young, 1990); however, listening comprehension can also be very stressful for learners. Listening is a receptive skill, like reading, but it involves serious time constraints on processing. These constraints, as well as possible difficulties in hearing resulting from learner impediments, acoustic inadequacies, and factors related to the speaker (e.g., unfamiliar accent, lack of clarity and proper enunciation), must be taken into account. Krashen has noted that listening "is highly anxiety provoking if the

discourse is incomprehensible” (Young, 1992,). Among the reasons that students develop anxiety about listening are a negative self-concept with regard to listening and low self-esteem regarding their ability in listening (Joiner, 1986).

Lack of concentration

Concentration has been defined as "the ability to direct one's thinking in whatever direction one would intend" (Cambridge University, 2012), Concentration is so important for developing listening skill because it helps listener to receive accurate information and it also indicates that the listener is interested in what speaker is saying. We all have the ability to concentrate some of the time. But at other times our thoughts are scattered, and our minds race from one thing to another.

Low concentration, or not paying close attention to speakers, is detrimental to effective listening. It can result from various psychological or physical situations such as visual or auditory distractions, physical discomfort, inadequate volume, lack of interest in the subject material, stress, or personal bias. Regardless of the cause, when a listener is not paying attention to a speaker's dialogue, effective communication is significantly diminished.

When listening to speech, there is a time delay between the time a speaker utters a sentence to the moment the listener comprehends the speaker's meaning. Normally, this happens within the span of a few seconds. If this process takes longer, the listener has to catch up to the speaker's words if he or she continues to

speak at a pace faster than the listener can comprehend. Often, it is easier for listeners to stop listening when they do not understand. Therefore, a speaker needs to know which parts of a speech may be more comprehension intensive than others, and adjust his or her speed, vocabulary, and sentence structure accordingly (Boundless, 2015).

EXTERNAL FACTORS

According to Hedge (2005) external factors are those which are outside the listener, they are listed as: characteristics of the passage (type, authenticity, distortion and noise speed rate) speaker's accent and environmental noises.

Characteristics of the passage

Type of passage

The type of the passage has been noted as a factor affecting listening comprehension, (Rubin, 1990). Different types of spoken passages have different structure, which can make them easier or more difficult for second language listeners to understand. Lectures (monologues, speeches) and recorded conversations, have very different structures, for instant In a conversation, participants are allowed to ask for repetition and clarification, and they often do not distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information (Flowerdew, 1994). Furthermore, conversations do not necessarily require specialized knowledge or an understanding of implied and indirect speech acts (Flowerdew, 1994). They are by

nature informal, contextualized, and involved (Biber, 1988). Furthermore, conversations have more repairs, negotiation of meaning, confirmation checks, and back-channel cues, (Chaudron, 1988). On the other hand, when attending to a lecture, listeners hear long stretches of uninterrupted speech, without the opportunity to take turns or clarify, and they must be able to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information (Flowerdew, 1994). Furthermore, lectures generally require specialized knowledge, though they do not require that the listener be able to understand implied and indirect speech acts (Flowerdew, 1994). They are by nature formal, elaborated, decontextualized, and detached (Biber, 1988). not to mention that the speakers often assume that listeners have prepared for the lecture by reading relevant material in advance.

Moreover, Shohamy and Ibar studies have pointed out other types of passage which are also difficult for foreign language listeners, these are listed as: new broadcast , dialogues, and narratives events; In their study they found that news are the most difficult materials to listen to , as well dialogues are the last difficult texts, they also provide empirical evidence that narratives texts are easier to listen to and recall than expository texts, furthermore Shohamy and Ibar report data to support their view that events described in chronological order are also easier to listen to and to recall.

In addition studies have suggested that types of passage with visual support can enhance listening comprehension, (Rubin, 1990). According to the study made by Georgetown University, students who watched dramas on video improved

significantly over students who receive no video support for the listening training, it argues that video can serve as a haven to enhance listening comprehension.

Authenticity

Authenticity of aural materials can be defined in many ways, involving the speaker, the listener, the context, and the message (Breen, 1985). One prevalent way of defining authenticity for a passage itself, and the definition that this report adopts, is that an authentic passage is a piece of real language created by a real speaker for a real audience in order to convey a message of some sort (Gilmore, 2007; Thanajaro, 2000). This characterization is designed to exclude passages that are created to exemplify some aspect of the language (the use of the future tense or speech acts such as apologies) rather than to convey an actual message. The characterization does include other types of passages such as speech from a native speaker to a non-native speaker and scripted television programs (Gilmore, 2007).

