

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



“THE USE OF BLOGS TO PROMOTE THE ENHANCEMENT OF LISTENING SKILLS IN STUDENTS TAKING THE ADVANCE LEVEL OF ENGLISH COURSE AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR”

**TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLES,
OPCION ENSEÑANZA**

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Introduction

The overpopulation conditions in the Foreign Language Department and the rapidly increase of the careers' demand in this Department have resulted in the impossibility to give special or specific attention to the students' needs or learning style. Seeking to give them the occasion to take all the advantages of every kind of resources in this age of technological globalization, we are focusing our thesis in these tools and applications that can optimize and simplify the student's learning pace. Undoubtedly, the use of technology as a whole makes the human life easier than before.

Macro skills (Reading Writing, Speaking and Listening) are in constant interdependency that becomes crucial at a certain point. On the other hand, listening skills play a major role in the success of one's communication and in the process of mastering a language. Such skills allow one to make sense of and understand what another person is saying. In other words, listening skills allow you to understand what someone is "talking about" (Tomatis 1991). This skill needs to be fed by being exposed to different kinds of materials that will help the student understand the importance of not only what it is said but also what it is not said; such language differences or accents, worries, fears, lack of comprehension in someone's speech.

A good way to encourage the self- study strategy is by sharing free online material that the students can access anytime they want, being updated constantly to keep the interest among the students. This also encourages the students to make their own research and share with the members in a feedback process. No doubt, this research will be a great benefit for the students of the Foreign Language Department, particularly the ones of the English Advanced Level, since its objective is to demonstrate teachers and students the advantages of using blogs as audio and video platforms focused on listening exercises to develop their listening skills.

By sharing a community customized blog in this area, we pretend to generate results from the methods and at the same time to encourage the enhancement of this modern approach in the University of El Salvador. Now that the recent virtual incursion in education has reached its objective to accomplish tasks efficiently and quickly. According to some experts, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play an important role in education as Roblyer mentioned: "Now that technology is becoming more common in schools, its potential for enhancing teaching and learning is being recognized. Technologies are being described as essential tools of the teaching trade" (2006).

Statement of the problem

Although language teaching implies developing four macro skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), it looks like the listening skills are often ignored and taken for granted in this teaching process in most English education centers including the University of El Salvador. But today it turns out that listening skills are essential in the students' development both academically and professionally, considering the Globalization which is viewed as a tool for promoting the development and the incorporation of El Salvador into the global market (Health in the Americas, 2007. Volume II). Certainly, the actual goal of English courses is to enable students to keep a communication unobstructed in the target language.

As Nunan (1991) wrote, "success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language". This is the role that listening plays in the English communication. "The fluency or ease with which the individual expresses himself is also a part of the self-listening process" (Tomatis 1991). Therefore, if students don't develop their listening skills as well as it must be, there will be deficiencies in their speaking skills and also in the other two macro skills. They won't develop a holistic performance in the language. So, the importance of the methods used to the listening skills that usually are not well-focused to the enhancement of the skills.

The biggest difference between speech and writing is that speech consists of sounds. This is very important, because processing the sound adds a whole new set of skills that are not necessary for reading. Most of the speakers speak very fast, so listeners have to listen fast. When reading, the reader can choose a comfortable reading speed, but the listener cannot choose the listening speed. Listeners must listen at the speaker's speed. Because speech is generally fast, the listener must get the meaning very quickly and very efficiently. There is no time to stop and wonder about vocabulary or grammar. That means that listening must be automatic.

In order to provide the necessary tools to improve students' listening skills in this web systems time, this research suggests the use of blogs to keep Advanced English level students in touch with a resource that enables them to hear audio and video with native English accents content in a practical and easy platform. As a result, to create an environment with all the characteristics of natural language use and most important of all, get students relax and enjoy listening. Doing like that, all the rest will just follow naturally. The students will have a chance to practice, so the listening skills become over-learned and completely automatic.

Justification

Important institutions such as Government departments and school districts use every sort of web tools for education. Based on this new educational movement, it was made the decision for the implementation of the blog as a friendly and easy tool in the Advance of English students' learning for the enhancement of Listening skills. It is relevant to demonstrate that our teachers in the university can easily take advantage of this resource to reach the actual goal of English courses, which is to enable students to communicate in the target language professionally.

Listening is viewed as a fundamental contributor to the development of language skills; it is an outgoing component of our use of language, particularly the outgoing control of our own speech. An important theory made by Tomatis explains that the sounds of language are the first learned, so it is assumed that the ease with which the child integrates the sound of language will affect the ease with which they can understand and express language, first in the spoken form and later in its written form (1991). Even if children don't learn the same way as adults do, it is obvious the role of listening in the development of language skills.

The peculiarities and complexities to develop listening skills are generally not taken into account by learners and teachers making students unable to get the maximum of these skills. Speech usually consists of idea units. Sometimes idea units are not complete sentences. Speech contains many mistakes, and grammatical errors. Speech contains many pauses and hesitations. There are also fillers, meaningless words that give the speaker thinking time. Spoken language is more modern and up to date; there are more slang words, new expressions and humor. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish strategies and techniques about it.

"In our days it is of high importance the education based on competence. The educator will have to build on the fundamental needs of the students, namely on their curiosity. Let them provide situations for the students in which they can discover the world on their own, look for the explanations, understand the contexts they discovered (Ágnes Démuth 2009)". Owning a blog and posting on it can be an interesting and fun way to share information. The quick and easy way that a blog can be updated is a great advantage for students practice their listening skills. This is the challenge of the research to implement this new approach in The Foreign Language Department for the education based on competence in English listening area.

Purpose of the Study

The nature of the current research is to suggest a proposal for implementing a new modern approach at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. This new modern approach implies the use of blogs as audio and video platforms focused on listening exercises to the enhancement of these skills in Advanced English level students. To analyze the data, we will use a qualitative technique using in addition every kind of information about the area. In the last chapter of this research, relevant recommendations and conclusions of the matter will be provided.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Objectives

● Main Objective:

-To demonstrate the profits of using blogs as audio and video platforms to the development of listening skills in an active, practical and efficient manner

● Specific Objectives:

-To build a blog for the enhancement of listening skills focused on generating results for the investigation.

-To share the previously designed blog specialized on listening skills with Advanced levels of English in Foreign Language Department.

-To demonstrate the feasibility of the blog as an effective audio and video platform in listening skill

Research Questions:

● Research Question:

-What are the innovative resources or internet applications and online tools available to the teachers in order to reinforce students' listening skills in Advanced English courses?

● Subsidiary Research Questions:

-What is the listening proficiency level developed by the students of Advanced English courses in the Foreign Language Department?

- -What are the criteria, in terms of resources, taken into account by the teachers to write a lesson plan directed to listening areas of students in Advanced English course?

Significance to the Field

With the development of this research, it is expected to collect enough valuable data and information for teachers in the English listening area. All the acquired information and data will be useful for the improvement in the students' learning process at the Foreign Language Department regarding to this important area. Moreover, it is totally helpful in this particular regard, the contribution of a research focused on listening skills to this Foreign Language field to develop new systems and methods that will enhance these skills in the students of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

A clarification of any terminology in the study that may not be commonly known is always needed and provides a similar interpretation for all readers of the study.

LISTENING MACROSKILL RELATED TERMS

- *Hearing* (or audition; [adjectival form](#): "auditory" or "aural"):

It is the ability to perceive [sound](#) by detecting [vibrations](#) through an organ such as the [ear](#)

- *Listening*:

It is a communication technique that requires the listener to understand, interpret and evaluate what they hear. The ability to listen actively can improve personal relationships through reducing conflicts, strengthening cooperation, and fostering understanding.

