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School of Arts and Sciences

Foreign Language Department

Graduation work

Topic:

"Techniques applied to evaluate the listening performance of students of Advanced English II semester I -2008 at the Foreign Language Department".

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INTRODUCTION

This research contains a clear explanation of the Topic "techniques applied to evaluate the listening performance of students of Advanced English II at the Foreign Language Department. It is made up of seven chapters in which all the information was organized as follows; Chapter I contains the General and Specific Objectives that this research intends to reach, the Research Questions, the Description of the project and Justification that refers to the explanation of the purpose of the study. Chapter II is concerned with the Theoretical Framework, in this case all literature is included to support the topic and the type of research techniques that were used to collect some valuable data from the teachers and students of the English courses. Chapter III includes important processes to follow to determine the type of research, the method applied to make the data analysis as well as the instruments used to gather information from the selected sample. Chapter IV has the data analysis, there is a description of the process that was carried out to gather essential information from teachers and students. Once students filled the questionnaire, the collected data related to every question was organized in tables of frequency and graphics that show students' main preferences in the choices presented in the questions. Then; there is an analysis with these results; moreover, there is a table which contains a synthesis of the information given by the teachers who are in charge of the groups and the conclusions of these answers. Chapter V; concerned with the findings, in other words, the research questions are answered based on the information gotten from the data analysis. Chapter VI has the conclusions, the most relevant aspects found about the topic; and Chapter VII includes some recommendations that teachers and students can take into account to improve the teaching- learning process in the listening skill.

I - TOPIC

"Techniques applied to evaluate the listening performance of students of Advanced English II semester I – 2008 at the Foreign Language Department".

A - OBJECTIVES

1) *General Objectives:*

a) To identify the activities that teachers of the Foreign Language Department carry out to develop the students' listening skill.

b) To identify the techniques used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate the students' listening performance.

c) To measure results obtained by students of the Foreign Language Department after being exposed to these listening techniques.

2) *Specific Objectives:*

a) To identify what are the activities that generate the best results to develop the students' listening skill.

b) To identify what are the techniques most used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate the students' listening performance.

c) To establish the inconveniences of using the different listening evaluation techniques.

d) To establish the facilities of using different listening evaluation techniques.

e) To establish what are the listening comprehension scales of students at the Foreign Language Department, after being tested.

B - RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) General Questions

a) What are the techniques used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate the students' listening performance?

b) What are the activities that teachers of the Foreign Language Department carry out to improve the students' listening skill?

c) What are the results obtained by students of the Foreign Language Department after being exposed to these listening techniques?

2) Related Questions

a) Which is the activity that generates the best results to improve the students' listening skill?

b) Which is the technique most used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate the students' listening performance?

c) How the inconveniences of using different evaluation techniques affect the students' listening performance?

d) How the facilities of using different evaluation techniques help to improve the students' listening performance?

C - DESCRIPTION

It is important to take into account that learning a new language basically requires to work on four essential skills; writing, reading, listening and speaking. However, every skill needs to be studied in an appropriate way since they are completely related.

The implementation of this project intends to search in depth the importance of developing the listening skill when learning a new language as well as the process to be followed to evaluate this skill. Since listening is one of the receptive skill it does not need a special criteria to be evaluated; however, there are some rubrics that can be taken into account when applying a listening test. These rubrics are:

1) *Comprehension*

In this case the teacher evaluates the following criteria:

a) The student identifies the form what he/she hears.
b) The student listens in a way that suits the material (taking notes, asking questions, engaging in dialogue.
c) The student recognizes the organization elements of what he/she hears.
d) The student infers meaning from context.
e) The student summarizes or restates the main ideas of what he/she hears.

2) *Interpretation*

In this case the teacher evaluates the following criteria:

a) The student generates questions about he/she hears.
b) The student identifies the speakers' purpose and point of view.
c) The student distinguishes fact from opinion.
d) The student analyzes the position taken in what he/she hears and the evidence offered in their support.
e) The student compares and contrasts different things he/she hears.
f) The student makes connections within and among things he/she hears.

g) The student makes connections between what he/she hears and his/her own experiences.

h) The student identifies the historical and social context of what he/she hears.

i) The student evaluates the strategies and elements of the speaker's craft.

j) The student takes a point of view about he/she hears and supports it with evidence.

(Criteria for excellence in listening)

http://www.parker.org/curriculumAssessment/Criteria/ For Excellence/listening.htm.

Even though teachers of the Foreign Language Department have knowledge about these Rubrics they do not score every criterion; since some of them think that these rubrics are implicit in all the evaluations they administer *(Source – Personal Interviews addressed to Advanced English teachers)* such idea is supported by Testing for Language Teachers from Arthur Hughes says scoring the listening test: "It is probably worth mentioning again that in scoring a test of a receptive skill there is no reason to deduct points for errors of grammar or spelling, provided that it is clear that the correct response was intended".

Beyond that, this research will show the activities that teachers of the Foreign Language Department carry out in the classroom to develop the students' listening skill and what are the activities the students do to improve their learning; for instance: listening to music, listening to conversations, watching TV, going to the lab. Moreover, it will show the results that teachers get with the implementation of these techniques; in other words, to show if students feel satisfied with the way they are evaluated and if these techniques offer them the opportunity to apply their knowledge about the new language.

There is also a variety of techniques that will be defined so that they can be implemented to evaluate the students' listening performance and the facilities and inconveniences that teachers can get if they use them.

This research will be done at the Foreign Language Department, the group that will be taken as a sample to study this topic is Advanced English II semester I – 2008. The questionnaire will be administered to 50% of the students that are taking the course. The interview will be addressed to the teacher who is in charge of the group.

D - JUSTIFICATION

One of the most important reasons to study this topic, is the necessity to implement the ways teachers evaluate the listening performance of the students by using a variety of activities such as; listing, following directions, fill in the blanks, writing true or false, etc. Also, this topic will contribute to the professional development of future teachers of the Foreign Language Department.

Furthermore, the people who are going to be taken as a sample for doing the research are students from the Foreign Language Department and they have some notions about the techniques the teachers use to evaluate their listening performance. In addition, there will be some people such as teachers and students especially practitioner students who are doing their teaching practice or social service that are going to get some benefits with the new information and they will know how to apply it.

The topic "Techniques applied to evaluate listening performance of students of Advanced English II semester I -2008 at the Foreign Language Department" will be studied since there is lots of data which can be useful to make a complete research and generate new information since there is not a project about it.

II - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Topic:

"Techniques applied to evaluate the listening performance of Advanced English II students at the Foreign Language Department".

A- *What is listening?*

Listening is one of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Like reading, listening is a receptive skill, as it involves responding to language rather than producing it.

1) Ways of listening.

       a) Listening for gist,

       b) Understanding body language,

       c) Listening for individual sounds.

       d) Listening for detail.

       e) Listening for sentence stress.

       f) Extensive listening,

       g) Listening for specific information.

(*Source: the TKT - Teaching Knowledge Test Course. Mary Sprate- Alan Pulverness- Melanie Williams (pages 30-33)*

2) Background

Listening in language teaching has undergone several important influences, as the result of developments in anthropology, education, linguistics, sociology, and even global politics.

a) Listening in SLA

In second language acquisition (SLA) research, it is the "linguistic environment "that serves as the stage for SLA. This environment – the speakers of the target

language and their speech to the L2 learners- provides linguistic input in the form of listening opportunities embedded in social and academic situation. In order to acquire the language, must come to understand the language in these situations. This accessibility is made possible in part through accommodations made by native speakers to make language comprehension possible and in part through strategies the learner enacts to make the speech comprehensible.

b) Speech processing.