The push to use authentic materials in teaching second-language listening skills began in the 1970s (Gilmore, 2007). Apart from more general concerns that using created passages rather than authentic passages robs the L2 learner of experience with many elements of the L2 (e.g., lexical reductions like can't, a realistic speech rate, disfluencies; Breen, 1985; Cobb, 2004; Crossley, McCarthy, Louwse, & McNamara, 2007; Flowerdew & Miller, 1997; Long & Ross, 2009;

Rings, 1986; Rogers & Medley, 1988), experimental evidence shows that L2 learners benefit from experience with authentic materials (Herron & Seay, 1991; Kienbaum, Russell, & Welty, 1986). However, it is just how authentic passages might differ from created passages in terms of passage-based and context-based factors of interest, and the impact these differences are likely to have on the difficulty of the passage for an L2 listener.

Distortion and noise

Authentic recorded passages are not always recorded in ideal conditions. Recordings from telephone calls, conversations, or radio transmissions are often distorted or mixed with background noise. Recorded conversations are rarely held in perfectly silent places: other conversations, background noise, and modulated volume can all contribute to speech that is difficult to understand. Radio and television transmissions are subject to interference from external sources.

Indeed, these acoustic distortions can have a profound effect on a listener's ability to understand what they are hearing. When listening to sentences under less than ideal circumstances, even people listening to their native language struggle to understand what was said (Payton, Uchanski, & Braid, 1994; Adank et al., 2009). This is due in part to the fact that it is difficult to recognize words when the signal is degraded (Aydelott & Bates, 2004.) when words are difficult to hear due to noise and distortion in the signal, it is also difficult to build a strong semantic framework into which the listener can integrate incoming words (Aydelott, Dick, & Mills, 2006;

Moll, Cardillo, & Aydelott Utman, 2001.) These difficulties are even more pronounced when a listener is trying to understand a non-native language, especially if they are in a low proficiency level.

Richars, (2006) states that it is extremely difficult to find authentic texts for beginning and low proficiency learners due in part to the fact that at this level of proficiency, listeners can only understand occasional words and phrases of statements made in unfavorable conditions.

Speech rate

Speech rate may appear to be a basic concept that distinguishes between faster and slower speakers, two speakers one fast, one slow producing the same spoken passage, but in actuality, it corresponds to one common measure, particularly in the literature on L2 listening comprehension, is words per minute (e.g., Blau, 1990; Brindley & Slatyer, 2002; Griffiths, 1990, 1992; Jacobs et al., 1988; Zhao, 1997).

Speech rate can make it harder for L2 listeners to understand a spoken passage, Griffiths(1990) suggests that speech rate includes a "normal rate", the rate at which speakers can usually easily comprehend a passage and a "threshold rate", the rate at which comprehension begins to decrease rapidly, Griffiths also argues that different languages have different "normal" rates; Moreover, Tauroza and Allison (1990) note that normal rates vary among text types and that the range of what is considered normal may vary from language to language. In addition, many studies

quotes a normal speech rate of 165 to 180 words per minute for native speakers of English and a threshold level between 250-275 words per minute, Thomas Sticht (1971).

According to Tarouza and Allison(1990) normal rates vary among text types, they state that the speech rate for radio news, interview speech events lies within the range of 160 to 190 words per minute and for conversation and lectures 210 and 140 words per minute.

For listeners of English, there is conflicting evidence about how speech rate affects comprehension, this conflicting evidence about the effect of speech rate on listening comprehension may relate to a number of variables one of these is the listeners' proficiency level, for instance Griffiths (1990) states that speeches faster than two hundred words per minute is hard for lower intermediate learners to understand, he also argues that this level of students performed best at 127 words per minute. In addition the type of text used and the background knowledge require for the passage can be variables that are also related to the speech rate, in fact the bad combination of these variables with speech rate can influence negatively the students' listening comprehension, Rubin, (1990).