- *Liaison*:

It is the pronunciation of a latent word-final [consonant](#) immediately before a following [vowel](#) sound.

- *Elision*:

It is the omission of one or more sounds (such as a [vowel](#), a [consonant](#), or a whole [syllable](#)) in a word or phrase, producing a result that is easier for the speaker to pronounce. Sometimes, sounds may be elided for [euphonic](#) effect.

- *Cliché*:

It is a noun that is also used as an adjective, although some dictionaries do not recognize the adjective sense. All dictionaries consulted recognize a derived adjective with the same meaning.

- IPA :

International Phonetic Alphabet

- Collocation:

In corpus linguistics, **collocation** defines a sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. In phraseology, **collocation** is a sub-type of phraseme. An example of a phraseological collocation

- Phonology:

(from Greek: *ph n* , "voice, sound" and *lógos*, "word, speech, subject of discussion") is, broadly speaking, the subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with "the sounds of language".

- ACTFL:

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

- Accent:

In linguistics, stress is the relative emphasis that may be given to certain syllables in a word, or to certain words in a phrase or sentence. The term is also used for similar patterns of phonetic prominence inside syllables. The word accent is sometimes also used with this sense.

BLOG RELATED TERMS

- Blog: A blog is a website in which items are posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order.

- Post: A post is a single entry in your blog; your blog is composed of multiple posts.

- Host Site: A website that allows you to create a blog and host it on their website for free of charge.

- Apps: Short code for Applications.

- Stage hogging: This is when talking is seen to be more valuable than listening by the speaker. The speaker does not allow for listening as a personal communication style.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening and hearing are not the same. Hearing is the first stage of listening. Hearing occurs when your ears pick up sound waves which are then transported to your brain. This stage is your sense of hearing. Listening is a communication process and, to be successful, is an active process. In other words, one must be an active participant in this communication process. In active listening, meaning and evaluation of a message must take place before a listener can respond to a speaker. Therefore, the listener is actively working while the speaker is talking.

Active listening is a communication technique that requires the listener to understand, interpret, and evaluate what they hear. The ability to listen actively can improve personal relationships through reducing conflicts, strengthening cooperation, and fostering understanding.

When interacting, people often do not listening attentively. They may be distracted, thinking about other things, or thinking about what they are going to say next (the latter case is particularly true in conflict situations or disagreements). Active listening is a structured way of listening and responding to others, focusing attention on the speaker. Suspending one's own frame of reference, suspending judgment and avoiding other internal mental activities are important to fully attend to the speaker.

There are three primary elements that comprise active listening: comprehending, retaining, and responding.

Comprehension is "shared meaning between parties in a communication transaction". This is the first step in the listening process. The first challenge for the listener is accurately identifying speech sounds and understanding and synthesizing these sounds as words. We are constantly bombarded with auditory stimuli, so the listener has to select which of those stimuli are speech sounds and choose to pay attention to the appropriate sounds (attending). The second challenge is being able to discern breaks between discernable words, or speech segmentation. This becomes significantly more difficult with an unfamiliar language because the speech sounds blend together into a continuous cluster. Determining the context and meanings of each word is essential to comprehending a sentence.

Retaining is the second step in the listening process. Memory is essential to the listening process because the information we retain when involved in the listening process is how we create meaning from words. We depend on our memory to fill in the blanks when we're listening. Because everyone has

different memories, the speaker and the listener may attach different meanings to the same statement. However, our memories are fallible and we can't remember everything that we've ever listened to. There are many reasons why we forget some information that we've received.

The first reason is cramming. When you cram there is a lot of information entered into one's short term memory. Shortly after cramming, when one does not need the information anymore, it is purged from the brain before it can be transferred into your long term memory. The second reason is that one is not paying attention when the information is received. . Alternatively, when the person receives the information he/she may not attach importance to it, so it loses its meaning. Another reason is at the time the information was received you lacked motivation to listen carefully to better remember it. Using information immediately after receiving it enhances information retention and lessens the forgetting curve (the rate at which we no longer retain information in our memory). Retention is lessened when we engage in mindless listening, where little effort is made to listen to a speaker's message. Mindful listening is active listening.

Responding is the third step in the Listening process. Listening is an interaction between speaker and listener. It adds action to a normally passive process. The speaker looks for verbal and nonverbal responses from the listener to determine if the message is being listened to. Usually the response is nonverbal because if the response is verbal the speaker/listener roles are reversed so the listener becomes the speaker and is no longer listening. Based on the response the speaker should either adjust or continue with his/her communication style.

In the book *Leader Effectiveness Training*, Thomas Gordon, who coined the term "active listening," states "Active listening is certainly not complex. Listeners need only restate, in their own language, their impression of the expression of the sender. ... Still, learning to do Active Listening well is a rather difficult task ..." A listener can use several degrees of active listening, each resulting in a different quality of communication. The Active Listening Chart below shows the three main degrees of listening: Repeating, Paraphrasing and Reflecting.

The benefits of active listening include getting people to open up, avoiding misunderstandings, resolving conflict, and building trust. In a medical context, benefits may include increased patient satisfaction, improved cross-cultural communication, improved outcomes, or decreased litigation.

All elements of communication, including listening, may be affected by barriers that can impede the flow of conversation. Such barriers include distractions, trigger words, vocabulary, and limited attention span.

Listening barriers may be psychological (e.g. emotions) or physical (e.g. noise and visual distraction). Cultural differences including speakers' accents, vocabulary, and misunderstandings due to cultural assumptions often obstruct the listening process. Frequently, the listener's personal interpretations, attitudes, biases, and prejudices lead to ineffective communication.

Interrupting is what happens when one person stops speaking because another person starts speaking. Competitive interrupting is "when we dominate the conversation by seizing the floor from others who are speaking". Both the original speaker and the interrupter fight for control of the conversation. This is similar to a shift response and can be used in the same way. However, a shift response follows the rule that one person speaks at a time while in competitive interrupting you don't wait for the other person to finish talking. Also, with shift responses the topic usually changes while with competitive interrupting the interrupter may make a point that is on topic. Interrupting may create an environment of hostility and rivalry. In general, competent communicators try to avoid interrupting in their conversation. However, there are noncompetitive reasons for interrupting such as a show of support or enthusiasm, or asking for clarification.

Glazing over occurs when the listener's attention wanders from the speaker's message and they begin to daydream. The listener does not even pretend to listen to the speaker's message. In general the brain processes words faster than people can speak, so a competent communicator will use the difference between the rate of speaking and processing to think about the conveyed message. Pseudo listening on the other hand is pretend listening; the listener uses the 'polite listening face' but nothing really registers. However, competent listening requires focused attention. We don't remember what we haven't focused our attention on.

To use the active listening technique to improve interpersonal communication, one puts personal emotions aside during the conversation, asks questions and paraphrases back to the speaker to clarify understanding, and one also tries to overcome all types of environment distractions. Do not judge or argue prematurely. Furthermore, the listener considers the speaker's background, both cultural and personal, to benefit as much as possible from the communication process. Eye contact and appropriate body languages are also helpful.

It is important to focus on what the speaker is saying; at times you might come across certain key words which will certainly help you understand the

speaker. The stress and intonation will also keep you active and away from distractions. Taking notes on the message will aid in retention.