Speech- processing research provides important insights into L2 learning. Several factors are activated in speech perception (phonetic quality, prosodic patterns, pausing and speed of input), all of which the influence the comprehensibility of input. While it is generally accepted that there is a common store of semantic information (single coding) in memory that is used in both first language (L1) and L2 speech comprehension, research shows that there are separate stores of phonological information (dual coding) for speech (Soares and Grosjean 1984; Sharwood Smith 1994). Semantic knowledge required for the language understanding (scripts and schemata related to real world people, places and actions) is accessed through phonological code of L2- and with the parallel cognitive processes of grammatical parsing and word recognition- is a proposed as the basis for keeping up with the speed of spoken language (Magiste 1985).

Research in spoken- language recognition shows that each language has its own "preferred strategies" for aural decoding, which are readily acquired by the L1 child, but often only partially acquired by the L2 learner. Preferred strategies involve four fundamental properties of spoken language:

1- *The phonological system:* The phonemes used in particular language, typically only 30 or 40 out of hundreds of possible phonemes.

2- *Phonotactic rules:* The sound sequences that a language allows to make up syllables; i.e. variations of what sounds can start or end syllables, whether the

"peak" of the syllable can be a simple or complex lengthened vowel and whether the ending of the syllable can be a vowel or a consonant.

4- *The stress system:* The way in which lexical stress is fixed within an utterance.

(Source: *The Cambridge guide to Teaching English to Speaker of others Languages Edited by Ronald Carter – Davis Nunan. Chapter1 Pages 7-9)*

B - Teaching and Testing

The simple objective of this topic is to help language teachers write better tests for evaluating students' listening performance. It is not enough to administer tests using some techniques. It also necessary to understand the principles of testing and how they can be applied in practice to get good results and satisfy students' needs. For this reason, it is very important the teachers know what the elements that every test should contain are and what are the listening evaluation techniques they can use when making tests.

There are three concepts that are traditionally seen as fundamental to any discussion of tests:

1) *Validity:*

In this case a test procedure can be said to have validity to the degree that it can be demonstrated that what it is actually assessed is what in the context concerned, should be assessed, and that the information gained is as an accurate representation of the proficiency of the candidate concerned. A test is to be said to have content validity if it content constitutes a representative sample of language skills, structures, etc.

There are essentially two types of criterion related validity; <u>*Concurrent validity and Predictive validity.*</u> Concurrent validity is establish when the test and the criterion are administer at about the same time, the second kind of criterion concerns to which a test can predict candidates' future performance.

2) Reliability:

On the other hand, is a technical term. It is basically the extent to which the same order of candidates is replicated in two separate (real or simulated) administration of the same assessment. In order to make a test more reliable teachers should consider the following aspects:

♦ Take enough samples of behavior.

♦ Do not allow candidates too much freedom.

♦ Write unambiguous items.

♦ Provide clear and explicit instructions.

♦ Ensure that test is well laid out and perfectly legible.

♦ Candidates should be familiar with format and testing techniques.

♦ Provide uniform and non-distracting conditions of administration

♦ Use items that permit scoring which is as objective as possible.

♦ Make comparisons between candidates as direct as possible.

♦ Provide a detailed scoring key.

♦ Train scorers.

♦ Employ multiple, independent scoring.

3) Feasibility:

It is the determination that a process, design, procedure, or plan can be successfully accomplished in the required time frame.

A *feasibility study* is a preliminary study undertaken to determine and document the project's viability. The results of this study are used to make a decision whether to proceed with the project, or table it. If it indeed leads to a project being approved, it will - before the real work of the proposed project starts - be used to ascertain the likelihood of the project's success. It is an analysis of possible alternative solutions to a problem and a recommendation on the best *alternative*. It, for example, can decide whether an order processing be carried out by a new system more efficiently than the previous one.

C - Listening evaluation techniques.

The starting point to administer a test is to take into account the three elements that it should have; validity, reliability and feasibility, but it is also important to know how to evaluate the four skills listening, speaking, writing and reading in a test and what are some techniques that can be used to get good results. In this case this research will focus on how to evaluate the students' listening performance since it is a receptive skill which sometimes is difficult to evaluate.

1) Testing the listening skill

Listening has been frequently identified as a skill area that is often tested but rarely taught (Tauroza 1997). Even in nonassessment situations, most classroom listening activities center around some prelistening task followed by listening to a monologue or conversation and answering some form of comprehension questions that are then evaluated. Feedback consists of students comparing their answers with a "correct" answer.

Many proponents of communicative language teaching advise, however, that language teachers shift from an orientation of "we will teach only what we can test" to finding ways to evaluate those skills that are important for learners (Savignon 1985). A learner-centered approach to listening comprehension assessment would provide classroom teachers with an excellent opportunity to discover what learners value in listening.

The classroom assessment process is usually divided into three major phases: test content and development, administration, and marking. In the test content and development phase, teachers identify skill or sub-skill areas to be tested, choose topics or themes, and select and write test questions and instructions. In the test administration phase, teachers make decisions regarding when to give the test, how to arrange student seating, what equipment and media are needed (audiotape, videotape, live reader), and what interaction and extra materials are allowed. This is the phase in which all administrative testing policies and procedures are addressed.

This receptive skill implies that the language user as listener receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers, so the listening activities should include, Listening for public announcements (information, instructions, warnings, etc.), Listening to

media (radio, TV, recordings, cinema), Listening as a member of a live audience (theatre, public meetings, public lectures, entertainments, etc.), listening to overheard conversations. In any case the user may be listening for; gist, specific information, detailed understanding, implications, etc. The listening activities are classified in the following scales:

2) Listening Scales

	OVERALL LISTENING COMPREHENSION
C2	Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed.
C1	Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. Can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. Can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly.
B2	Can understanding standard spoken language, liver or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social. Academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influence the ability to understand. Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topic delivered in a standard dialect, including discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers.
B1	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent.

	Can understand the main points clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. including short narratives.
A2	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
A1	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.

	UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIVE SPEAKERS
C2	As C1
C1	Can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.
B2	Can keep up whit an animated conversation between native speakers.
	Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several native speakers who do not modify their language in any way.
B1	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.
A2	Can generally identify the topic discussion around him/her, when it is conducted and clearly.
A1	No descriptor available.

	UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIVE SPEAKERS
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C1	Can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.
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	Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several native speakers who do not modify their language in any way.
B1	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.
A2	Can generally identify the topic discussion around him/her, when it is conducted and clearly.
A1	No descriptor available.

	LISTENING AS A MEMBER OF A LIVE AUDIENCE.
C2	Can follow specialized lectures and presentations employing a high degree of colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology.
C1	Can follow most lectures, discussions and debate with relative ease.
B2	Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex.
B1	Can follow a lecture or talk a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured
	Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topic provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech
A2	No descriptor available
A1	No descriptor available

	LISTENING TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS
C2	As C1
C1	Can extract specific information from poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements, e.g. in a station, sports stadium etc.
	Can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specification for familiar products and services

B2	Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed.
B1	Can understand simple technical information, such as operating for everyday equipment. Can follow detailed directions.
A2	Can catch the main points in short, clear, simple messages and announcements. Can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport
A1	Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.

(Common European framework of Reference for Languages Learning, teaching, assessment) Cambridge University Press.

The common reference levels can be presented in formats varying degrees of detail. The scales are part of the process of developing new sets of language specifications.

➢ Level A1 (Breakthough)

It is considered the lowest level of generative language use – the point at which the learner can interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, rather than relying purely on a very finite rehearsed, lexically organized repertoire of situation – specific phrases.

➢ Level A2

It appears to reflect the level referred to by the Waystage specification. It is at this level that the majority of descriptors stating social functions are to be found, like use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address; greet people, ask how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about

what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet; make and accept offers.