Speaker accent

Comprehending spoken language involves adapting to the idiosyncrasies of a particular speaker (e.g., speaking rate or the pitch of voice). In general, the comprehension of the spoken language becomes considerably more challenging when the speaker has a different accent than the listener (Weil, 2003). Accented

speech has been found to affect both the extent to which listeners successfully retrieve a speaker's message and the effort involved as listeners identify particular words in the message (Floccia et al., 2009). In the case of a speaker with a different accent, a listener must cope with variation arising from both the speaker's own idiosyncrasies and additional variation the speaker shares with others from the same linguistic background (Weil, 2003). Such difficulties in adaptation are further exacerbated when the spoken language is not the listener's native language, particularly when proficiency in that language is low.

Non-native speakers are likely to have a lower level of familiarity with any accented speech for their L2 than native speakers, but non-native speakers should still find particular L2 accents more familiar.

Fitzmaurice, Bunta, and Balasubramanian (2005) investigate how accents of varying degrees of familiarity affected the listening comprehension of native and non-native listeners, in their study they exposed the non-native listeners to different accents including the accent in which listening materials were often presented in the listening training, final results of this research shows that the speaker accent significantly affected listening comprehension for non-native listeners. The more familiar the accent, the easier it was to comprehend. Further, differences in comprehension of the different accents were significant only for the non-native listeners, indicating that the effect of accent on comprehension is larger in the L2 than in the L1. Familiarity with the accented speech can explain these latter results, in that a non-native listener is less likely to have experience with any of the accents

than is a native listener.

If the effect of accent on listening comprehension is due to familiarity, it is possible that language learners may find L2 speech accented with their L1 more comprehensible, regardless of actual exposure, due to the influence of L1 phonological forms on L2 productions. Wilcox (1978) found some support for this idea, in that non-native listeners in his study understood L1-accented target language better than target language spoken by native speakers. However, two more recent studies have found only weak evidence that non-native listeners better comprehend L2 speech spoken by someone sharing their L1, in other words all these studies suggest that the familiarity of the speaker's accent in the listening materials can influence positively on the listening comprehension of a foreign language learner.

Environmental noises

Environmental factors such as lighting, temperature, and furniture affect our ability to listen. A room that is too dark can make us sleepy, just as a room that is too warm or cool can raise awareness of our physical discomfort to a point that it is distracting. Some seating arrangements facilitate listening, while others separate people. In general, listening is easier when listeners can make direct eye contact with and are in close physical proximity to a speaker. When a group of members are allowed to choose a leader, they often choose the person who is sitting at the center or head of. Andersen, *Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions*

(Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), Even though the person may not have demonstrated any leadership abilities, people subconsciously gravitate toward speakers that are nonverbally accessible. The ability to effectively see and hear a person increases people's confidence in their abilities to receive and process information. Eye contact and physical proximity can still be affected by noise.

Environmental noises such as a whirring air conditioner, barking dogs, or a ringing fire alarm can obviously interfere with listening despite direct lines of sight and well-placed furniture.

Physiological noise, like environmental noise, can interfere with our ability to process incoming information. This is considered a physical barrier to effective listening because it emanates from our physical body. Physiological noise is noise stemming from a physical illness, injury, or bodily stress. Ailments such as a cold, a broken leg, a headache, or a poison ivy outbreak can range from annoying to unbearably painful and impact our listening relative to their intensity. Another type of noise, psychological noise, bridges physical and cognitive barriers to effective listening. Psychological noise, or noise stemming from our psychological states including moods and level of arousal, can facilitate or impede listening. Any mood or state of arousal, positive or negative that is too far above or below our regular baseline creates a barrier to message reception and processing. The generally positive emotional state of being in love can be just as much of a barrier as feeling hatred. Excited arousal can also distract as much as anxious arousal. Stress about an upcoming events ranging from losing a job, to having surgery, to wondering

about what to eat for lunch can overshadow incoming messages; psychological noise is relevant here given that the body and mind are not completely separate. In fact, they can interact in ways that further interfere with listening. Fatigue, for example, is usually a combination of psychological and physiological stresses that manifests as stress (psychological noise) and weakness, sleepiness, and tiredness (physiological noise). Additionally, mental anxiety (psychological noise) can also manifest itself in our bodies through trembling, sweating, blushing, or even breaking out in rashes (physiological noise).

III METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

Research approach: qualitative

This research study adopted a qualitative approach because the data was decoded and analyzed through an interpretative model.

Type of the study: descriptive

This research project is a descriptive study, since its purpose is to describe the current existing characteristics such as attitudes, events, and relationships basically, this study concerned in the research of the external and internal factors that influence the students' listening performance in the intermediate intensive English I courses.

Research design: non-experimental, cross-sectional design

This study is non-experimental because the researchers were not allowed to control, manipulate or modify the variables. At the same time this study is also a cross-sectional design because researchers collected the data in a specific period of time.

Population:

The study was carried out at the University of El Salvador in the Foreign Language Department; the population was all the students enrolled in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses.

Sample:

The sample was four groups of Intermediate Intensive English I students, each group was made up of approximately 20 students. To obtain the sample the researchers chose a purposive sample since the participants had to accomplish certain characteristics.

Research study: Factors that influence Intermediate Intensive English I students in their performance of the listening skill at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, semester II, 2015.

Sampling criteria

The criteria that were applied for this research study were based in the general characteristics that all participants had to have:

Category 1 - Age:

- For this study, researchers took into account participants between 20 to 30 years old.

Category 2- Gender:

- Both genders, male and female were taken into account.

Category 3- University:

- The participants for this research study were students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

Category 4- Major:

- The participants for the research study were students from the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching.

Category 5- Level:

- For developing this study, researchers took into account students who are enrolled in the Intermediate Intensive English I course.

Research techniques:

In this research project, the researchers applied the non-participant observation and the open-ended questionnaire as research techniques.

Research instruments:

To carry out this research study, three types of instruments were used with the aim of getting the information that researchers needed to find out.

Diagnostic listening test: this was applied to the students in order to know if they were having troubles in their listening skill. The test contained eight listening exercises and it made a total of 53 items, the exercises were designed according to students' level, and the test took 15 minutes to do it.

Non-participant Observation guide: researchers visited the Intermediate Intensive English I classrooms in order to verify the external factors that influence the

students' performance in the listening skill. The observation process was executed in a period of three weeks.

Open-ended questionnaire guide: this was applied to the students in order to obtain their opinion about the internal factors that influence their listening performance, the questionnaire contained 11 open-ended questions and it took 15 minutes to complete it. .

IV DATA ANALYSIS

DATA ANALYSIS

This research study has led to interesting findings about the internal and external factors that influence Intermediate Intensive English I students, semester II, 2015.

We present them through a qualitative analysis as follows:

Phase I: diagnostic test

The diagnostic test was administrated in order to know how is the students' listening performance in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses, the test contained 8 listening exercises making a total of 53 items.

The diagnostic test was administrated to 82 students of 4 groups from Intermediate Intensive English I, the results showed that 28% of students passed the test and 72% failed it, based on these findings the researchers determined that the majority of students were not having a good performance in listening skill.

Phase II: open- ended questionnaire

An open-ended questionnaire was administrated to the students in order to know what were the internal factors that affected their performance in listening skill.

The questionnaire contained 11 open-ended questions; the results for each question are described below:

Question 1

What is the reason that motivates you to study a foreign language?

When students were asked about this question, most of them expressed that they felt motivated to study a foreign language because they were really attracted by the beauty of the language; moreover, some other students said that they were motivated to study this language because they want to get better job opportunities in their future; and few of them affirmed that they were studying English because they expect to travel around the world and they would like using the language just as a means of communication.

Question 2

What kinds of listening activities do you like the most in your English classes?

According to the students responses; the listening activities that they liked the most were the audios (songs, news, interviews), most of them said that these kinds of activities arose their motivation especially when they were boring, in addition some other expressed that they liked practicing dialogues with their classmates: moreover, few of them affirmed that they liked video activities and expository listening activities such as dramas monologues and teachers' speeches.

Question 3

When you are listening, is it difficult for you to comprehend the passage if you find unknown words? Why?

When asked about this question, the responses students gave demonstrated that when students did not understand some words in the listening passage, most of them used to face difficulties while developing the listening activity, as consequence of their misunderstanding, they did not pay attention to the next part of the listening, because they started translating the words into Spanish; moreover, some other students said that they did not have enough vocabulary and due to that reason nor did they understand the main idea of the context; nevertheless, few students stated that they did not face any problem because they could easily infer the main ideas from the context.