There are several misconceptions about listening. The first of these is that listening and hearing is the same thing. Hearing is the physiological process of registering sound waves as they hit the eardrum. We have no control over what we hear. The sounds we hear have no meaning until we give them their meaning in context. Listening on the other hand is an active process that constructs meaning from both verbal and nonverbal messages. [29] It involves a lot of interpretation by the listener to reconstruct a message that is like the one that the speaker intended to send. The second is that listening is a natural process. However, we have been hearing since birth, not listening. Listening is a skill that is acquired over a lifetime. The third misconception is listening requires no effort. This is untrue because the more you practice listening the better you get at it and the three steps that comprise it.

One of the most important instructional goals for second language learners to attain should be listening because it is the prelude to comprehend what we listen or what we are told, however, building such a listening competence is a long-term process that must be taught actively since the very beginning of the learning teaching process, otherwise, it will present a barrier in higher level learning. Something widely discussed by the Direct Method and the Audio- LingualMethod. The first one states that “students learn to understand a language by listening to it in large quantities”. On the other hand, the Audio- Lingual Method states that: “ a language is what native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say” (Rivers) 1981. So, the enhancement of the listening skills is very necessary because, as Krashen suggested, no one can produce the language naturally until he or she has had enough of the type of exposure to which Rivers (1981) cites: “that adults spend 40 to 50 percent of their time listening and just 11 to 16 percent of their time reading.

Thus, for the ESL teacher is necessary to have access to sequential listening material based on natural discourse, along with appropriate comprehension activities to teach that comprehension process. This process is not only internal to the learner, but complex too due to the existing of very few published materials for the teaching of this particular skill. If listening materials are made up of everyday conversation, they must contain a lot of colloquial words and expressions, such as “stuff” for material, “guy” for man, etc., as well as slang. But students are exposed mainly to formal or bookish English without getting familiar with these expressions.

In teaching listening comprehension we must be careful not to go to extremes, either by being concerned too exclusively with theories without thinking about their application to teaching, or by obstinately following frozen routines-opening the textbook and explaining new words, playing the tape recorder, and asking/answering questions. It is essential for a teacher to have an overall understanding of what listening is, why it is difficult for foreign-language learners, and what some solutions may be. The vital question is how to bridge the gap between an analysis of listening and actual classroom teaching.

The American Council for the teaching of Foreign Languages, which is the source on which this search lays on, states guidelines to identify the stages of proficiency and assessment of what an individual can and cannot do. It also states that if students are taught listening actively, they can attain optimal levels of proficiency; which will be observed in his capacity to understand majority of face-to-face speech, get main ideas and most supporting details relating to every day topics, or understand abstract topics in a particular context such as descriptions and narrations of factual material and nontechnical prose.

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt and Dakin 1974). An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously. Willis (1981:134) lists a series of micro-skills of listening, which she calls enabling skills. These micro-skills are predicting what people are going to talk about, guessing at unknown words or phrases without panicking, using one's own knowledge of the subject to help one understand, identifying relevant points, rejecting irrelevant information, retaining relevant points, recognizing discourse markers, recognizing cohesive devices, understanding different intonation patterns and uses of stress, etc., which give clues to meaning and social setting understanding inferred information.

Teaching listening skills implies a great challenge. This is because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice. It's frustrating for students because there are no rules as in grammar teaching. Speaking and writing also have very specific exercises that can lead to improved skills. This is not to say that there are not ways of improving listening skills; however they are difficult to quantify. One of the largest inhibitors for students is often mental block. While listening, a student suddenly decides that he or she does not understand what is being said. At this point, many students just tune out or get caught up in an internal dialogue trying to translate a specific word. Some students convince themselves that they are not able to understand spoken English well and create problems for themselves.

ESL listening skills are perhaps one of the hardest things to teach and learn. Speech patterns among English speakers vary widely, with different accents, speeds of talking and regional dialects. Still, you need to teach listening skills to ESL students if you want them to be successful English speakers. Focus on appealing to their specific needs and interests, which can help to improve learning. The key to helping students improve their listening skills is to convince them that there is nothing wrong with not understanding. This is more of an attitude adjustment than anything else, and it is easier for some students to accept than others. Another important point is to teach students the need to listen to English as often as possible, but for short periods of time.

In order for students to learn, they must first be able to effectively listen as others communicate new material. Effective listeners are able to adjust their listening skills to fit different situations. Teaching students how actively listen can improve their comprehension of new material and help them communicate better with their peers. Listening is a skill that most students use daily without much thought, but unlike reading or writing, many students have not spent time developing and improving their listening skills. According to ERIC Digest, listening is one of the first language tools that children acquire, yet teachers often struggle to cultivate a student's listening skills. With careful preparation, you can teach listening skills in your classroom, regardless of your classroom size or subject.

Listening skills are especially important for students of a new language. Teach your students to give each other constructive feedback to ensure that they are listening and understanding conversations. Their feedback should be timely, descriptive, aimed only at behaviors that can be adjusted and based on the speaker's needs. Students must thoroughly discuss the feedback to ensure the speaker understands the listener's comments. To understand a lesson, students must be able to hear and comprehend lectures, instructions and directions. In order to teach any subject, listening comprehension skills must be acquired to understand future topics and lessons. Integrate listening activities in your classroom to help improve the grades and interest of your students. By enhancing your students' listening skills, you can create a more interactive and dynamic classroom with curious, responsive students.

TYPES OF LISTENING

There are some teachers that think that listening is the easiest skill to teach, but most students think it is the most difficult to improve. This contradiction tells us that there are some things about teaching listening that need to be explored. Definitely those who say it is “the easiest to teach” mean that it does not require much meticulous lesson preparation and all they need to do is play the tapes and test the students’ comprehension. But is there nothing more to teaching listening than testing? We must find out all we can about how listening can be improved and what activities are useful to this end and then use this knowledge and these activities in our own classrooms.

Listening problems (that result in miscommunication) may have several different sources: they can be pure physical, like damage in the inner ear, for example. Linguistics problems can conduct to a problem with the recognition of speech sounds, or the problem can be of a more abstract cognitive level, for example with the interpretation of the message. Among linguistic problems, we can mention: clustering, redundancy, reduced forms especially if these have not been taught in class due to the textbook language presented. Colloquialism and the rate of delivery along with the stress, rhythm and intonation can create a barrier in the communication between the speakers. To overcome these situations it is advisable to design assessment tasks for the different kinds of listening.

There are four types of listening: Intensive, responsive, selective, and extensive. In intensive listening the pupil is asked to check phonemes, words, or intonation. Responsive listening deals with greetings, commands, and questions. For the selective listening, we may use TV or radio news items, and stories. The extensive listening is where the students are primarily concerned with following a story, or finding something out from a passage they are listening to. Thus the student has to make some sort of connection for himself. This can be a connection between two parts of the passage or the student knowledge of the world. Through this listening type, students from the advanced English levels can listen for gist, the main idea or make inferences.

According to the ACTFL guidelines, the techniques that are appropriated for building listening skills at the advanced levels are: comprehension check, dictation, clue searching, graphic fill-ins, paraphrasing, note taking, story rebuilding, and inferential listening. These techniques can be used according to the different types of listening. Thus for the intensive listening, the teacher can locate exercises where the students can recognize phonological and morphological elements like phonemics pairs and consonants, vowels, stress pattern.

