

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

**THE LISTENING STRATEGIES THAT STUDENTS OF ENGLISH
ADVANCED I, AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
USE TO IMPROVE THEIR LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL**

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TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLES, OPCION ENSEÑANZA

UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, APRIL 12, 2012.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- To our Almighty Lord, for his protection and guidance in every day of our lives and who we owe our eternal gratitude.
- Special thanks to our advisor Claudia Vides de Guzman M.S.D. For her big effort and professional guidance to finish this project.
- To all teachers and classmates of the Foreign Language Department that gave suggestions to accomplish this project.
- To our families that provided us the entire support encouraging us to complete the English teaching career.
- This is dedicated to all people who stayed by our side helping us during the leaning process.

Katty, Alessandra y Lilian.

DEDICATED TO:

To God:

For being the light that guided me during this process and gives me everything I needed to finish my career.

To my Family:

My grandma, my father, my uncle and my brothers; who always supported me economically and emotionally, Thanks for your unconditional support, love and encouragement.

To my husband:

For being by my side in every moment and always gives me unconditional help, support, hope and encouragement to get this triumph.

To my little daughter Gabriela

For being my inspiration and give me the strength to continue and finish my career.

Katty Carranza

DEDICATED TO:

- My Almighty God, who guided me to the success and who I owe my eternal gratitude.
- To my mother Evila de Cuéllar (Q.D.D.G), my father Alberto Cuéllar, my brothers and sisters, and my daughter Diana Karoline, I recognize that this project would not have been possible without their inspiration and support.
- To my friends Beatriz Oliva, Alicia de Llanes, and my ex coworkers Anthony Goh, Johana Pineda, who assisted me to attend my classes and complete this English Teaching Career.

Lilian Cuéllar.

DEDICATED TO:

- To God for being with me, during my career and who provided me perseverance, patient and wisdom in the most difficult moments of my life that I spent in the University.
- A very special thank goes out to my parents Sara Santos Aguilar and Jorge Alberto Linares who were there ,filling me of love, hope and encouraged me to finish my career.
- To my son Jefferson Steve Escobar Linares who motivated me to become a professional and my husband Fernando Antonio Escobar Vides who supported me to be able to finish my career.

Alessandra Linares

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INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language has become an important part of the Salvadoran society. Many people consider that learning a new language gives them better opportunities to incorporate to the new world as a professional. But, learning a new language not only has to do with learning how to communicate with others but also know how it is used in other countries around the world. It is well known, that English is one of the most important languages in the world, and there are some reasons why people decide to learn English as a foreign language.

Many people learn English for educational, cultural, personal, economic and political reasons. For all those reasons, a lot of people agree that English is the best option to learn a new language. Not only because it is an international language but also because it has become one of the most spoken languages around the world. According to some experts, English is spoken by as many people as 750 million. It has an official or special status in at least 70 countries and it is being learned by about a billion people. These numbers alone make English important to learn. Scarcella & Oxford (1992); Vandergrift (1997).

Nowadays, learning a second language involves much more than learning the words and the sounds of a language. Communication breakdowns occur not only due to

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the more commonly understood syntax and pronunciation difficulties but because when students learn a language also they learn a culture . In particular, some students may have very different cultural perceptions in the classroom as far as learning a second language is concerned. Students who are studying English apply some strategies that help them to develop the four macro skills: Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing; in order to achieve a high proficiency level in each of them.

One way students can become actively involved in improving their own learning is by using strategies. Vandergrift (1999) showed that strategy development is important for listening training because strategies are conscious means by which learners can guide and evaluate their own comprehension and responses. These strategies help students to have better performance when they try to understand something. For this reason different strategies should be taken into account in the language teaching-learning process in order to develop students' skills. Although, these strategies help students to improve their skills, the effectiveness of the strategies depends on the students' motivation to learn a new language. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) claimed that exist three main strategies that help students to improve their skill: They are metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies.

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This research was focused on the strategies that students specifically use to improve their listening comprehension skill. It is known that the Listening ability is one of the most important skills in foreign language learning because it is developed faster than the other three skills and could affect reading and writing abilities in learning a new language. Scarcella & Oxford (1992), Vandergrift, (1997), Howatt and Dakin (1974) define listening as the speaker's accent or pronunciation, the grammar and the vocabulary, and grasping the meaning. Besides, researches show that the listening skill is employed most frequently. In daily communication, people spend 45% of the time in listening, 30% on speaking, 16% on reading, and only 9% on writing, Feyten (1991). Therefore, strategies for listening and the ability to use them effectively are particularly significant in language learning.

This study aimed to investigate the listening strategies that students from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador applied for improving their listening comprehension skill. Also, it contained the research questions that refer to strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department use for improving their listening comprehension skill. A theoretical framework is presented which contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data that was collected.

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In order to find out if there was a correlation between the data collected and the preferences of the students, some instruments were designed such questionnaires. The listening strategies in the questionnaire consist of the following categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, social/affective strategies. Students were the primary source of this research; the sample was taken from six groups of English Advanced I at the Foreign Language Department.