Question 4

How has your performance been in a listening activity in which you already had a previous knowledge of it?

When students were asked about this question, the majority of them said that when they knew about the topic of the listening activity their performance was high; however, some students said that their performance in this kind of activity was ranged in an average level because they still had some problems to understand the message even though they knew about the topic; moreover, few of them affirmed that their performance was low because they did not understand the message at all; despite the fact they had a previous knowledge about it.

Question 5

How is your development in a listening activity in which you are nervous?

Most of the subjects under study stated that when they felt nervous in a listening activity their performance was low because that feeling made them have a mental block and it was difficult for them to concentrate in the listening activity; however few students said that they were not affected by nervousness while developing a listening activity.

Question 6

What are some of your physical and emotional reactions that you face before doing a listening activity?

When students were asked about this question, the majority of them gave some physical and emotional reactions that affected them before doing a listening activity; among these physical reactions they listed the followings: shaken and sweaty hands, stress, hunger and also students said that they could not breathe well. On the other hand, some emotional reactions students stated were: frustration, desperation, nervousness, fear, panic and laughing without control.

Question 7

How do your physical and emotional reactions affect you when having a listening activity?

When asked about this question, the majority of the students affirmed that the physical and emotional reactions affected them in a negative way making them feel confused and due to the confusion they used to get a low performance in their listening activities; however, few students stated that their physical and emotional reactions did not affected their listening performance.

Question 8

How do you feel when the teacher is about to ask you a question from the listening activity?

When asked about this question, the majority of the students stated they felt anxious and nervous when the teacher inquired them regarding to the listening activity; moreover, few of them stated they felt nothing when the teacher asked them.

Question 9

Based on your own experience, what are the distractions that may affect you while developing a listening activity?

When students were asked about this question, most of them said that they were affected by many distractions such as the outside noises (buses claxon, people talking, lawnmowers, etc.), personal issues and lack of attention, they also said

that when they are having a listening activity and their classmates are talking or unexpected people come to the classroom they used to lose their attention in the activity; however, few students said that they were not affected at all by these distractions while developing a listening activity.

Question 10

How have your listening performance been since you started your major?

When asked about this question, most of all students stated that since they had started the major their performance had been neither good nor bad; moreover, some others said they had had a good performance, and few of them stated that their performance had not improved the way they expected to do it.

Question 11

In your own opinion, what could it help you to improve your performance in the listening skill?

When asked about this question, all the students suggested some recommendations that could help them to improve their performance in listening skill; they said that it is really necessary to use authentic material in Intermediate Intensive I courses because it is important for them to be exposed to the real English; moreover, students also expressed that it is important to have a listening lab in which they could have the opportunity to practice their listening at any time; in addition to this they suggested that it is necessary to create clubs of listening leading by the students from the social service in order to develop this skill as

much as they can; lastly they recommended that teachers had to assign them evaluated listening homework.

Phase III: observation

As it was stated in one of the objectives of this research study, the observers had to identify the external factors that affected the students listening performance in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses. Consequently, the observation pointed out that external factors affecting students' listening comprehension were: type of the passage, authenticity, distortion and noise, speech rate, speaker accent and environmental noises. In addition to this, the observers had to identify how these factors affected students' performance while developing a listening activity. The identified factors by the researchers are outlined below:

Type of the passage

The researchers observed that in some cases the audios were from the textbooks and sometimes they were authentic material. When the teacher played audios from textbooks the majority of the students did not want to participate when the teacher asked them at the end of the listening activity, in spite of the fact that they understood some ideas, but when an authentic audio was played, students started to make weird gestures meaning that they did not understand anything from the audio.

Authenticity

what researchers observed is that when the teachers made students to listen to videos and news students tended to be confused because most of them were not able to understand the meaning of the message at all due to the fact that it was an authentic material and it was more difficult for them because it used different speaker accent and speech rate; moreover, what researchers also observed was that students are not frequently exposed to the real English so that it made them to fail when making activities with authentic listening materials.

Distortion and noise

The researchers observed that in some classes when the audio was played with acoustic distortion, like music, traffic or any other noise, it was more difficult for the majority of students to understand the listening activity or even the context of it, because the noise that came from the same audio did not allow them to listen clearly and even they started checking their cell phones and talk with their classmates.