Appropriate answers to questions are good ways to assess responsive listening, these may be open-ended questions. For the selective listening, where the test taker listens to a limited quantity of input and discerns within it some specific information, the student can practice by doing listening cloze, information transfer through chart filling for example or by sentence repetition. For the extensive listening, students are required to develop a top-down global understanding of spoken language. These can be gotten by using some techniques like note taking, or by paraphrasing the story or conversation or having the students retell the story for the class for example.

Another point that is important to mention is the content of the message. Many learners find it more difficult to listen to a taped message than to read the same message on a piece of paper, since the listening passage comes into the ear in the twinkling of an eye, whereas reading material can be read as long as the reader likes. The listening material may deal with almost any area of life. It might include street gossip, proverbs, new products, and situations unfamiliar to the student. Also, in a spontaneous conversation speakers frequently change topics. The content is usually not well organized. Messages on the radio or recorded on tape cannot be listened to at a slower speed. Even in conversation it is impossible to ask the speaker to repeat something as many times as the interlocutor might like.

Linguistic Features are another point that must be taken into account. Liaison and elision are common phenomena that make it difficult for students to distinguish or recognize individual words in the stream of speech. They are used to seeing words written as discrete entities in their textbooks. In spontaneous conversations people sometimes use ungrammatical sentences because of nervousness or hesitation. They may omit elements of sentences or add something redundant. This may make it difficult for the listener to understand the meaning.

The role of the speaker also affects greatly the way of listening. Ur (1984:7) points out that "in ordinary conversation or even in much extempore speech-making or lecturing we actually say a good deal more than would appear to be necessary in order to convey our message. Redundant utterances may take the form of repetitions, false starts, re-phrasings, self-corrections, elaborations, tautologies, and apparently meaningless additions such as I mean or you know." This redundancy is a natural feature of speech and may be either a help or a hindrance, depending on the students' level. It may make it more difficult for beginners to understand what the speaker is saying; on the other hand, it may give advanced students more time to "tune in" to the speaker's voice and speech style.

Learners tend to be used to their teacher's accent or to the standard variety of British or American English. They find it hard to understand speakers with other accents. Spoken prose, as in news broadcasting and reading aloud written texts, is characterized by an even pace, volume, pitch, and intonation. Natural dialogues, on the other hand, are full of hesitations, pauses, and uneven intonation. Students used to the former kinds of listening material may sometimes find the latter difficult to understand.

On the other hand, there is the way the listener performs. Foreign-language students are not familiar enough with clichés and collocations in English to predict a missing word or phrase. They cannot, for example, be expected to know that rosy often collocates with cheeks or to predict the last word will be something like rage when they hear the phrase he was in a towering. This is a major problem for students. Lack of sociocultural, factual, and contextual knowledge of the target language can present an obstacle to comprehension because language is used to express its culture (Anderson and Lynch 1988).

Foreign-language learners usually devote more time to reading than to listening, and so lack exposure to different kinds of listening materials. Even our college students majoring in English have no more than four hours' regular training per week. Both psychological and physical factors may have a negative effect on perception and interpretation of listening material. It is tiring for students to concentrate on interpreting unfamiliar sounds, words, and sentences for long periods.

Another important aspect is the physical Setting. Including both background noises on the recording and environmental noises can take the listener's mind off the content of the listening passage. Listening material on tape or radio lacks visual and aural environmental clues. Not seeing the speaker's body language and facial expressions makes it more difficult for the listener to understand the speaker's meaning. Unclear sounds resulting from poor-quality equipment can interfere with the listener's comprehension.

Not all the problems described above can be overcome. Certain features of the message and the speaker, for instance, are inevitable. But this does not mean that the teacher can do nothing about them. She or he can at least provide the students with suitable listening materials, background and linguistic knowledge, enabling skills, pleasant classroom conditions, and useful exercises to help them discover effective listening strategies.

Grade listening materials according to the students' level, and provide authentic materials rather than idealized, filtered samples. It is true that natural speech is hard to grade and it is difficult for students to identify the different

voices and cope with frequent overlaps. Nevertheless, the materials should progress step by step from semi-authenticity that displays most of the linguistic features of natural speech to total authenticity, because the final aim is to understand natural speech in real life.

Design task-oriented exercises to engage the students' interest and help them learn listening skills subconsciously. As Ur (1984:25) has said, "Listening exercises are most effective if they are constructed round a task. That is to say, the students are required to do something in response to what they hear that will demonstrate their understanding." She has suggested some such tasks: expressing agreement or disagreement, taking notes, marking a picture or diagram according to instructions, and answering questions. Compared with traditional multiple-choice questions, task-based exercises have an obvious advantage: they not only test the students' listening comprehension but also encourage them to use different kinds of listening skills and strategies to reach their destination in an active way.

Provide students with different kinds of input, such as lectures, radio news, films, TV plays, announcements, everyday conversation, interviews, storytelling, English songs, and so on. Brown and Yule (1983) categorize spoken texts into three broad types: static, dynamic, and abstract. Texts that describe objects or give instructions are static texts; those that tell a story or recount an incident are dynamic texts; those that focus on someone's ideas and beliefs rather than on concrete objects are abstract texts. Brown and Yule suggest that the three types of input should be provided according to the difficulties they present and the students' level. They draw a figure, in which difficulty increases from left to right, and, within any one type of input, complexity increases from top to bottom. Try to find visual aids or draw pictures and diagrams associated with the listening topics to help students guess or imagine actively.

Give practice in liaisons and elisions in order to help students get used to the acoustic forms of rapid natural speech. It is useful to find rapidly uttered colloquial collocations and ask students to imitate native speakers' pronunciation. Make students aware of different native-speaker accents. Of course, strong regional accents are not suitable for training in listening, but in spontaneous conversation native speakers do have certain accents. Moreover, the American accent is quite different from the British and Australian. Therefore, it is necessary to let students deal with different accents, especially in extensive listening.

Select short, simple listening texts with little redundancy for lower-level students and complicated authentic materials with more redundancy for advanced learners. It has been reported that elementary-level students are not

capable of interpreting extra information in the redundant messages, whereas advanced listeners may benefit from messages being expanded, paraphrased, etc. (Chaudron 1983). Provide background knowledge and linguistic knowledge, such as complex sentence structures and colloquial words and expressions, as needed.

Give, and try to get, as much feedback as possible. Throughout the course the teacher should bridge the gap between input and students' response and between the teacher's feedback and students' reaction in order to keep activities purposeful. It is important for the listening-class teacher to give students immediate feedback on their performance. This not only promotes error correction but also provides encouragement. It can help students develop confidence in their ability to deal with listening problems.

Student feedback can help the teacher judge where the class is going and how it should be guided. Help students develop the skills of listening with anticipation, listening for specific information, listening for gist, interpretation and inference, listening for intended meaning, listening for attitude, etc., by providing varied tasks and exercises at different levels with different focuses.

Some teachers, accustomed to following exactly the exercises and tasks provided in the textbook without thinking about whether they are suitable for their students or not, might look on these activities as extra work and a burden, which is untrue once the teachers discover the pleasure to try various exercises, tasks, and classroom activities, for successful lessons. Teachers should have at their fingertips a set of exercises, tasks, and activities that they can use with their classes whenever they may be needed: and as more authentic is the listening material, the better for the students because that will expose them to the type of English they will be listening in the real world.

THE BENEFITS OF THE BLOG TO REINFORCE THE LISTENING

We have now entered a digital era in which technology is no longer a novelty. Technological advancement has always occurred in the past, but never at this speed. "Technology is not a panacea that can replace language teachers and face-to-face classrooms; it is something that can be used to enhance language learning" (Sharma & Barrett, 2007). Some years ago the Internet held the promise of access to authentic audio and video. Today that promise has been realized. An unending stream of audio and video lessons, television and radio broadcasts, including news and documentaries, and music videos are now at our fingertips through different sources.