Also, this research presents the methodology that was used in order to get the data. In addition to this, it shows the analysis of the data and the findings of the questionnaires by means of graphics and descriptions. The results of this study will be the important references for both educators and learners to evaluate their teaching and learning listening experiences in the classroom as well as the application in daily communication. Finally, it contains some recommendations that will be useful for teachers and students interested in improving the teaching and learning process.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Listening is not only the first of the language arts skills developed, but also it is the skill most frequently used in both the classroom and daily life. Rost (1994) pinpoints the importance of listening in the language classroom as the input supplier for students. More concisely, without comprehensible input at the right level, learning cannot take place. Therefore, listening is a fundamental and vital skill in the acquisition of languages, Nunan (2002). Having stated the important role that listening comprehension has in the learning of a Language, it is necessary to know the strategies that help students to improve their English listening comprehension skill with the purpose of comprehending communication, also to find the impact that these strategies have in the development of the skill in question and finally it is important to know the frequency that students use them in order to improve the English listening skill.

Thus, it plays a significant role in daily communication and educational processes, Oxford (1993) claimed that listening is the most fundamental skill to develop the other three (speaking, reading, and writing) skills. A survey conducted in the United States of America suggested that an average person spent about 30% of time in speaking, Cooper (1988) adds that 42% of time in listening is the medium through which people gain a large

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portion of their education, information, and understanding of the world and of human affairs, different ideas, sense of values, and different appreciation.

Besides, it is necessary that teachers and students become aware of the influence of metacognitive, cognitive and social affective strategies in the learning process. Also, how these strategies can help students to achieve a high level of competence in English listening comprehension. It is important to know how these strategies extend in and out the classroom in order to help students feel more confidence learning a new language. By studying these strategies, the researchers have reached the main purpose of this study that is to know which of the strategies given by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) are used by the students to improve their English listening comprehension skill.

In order to know the strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department use to improve their English listening comprehension skill; the following specific research questions needed to carry out:

- What are the strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department use for improving their English listening comprehension skill?
- How fundamental is it for students of the Foreign Language Department to use different strategies for improving their English listening comprehension skill?
- How do students become actively involved in controlling their own learning by using different strategies?
- What strategy is the most frequently used by students to improve their listening comprehension skill?

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DELIMITATIONS

- **Social Delimitation:** The research was carried out at the University of El Salvador, School of Arts and Sciences in the Foreign Language Department, in the Advanced English I courses. In the sample, seventy young adults were included; all of them were active students from the Foreign Language Department.

- **Space Delimitation:** The research took place in six groups: four groups from the morning shift and two from the afternoon; from the Advanced English I Level at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

- **Time Delimitation:** The investigation was carried out in a period of eight months from May to December 2011. During this period, the sample was established, and every professor in charge of the English Advanced Level I courses, they were contacted and informed through a letter, to obtain their authorization and administer the two questionnaires in their groups, to approach ten students of five groups, and twenty students of one group, consequently students filled out the instruments to collect the data for processing results.

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After processing the instruments, the data was analyzed and the findings obtained from the examination of the two questionnaires were reported. In addition, from this analysis, conclusions, and recommendations were also provided.

OBJECTIVES

General Objectives

- To identify the strategies that students of the English advanced I courses, semester II-2011 of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use in order to improve their listening comprehension skill.

Specific Objectives

- To know how fundamental it is for students of the Foreign Language Department to use different strategies for improving their English listening comprehension skill.
- To describe how students become actively involved in controlling their own learning by using different strategies.
- To report the strategy that is the most frequently used by students to improve their listening comprehension skill.

JUSTIFICATION

The main purpose of this research remained students' preferences in listening comprehension strategies. Also, it was aimed at reinforcing the theory about strategies for improving the students' listening comprehension skill. Listening comprehension is an important macro skill of any language since people create output according to the input that they get in a conversation. Thus, what has been already stored by the listeners will be expressed whether orally or in a written form. Listening plays a vital role and is a key stone in the development of language skills.

Saricoban (1990) states that listening is the ability to identify what others are saying, and to understand what others intend to mean. This leads to two ways road; the first is directed to understand the speaker pronunciation included grammatical structure and lexical items; and the second is directed to grasp the speaker's meaning. An able listener is capable of following the two ways simultaneously.

Besides, many researchers have demonstrated that the strategies are useful to improve the students' English listening comprehension; O'Malley & Chamot, (1990), Goh (1997), Vandergrift (1999), Nunan (2002), Richards,(2008) stress that there alternative ingredients in listening comprehension that listeners used to process, when they use prior knowledge to interpret or to decode the speakers' discourse. Prior knowledge can be knowledge of the topic, the listening context, the values, the culture or other information

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store in short term memory and then, through a period of time, in long term memory as schemata. Listeners use content words and contextual aids to predict and interpret. Also, listeners use processes when they use linguistic knowledge to understand the meaning of a message.

In many cases students do not know the strategies, and they are not good at learning a new language and sometimes feel uncomfortable when they need to put into practice the proficiency in understanding English. The solution to this is, to make students aware of the strategies for improving their English listening comprehension and the ability to use them effectively. Creating students awareness of the different strategies that they can use to develop their listening comprehension is particularly significant in the language learning process.