➢ Level B1

It reflects the Threshold level specification for a visitor to a foreign country and is perhaps most categorized by two features. The first feature is the ability to maintain interaction and get across what you want to, in a range of context, for example: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect; give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends, express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly; exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to; maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to.

The second feature is the ability to cope flexibly with problems in everyday life, for example cope with less routine situations on public transport; deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling; enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics, etc.

➢ Level B2

It is intended to reflect the Vantage Level specification. The metaphor is that, having been progressing slowly but steadily across the intermediate plateau, the learner finds he has arrived somewhere, things look different, he/she acquires a new perspective, can look around him/her in a new way. This concept does seem to be borne out to a considerable extent by the descriptors calibrated at this level. They represent quite a break with the content so far. For example at the lower end of the band there is a focus on effective argument: account for and sustain his opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments; explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options; construct a chain of reasoned argument; develop an argument giving reasons and support of or against a particular point of view; explain a problem a make it clear that his/her counterpart in a negotiation must make a concession;   speculate about causes,

consequences, hypothetical situations; take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses.

➢ Level C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency)

What seems to characterize this level is good access to a broad range of language, which allows fluent, spontaneous communication, as illustrated by the following examples: can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. The discourse skills characterizing the previous band continue to be evident at level C1, with an emphasis on more fluency, for example: select a suitable phrase from a fluent repertoire of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain the time and keep it whilst thinking.

➢ Level C2 (Mastery)

It is not intended to imply native – speaker or near native – speaker competence. What is intended is to characterize the degree of precision, appropriateness and ease with the language which typifies the speech of those who have been highly successful learners. Descriptors calibrated here include: convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices; has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative level of meaning; backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.

(Common European framework of Reference for Languages Learning, teaching, assessment) Cambridge University Press.

3) Defining important aspects in Listening evaluation techniques.

There are some important aspects that need to be mentioned before defining the listening evaluation techniques, those are the followings: Listening requires to develop in the students the macro skills which are related to their needs or to course objectives such as; listening for specific information, obtaining gist of what it is being

said, following directions and instructions, interpretation of intonation patterns, recognition of function of structures.

1) *Task Support:*

The introduction of various forms of support can reduce the possible difficulty of texts, for example, a preparatory phase can provide orientation and prior knowledge, clear task instruction help to avoid confusion, and work arrangements involving small group settings offer possibilities for learner cooperation and mutual assistance.

2) *Types of text:*

These might be first specified as monologue, dialogue or multi participant, and further specified: announcement, talk or lecture, instructions, directions, etc.

3) *Text characteristics:*

a) **Linguistic complexity:** Particularly complex syntax consumes attentional resources that might otherwise be available for dealing with content: for example; long sentences with a number of subordinate clauses, non-continuous constituents, multiple negation, scope ambiguity, use of anaphorics without clear antecedents or reference.

b) **Discourse structure:** Textual coherence and clear organization, the explicit rather than implicit nature of information, all contribute to reducing information processing complexity.

c) **Physical presentation:** Written and spoken texts obviously make differing demands because of the need to process information in spoken real time. In addition, noise, distortion and interference increase the difficulty of comprehension.

d) Length of text: In general a short text is less demanding than along text on a similar topic as a longer text requires more processing and there is in additional memory risk of fatigue and distraction.

e) Relevance to the learner: A high level of motivation to understand due to personal interaction in the content will help to sustain the learner's to understand.

4) Addresses:

Text may be intended for the general public, students, and young children.

5) Topics:

These will be often indicated in quite general terms.

6) Setting the task:

To select samples of speech the passages must be chosen with the test specifications in mind. If the candidates are required to cope with language intended for native speakers, then ideally, the test should have samples of authentic speech. If, on the other hand candidates are required to interpret non-native speakers, these too can be obtained from teaching materials and recordings of native speakers.

If recordings are made especially for the test, then care must be taken to make them as natural as possible, avoid redundancy and passages that are intended for reading.

7) Writing items:

For extended listening, such as lecture, the first step is to listen to the passage and take notes, putting down what it is that candidates should be able to get from the passage. It can be attempted to write items that check whether or not that have got what they should be able to get. This note-making procedure will not normally be necessary for shorter passages, which will have been chosen to test particular abilities.

In testing extensive listening, it is essential to keep items sufficiently far apart in the passage. If two items are close to each other, candidates may miss the second of them through no fault of their own, and the effect of this on subsequent items can be disastrous. Candidates should be warned by key words that appear both in the item and in the passage that the information called for is about to be heard. It is important that candidates should be given sufficient time at the outset to familiarize themselves with the items. Some possible listening evaluation techniques that can be used are:

❖ *Multiple choice:*

Candidates hold in their heads four or more alternatives while listening to the passage and, after responding to one item, of taking in and retaining the alternatives for the next item. If multiple choice is to be used, then the alternatives must be kept short and simple.

❖ *Short answer:*

Provided that items are brief, and only really short responses are called for, short answers item can work well in the listening tests. The completion variety, requiring minimal writing from the candidates, is particularly useful.

❖ *Information transfer:*

It can involve such activities as the labeling of diagrams or pictures, completing forms, or showing routes on a map. This technique is as useful in testing listening, since it makes minimal demands on productive skills.

❖ *Note taking:*

Candidates take notes during the talk, and only after the talk is finished do they see the items to which they have to respond. When constructive such a test, it is essential to use a passage from which notes can be taken successfully.

❖ *Partial dictation:*

It may be possible to administer a partial dictation when no other test off listening is practical. It can also be used diagnostically to test students' ability to cope with particular difficulties.

❖ *Recordings:*

The great advantage of using recordings when administering a listening test is that there is uniformity in what is presented to the candidates. The recording is to be listened to in a well-maintained language laboratory or in a room with good acoustic qualities and with suitable equipment.

❖ *Live presentations:*

There is a just a single speaker for each part of the test. Speakers should have a good command of the language of the test and be generally highly reliable, responsible and trustworthy individuals.

❖ *Listening cloze:*

Cloze test are reading test based on the idea of reduced redundancy: the basic cloze procedure is very simple. A text is selected, and words are replaced by blanks in a systematic way, usually every 5th, 7th or 10th word. The test taker has to fill in the blanks by writing down the word they fits best.

❖ *Gap-filling techniques:*

One simple test-taker of making a gap-filling test is to give test-taker a transcript of spoken text, with words deleted, then play a recording of the text and ask test-taker to fill in the blanks based on what they have heard.

❖ *Gap-filling summaries:*

This forces them to process the meaning in order to fill in the blanks. The testing procedure is quite simple, test-takers are given a summary of the passage they are going to hear, in which some of the important content words have been replaced by blanks.

On the other side, there is a very useful activity that the teachers can implement to teach listening comprehension which is "Cooperative Learning". This technique combines cooperative learning with strategic learning. It assigns learners to pairs or small groups, and then gets them to cooperate in comprehending the messages of a recorded speech. While listening, the learners employ some strategies and keep them in mind so they can later share them with their classmates after listening. The results of this activity are a range of strategies used by students with a variety of learning styles. These strategies are then shown to the class. At this stage, the learners have the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their own strategies, adopt other strategies to complement theirs, and explain why they use a particular strategy. Under the guidance of the teacher, weaker learners can see the limitations of their listening strategies and adopt those that more proficient classmates have been using with some success. The teacher can encourage the use of different types of strategies, increase the learners' awareness of having purposeful strategies, and show the students how to orchestrate the strategies to achieve a good result. An added advantage of this listening comprehension technique is the creation of a learning atmosphere conducive to feelings of togetherness among the students.

Possible obstacles to this technique include the difficulty learners have verbalizing their automatic mental processes, the difference among some strategies in terms of effectiveness for different learners, and the potential incompatibility among learners with different learning preferences. These potential obstacles should not dissuade teachers from implementing the listening technique since, arguably, the very cooperative nature of the technique is likely to overcome such difficulties.