Speech rate

The researchers observed that some audios played in the class were according to students' level; nevertheless the majority of the students comprehended just some random ideas. On the other hand; when an authentic audio was played, it was more difficult for students to understand the listening exercise due to the rate of the speaker was faster than the textbook audio.

Speaker's accent

Through the observations researchers noticed that when teachers asked students to listen to audios from textbooks, these were less difficult for students to understand due to the speaker's accents was familiar to them, however, when teachers asked learners to listening to an authentic recorded conversation students were quiet confused for the unfamiliar speaker accent of the audio.

Environmental noises

The researchers observed that this factor affected in high scale to students, because when the listening was played the noise of the busses' claxon, lawnmowers, neighbor's rooms and hall did not allow them to listening clearly and made them feel confused, another important aspect was the high temperatures that caused them desperation and boredom.

V INTERPRETATION

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This study was focused in the factors that affect students' performance in listening skill in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses. Through the development of the questionnaire and the observation, researchers were able to identify what are the internal and external factors that affect the students' performance of listening skill.

The results obtained in the diagnostic test demonstrated that most students were having listening problems due to the vast majority of them approximately (being they 72%) failed the test; even though, the test was designed according to their level and the listening exercises were previously studied by the students only 28% of students passed it, due to this, we hardly believe that was important to identify what were the factors affecting the listening performance of those students in order to inform them and give some recommendations that can improve their listening skill.

Internal factors

Within the internal factors researchers found that motivation affect students listening performance in high proportion. According to students' point of view they felt motivated to study English because they really liked the language and also because they liked its skills too, such as listening; however, researchers realized that even though in some cases most of the students were intrinsically motivated the degree of motivation decreased when they developed bore listening activities which did not call their attention or interest; moreover, researchers argued that

when listening activities lack of motivation, these can affect negatively the students listening performance; Therefore, it is necessary to made the students practice more their listening through the presentation of videos, movies, songs or dramas because these kind of activities not only will increase students' motivation but also these will improve students' performance in this skill.

Lack of vocabulary is another internal factor that affected students listening comprehension in a high level because when they did not understand many words from the listening they tended to fall into depression and shyness and when the teacher started inquiring them they just answered "I don't know". To be more precise, if students do not have enough vocabulary they do not comprehend the listening activity and even it is difficult for them to share their opinion from it with someone else.

Likewise lack of background knowledge is another factor that affected the majority of the students, so researchers argue that when students listen to an audio, in which they do not have any prior knowledge related to the topic, it make them fail in the listening activity, but when they have a previous knowledge about the topic their listening performance is better.

The research team also confirmed that anxiety affected negatively the performance of students in the listening skill, this assumption was made since most of them expressed in the questionnaire that they always felt nervous before making listening activities, in fact they said that having a single hearing can increase their anxiety because they had to process quickly to what the speaker says as they

recall it. Based on these findings researchers believe that students had a low performance in listening skill since they experienced feelings like nervousness, tension and apprehension which are symptoms of anxiety.

In addition to this, the results from the lack of concentration show that students are highly affected in a negative way. The problems students faced in this internal factor are summarized in the fact that distractions are those moments when the teacher plays the audio, but students thoughts are far away from the class; moreover, among the reasons that students listed as distraction problems are: noises from the outside, talkative classmates, unexpected people coming to the classroom and even personal issues, so when students thoughts are focused on this, the performance in their listening activity decreases.

External factors

Through the development of this research study researchers also found that students from Intermediate Intensive English I not only are affected by internal factors but also for external factors such as type of the passage, authenticity, distortion and noise, speech rate, speaker's accent and environmental noises.

Base on the results taken from the type of the passage, researchers argue that most students have been affected because the majority of the audios played in the classrooms are from textbooks, for sure the textbooks audios materials do not mean to be the problem, but the problem is that when students are not exposed to many types of listening they fossilize just one way of learning, so when another

type of listening is played like a video, authentic audio, news, TV shows, etc. they do not understand almost anything from the listening activity.