Also, students need to be conscious of how fundamental it is for them to know the strategies that they can use to improve their listening comprehension skill. In fact, students need to find the best strategy that helps them to improve their listening skill in a real situation based on their needs. Also, students need to become actively involved in controlling their own learning by using different listening strategies. Finally, this research intended to present the strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department can use to improve their listening comprehension skill.

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to identify the different strategies that students of the English Advanced I courses, semester II-20011 of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to improve their English listening comprehension ability. Studies carried out on listening strategy instruction suggest that students could indeed be instructed in strategy use to enhance their performance on listening tasks Vogely (1995).

As a result of the information gathered in this study, it was expected to find:

- the strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department use for improving their English listening comprehension skill?
- how fundamental it is for students of the Foreign Language Department to use different strategies for improving their English listening comprehension skill?
- how do students become actively involved in controlling their own learning by using different strategies?
- the strategy that is most frequently used by students to improve their listening comprehension skill?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question:

- What are the strategies that students of Foreign Language Department use for improving their English listening comprehension skill?

Specific Questions:

- How fundamental is it for students of the Foreign Language Department to use different strategies for improving their English listening comprehension skill?
- How do students become actively involved in controlling their own learning by using different strategies?
- What strategy is the most frequently used by students to improve their listening comprehension skill?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Listening is the first language mode that children acquire. It provides the foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, and it plays a life-long role in the processes of communication, therefore It is the medium through which people gain a large portion of their education, information, and understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideas, sense of values, and their appreciation as it is stated by Bulletin (1952), furthermore listening is essential in the family, in the workplace, and the community at large.

➤ **Definition of listening Skill.**

The listening skill allows one to make sense of an understanding what another person is saying. In other words, listening skills allow students to understand what someone is "talking about", this skill has some benefits for people who are working or studying English; some of these benefits: It makes students more productive in their listening comprehension process, it builds up the ability, it to listen carefully, it allows students to have better understanding of the assignments and what is expected of them; to work better in a team-based environment, answer questions; and find meanings in what others say.

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Howatt and Dakin (1974) defined listening as the ability to identify and understand what others are saying, and that involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and grasping meaning. A proficient listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously. In addition Thomlison's (1984) definition of listening includes "active listening," which goes beyond comprehending as understanding the message content, to comprehension as an act of empathetic understanding of the speaker.

Furthermore, Gordon (1985) argues that empathy is essential to listening and contends that it is more than a polite attempt to identify a speaker's perspectives. Rather more importantly, empathetic understanding expands to "egocentric pro-social behavior". Thus, the listener altruistically acknowledges concern for the speaker's welfare and interests.

In addition Ronald and Roskelly (1985) add that listening is an active process requiring writing and reading skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising, and generalizing as writing and reading demand; and these authors present specific exercises to make students active listeners who are aware of their "inner voice" , a form of intuiting inspirational information, it is like voice messages that come from a variety of sources that students have in their brain and it becomes active once they hear something in the real world.

◆ The Importance of listening.

As it is known, the importance of the listening skill is enormous. People often focus on their speaking ability believing that good speaking equals good communication. In addition, the ability to speak well is not only a necessary component to successful communication, but also the ability to listen is equally as important. Listening is the activity of paying attention and trying to get meaning for something that is heard, Underwood (1989). Meanwhile it is a complex process that allows student to understand spoken language. Through listening, students process language in real-time employing pacing, units of encoding and pausing that are unique to spoken language, Rost (2001). Due to the reasons stated above, listening has become one of the most important skills for many learners.

Listening as it has been mentioned above, is one of the most important skills in foreign language learning making it an essential part of the communication process Bentley & Bacon, (1996). Based on Scarcella & Oxford (1992), this skill is developed faster than the other three skills and could affect reading and writing abilities in learning a new language. In addition to Vandergrift, (1997) also adds that listening is not only the rules of language; he also adds that listening facilitates the emergence of other language skills in order for learners to get a high proficiency level in the English language.

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Furthermore, researches show that among the four language skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing; listening is employed most frequently Feyten (1991). According to Feyten, of the total time people spend on communication, 45% is on listening, 30% on speaking, 16% on reading, and 9% on writing. Scarcella & Oxford, (1992); Vandergrift, (1997) also agree that listening is the most frequently skill used in the classroom and in daily life. It can be argued that students spend most of their school days listening to everyone around them and much of what they learn is acquired by means of listening. Listening, therefore, is an important skill in language learning.

◆ The Process of Listening.

Studies have indicated that listening comprehension consists of several procedures. First, listeners have to distinguish the sound, stress, intonation and pitch of the language. After that, they become aware of the entire information that the speakers have said, listeners then, have to hold the information in their memory until it can be understood. Then, they have to unscramble the information from what they have heard and that is the output or the utilization process Brown, (1995); Chastanin, (1975). Clark & Clark (1977) have also concluded that there are three parts in the process of listening comprehension: the perceptual, parsing, and utilization. For the perceptual, listeners receive the sounds by a speaker and form an image in their short-term memory, and learners transfer quickly the information in echoic memory to short-term memory to process the sounds for meaning. The parsing process reorganizes the messages into a

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meaningful word that can be stored in the short-term memory and utilization. Listening, then, is a complex, active processes of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know.