D) Listening Comprehension

Teaching language as communication has become an accepted aim of the foreign- language teacher throughout the world. To most this has the foreign language come to mean that we must teach our students to speak the language with some fluency and authentic idiom. What has been less emphasized, however, is that the communication is a process involving at least people. Speaking does not of itself

constitute communication unless what is said is comprehend by another person. The greatest difficulty for a traveler in a foreign country is not primarily that he cannot make himself understood; this can be frequently do by gesture, by writing or by pointing to something written in a bilingual book of phrases.

Teaching the comprehension of spoken speech is therefore of primary importance if the communication aims is to be achieved. A long neglected area, listening comprehension has its peculiar problems which arise from the fleeting, immaterial nature of spoken utterances.

1) *Theoretical Concepts Basic to Listening Comprehension*

Much attention has been paid recent years to problems of discrimination of sounds, stress and pitch, but these are only a few elements involved in understanding what is being said.

Of great value to foreign- language teachers interested in teaching listening comprehension is the extensive research which has been carried out in recent years by communication engineers concern with the maximum efficiency of telephonic and telegraphic equipment.

2) *Information in Communication*

The language emitted by the communicator, which contains the message, has phonic distinctive for each language. This conventional patterning limits the possible sequences of sounds for that particular language and determines their frequency of occurrence.

a) Redundancy

In order to reduce to manageable proportions the amount of information in any one sound sequence each language has developed a certain amount of

redundancy. It has been estimated for instance, that the English language id fifty percent redundant. Were this redundancy eliminated, the human organism could not absorb information at the rate at which it would be emitted in normal speech. Redundancy in languages is to be found in elements of sound and morphological and syntactical formations which reinforce each other in the conveying of meanings.

It is redundancy in language which helps us to piece together the information we hear. Even in communication in our native we do not hear everything that is said to us clearly, nor do we pay full attention to every element of each utterance. In a language we are learning as foreigners our difficulties are compounded by so many items which we are as yet unfamiliar. Artificially constructed messages, such as those frequently used in foreign- language classes, often unwittingly reduce the amount of redundancy supplied by a speaker in a normal situation. In this way the perception of the foreign- language message is made more difficult even for a person familiar with the language clues.

b)   Irrelevant Sound or Noise.

Further problems arise, however, in the transmission of the message from communicator to receiver. If the message is transmitted with an accompaniment of irrelevant sound or "noise", some of the message may not be received by the listener. In a foreign- language situation, unfamiliar elements of the message may be perceived in much the same way as noise, so that some parts of it will be lost in the process of transmission to the receiver. The listener is then faced with several problems: the identification of patterns in a meaningful way. This organization will depend on his previous experience with words, syntactical groupings, situational context and the cultural elements reflected in the foreign language usage.

Probabilities of occurrence of certain sequences of sounds are built up through experience with a language. These possibilities determine what we hear; in other words, we hear what we expect to hear. A non- conventional, and

therefore improbable, sequence of sounds will at first be interpreted as a familiar, or probable, sequence and in this way acquire intelligibility. Psychologist have found that if a non conventional sequence of sounds is presented to a listener into a conventional sequence of sounds is presented to a listener just below the threshold of audibility it will be organized by the listener into a conventional sequence; in other words, a series of meaningless syllables with sentence intonation will be interpreter as an intelligible sentence. In the learning stages of a foreign language many sequences of sounds have low probability of occurrence for the inexperienced learner, and will therefore be misinterpreted, while other which he has never before encounters provide an accompaniment of "noise".

(Source: *Teaching Foreign Language Skills. Wilga M. Rivers. Pages 265-269)*

III - METHODOLOGY

A - *Type of research*

1) *Exploratory:*

This research is exploratory since it will consist of examining the topic "Techniques applied to evaluate listening performance of students of Advanced English II semester I -2008 at the Foreign Language Department", which has not been researched before, there is also, lots of available data that can be useful to create new information about the way of evaluating the listening performance of students. Basically there are only books and sources containing information about general assessment which defines in a brief way some techniques used to evaluate listening, however, it is essential to create a new source that has definitions of the techniques and how to apply them in the teaching context.

Moreover, this research intends to explore if students carry out extra activities after classes to reinforce what they have learned during the course; also such activities will help them to know what they have to improve in order to reach the desire level in that way they can fulfill their needs.

2) *Descriptive:*

This research will describe the listening evaluation techniques used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate students' performance, how these techniques are applied in the teaching context, the resources used such as: tape – recorders, place, time, visual aids, etc to apply the different techniques, the results gotten from the teachers and how they grade those results.

In addition it is useful to determine students' listening comprehension level in order to know if their knowledge is measured according to the level of proficiency achieved during a course. Moreover, it is essential to take into account the

importance of the listening comprehension skill since it contributes to communicate with people in everyday life, so that people can interact in any context.

B - Method

1) Quantitative

The method that will be used in the project is quantitative. This method requires the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number or predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned.

The quantitative method will permit the gathering of reliable data from the applications of the different instruments. Also, this method will give specific information of the issue being studied through statistics so that, the results gotten will be valid. Some instruments are:

a) Questionnaire

A questionnaire consists of a set of variable questions respect to one or but measuring. It is administered to some sample of population to learn about the distribution of characteristics, attitudes, or beliefs.

It typically entails several questions that have structured response categories and may include some that are open – ended and closed questions.

b) Closed questions

The closed questions contain categories or options of answer that previously have been delimited. That is to say, they give to participants some answer possibilities. They can be dichotomized or include several answer options.

c) Open questions

The open questions do not delimit the answer alternatives beforehand, thus the number of answer categories is very elevated. The questionnaire will be administered to a sample of students who are taking English courses at the Foreign Language Department.

d) Personal interview

The interviews imply that a person applies the questionnaire to the participant subjects, first he/she presents the questions to each subject and writes down the answers.

The interview will be addressed to a sample of teachers who are in charge of the English courses in the Foreign Language Department, so that they can give some specific information about the topic.

e) Instruments

❖ A questionnaire administered to a sample of Advanced English students.

❖ An auto-evaluation administered to Advanced English students.

❖ A personal interview addressed to the teachers in charge of each Advanced English Course.

❖ Teachers' appreciation about their students' listening comprehension level based on "The European Listening Scale"

IV - DATA ANALYSIS

The primary goal of the data analysis is to provide valuable and real information from statistics taken from a sample of students that filled out a questionnaire of eleven questions with multiple choice answers and an auto – evaluation.

Therefore, the data contain a quantitative and qualitative analysis which has permitted to know the different opinions of Advanced English students and teachers at the Foreign Language Department about listening techniques and activities, that help them to develop the variety of listening skills when they are learning a second language. The quantitative analysis permits to determine the technological equipment used to carry out the listening activities; as well as to know the students' points of view about how they consider the listening tests administer by teachers, and also the difficulties that students face when they are taking those evaluations in order to know their knowledge about this matter.

This data was organized in frequency tables and graphics which show each student's opinion and their performance in such difficult ability. Some students consider themselves as if they do not have the proficiency necessary at this moment, but some of them are according to the proficiency required at this level. Moreover, it was necessary to address some interviews in order to know the professors opinions and their experiences at teaching, because all the teachers at the Foreign Language Department are experienced teachers and they not only have the experience but they also have further knowledge of these important skills. In order to make the interviews it was necessary to design a guidance interview with the objective to fulfill the interview with real experiences and updated information.

Once the interviews were made; it was necessary to analyze them and write some conclusions about each teacher's opinion in order to share important information with all those students that really want to improve that skill.