A blog (a blend of the term *web log*) is a type of website or part of a website. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. *Blog* can also be used as a verb, meaning *to maintain or add content to a blog*. Most blogs are interactive, permitting visitors to leave comments and even message each other via widgets on the blogs and it is this interactivity that distinguishes them from other static websites.

Many blogs provide clarification or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its area. The ability of students to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art, photographs (photo blogs), videos (video blogging or vlogging), music (mp3 blog), and audio podcasting). Micro blogging is another type of blogging, featuring very short posts.

The term "weblog" was coined by Jorn Barger on 17 December 1997. The short form, "blog," was coined by Peter Merholz, who jokingly broke the word *weblog* into the phrase *we blog* in the sidebar of his blog Peterme.com in April or May 1999. Shortly thereafter, Evan Williams at Pyra Labs used "blog" as both a noun and verb ("to blog," meaning "to edit one's weblog or to post to one's weblog") and devised the term "blogger" in connection with Pyra Labs' Blogger product, leading to the popularization of the terms. Before blogging became popular, digital communities took many forms, including Usenet, commercial online services such as GEnie, BiX and the early CompuServe, e-mail lists and Bulletin Board Systems (BBS). In the 1990s, Internet forum software, created running conversations with "threads." Threads are topical connections between messages on a virtual "corkboard."

The modern blog evolved from the online diary, where people would keep a running account of their personal lives. Most such writers called themselves diarists, journalists, or journalers. Justin Hall, who began personal blogging in 1994 while a student at Swarthmore College, is generally recognized as one of the earliest bloggers, as is Jerry Pournelle. Dave Winer's Scripting News is also credited with being one of the oldest and longest running weblogs. Another early blog was Wearable Wireless Webcam, an online shared diary of a person's personal life combining text, video, and pictures transmitted live from a wearable computer and EyeTap device to a web site in 1994. This practice of semi-automated blogging with live video together with text was referred to as *sousveillance*, and such journals were also used as evidence in legal matters.

Early blogs were simply manually updated components of common Web sites. However, the evolution of tools to facilitate the production and maintenance of Web articles posted in reverse chronological order made the publishing process feasible to a much larger, less technical, population. Ultimately, this resulted in the distinct class of online publishing that produces blogs we recognize today. For instance, the use of some sort of browser-based software is now a typical aspect of "blogging". Blogs can be presented by dedicated blog hosting services, or they can be run using blog software, or on regular web hosting services.

Some early bloggers, such as The Misanthropic Bitch, who began in 1997, actually referred to their online attendance as a zine, before the term blog entered common practice. After a slow start, blogging rapidly gained in popularity. Blog usage range during 1999 and the years following, being further popularized by the near-simultaneous arrival of the first hosted Since 2002, blogs have gained increasing notice and coverage for their role in breaking, shaping, and spinning news stories. The Iraq war saw bloggers taking measured and passionate points-of view that go beyond the traditional left-right divide of the political spectrum.

By 2004, the role of blogs became increasingly normal, as political consultants, news services, and candidates began using them as tools for outreach and opinion forming. Blogging was established by politicians and political candidates to express opinions on war and other issues and cemented blogs' role as a news source. (See Howard Dean and Wesley Clark) Even politicians not actively campaigning, such as the UK's Labour Party's MP Tom Watson, began to blog to bond with constituents. In January 2005, *Fortune* magazine listed eight bloggers that business people "could not ignore": Peter Rojas, Xenia Jardin, Ben Trott, Mena Trott, Jonathan Schwartz, Jason Goldman, Robert Scoble, and Jason Calacanis.

The impact of blogging upon the ordinary media has also been acknowledged by governments. In 2009, the presence of the American journalism industry had deteriorated to the point that several newspaper corporations were filing for bankruptcy, resulting in less direct competition between newspapers within the same circulation area. Discussion appeared as to whether the newspaper industry would benefit from a stimulus package by the federal government. President Barack Obama acknowledged the emerging influence of blogging upon society by saying "if the direction of the news is all blogosphere, all opinions, with no serious fact-checking, no serious attempts to put stories in context, that what you will end up getting is people shouting at each other across the void but not a lot of mutual understanding".

There are many different types of blogs, differing not only in the type of content, but also in the way that content is delivered or written. The first one is

the personal blog, an ongoing diary or commentary by an individual, is the traditional, most common blog. Personal bloggers usually take pride in their blog posts, even if their blog is never read. Blogs often become more than a way to just communicate; they become a way to reflect on life, or works of art. Blogging can have a sentimental quality. Few personal blogs rise to fame and the mainstream but some personal blogs quickly garner an extensive following. One type of personal blog, referred to as a microblog, is extremely detailed and seeks to capture a moment in time. Some sites, such as Twitter, allow bloggers to share thoughts and feelings instantaneously with friends and family, and are much faster than emailing or writing.

Also there are corporate and organizational blogs. A blog can be private, as in most cases, or it can be for business purposes. Blogs used internally to enhance the communication and culture in a corporation or externally for marketing, branding or public relations purposes are called corporate blogs. Similar blogs for clubs and societies are called club blogs, group blogs, or by similar names; typical use is to inform members and other interested parties of club and member activities. Blogs have also had an influence on minority languages, bringing together scattered speakers and learners; this is particularly so with blogs in Gaelic languages. Minority language publishing (which may lack economic feasibility) can find its audience through inexpensive blogging.

Developing listening skills comes “naturally” for some students, but with great difficulty for others. Acquiring listening skills can even be frustrating for some students. For some time, listening was regarded as a “passive” or “receptive” skill and, consequently, not particularly crucial as a skill area to be taught. Researchers then began to recognize the importance of listening and its role in comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), and attention to and adoption of newer comprehension-based methodologies brought the issue to the fore. Listening became a skill to be reckoned with and its key position in communication recognized (Feyten, 1991; Omaggio Hadley, 2001).

The benefits that the blog can prove outside the language classroom or in the self-access center can make learners more independent. One key feature of using blogs in learning is that it allows language practice and study away from the confines of the classroom at your own pace anywhere. While listening to digital audio or watching a video clip, learners have the opportunity to pause at will, and listen and read a transcript. Moreover, learners can get instant feedback on what they have done, as learners become used to selecting and evaluating listening materials, they are able to plan out their own use of web-based materials in their own time. This helps them become effective listeners and independent learners.

The principal benefits of audio and video start with the series of material in terms of subject matter, accent of the speaker, and length. Some of the activities will only take up a short amount of time, for example listening to the news, whereas others, such as participating in conference calls or listening to TV broadcasts will require learners to set aside quite a lot of time. Students can listen to or watch news on the computer, or download audio and video files to their mp3 players. Audio and video materials are accompanied by language practice activities that learners can do on their computers while they listen or watch, or print out and do them when they want to.

Listening comprehension is often the most difficult task for learners of English as a foreign language. Listening in the real world and listening to authentic texts is more complex than listening to non-authentic texts in the classroom environment. Effective listening does not just happen. Access to up-to-date materials via the Internet gives the students opportunities to develop and improve their listening skills by using materials in the self-access language learning Center or outside the classroom. With the appropriate use of technology, learning can be made more active, motivating, and learner-centered, especially with such internet-based resources as audio-video, podcasts, and video clip tools.