◆ **Strategies for Listening Comprehension.**

Language learning strategies are defined as any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information Wenden and Rubin (1987); or as thoughts used by the learners so as to better help them understand, learn or remember new information Richards (1992). Moreover, Oxford (1990) describes learning strategies as actions taken by second and foreign language learners to control and improve their own learning. In addition to O'Malley (1990) defines strategies for listening comprehension as special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information.

There is no doubt that strategies play an important role in the students' learning process, therefore, strategies for listening and the ability to use them effectively are particularly significant in the language learning process. Mendelsohn and Robin (1995) states that listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. In real life situations, there is not always a second chance to get the message in an accurate way, for these reason different strategies should be taken into account in the teaching - learning process in order to help students to understand different accents in a clearer way, to discriminate between

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sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, understand intention, retain, and interpret the larger socio-cultural context.

For language learners, the best way to improve their listening comprehension skill is to become actively involved in controlling their own learning by the use of strategies. In his study, Vandergrift (1999) showed that strategy development is important for listening training because strategies are conscious means by which learners can guide and evaluate their own comprehension and responses. In O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo's (1985) study, high school ESL students were randomly assigned to receive learning strategy training on vocabulary, listening, and speaking tasks and the result indicated that strategy training can be effective for integrative language tasks.

There is a great amount of ongoing research into the nature of learning strategies and into identifying learning strategies that are effective for different purposes Vann and Abraham (1990). Also, Oxford (1990) identifies six general types of learning strategies: Memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Among all the strategies for listening, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) claimed that there are three main types of strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies, which will be taken for discussing this research.

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This study presents and describes the three types of listening strategies given by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and how each one of them is developed. The first strategy to be described is the Metacognitive; the metacognitive strategy is a process by which an individual is aware of his or her own brain processes that occur during learning. The goal of using the metacognitive strategy is to make a person's thinking visible to themselves and others, as well as to achieve learning outcomes (Last Modified by Licia Morrow 2010). Another important part of the metacognitive strategy is the use of learning strategies such as forecasting expected outcomes, fact checking, identifying important components, and re-reading for understanding. This may involve previewing a text or assignment, breaking down the parts of an experiment, researching unfamiliar terms, or integrating previous knowledge with new information. It refers to how students attempt to plan, check, monitor, select, revise and evaluate the learning material, they also plan by deciding which listening strategies will serve best in a particular situation, they monitor their comprehension and the effectiveness of the selected strategies.

The second one is the cognitive strategy. This strategy provides a structure for learning that actively promotes the comprehension and retention of knowledge through the use of engaging strategies that acknowledges the brain's limitations of capacity and processing. Cognitive strategies involve solving learning problems by considering how to store and retrieve information from the listening passages (Rubin, 1994). For example, listeners focus on word groups or their background knowledge while they listen.

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These strategies are used to achieve cognitive purposes (e.g. memorizing) and are potentially conscious in controllable activities. The cognitive strategies are related to comprehending and storing input in working memory for later retrieval.

In 2005, Hsu made a research in Southern Taiwan University and he found that students frequently practiced English by watching films or TV programs, listening to English songs, radio programs, and English lectures and interesting topics and some popular songs could attract students' learning motivation in order to improve their listening comprehension skill. Also Bacon (1992) suggested that learners could use the authentic text to practice their listening skill, and build their confidence in future real conversation with foreigners.

Cognitive strategies are investigated from the aspect of bottom up strategies and top down strategies. Bottom up strategies refer to using the incoming input as the basis for understanding the message, that is the combination of sound words and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom up strategies include: listening for specific details, recognizing cognates, and recognizing word order patterns. Richards (2008) pointed out that the recognition of key words, transition in a discourse, grammatical relationships between elements in sentences, and use stress, intonation to identify word and sentence functions were the essential elements in processing bottom-up strategy. The top - down strategies refer to when the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or contexts, the type of texts, and the language. This background knowledge

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Activates a set of expectations that help students to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Top- down process includes listening for main ideas, predicting, drawing inferences and summarizing.

The third type of strategies is the Social/affective strategies. This strategy involves the student's social relations with their classmates, and all the communication that takes place out of the classroom. According to Habte-Gabr, (2006) this last strategy, the socio-affective, refers to those which are non academic in nature and involve stimulating learning through establishing a level of empathy between the instructor and the student. They include factors such as emotions and attitudes (Oxford, 1990). Socio-affective strategies strongly consider the student's relation to society as a whole ranging from family to the global community. Similarly, Vandergrift (2003) defines socio-affective strategies as the techniques listeners use to collaborate with others, to verify understanding or to lower anxiety. In addition Habte-Gabr, (2006) in her study, she noticed that her students were likely to learn more when they were able to share aspects of their personal life.

Socio-affective strategies are ranked as the most effective strategies in terms of enhancing learning among students. Statistical data of Habte-Gabr, (2006) research indicates that the majority of her students agreed that the relationship between instructor and student is important.