Likewise the results that this research study launched were that the authenticity of materials affected students' listening performance negatively. To be more precise, Researchers confirmed that students tended to fail when they were asked to develop listening activities which contained authentic audio materials, in fact, researchers noticed that students did not understand these kinds of audios because the speaker's accent and in some cases the speech rate made more difficult the understanding of these audios. Thus, researchers believe that students from Intermediate Intensive English I are affected highly by the authenticity because they are not frequently exposed to real English audio materials, for that reason it is important that teachers make students to listen to more authentic materials in classes and ask them also to do homework relate to listening skill (watching movies, videos, and news) in order that they can practice listening and improve it.

Furthermore, the distortion and noise of audios is another external factor that influenced negatively the students' listening performance. The distortion and noise happened when teachers used authentic audios in which the acoustic noises of traffic, music, and people talking are inside of them and these made students no listening clearly, and that made them also to be confused, due to the fact that they were unable to understand the audios. The researchers believe that when this interference happens in the listening activity, it not only made students to get a low

performance in that activity but also they get distracted until they dropped out the activity.

Just as the previous one, speech rate also represents a big trouble for the majority of the students because in the observation researchers identified that the major problem is when they are listening to a native speaker or authentic audios due to the fact that this speaker rate is faster than the textbooks audios, so when students are trying to comprehend the first words from the authentic listening they realized that the speakers have already finished the conversation.

Another factor that researchers confirmed was that the speaker accent affected students listening performance in high proportion. The unfamiliar accent of some audios played in some classes made students to get confused due to the fact that students misunderstood the pronunciation of some words, and sounds and that feature made more difficult their understanding of the listening message; moreover, researchers argue that students from intermediate intensive English I were not frequently exposed to audios with different accents so that, it made them to have a low performance in these kind of listening materials.

Finally, the results that environmental noises obtained were highly evident because when an audio was played, the outside noises (lawnmowers, traffic, neighbor classrooms and hall) interrupted students listening comprehension, as consequence they got confused and their development was not good.

VI CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Listening is one important skill when learning a foreign languages because this is a process in which we can say that we becomes kids again because it is like when we started to speak, and if students do not have the care of being fostering this skill the results can be not so pleasant so what researchers conclude through the results of this research project is that:

- The researchers confirmed that there are factors that affect students listening performance in a negative way, these factors are classified in internal and external.
- The internal factors that affect listening performance are within students or EFL learners, and those are listed as motivation, lack of vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, anxiety and lack of concentration.
- The external factors that affect the students' listening performance are those which come from the outside such as, type of passage, authenticity, noise and distortion, speech rate, speakers' accents and environmental noises.
- Most of students who present one or more internal and external factors before or while developing a listening activity get a low performance on it.

- It is important that students practice their listening through activities that not only made them to get experience with real English, but also that help them to learn new vocabulary, arise their motivation, call their attention, and made them feel confident in every single listening task.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the study carried out In the Intermediate Intensive English I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, researchers are able to make some suggestions that may have a positive impact on EFL learners. Some recommendations for helping students to improve their listening performance are outlined below:

- Encourage teachers to prepare extra listening activities in which students not only have the opportunity to listen to authentic audio materials but also to recognize different accents of English language.
- Suggest teachers to develop the three stages of the listening process (pre-listening, listening and post listening) in each listening activity.
- Make the students practice more their listening skill trough activities that increase their motivation such as videos, songs, news, movies, and dramas.
- Improve the FLD's laboratory for the development of listening activities. It is important to implement technology systems that help students to improve their listening skill.
- Encourage students from social service to create listening clubs in which students from basic levels have the opportunity to practice their listening skill after classes.

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ANNEXES



UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Name: _____ **Date:** ___/___/___

In this listening test, you will be asked to demonstrate how well you understand spoken English. The entire listening test will last approximately 45 minutes. There are eight parts and directions are given for each part.

Instructions: listen and complete the text with the internet activities Doug does.

Doug is a music fan and he uses the internet a lot. He regularly _____ to look for new music. He uses a _____ like Yahoo or Google to find good music sites and he _____ music online. Doug doesn't _____ for other things and he doesn't _____. But a lot his friends play action or sport games online. He plays guitar in a band and he _____ about their concerts. He _____ several times a day, and He _____ to his friends and other music fans.

Instructions: listen to Emily talking about a key event in her life. Answer the questions.