The blog can improve the listening skills of students, whether they are learning English as a foreign language or whether they just want to improve their ability to listen, concentrate and comprehend. The use of blogs enables students to improve their listening skills because they become engaged in the posts, which offers both a visual and audio depiction of dialogue and story in a potential real-life situation, using real emotions, diction, tone and slang, which can sometimes be lost in a classroom environment.

2. RESEARCH METHODS DESIGN

The reason of this study is to consider the use of blogs for practicing listening skills of Advanced level students. The sample was purposively selected from students who enrolled on Advanced English course in the II semester of academic year 2011 at El Salvador University at Foreign Language Department.

Data collection was entirely conducted within the study where the entire time-frame was 8 weeks. To collect the data on the students' feelings, opinions, comments, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions to the use of the blog for practicing listening skills, 40 students were asked to complete the open-ended questionnaire and 5 educators were selected for in-depth semi-structured interview.

METHODOLOGY

A Qualitative Research was chosen to open this subject to a more extensive investigation.

The majority of the students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador have difficulties in the English Listening area such as miscommunication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation information, and misrecognition of sounds. Therefore, their performance is lower not only academically but also professionally. Sadly, the listening skills are often ignored and taken for granted in this teaching-learning process in most Educational centers including the University of El Salvador.

To suggest an approach to this issue, the following research questions were addressed in this study: -What are the innovative resources or internet applications and online tools available to the teachers in order to reinforce students' listening skills in Advanced English courses? -What is the listening proficiency level developed by the students of Advanced English courses in the Foreign Language Department? -What are the criteria , in terms of resources, taken into account by the teachers to write a lesson plan directed to listening areas of students in Advanced English course?

This case study presents suggestions for enhancing students' English listening proficiency. Surveys were carried out to collect useful data to determine the areas that must be improved and strengthened in the learning process. This study took place at the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador. This is one of the oldest and one of the most prominent universities in El Salvador. It serves as the national university of the country.

The main campus is located in San Salvador, where the research was conducted. But there are also branches of the university in other Salvadoran cities such as Santa Ana, San Miguel and San Vicente.

The participants were chosen at random from those who study at the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador. The number of participants of this research study included approximately fifty students among males and females. Ten students tested the audio and video platform in the computer center of the Foreign Language Department; fifteen answered the survey online and the other twenty-five answered it in person. The participants were selected because they are taking Advanced English which is the English level this research study is focused on.

The measurement instrument selected to this study was the survey. The researcher used the respective surveys to collect data. The purpose of the survey was to identify the weak aspect the students of Advanced English level must work on to enhance their listening skills. To check its reliability and validity, it was administered in a comfortable environment in order to have from the students the most sincere answers about the matter related to this area.

All the data were collected through surveys. The surveys were conducted individually with participants after classes and by email. The answers to the interview questions were written by the researcher. Every survey in person lasted between 10 and 15 minutes. The collect data were categorized according to the research questions and emergent topics. Specific survey questions were matched to answer the three research questions. The methodology was used to organize survey data into a limited number of issues around these questions.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

The first step for data analysis is to gather information from educators on the campus to find out what their strategies are to deliver a level on their students.

The second step was to find out from the students' part what they would like to find in our blog, what they would find interesting and if it was any enhancement to make at the time they visited the blog. For that a focus group was developed and data gathered.

The third step included the feedback from students that used in a regular basis the blog to improve their listening skills.

The main categories are depended on what the research questions are, thus the two categories were found:

- 1) Advantages of the use of blogs for practicing listening skills;
 - 2) Students' problems when using blogs for practicing listening skills.
- From the results, students' information was coded and classified into each Category and there were three sub-categories found in each group.

According to the first category 'the advantages of the use of blogs for practicing listening skills', the sub-categories are:

- 1) Convenience of the use of blogs for practicing listening skills;
- 2) Support autonomous learning;
- 3) Enhance listening and other English skills.

The second category 'the students' problems when using blogs for practicing listening skills, the sub-categories are:

- 1) Personal limitation;
- 2) Background knowledge;
- 3) Technical problems.

With the feedback provided we based our selection of material for the blog on three major considerations. The blog must be educational, to accomplish our main objective: alluring in order to attract the student attention and varied in order to keep the site entertaining and interesting.

A section was assigned to every week day in order to create expectation among the sample, combining different areas of interest and timelines. (Appendix 1) and it was enable a comment box in order to receive feedback from the daily visitors. To facilitate a better comprehension a translation app was inserted in the blog in case students had problems such as language barrier.

RESULTS

According to students' answer from the survey, researchers found useful information from their points of view about using the blog to enhance their listening skills. To the first question, "What are the students' points of view about advantages of the use of blogs to practice listening skill?", almost all of students agreed that the use blog for practicing listening skills can help them improve not only their listening skills, but also other skills as well, and it can help them to create self-sufficient learning strategies. In addition, it is important to mention the feasibility to use the blog for practicing listening skills outside the classroom at anywhere and at any time.

According to the survey results, researchers found that all students mentioned about advantages into three points. Firstly the use of the blog is suitable for them to practice listening skills. The students, who often surf the Internet outside classroom believe that the use of the blog is convenient for them to practice English listening skills. A blog provides various topics and they can choose their favorite ones or those related to the topics they are studying in their English class.

The blog also saves the teacher's times. The students conclude that it saved time and it was very convenient. They do not need to find materials for practicing listening skills. Many students said they can use the blog in their free time at home or in an Internet café. It is quite convenient for them to promote and to encourage students to use it in their leisure time to support their learning activities.

Secondly, the students find their suitable learning strategies to solve some problems by themselves. Students can easily repeat listening materials again and again until they finally enhance about it, this result quite agrees to the listening skills improvement.

Outside classroom students can use the blog for practicing listening skills to prepare themselves for listening test of their English class. This is quite helpful to create self-sufficient learning environment.

Finally, the use of the blog enhances students' English skills. Most students mentioned the use of blog help them improve English listening skills, and also they could improve other skills while they listened through blogs, such as pronunciation, speaking, reading, vocabulary learning. During the time they listened to the native speakers' sound, they also tried to follow and repeat the sound, in order to get familiar with the pronunciation, native accent and intonation, and they speak better after then. When they looked at the sound script, they knew new words and vocabulary as well.

To the second question "Which section of the blog has been more appealing to your interests?"; students commented this was the audio books section: I thought that some of your stories were interesting; audio books may come as fully dramatized versions of the printed book, sometimes calling upon a complete cast, music, and sound effects; audio books have been used to teach children to read and to increase reading comprehension; Many students also listened to these audio books to relax or as they drift off into sleep; audio books are a wonderful alternative to paper books.

Other answered about this same question: broadcast, I wouldn't mind reporting the traffic or something similar. Broadcast; I'm really interested in becoming a reporter. Beside, other mentioned: for me, I liked real English part because listening is a natural way to learn English; it is fun and it works. Real English; the passages are real people, speaking real English, talking about what interests them, I think it is a good way to improve your English, especially pronunciation.

To the third question “How helpful has been this blog for you?”; these were the answers gotten: it is fun doing something that gives me a creative outlet and something where I can be goofy and less serious about life, I see blogging as a bit of a game I can play with the short stories and posts that you write, I started doing only what I wanted to do in the time I had available to do it, You can study when you want: anytime and in any place, I use it for homework or to look up things I am interested in.