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Particularly this study is concentrated, in three main types of English listening comprehension strategies, that students of English Advanced I; use in and out of the classroom, to determine that, two questionnaires were administered, in order to identify the students' listening strategies. Also, to find the strategy students use the most and their learning style preferences by exploring the cognitive strategies (by taking notes and summarizing), metacognitive strategies (by paying attention and self-monitoring), and social affective strategies (using laughter and taking risks wisely and working with peers) stated by (Oxford, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997). Furthermore, the findings of this study will help to give some suggestions for students interested to improve their listening comprehensions skill, to become high proficiency competent listeners.

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METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to identify what strategies students of Foreign Language Department use for improving their English listening comprehension skill. Also, to determine the strategies for listening and the ability to use them effectively are particularly significant in language learning and to find the strategy that generates the best result in improving their students listening comprehension skill. Besides, this research project intended to find the strategy that students use more frequently to improve their listening comprehension skill. Furthermore, it is important to recall that the strategies taken as a reference for this research project are based on the three strategies as described by O'Malley and Chamot (1990); cognitive, metacognitive and social affective strategies, In order to obtain those results the procedure was as follow:

Method.

The method that was applied in this study was quantitative. This method is characterized by collecting limited information. Commonly, a survey only involves asking questions of a percentage or sample of the larger population, using various sampling techniques to get a representative sample, such as using a random sample or quota sample. Once the surveys are completed, the data from each question on the survey is combined to provide numerical data for that question which can then be analyzed through various quantitative methods, such as comparing the percentages of responses to different questions based on the characteristics of the respondents, obtaining an average

or median for rating or ranking data, or doing a correlation or regression analysis Gini Graham Scott, (2009).

The data collection was gathered using the quantitative research through two surveys one with five closed questions and the other one with twenty-nine statements, both surveys were based on the three strategies of listening comprehension proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990): metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective strategies. The surveys were administered in six groups of Advance English I I, semester II / 2011 from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. The sample of the population was taken at random, by choosing ten students per groups. The participants had to answer according to their point of view about the preferences on strategies that they use to improve their English listening comprehension.

Questionnaires.

The gathered information from the surveys was analyzed using the descriptive method. This method is defined by Gay (1976) as involving collection of data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the study. Descriptive research is also called Statistical Research. The main goal of this type of research is to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied. The idea behind this type of research is to study frequencies, averages, and other statistical calculations.

Questionnaire of twenty-nine closed statements.

The questionnaire contained several statements about the three strategies to improve student listening comprehension skill. The questionnaire was divided into three types of strategies which are: cognitive, metacognitive, and social affective. This questionnaire was used to measure English listening comprehension by a test and the pattern of test was adapted from the basic level of the GEPT (General English Proficiency Test). The General English Proficiency Test is a test of English language proficiency that was commissioned by Taiwan's Ministry of Education in 1999. The GEPT was developed by the Language Training and Testing Center in Taipei, Taiwan and it was first administered in 2002. Although this questionnaire was adapted according to the research needs. It contained 29 closed frequency statements. The closed statements were used to gather the information needed in this study to answer the research question. Each statement contained four frequency options: Always, Usually, Sometimes and Never.

Questionnaire of five closed statements

The questionnaire contained five statements about the three strategies to improve students' listening comprehension skill. The questionnaire intended to gather some information related on how familiar students to the listening strategies are, and it

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contained five closed questions related to the strategies which are: cognitive, metacognitive, and social affective. The closed statements were used to gather the information needed in this study to answer the research questions. Each statement contained seven frequency given options such as yes, no, strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree.

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RESULTS

This chapter reports the analysis of data and results that were obtained from the gathering of information of the two administered questionnaires in this study. A summary of the findings and detailed description of results are discussed. The primary research question addressed in the study was: What are the strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department use for improving their English listening comprehension skill? The secondary research questions asked in the study were: 1. how fundamental it is for students of the Foreign Language Department to use different strategies for improving their English listening comprehension skill? 2. How do students become actively involved in controlling their own learning by using different strategies? And 3. What strategy is the most frequently used by students to improve their listening comprehension skill?

The data obtained from the first survey filled out by students of the Foreign Language Department from English Advanced level I revealed that the use of strategies helped to increase students' listening comprehension in their learning process. This analysis contains eight graphs, each graph has been analyzed from the highest to the lowest percentage and separated into the three following strategies, cognitive (Bottom up and Top down), metacognitive (Pre-listening planning strategies, While listening monitoring and post listening evaluation), and social affective (Social strategies and Affective strategies). The first strategy is represented in three graphs, the first graph is

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from statement one to three about comprehension and storing input in working memory for later retrieval that provides students a structure for learning that actively promotes the comprehension and retention.

The second graph refers to statements four to seven of bottom up strategies that learners use as the basis for understanding the message of incoming input, that is the combination of sound words and grammar that creates meaning. The third graph refers to statements from eight to thirteen of top down strategies which is a process that includes listening for main ideas, predicting, drawing inferences and summarizing.