Analysis – Question 1

*What are the listening techniques mostly used by the teachers
to evaluate students' listening performance?*

Based on the results gotten from the questionnaire addressed to Advanced English students it can be said that: the listening technique mostly used by teachers to evaluate students' listening performance at the Foreign Language Department is the multiple choice option since it reflects the highest percentage of all alternatives. 47% of students think that teachers use the most the multiple-choice technique because through this kind of exercises students can enhance the performance of their listening skill. Therefore most listening evaluations have this kind of exercises.

Although multiple choice exercises give students several answers from which they have to choose the one they think is correct, these exercises do not make students think too much since they are limited to select an option without making any effort in analyzing information; however, it does not mean they are not good tools in teaching English. Teachers can apply this kind of exercises but taking into account what are the learning objectives when using them; and also, if they are suitable to the course level.

Furthermore, the results reflect that 24% of students who filled out the questionnaire answered that "Partial Dictation" is the second technique most used by teachers; the 21% of students think that "True – False statements" is the third, 7% of them selected "Recordings" as the fourth listening technique most used, also 1% of students chose "Short answers" and no one of them marked "Live presentation", making a total of 100%.

Analysis - Question 2

What technique is the most used by teachers to evaluate
students' listening performance?

According to the results gotten from the questionnaire addressed to Advanced English students it can be said that: students think the technique most used by teachers to evaluate their listening skill is "True – False statements" since it raises their listening performance in the class. True – False statements shows the 28.9% of the results which is the highest. By using True – False statements, teachers grade students' listening skill; however, they require not just a set of utterances with logical answers, they need to be more analytic regarding which students have more distractions. Therefore, the purpose of doing True – False statements exercises is the matter of making students think and be analytic; on the contrary, students are producing deductive learning where they do not have the chance to think. Teachers must encourage students to be more thinkable, because when they are thinking they are producing, also teachers should prepare exercises where students can analyze situations in everyday life.

Besides that, the second technique more used by teachers it is the "Multiple choice" option which reflects 23.7% of students' opinion. "Recordings" shows the 23.7% of preference in students, "Partial dictation, short answers and live presentation" reflect the 7.9% respectively.

Analysis - Question 3

How often do teachers provide students a listening evaluation?

Evaluations are exams or tests used as tools for teachers to level students' knowledge; they tell teachers how much students have improved, how much they need to improve and the topics teachers have to reinforce for the next course. Through evaluations teachers can see the progress in their students, noticing if the students' expectations are fulfilled or accomplished at the end of the course. When English is taught as a second language, at least one skill must be evaluated each class; teachers do not have to wait too long to evaluate the four macro skills. For instance: when teachers assign a grade in speaking, as well as speaking, the students are developing the listening skill at the same time; in that way oral exams show progress in students' development.

The 23.7% of students said that they are evaluated "Once a week" which is the highest result. Language evaluations should be in every class like a cycle; where students can learn step by step following a process as in the natural approach, because it is the way people learn. When students write an essay or a composition everything comes from their mind and thoughts; the way they write is the way they speak, if students speak clearly, they will write clearly, everything is together. The four macro skills must be at the same development; however, some students develop one skill more than the others, it happens due to their learning style, but it does not mean they will just focus their learning in one of them and leave out the other three skills. All skills are important when learning a second language and they must be developed at the same level respectively. The challenge is for teachers; they need to look for the latest methods, approaches for teaching students in the way they learn.

Furthermore, 19.7% of students are evaluated "Twice a week", 11.9% say "Every class", 18.4% "Once a month", 15.8% "Twice a month" and the 10.5% of students from the statistics said that they are evaluated just when a test is administered.

Analysis - Question 4

What kind of equipment do teachers use to carry out
each listening exercise during an evaluation?

The results gotten from the questionnaire administered to Advanced English students reflect that 72.3% of them chose "CD players" as the most used equipment for teachers to teach the second language. Teachers consider CD players be the most useful tool to teach English since it is easy to handle and cheaper; people do not have to invest a lot of money to buy this technological resource. However, in some cases teachers use CD players instead of using another equipment because the University of El Salvador does not have the latest technology resources, it lacks of modern machines or the teachers are not skillful to use them.

Although CD players are a fundamental tool to teach the language, teachers do not have to forget to use other resources such as: internet access, television, DVD players, news, newspapers, magazines or any written material in English they can find in libraries, hotels, private institutions, etc. These sources contribute to raise students' motivation so that they look by themselves for ways to direct their own learning and increase their knowledge.

Moreover, 22.4% of students said that "Computers" is the second most used equipment to teach English, 5.3% chose "Tapes" and no one of them marked "Charts and Videos". Therefore, English teachers from the University of El Salvador use CD players as primary resource.

Analysis - Question 5

What kind of activities do the teachers perform
during the class to improve students' listening skill?

The results gotten from the questionnaire administered to Advanced English students reflect that 69.9% of them think that teachers at the Foreign Language Department perform activities during classes in which they use the most "Recordings to enhance their students' listening skill. All listening exercises are designed to measure students' listening comprehension level and it is essential to use recordings as listening resources to encourage students to be receptive listeners. Those recordings can be pieces of conversations or a piece of a speech that has been recorded to perform them, so that students can be receptive at what they hear and in that way they can comprehend or interpret the required information they need to know.

The 18.4% of students said that "Watching movies" is the second most used activity performed in classes to enhance their listening skill. By watching movies students can enrich their listening ability since they are exposed to hear native speakers of the language; also they can watch movies according to their likes; so that such activity can be performed frequently and besides that they can identify the use of the language in any context, in different and real situations.

Moreover, 3.9% of students consider that "Going to the Lab" is another way to improve their ability to listen. The Foreign Language Department has a language laboratory that is used to perform listening activities which help students to enhance this receptive skill; however, such resource is not available for long period of time since students just study there one or two hours per week during the course. The other 3.9% of students selected that "Listening to music" it is the third activity their teachers perform in classes; nevertheless, teacher must be aware that if they use songs to teach the listening approach, they should know how to use them properly, because there are a lot of mistakes

implied in songs since writers, singers and composers are allowed to make them, but it is permitted because it is part of their field and in that way they express themselves. Therefore, teachers' task it is to be aware beforehand about the material they will use in class so that these songs contain proper and standardized language.

Finally, "Listening to native speakers" showed the last 3.9% of students' opinions that it is another way to improve their listening skill.

Analysis - Question 6

What kind of activities do Advanced students do
as independent study to reinforce their listening skill?

Based on the gathered data from questionnaires administered to Advanced English students it can be said: 42% of students listen to songs in English as independent study to reinforce their listening skill since they consider it as useful activity which can help them to improve their learning. However, there is a technique to listen to a song, it is not just a matter of listening to it. In songs, proper language is not used, colloquial and informal language is used there, so that students would face many different situations in those lyrics such as: writers using a lot affective language, students finding words that differ in meaning from a culture to another and also today songs are not the same used 10 to 15 years ago.

Listening to songs is an effective way to improve students' listening skill since it contributes not only to develop the ability to listen faster but also the opportunity to hear a variety of voices of different qualities and accents, representative of several regions and educational backgrounds. This activity is a good tool to learn English but students think that since teachers use songs in class that is the only way they can improve their listening skill and it is really a false idea that only through music people can learn or develop the listening ability. Therefore, students must take into account the advantages and disadvantages of listening to songs so that they can use them properly.

Moreover, 17% of students say that "Attending conversation clubs" is another way to reinforce their learning, because they listen and produce the language at the same time. The 16% of students think that going to a language laboratory frequently improves their listening ability, also 16% consider that listening to speeches in English is another alternative; 8% of students say that watching movies in English without subtitles is

an effective way to learn and 1% of them think that watching any program in English helps them to increase their knowledge as well as their performance of the listening skill.