To the fourth question “What are the students’ problems when using blogs for practicing listening skills?”; these were some answers: disadvantages and problems when using blog to practice listening skills are technical problems, the Internet connection is quite slow, the processes and instruction of the websites are complicated. Besides, some students do not have their own personal computers. They cannot practice outside classroom or go somewhere, such as computer lab room or Internet café. Although many students have their personal computer, somebody reported that they did not use the blog for practicing listening skills outside classroom because they do not have time.

To the fifth question “How often did you visit our blog?” almost all of students visited the blog at least once a week. Others visited it between twice or three times a week. Few students used it every day, mainly for practicing.

LIMITATIONS

Due to the extension of the matter of English listening proficiency, some boundaries restrict and affect the results of the research. First of all, a sample of twenty-five students was taken to establish advanced students' level of English-hearing environment exposition in the Department of the Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador. As well, just forty students tested the customized blog as an audio and video platform focused on listening exercise in order to lead and enhance the aim of our blog in order to continue developing it.

Among the limitations we also found the impossibility of access to youtube.com resources in the laboratory of the Foreign Language Department, website in which we have based on our activities of the blog. Students expressed their interest in the blog, but they resented not being able to access from the department's laboratory.

We experienced poor attendance in the focus group of the sample, either the presential or virtual ones. We needed to create strategies in order to obtain the feedback that we wanted. So we introduce the same system in an online basis in which we got better results.

The Advance teachers demonstrate a lack of interest in the web tool so we needed to create the appropriate way to approach to our sample, promo ads were created and spread through the department. (Appendix 5)

It was unfeasible to identify if the comments and feedback received on the blog belonged to Advance English level students of the University of El Salvador, even though a great part of the public was student population because of the publicity previously made. We seldom received feedback from people of other countries and institutions within the country.

All the information presented in this paper was delimited for the groups taking Advanced English courses currently in order to suggest blogs for the enhancement of students' listening skills in this department. This research was carried out just only in about eight months; the period of the thesis project took.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations must be taken into account to conduct the research in an ethical and professional manner. The research will be developed with the Educational Center authorization to obtain access to the data from teachers and students. Data compilation from students will be done with their permission. Besides, every kind of information from any website, article, magazine or book will be quoted according to the copyrights. All these aspects will be included for the successful development of the research.

Regarding YouTube videos embedded we have followed certain common sense rules in order not to infringe copyright boundaries.

Even though the odds of actually being sued or threatened with a law sue for embedding a YouTube clip are slim, it is still worthwhile to take a few simple precautions to make certain not to have problems down the road:

1. Don't Embed Clearly Infringing Material: Lengthy clips of popular television shows and movies, meaning the length goes beyond what might be considered fair use, should not be embedded.
2. Embed from Official Channels: Many major rightsholders, including CBS, have official YouTube channels that allow embedding. Embedding videos from only these channels is a great way to avoid any potential copyright issues later.
3. Stick to Popular Amateur Clips: Since the majority of the most popular clips on YouTube are amateur-made, it is probably best to stick to those. Small rights holders, if infringed, have less incentive to sue.
4. Say Something About It: Generally, transformative use is much more highly protected than non-transformative use. Rather than simply posting the clip, say something about it. Offer some commentary or criticism regarding the clip or discuss an issue that relates to it. This might not make an infringing use non-infringing, but it could bolster a fair use argument if the clip is borderline.
5. When in Doubt, Link Don't Embed: Though linking is not a guaranteed way to avoid being sued for copyright infringement, it is definitely preferable to embedding. If you are unsure about a video clip, consider linking to it rather than embedding it directly.

SUGGESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

IMPLICATIONS

According to the data collected from students' investigation, using the blog to practice listening, shows that it can be a good assistance for students to improve their language learning ability.

Like Robin (2007) mentioned, effectively use of Internet resources, such as easily repeatable video clips, captions, and even translated scripts will bring a wider variety of input at the proper level for a broader range of learning styles than could possibly be made available in any pre-packaged closed-track program.

The findings of this study have significant implications on the appropriateness of relying on websites assisted language learning and teaching process. Teachers and higher education institutions should focus on those blogs or websites usefulness and ease of use them for language learning and teaching. Hong, Ridzuan & M also stated, University of Malaysia Sarawak achieved the objectives of promoting the use of the Internet for teaching and learning process. Students had positive attitudes toward using the Internet as learning tool, adequate basic knowledge of the Internet, and viewed the learning environment as supportive of using the Internet for learning.

After carrying out the research it was found there were four major critical factors for the apparent usefulness of blogs assisting language teaching and learning. The first of these is the course work interactivity. Different kind of materials could be available electronically in different formats via the site and students can easily go and practice any of them. The blog include many other links to related materials and websites that widen students' exposure to current information on their topics.

The Second usefulness factor is to enable students to accomplish their listening practicing quickly, because those online resources, such as the blogs, can provide them with on-line components such as animations and multimedia materials. The third factor is to make study course material easier by having related study material available anytime anywhere, facilitating student–student and student–teacher communications.

The last factor is to increase the students' productivity and effectiveness. This factor is a result of enabling students to finish their practicing quickly and achieving their objectives efficiently using the tools available on the website.

SUGGESTIONS

Now the recent virtual educational incursion in this technological age, teachers must reconsider their roles in teaching with computers. And currently, blogs through Internet grow rapidly. Nevertheless, it is important to define that teachers are the ones who decide how the class should be conducted. In other words, it is necessary to decide whether computers should be used, in which teachers may play an important role for guiding students to use web applications as blogs properly. With the rise of Internet, learners can have easy and free access to the huge amount of authentic materials as well as get into direct contact with native speakers across English-speaking cultures.

TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

For the students to Access the blog, it is necessary to have the following equipment:

1. A personal Computer.
2. Internet Access with a minimal capacity of 3 megabytes.
3. YouTube Access.
4. Adobe flash player. This plug in is free download if it is not installed yet. It is used to reproduce the videos.
5. A sound hardware if it is a laptop. This hardware is downloadable for free.
6. A pair of headphones, or the speakers.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The blog is an audio-video platform designed to help all those students of the Advanced English courses of the Foreign Language Department develop their English listening skills during the current semester 02/2011. It contains lots of free online material, which is also being updated constantly to keep the students interest; simplifying in that way the students 'learning pace. The blog as an innovated web tool is suggested for the students to assess their listening skills, however it can be used for the professors too, because by creating their own blog the professors can share with the pupils authentic listening material to plunge the students into the type of language the will be listening in the real world.

RESTRICTIONS

To create this blog, the students have used **blogger.com**, but there are certain restrictions to be taken into account in order to post on it or to see the blog.

1. Blogger just accepts audios from YouTube.
2. Videos from the PC cannot be uploaded.
3. Sometimes, it can be time consuming to charge the videos due to the speed.
4. The blog cannot be seen in the laboratory of the FLD even though this was suggested by the students in the launch of the blog because of the lack of YouTube in its computers.

VARIABLES.

The blog is available for the students of the Advanced English levels 1 and 2 for the current semester 02/2011. It can be a tool for self study students. The students can access the blog from their house or from a cyber café too, but not from the Laboratory of the FLD. However, the noise motivated by the people coming in or out of the cyber café can be a distraction. So that in their houses, the students may decide the time it will take them to master their listening skills by practicing with the different input presented in the blog.

CONCLUSIONS

The study described in this research was mainly set up to emphasize the need for improving Advanced English level students' listening skills at the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador. As a very special contribution the researchers designed a blog with a variety of authentic audio and video activities to aid the students rise above their listening weaknesses.