The fourth graph represents the metacognitive strategies, and it is from statements fourteen to sixteen of pre-listening planning strategies, that students use to plan by deciding which listening strategies will serve well in a particular situation. The fifth graph is from statements seventeen to twenty, which refer to the while listening monitoring strategies that monitor the students comprehension and the effectiveness of the selected strategies. The sixth and last graph that corresponds to metacognitive strategies is from statements twenty one to twenty three of post listening evaluation that evaluate whether students have achieved their listening comprehension goals and whether the combination of listening strategies selected was effective.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

The seventh graph corresponds to social affective strategies and is from statement twenty four to twenty six, of social affective strategies that involve the student's social relations with their classmates, and all the communication that takes place out of the classroom. The last graph about affective strategies is from statement twenty seven to twenty nine that shows the results of strategies that listeners use to collaborate with others, to verify understanding or to lower anxiety.

The data obtained from the second survey filled out by students of the Foreign Language Department from English Advanced level I gathered information in relation to how familiar students are with the listening strategies. The survey contained five closed questions about the strategies which are: cognitive, metacognitive, and social affective. Therefore there are five graphs that represent each question.

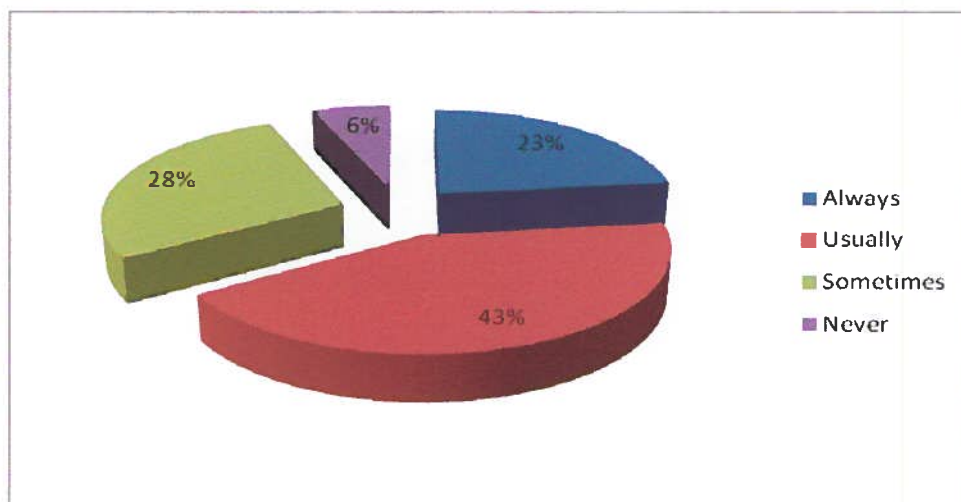
Listening Comprehension Strategies

FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

a) Cognitive Formal Practicing Strategies

1. I practice listening English actively in daily life such as listening to english radio, english songs, talking to foreigners.
2. While listening, I try to translate words or sentences into Spanish.
3. While listening, I can apply the new vocabulary, phrases, or grammar I have learned to understand the content.



The first graph shows the results about cognitive formal strategies that students use to practice their English in daily life, the 43% of students responded that they usually practice their English in order to improve their listening comprehension skill. On the other hand the 28% of the responders said that they sometimes practice actively in their daily lives. Meanwhile the 23% said that they always try to practice actively in their daily life; such as listening to English radio, English songs, talking to foreigners, besides they try to

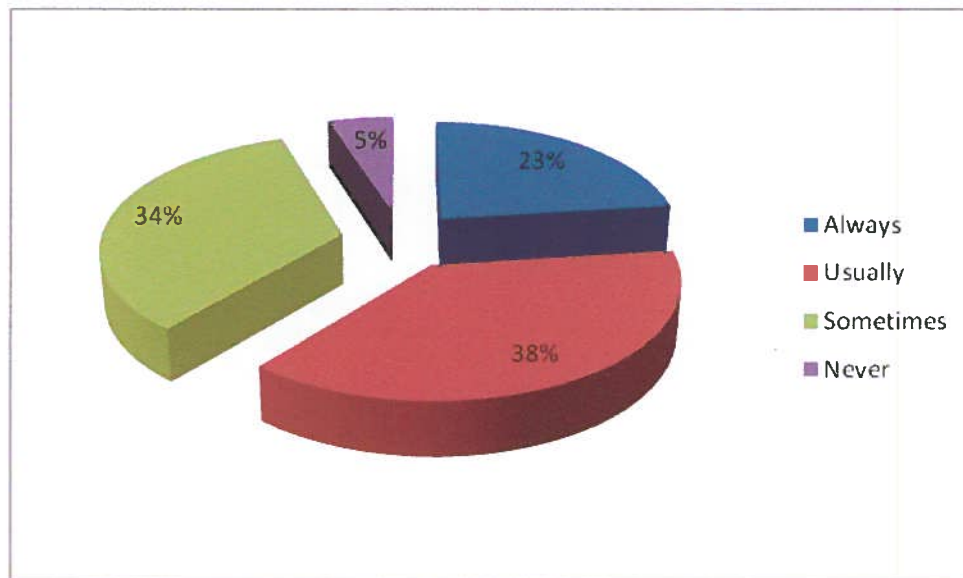
Listening Comprehension Strategies

translate words or sentences into Spanish and they also apply the new vocabulary, phrases, or grammar that they have learned to understand the content. Those findings are supported by Hsu's (2005) study, in which students frequently practiced English by watching films or TV programs, listening to English songs, radio programs, and English lectures and interesting topics and some popular songs that attracted students' learning motivation in order to improve their listening comprehension skill. Contrary to that, the 6% of the students show their low motivation in learning listening comprehension strategies; they answered that they never practice English in their daily life, they try to translate words or sentences into Spanish, and while they are listening, they can apply the new vocabulary, phrases, or grammar that they have learned to understand the content.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

b) Bottom up Strategies (cognitive strategies)