1. What key event is Emily describing? _____
2. Where did it take place? _____
3. How did she feel before the ceremony? _____
4. How did she feel later? _____
5. How does Emily keep in touch with _____ her high-school friends?

Instructions: listen and check (✓) the adjectives you hear in the conversation.

- Amazing boring unusual dull
 Modern incredible silly funny

Instructions: listen and write the words you hear in the audio

1. _____ 6. _____
2. _____ 7. _____
3. _____ 8. _____
4. _____ 9. _____
5. _____ 10. _____

Identifying speaker's opinions

Instructions: listen and write the phrase from each conversation that expresses the speaker's opinion.

I don't think... I know I think... (x2) In my opinion... No way! Personally, I...Yes, that's true.

Conversation 1: A: _____ B: _____

Conversation 2: A: _____ B: _____

Conversation 3: A: _____ B: _____

Conversation 4: A: _____ B: _____

Instructions: listen and write the words in the correct column.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE

UNDERSTANDING INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCESSES

Listen to the instructions. What is the basic purpose of Maureen's advice?

- a) To create a stylish room
- b) To create positive energy
- c) To create more space

Listen again and match to make complete sentences.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Empty ... | a) your shelves. |
| 2 Sort ... | b) your closet. |
| 3 Throw away ... | c) boxes to organize small objects. |
| 4 Store ... | d) things up on hooks. |
| 5 Organize ... | e) winter clothing. |
| 6 Use ... | f) clothes into three bags. |
| 7 Hang ... | g) old clothes. |



UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Topic: Factors that influence Intermediate Intensive English I Students in their performance of the listening skill at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, semester II, 2015

Objective: To gather information about the point of view of students at the Intermediate Intensive English I course regarding to their opinion about the internal factors that affect their performance in the listening skill.

This is not a test. There are no correct or incorrect answers. It is your personal and honest answer that will be appreciated and valued here. I assure your responses will be treated with the strictest confidence in accordance with research ethics. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Open-ended questionnaire

Part One : The Students' Background Information

Instructions: fill in the blanks with your own information.

1. Gender: male () female ()

2. Major: _____

Part Two : The Students' Opinions Concerning the factors that affect negatively their Performance in Listening skill.

Instructions: Complete the following questions base on your own criteria.

1. What is the reason that motivates you to study a foreign language?
(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case motivation) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

2. What kinds of listening activities do you like the most in your English classes?
(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case motivation) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

3. When you are listening, is it difficult for you to comprehend the passage if you find unknown words? Why?
(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case lack of vocabulary) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

4. How has your performance been in a listening activity in which you already had a previous knowledge of it?

(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case background knowledge) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

5. How is your development in a listening activity in which you are nervous?

(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case anxiety) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

6. What are some of your physical and emotional reactions that you face before doing a listening activity?

(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case anxiety) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

7. How do your physical and emotional reactions affect you when having a listening activity?

(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case anxiety) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

8. How do you feel when the teacher is about to ask you a question from the listening activity?

(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case anxiety) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

9. Based on your own experience, what are the distractions that may affect you while developing a listening activity?

(This question supports the first specific objective, which leads us to determine one of the internal factors (in this case lack of concentration) that affect Intermediate Intensive English I students' performance in their listening skill.)

10. How have your listening performance been since you started your major?

(This question supports the third specific objective, which leads us to propose some recommendations that can help students to improve their performance in listening skill.)

11. In your own opinion what could it help you to improve your performance in the listening skill?

(This question supports the third specific objective, which leads us to propose some recommendations that can help students to improve their performance in listening skill.)



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FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TOPIC:

Factors that influence Intermediate Intensive English I Students in their performance of the listening skill at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, semester II, 2015.

OBJECTIVE:

- To identify the main factors that influence the performance of the Intermediate Intensive English I Students in their listening skill through class observation in order to provide some recommendations to develop a better teaching-learning process for this skill.

Observational Protocol

Observer: _____ **Observed Event:** _____
Place: _____ **Level:** _____
Class Time: _____ **Observation Time:** _____

OBSERVATIONS	WHAT I OBSERVED	WHAT I THINK
Motivation		
Listeners´ characteristics		
Type of the passage		
Authenticity		
Distortion and noise		
Speech rate		
Speaker´ s accent		
Enviromental noises		