Furthermore, advanced foreign language learners need to have a wide recognition vocabulary for rapid listening comprehension. To develop facility in comprehending spoken messages, students need much practice in aurally recognizing vocabulary they have been learning in written forms. Here games, competitions and other activities which require quick word recognition, grouping and matching are useful.

Finally, the teachers' task it is to encourage students to listen freely to all kinds of materials instead of just listening to songs. Students can listen for pleasure or profit; also they can listen to plays, sound – tracks of films, poems, news, bulletins, discussions of subjects of topical interest, speeches by important political figures or literary and cultural material related to other course work.

Analysis - Question 7

What kind of activities do Advanced students do
the most to reinforce their listening skill?

According to results gotten from the questionnaire administered to Advanced English students; it can be concluded that 30.3% of them think that the activity they do the most to reinforce their listening skill is listening to songs in English, because they consider it as a useful resource to get in touch with the language, since they can find songs according to their likes and it is also another way to acquire new vocabulary appropriate to the studied level. Besides that, they can work with the rest of the macro skills such as: reading, speaking and writing; but those skills must be developed based on learning objectives, students' needs, lacks and wants.

In addition, 26.3% of students selected "Going to the Lab", 22.4% chose "Attending conversation clubs", 13.1% of them marked "Watching movies in English without subtitles", also 6.6% said "Listening to speeches in English" and finally 1.3% preferred "Watching any program in English". These activities are good sources to study, but not enough to learn the language effectively; so that, students must be more interested in looking for new activities which can help them to increase their knowledge.

Analysis - Question 8

How do Advanced English students consider the
listening tests administered by teachers?

Tests are designed to find out how much students know about a subject. In listening tests, teachers need to know if students comprehend what they hear; there are several listening exercises which help teachers to provide students a variety of listening difficulties; however, such listening exercises should be used according to learning objectives.

Based on the results gotten from the questionnaire administered to Advanced English students; it can be said that 60.4% of them consider the listening tests "Difficult" since they find the listening exercises not easy and hard for doing them. The complexity of those exercises will vary according to the students' listening comprehension level. Moreover, 19.8% of students say that listening tests are "Very Difficult", it shows that some students get bad grades in listening parts due to the complexity of the exercises or factors that can interfere during the application of the listening evaluations. Physical aspects of the classroom or laboratory presentation, such as: speed of utterances, length of segments, length of pauses, acoustics of the room, and comfort of the students exert a decisive effect on the value of the exercise. Those elements should be studied carefully by the teacher in charge of the group.

Finally, 19.8% of students think that the listening tests are "Easy", it means that these students do the exercises without any difficulty or effort; so that, they get good grades and comprehend what they hear. Therefore, students believe in their own ability to do them. For instance, when students can generate questions about what they hear, identify the speakers' purpose and point on view easily, and also students can compare and contrast different things they hear.

Analysis - Question 9

What are the difficulties Advanced English students
face when they are taking a listening test?

There are many factors that can interfere during the implementation of listening tests; those factors affect the students' listening performance since they are exposed to interference or distractors which do not permit them to get the message they need to comprehend.

According to the results gotten from the questionnaire administered to Advanced English students it can be said: 39.5% of them think that "Outdoor noises" is the problem they have to face the most during evaluations. Therefore, if the message is transmitted with an accompaniment of irrelevant sounds or noises, some parts of the message may not be received by the listener. 21.1% of students consider "Crowded classrooms" as the second difficulty they face the most. Classrooms with a lot of students do not help in any way, since students are exposed to a variety of distractors which cause problems while the listening evaluation is taking place.

Moreover, 18.4% of students think that when the technological equipment is not in good conditions, it causes interference in the listening exercises development. When recording and playback equipment is not properly serviced, with tapes and cassettes re – recorded at regular intervals, audial quality in the language class or laboratory deteriorates. As a result, students have problems discriminating sounds, and the message they receive is defective; what was not heard clearly may mislead in the interpretation of what was heard earlier or is heard later, requiring extra processing before real comprehension is achieved; or if something was not heard at all expectations for what follows are reduced and interpretation becomes more complicated.

Even when the message is received clearly, unfamiliar elements of it may be perceived in much the same way as noise, so that some parts of the message will be lost in the process of transmission to the receiver.

Furthermore, 7.9% of students consider that when teachers give unclear instructions in the listening exercises, it affects in their performance since they probably do not comprehend what they have to do at all or they can get confused with those instructions. Therefore, it is useful to provide students with an example to perform each listening exercise.

In addition, 5.2% of students think that sometimes the time available to perform the listening activities is not enough since some exercises are longer and they may need more time to be analyzed due to their complexity or variety of options. Finally, 7.9% of students conclude that all difficulties previously mentioned affect the students' listening performance since they make the listening process slower and more complicated.

Analysis - Question 10

How do Advanced English students consider the level
of their listening performance?

The students' listening performance depends on the speaking skill too; communication does not exist unless what it is being said is comprehended by the listener. Teaching the comprehension of spoken language is of primary importance if the communication aim is to be achieved. In advanced students a range of higher level comprehension skills is also developed by listening to activities which involve: listening to narratives, commercials, discussions and interviews. Such activities improve pronunciation and build vocabulary on students' learning.

The 51% of students think that their level of listening performance is "Good" since they still have problems and difficulties in understanding any listening material spoken by native speakers, because they do not pronounce words as foreign learners do. Therefore, it is important to take into account that if students do not have the listening ability developed and arranged they would not probably become good listeners.

Moreover, the 26% of students consider their listening performance as "Very good" which means that they comprehend the 50% of what they hear. However, students should grade themselves to find out what they need to do in order to increase their performance. Also the 20% of the participants think their listening performance needs to be improved since they have problems in understanding when they are exposed to the language.

Finally, the 3% of the students consider that their listening performance is "Excellent" since it is not difficult for them to understand listening materials; however, it is important that students encourage themselves in looking new ways or sources to develop their ability and become good listeners as well as good speakers.

Analysis - Question 11

How do Advanced English students categorize their
listening comprehension level?

Considering that the process of language learning is continuous and individual; it is important to mention that foreign learners - in this case students -, have exactly the same competences as native speakers to develop them in the same way; however, for practical purposes it is useful to set up a scale of defined levels to segment the learning process for curriculum design; but those aims will depend on how a particular educational system is organized and for which purposes scales are established. Such scales may help to assess whether learners are working at an appropriate level in different areas.

Based on the information gathered from a questionnaire administered to Advanced English students it can be concluded: 35.5% of students categorize their listening comprehension level is the B1 scale; that is to say they can understand factual information about common everyday or job related topics, follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, understand simple technical information and follow detailed directions. 28.9% of the participants consider that their listening comprehension level is placed in the B2 scale; which reflects that students can understand standard spoken language liver or broadcast, able to catch the main ideas of proportionally and linguistically complex speech, they can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers and also can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed.

Moreover, 13.3% of students think they are in the A1 scale; which means that they can follow a speech that is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for them to assimilate meaning, also they can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them, and follow short and simple directions. The 10.5% of them say they are in

the A2 scale; since they can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority; they can generally identify the topic discussion around them when it is conducted and clearly. Besides that, they can catch the main points in short, clear in simple messages and announcements.

Furthermore, the 7.9% of the students place their listening comprehension level in the C1 scale; which shows that students can understand enough to follow extended speeches on abstract complex topics, they can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate; even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics and they can also extract specific information from poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements.

Finally, 3.9% of the participants think they are in the C2 scale; because they consider themselves able to understand any kind of spoken language with no difficulty and at fast native speed, they can also follow specialized lectures and presentations employing a high degree of colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology. Therefore, students have developed their competences as native speakers.

Contrasting the teachers' and students' appreciation of the listening comprehension levels based on "The European Listening Scale".

The European Framework categorizes the listening abilities of students in six levels going from the most advanced C2 in which students reach the highest level of comprehension up to the less advanced A1 in which students have many gaps in the development of this skill.