4. While listening, I notice the information questions with who, how, when, where and what in the content.
5. While listening, I try to understand each word.
6. While listening, I repeat words or phrases softly or mentally.
7. While listening, I piece things together from the details



The bottom-up strategies help students to understand the details such as words or phrases of the content. In this category, the 38% of the students said that they usually put details together to understand what the sentences mean, especially notice the information of who, how, when, where, and what in the content, and also to piece things together from the details, they try to understand each word, and repeat words of phrases

Listening Comprehension Strategies

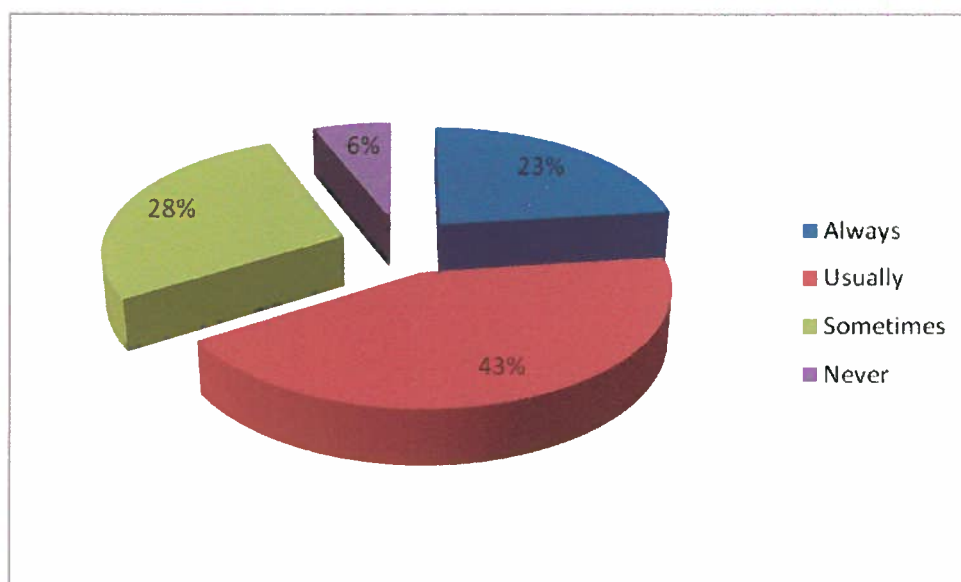
softly or mentally. On the other hand, the 34% of the students said that they sometimes use the bottom up strategies. The 23% of the responders answered always, and only the 5% said they never like to put details together to understand what the sentences mean, especially notice the information of who, how, when, where, and what, and also to piece things together from the details, they try to understand each word, and repeat words or phrases softly or mentally.

Actually, for the application of bottom-up processing, it is necessary to learn how to break the content down into its components and combine it together. Richards (2008) pointed out that the recognition of key words, transition in a discourse, grammatical relationships between elements in sentences, and the use of stress, intonation to identify word and sentence functions were the essential elements in processing bottom-up strategy.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

c) Top-down strategies (cognitive strategies)

8. I listen for main ideas first and then details.
9. I predict or make hypotheses on texts by titles.
10. I can guess the meaning based on the context.
11. I try to think in English instead of Spanish.
12. While listening, I form pictures mentally to help myself comprehend texts.
13. I collect the contents of listening to my personal experiences.



The results indicated that the 43% of students answered that they usually use the top down strategies in order to improve their listening comprehension skill. While 28% said that they are sometimes good at applying guessing the meaning based on the context, and they are familiar with trying to think in English instead of Spanish, predicting or making hypotheses on texts by titles, listening for main ideas first and then details and collecting the contents of listening to their personal experiences. The 23% of students

Listening Comprehension Strategies

answered that they are always good at applying guessing the meaning based on the context, and they are familiar with trying to think in English instead of Spanish, predicting or making hypotheses on texts by titles, listening for main ideas first and then details and collecting the contents of listening to their personal experiences. And only the 6% of the responders said that they never use the top down strategies to improve their listening comprehension skill.