In order to enhance students' listening performance, teachers must implement innovative resources to create a native speaking-content environment in which students can practice their listening skills. It is necessary to have a more modern focus on the development of listening skills in the syllabi of the career Foreign Language Department, assigning equal relevance to the development of student's listening performance.

And finally, it is important that the professors carry out a constant monitoring of the students' listening skills progress to take them from a low intermediate to a high intermediate level of English concerning the Listening skill.

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 - ❖ **“Advance English 4”**
Advance English with Jennifer ESL
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEq4yaWTMd0&NR=1>
 - ❖ **“Assessing listening presentation”**
It is a series of slides about types of listening, including the process for uploading audio to blogs.
www.slideshare.net/h3rt1k1assessing-listening-presentation

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Retrieved

from the Web June 26, 2007.

http://esl.about.com/od/englishlistening/a/listen_tips.htm

❖ **“blogs”**

The article shows the history of the blog , moreover demonstrate the different types of blogs and how it has been increasing in the web sites.

<http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>

❖ **“Crear tu Website”**

The purpose of this site is to teach the basic steps to create your website.

<http://www.creartuwebsite.com/Crear-tu-website-chat-room.html>

❖ **“Create a blog”**

It is a website that teaches you how to create a blog step by step.

<http://www.blogger.com/home?pli=1>

Debski R. & Gruba P. (1999). **A qualitative survey of tertiary instructor attitudes towards project-based CALL. Computer-Assisted Language Learning**, 12(3), 219-239.

“English Listening Practice”

This is a video for practice listening skills.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoA7_7oV_NA&NR=1

❖ **“Improving foreign language listening comprehension definition”**

Clark & Clark (1977) and Richards (1983)

https://cvc.cervantes.es/enseñanza/biblioteca_ele/asele/pdf/06_0392.pdf

❖ **“ Improve Your Listening Skills Even When You Don't Want to Listen”**

It shows the situations in which people are in difficult situations. Here is a discussion of the problems and some suggestions to improving listening skills.

<http://www.learnenglish.de/spelling/spellingadjectives.html>

❖ **“Internet Based Resources For Developing Listening.”**

Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching it is essential to give our learners opportunity to develop and improve their listening skills not only in the classroom, but outside the classroom as well.

<http://sisaljournal.org/archives/sep10/peterson/>

“Listening Quizzes for Academic Purposes”

- ❖ Prepare for TOEFL/TOEIC Test with these lectures, interviews and conversations.

<http://www.esl-lab.com/index.htm>

❖ “Live Radio Broadcasts on the Internet”

National public radio for more advanced students.

<http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaplayer.html?action=3&t=live1&islist=false>

❖ “Listening Quizzes for Academic Purposes”

Prepare for TOEFL/TOEIC Test with these lectures, interviews and conversations.

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❖ “Live Radio Broadcasts on the Internet”

National public radio for more advanced students.

<http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaplayer.html?action=3&t=live1&islist=false>

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Canberra.edu.au/coursepage.asp?cid=49

❖ “Way Teachers use Technology”

It explains the different way teachers use grade books, lesson plan and test-making software.

<http://www.suite101.com/content/ways-teachers-use-technology-a11068>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

BLOG ORGANIZATION

- **Monday**
Real English by Real People
Day to day situations spoken by native English speakers.
→Mini Section : Real People on Campus
- **Tuesday**
Audiobooks
Bestsellers books brought to you in audio.
- **Wednesday**
Radio and TV Broadcasting
Interviews, Journals Radio and TV Broadcasting.
- **Thursday**
English Accents around the World
Discover how to understand and master the English accents around the world.
- **Friday**
Music & Film Recommendations
Music and Movies that will help you to enhance your listening skills.

APPENDIX B

Tuesday September 6, 2011.

Teachers of Advanced English1
Foreign Language Department

Dear colleagues:

I am writing to enquire about the possibility of enrolling two of your English Advanced Students on the launch of a blog with exercises for testing Listening that my students: Amanda Herrador, Jeison Lopez, Myrna Solano and Regina de Crespín are preparing for the enhancement of the listening competence of our students. The blog is an effort of the students under my direction, and I would really appreciate your cooperation as well as the announcement of this activity to your students.

The blog will be presented to 14 participants (2 students per group) this coming Friday, September 9TH at the Computer room on the third floor of our Department from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. Thus, the students must confirm their attendance no later than Thursday.

Finally, it would be very useful to know if you can read this invitation to your students in order to promote this activity, or let the students above visit your classrooms to gather results for their investigation on the utility of blogs as platforms to the development of listening skills in a very active, practical and efficient manner. For more information about the activity, the students can call the number 7845-6330 or send an e-mail to the following address: myrna.solano.escobar@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards

Lic. Wilber Alexander Bruno
Graduation process Adviser

Note: Snacks will be provided.

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

“The use of blog to promote the enhancement of the listening skills in the Advanced English level students at Foreign Language Department at University of El Salvador”

Pilot interview to educators in the Foreign Language Department

1. What is the listening proficiency level developed by the students of Advanced English courses in the Foreign Language Department?
2. Do you ask your students to search information on internet?
3. What are the criteria taken into account by the teachers when writing a lesson plan directed to Advance English students?
4. How much time do you take for listening activities during the week?
5. Do you think a blog is a practical way to expose to English in a fun way?

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

*“The use of blog to promote the enhancement of the listening skills in the
Advanced English level students at Foreign Language Department at
University of El Salvador”*

Focus Group developed at the Laboratory of the Foreign Language
Department.

1. Do you like the blog?
2. Have the blog taught you something new today?
3. Would you continue visiting it for educational purposes on listening enhancement?
4. What did you like the most?
5. What value would you add in order to improve it?

APPENDIX E



THE 1ST UES BLOG THAT INCLUDES IT ALL!

Audiobooks Music & Films

Broadcasting Interviews

Accents around the World

JOIN US NOW!

UESACTIVELISTENING.BLOGSPOT.COM

APPENDIX F

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

“The use of blog to promote the enhancement of the listening skills in the Advanced English level students at Foreign Language Department at University of El Salvador”

After having visited our blog, we would like to hear from you, so we would thank you very much the time it will take you to answer these questions.

- 1- *What are the students' points of view about advantages of the use of blog to practice listening skills?***

- 2- *Which section of the blog has been more appealing to your interests?***

- 3- *How helpful has been this blog for you?***

- 4- *What are the students' problems when using the blog for practicing listening skills?***

- 5- *How often did you visit our blog?***

APPENDIX G

CHRONOGRAM																							
MONTH	JULY				AUGUST				SEPTEMBER				OCTOBER				NOVEMBER				DECEMBER		
WEEK	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d
Advisory session																							
Group Meeting																							
Pilot Study																							
Advisory session																							
First Draft																							
Group Meeting																							
Advisory session																							
Second Draft																							
Group Meeting																							
Advisory session																							
Third Draft																							
Focus Group																							
Focus Group Feedback																							
Group Meeting																							
Advisory session																							

APPENDIX H

CHRONOGRAM																								
MONTH	JULY				AUGUST				SEPTEMBER				OCTOBER				NOVEMBER				DECEMBER			
WEEK	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	4t h	1s t	2n d	3r d	
Forth Draft																								
Group Meeting																								
Advisory Meeting																								
Fifth Draft																								
Group Meeting																								
Advisory Meeting																								
Sixth Draft																								
Data Collection																								
Group Meeting																								
Advisory Meeting																								
Seventh Draft																								
Group Meeting																								
Advisory Meeting																								
Tentative Hand in of Final Paper																								
Presentatio n																								