Based on the auto evaluation passed to the teachers and students there is a difference found in the results gotten from the listening proficiency reached by students during the course this is the following: There are three teachers who categorized their students in level B1; that is to say, their students are able to understand the main points of clear speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Also, they can understand the main points of many radio or TV programs on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest. There is only one teacher who thinks his students have reached the level B2; that is to say, the students can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, they can understand most TV news and current affairs programs. These levels are categorized as intermediates since students have a few problems in understanding some things in English; however, they have not reached the highest level of proficiency in the skill which is level C2.

On the other side only 28.9% of students who filled the auto evaluation categorized their level of proficiency in listening in the B2 scale, and 35.5% of them categorized it in the B1 scale. According to the results gotten, teachers and students categorize the level of proficiency in listening in the scales B1 and B2; however, based on the students answers it can not be said that all students of every group have reached level B1 or B2 since there is 13.3% who think they are in the A1 scale and 10.5% of them say they are in the A2 scale, this means students have not reached the level of proficiency required to pass the course.

Conclusions

According to the information gathered from questionnaires administered to Advanced English students at the Foreign Language Department it can be concluded that:

1) Students think the listening technique most used by teachers is "Multiple choice"; because most listening evaluations have this kind of exercises.

2) Students consider that teachers from the Foreign Language Department use a lot "True – false statements " exercises; but the exercises must make students think and be analytic.

3) Students say that they are assessed once a week; however, it is not enough because learning English as a second language requires to work on the four macro skills every class; to achieve a meaningful learning. Students practice every day but they are not necessarily assessed with the same frequency.

4) Students comment that teachers from the Foreign Language Department use CD players as a primary resource to perform listening activities.

5) Students say that "Listening to songs in English" is an useful activity as independent study to reinforce their listening performance.

6) Students consider the listening evaluations administered by teachers as "Difficult"; because they find complex exercises, as a result they get bad grades.

7) Students think that the difficulty they have to face the most during evaluations is "Outdoor noises" since the noises interfere in the transmission of the message.

8) Students think that their listening performance is "Good" since they still have problems in understanding any listening material.

QUESTION	TEACHER	ANSWER	CONCLUSION
1. Why do you consider that the listening evaluations are important in advanced students?	a) Lic. Garay	Assessment has two parts, a) to assess what students are learning, b) the other one it is if they are getting a level of proficiency in the language. Teachers want students use the language to know what is going on in the macro skills.	The listening evaluations are important for students because through these ones teachers can see the level of proficiency in listening that students have reached during the course, beyond that it is a requirement that students have if they want to pass a subject of the career.
	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	It's away to measure students' understanding and comprehension of listening passages, and how much they are understanding and comprehending what has been said if students have developed some listening strategies or techniques.	
	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	They are part of an evaluation system required by the university law. They are a requirement that students have in order to pass a subject.	
	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	Because listening is one of the basic skills to understand and comprehend a speaking language.	

QUESTION	TEACHER	ANSWER	CONCLUSION
2. What are the techniques you apply in order to evaluate students' listening performance?	a) Lic. Garay	- Play recording, then provide students a set of questions that most of the time are multiple choice, next they can choose the possible answer they consider the correct one. - Making inferences from what students have listened. - Follow directions. - Listening to instruction. - Get information about a topic.	The techniques used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate the students listening performance are almost the same in all cases students are provided with a variety of exercises to evaluate their performance, so that they have the opportunity to get a better score according to their learning style.
	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	- Listening passages, then students look for details, make inferences. - Multiple choices, true and false, opened questions, structured answers, giving opinions.	
	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	- Strategies such as; true and false, multiple choice, matching, little exercises.	
	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	- It depends on the purpose of what you want students do, you can do different things let them talk listening a song evaluation with realistic material or bring a native speaker.	

QUESTION	TEACHER	ANSWER	CONCLUSION
3. What are the activities that generate the best results to develop the students listening skill?	a) Lic. Garay	- No answer –	The activities that the teachers do to develop the students' listening performance are not the same in all cases, since every teacher does what he considers it is the best for their students.
	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	- A topic is really interesting for them, a topic that is familiar or a topic they have already discussed or they have some background through this topic students will become more engaged to try to listen fully for participating or to work on the exercises.	
	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	- By going from the general top the specific. - By going from the specific to the general. - Looking for specific information, comprehensions, listening for details.	
	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	- Bring realistic material (such as, going to a bank, listening to songs y listening different accents from speakers)	
QUESTION	TEACHER	ANSWER	CONCLUSION

QUESTION	TEACHER	ANSWER	CONCLUSION
4. How important is the use of technology when applying a listening test?	a) Lic. Garay	- Quality of recordings, tape recorders, CD's, laptops, projectors, DVD's	Technology is very important since students are exposed to a realistic language from native speakers through CD's, DVD's, documentals, Internet, tape recorders, on-line, etc. Beyond that it is important to mention that the hardware and the exercises the teacher carries out in the classroom are part of the technology.
	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	- It's very important that we have technology because students are exposed to different kings of devices such as; tape recorders, CD roms, on-line speaking activities and the teacher can be a resource too.	
	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	- People thing a projector is technology but technology is the hardware, other equipment and the exercises the teacher does with the students.	
	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	- It's very important because you can use the Internet in order to watch videos, documentals, music.	
QUESTION	**TEACHER**	**ANSWER**	**CONCLUSION**
5. What are the facilities	a) Lic. Garay	- We work with already made	In the Foreign Language

QUESTION	TEACHER	ANSWER	CONCLUSION
of using different evaluation techniques?		instruments that are designed for every macro skill.	Department teachers use already made instruments that are designed for the listening skill, in this case they provide students a systematic way that permits to evaluate their performance in a better way, also they can see which one works better for the students.
	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	- We have already made instruments, forms, items, exercises. The facility for the teachers it's to follow a systematic and gradual system for assessing the students' listening performance also for students it's always of facilitating the systematic development of the techniques.	
	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	- It depends on the goal or what you want to evaluate.	
	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	- If you use different techniques this will help to find out which is more effective.	
QUESTION	**TEACHER**	**ANSWER**	**CONCLUSION**
6. What are the	a) Lic. Garay	- For students in lower levels there are	There are some

		difficulties in the listening process when topics are complex.	inconveniences that the teachers can face when using different evaluation techniques, most of them can depend on the level of students' listening performance or teachers can see difficulties because of each student's learning style.
inconveniences of using different evaluation techniques?	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	- Maybe one of these are for the low performance in the low level of students, the more we expose students to more complex topic, the less advantage we have for them, because of the lack of vocabulary, comprehension, listening techniques or background knowledge they have about the topic.	
	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	- There are not any inconveniences since anything and everything that the teachers do will benefit students.	
	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	- There are many, if you use one technique this can not be good for one student even though it is excellent form another one.	
QUESTION	**TEACHER**	**ANSWER**	**CONCLUSION**
7. Based on your own	a) Lic. Garay	- You can never be satisfied. There is	Most of teachers think

		always a chance to do more exposits to different accents.	that the techniques they are using to evaluate the students' listening performance are not
experience, do you think that the listening evaluation techniques used at the Foreign Language Department are good enough to develop such skill?	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	- There might be more, some other alternatives, modalities, techniques that we are not applying but I think the ones we are using right now are just the beginning for trying to get a very systematic, complete and successful package of instruments that we can use.	enough since there might be more which can help the students to be evaluated in a different way.

	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	- Fluency is not developed through an evaluation.
		  • Assessment
		  • Assign a grade.
		- Fluency is developed through activities and exercises.	

	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	- I will say it's good and effective but they are never enough. Remember when you are learning it is very important to get involved in that language.	
QUESTION	**TEACHER**	**ANSWER**	**CONCLUSION**
8. What do you suggest	a) Lic. Garay	- The students do not look by themselves	It is desirable for the

		just when it is mandatory, they can do this: * *Watching videos, movies.* * *Listening to music.*	students to look for their own sources in order to reinforce their performance in the listening skills. In this case teachers give the same advice since they think that students should be exposed to the language by themselves and try to practice outside the classroom.
to advanced students to improve their listening performance at the Foreign Language Department?	b) Lic. Rolando Guzmán	- Students have to take seriously their own role of active listeners and learners. We advice them to look for listening on-line songs, CD roms, on-line activities, movies, lyrics, to talking classes to really practice inside and outside, watch movies, programs. In any way they can get comprehensible input and improve their own learning.	
	c) Lic. Fidel Navidad	- Class represents 25% of learning and students think it is enough but they have to listen to music, going to Internet, watch movies anything that comes from native speakers, they have to expose them selves.	
	d) Lic. Oscar Carranza	- One of the most important is to listen to music, to watch TV, English programs without any subtitles, watching the news, reports, documentals and realistic materials, get involved with the language.	

Conclusions

Based on the information gathered from the interviews made to the teachers of Advanced English Students II from the Foreign Language Department it can be concluded:

1- Teachers consider that the listening evaluations are important since they help to see the level of proficiency of their students during the course, beyond that these evaluations are part of the syllabus and students have to pass in order to be in the next level.

2- The most common techniques used by the teachers to evaluate the listening performance of students are "recordings" in this case students listen to passages, conversations, instructions, etc, then, they are provided with exercises such as; true – false, multiple choice, matching, making inferences.

3- Teachers think that the use of equipment such as, tape recorders, DVD's, CD's, computer, etc. are very important since students are exposed to a realistic language.

4- Teachers work with already made instruments to evaluate the listening performance of students since they think that they provide students a systematic way to get better results.

5- Teachers think students should look for their own system in order to improve the listening skill since the class is not enough, basically it represents only 25% of the students learning.

V – FINDINGS

Based on the information gathered from the data analysis the research questions can be answered in the following way:

A- General Questions.

1- *What are the activities that teachers of the Foreign Language Department carry out to improve the students' listening skill?*

According to the students the teacher of the Foreign Language Department perform activities during classes in which they use "Recordings" mostly, these ones contain listening exercises which are designed to measure the level of comprehension of students. In second place, students said teachers use the technique of "Watching movies". Through these activities students enrich their listening ability since they are exposed to hearing native speakers of the language. Moreover, students are exposed to listening to songs in class and going to the lab one or two hours per week during the course.

2- *What are the techniques used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate the students' listening performance?*

Teachers of the Foreign Language Department use a variety of activities to evaluate the students listening performance such as "True- False Statements" which help students to be more thoughtful and analytic , " Multiple choice", "Recordings", " Partial dictation", making inferences of what students have listened, following directions, listening to instruction, getting information about a topic. However, the use of these techniques will depend on the purpose of what students should do.

3- *What are the results obtained by the students of the Foreign Language Department after being exposed to these listening techniques?*

Tests are designed to find out how much students know about a subject. In listening tests teachers need to know if students comprehend what they hear; there are several listening exercises which help teachers to provide students with variety of listening difficulties; however, such listening exercises should be used according to the learning objectives.

Based on the results gotten from the questionnaire administered to advanced English students it can be said they consider the listening tests difficult since they find the listening exercises not easy and hard for doing them. The complexity of those exercises will vary according to the students listening comprehension level. On the other hand, some students think that the listening techniques used in the test are very difficult that is why they get bad grades due to the complexity of the exercises, some others think the listening test are very easy, it means these students do the exercises without any difficulty or effort; so, they get good grades.

B- Related Questions

1- *Which is the activity that generates the best results to improve the students' listening skill?*

The activities that the teachers do to develop the students listening skills are not the same in all cases, since every teacher does what he considers it is the best for their students; going from the general to the specific or vice versa, looking for specific information and bringing realistic material.

2- Which is the technique more used by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department to evaluate the students' listening performance?

According to the information given by students the teachers use "True – False Statements" mostly to evaluate their listening performance.

3- How do the inconveniences of using different techniques affect the students listening performance?

There are some inconveniences that teachers can face when using different evaluation techniques, these can depend on the level of students or their learning style, the students can be affected in a meaningful way when the topics are complex if they do not have enough vocabulary, comprehension, listening techniques or background knowledge about the topic.

4- How the facilities of using different evaluation techniques help to improve the students' listening performance?

In the Foreign Language Department teachers use already made instruments that are designed for the listening skill, in this case they provide students a systematic way that permits to evaluate their performance in a better way, also they can see which one works better for students.

VI - CONCLUSIONS

1-   Based on the book assessing listening, there are more techniques that the teachers of the Foreign Language Department can use to evaluate the students' listening performance for example; information transfer , note taking, partial dictation, Live Presentations, Listening Cloze, Gap Filling Techniques and Gap Filling Summaries, however according to results gotten from the questionnaires made to the students they said teachers use true- false statements mostly then; this technique is followed by Recordings , and Multiple Choice, finally they use Live Presentations, Short Answers and Partial Dictation. This information shows that students need to be exposed to more techniques to evaluate their performance giving them the opportunity to apply their different learning styles.

2-   Teachers consider the listening evaluations are important since they help to see the level of proficiency of their students during the course, beyond that, these evaluations are part of the syllabus and students have to pass them in order to be in the next level. On the other hand, most of the students consider the listening test are difficult because of the complexity of the topics and the exercises are not easy. Moreover, 19.8% of students say the listening test are very difficult, it shows that some students get bad grades in listening parts, only some of the students think test are easy it means they do not have problems to complete the exercise.

3-   According to the Common European Framework there are six levels in which students can categorize their listening proficiency , these are the followings A1- it is considered the lowest level of generative language , students can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases, A2- students can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance, B1 – students can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters , B2- students can understand extended speech and lectures and follow complex lines, C1- students can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and C2- it is consider the

highest level. Students do not have difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language provided they have some time to get familiar with the accent. However, based on the results gotten from the auto evaluation made to the students only 3.9 % categorized themselves in level C2 followed by the level C1 with 7.9 % . Basically, there were a lot of students who categorized themselves in level B1, in other words, just few students thought they have reached the level of proficiency required during the course. Beyond that, one half of the students considered their listening performance as "good" , since they still have problems and difficulties in understanding any listening material spoken by native speakers , because they do not pronounce words as foreign learners do and there were few students who thought their performance is "excellent", so not all students have developed their listening skill completely.

VII - RECOMMENDATIONS

1-   Since the evaluations are part of a syllabus, it is mandatory for students to pass them in order to be in the next course. Students should be conscious that the purpose of the evaluation is to measure what they have learned during the course. Also, it is a way to show the teachers if the techniques they are applying to evaluate the students are good enough; that is why students should look for more sources to improve their performance and find the tests easier.

2-   Teachers at the Foreign Language Department can use a variety of techniques to offer the students the opportunity to improve their listening performance when there is an evaluation, also in order to help students to improve their performance and know what are the techniques that work better according to the students' different styles. In the case in which students have difficulties with the technique, teachers can develop the activity of cooperative learning giving to weak learners the possibility to learn from more able learners how to listen strategically.

3-   Both teachers and students should work in all the listening activities so that all the students reach the highest level of proficiency in listening, in this case teachers should have more live presentations with native speakers, ask students to watch more movies in English without subtitles, listen to music in English, attending speeches, and exposing themselves to all type of activities developed by native speakers. It is desirable for students to practice more outside the class, not only to develop one extra activity but also many of them. Students should take seriously their role as active learners since the class is not enough to develop the listening skill.

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