As top-down processing went from meaning to language, the background knowledge required for top-down processing might be previous knowledge about the topic of discourse, situational or contextual knowledge, or knowledge in the form of “schemata” or “scripts”-plans about the overall structure of events and relationships between them (Richard, 2008). For the most of the learners, it is quite natural to choose their familiar ways to process the information in terms of “trying to think in English instead of Spanish”. However, some exercises were also suggested by Richard (2008) in developing top-down strategies: use key words to construct the schema of a discourse, infer the setting for the text, role of the participants and their goals, causes or effects, unstated details, and anticipate questions related to the topic or situation.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

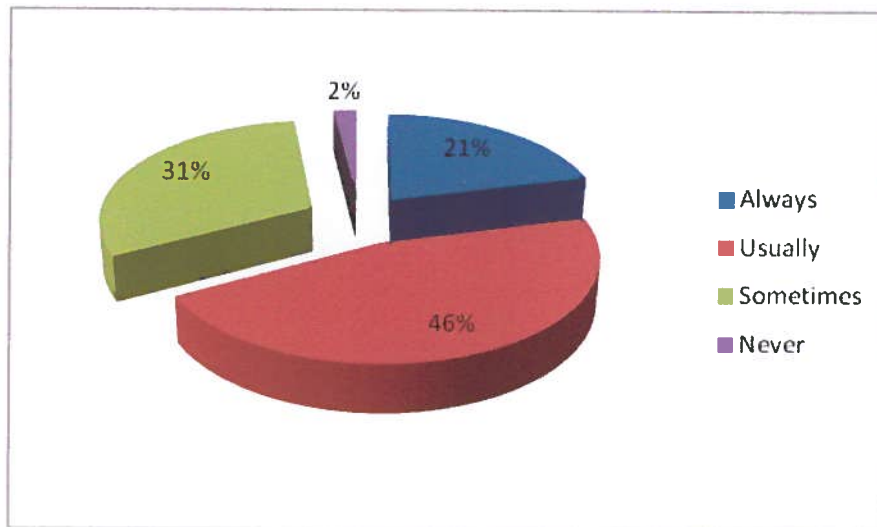
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

a) Pre-listening Planning Strategies

14. I clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening task and/or propose strategies for handling it.

15. Before listening, I prepare my mind to concentrate.

16. Before listening, I request myself to make progress.



Well-prepared pre-listening strategies can help build up confidence and facilitate listening comprehension. For students, it is important to preview the questions, answers or listening activities before listening to since it is helpful to the learner's comprehension. The 46% of students said that they usually prepare their mind to concentrate and requested themselves to make progress, rather than clarify the objectives and propose strategies. Meanwhile the 31% of students said that they sometimes prepare their mind to concentrate and requested themselves to make progress, rather than clarify the objectives and propose strategies, on the other hand the 21 % of students said that they

Listening Comprehension Strategies

always, and the 2% of students said they never prepare their mind to concentrate and requested themselves to make progress, rather than clarify the objectives and propose strategies, prepare their mind to concentrate and requested themselves to make progress, rather than clarify the objectives and propose strategies, However, for learners, their lack of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary would definitely affect their listening comprehension, and thus reduced their confidence.

Wang (2005) suggested teachers to list the new vocabulary on the board and to offer pictures to help the students predict the listed questions. It is important to mention that, students used the Meta-cognitive strategies before, while and post listening activities according to their needs.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

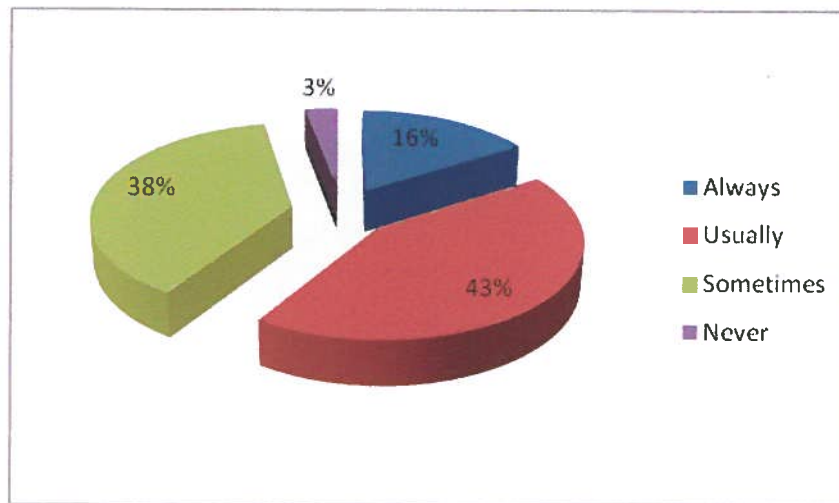
b) While-listening Monitoring Strategies (Metacognitive Strategies)

17. While listening, I don't understand if I am unfamiliar with speakers' accents.

18. While listening, I check what part of content I don't understand.

19. While listening, I double check again for my answer.

20. I am aware of my inattention and correct it while doing listening test.



While listening, most students are aware that they do not concentrate on listening, and correct it immediately. However, the speakers' accent, stress and speed would influence their mind. In this graph the 43% of students answered usually, the 38% of students responded sometimes and the 16% of students responded that they always use the while listening monitoring strategies; while listening, they don't understand if they are with unfamiliar speakers' accents, while listening, they check what part of content don't understand, while listening, they double check again for their answer and are aware of they inattention and correct it while doing a listening test.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

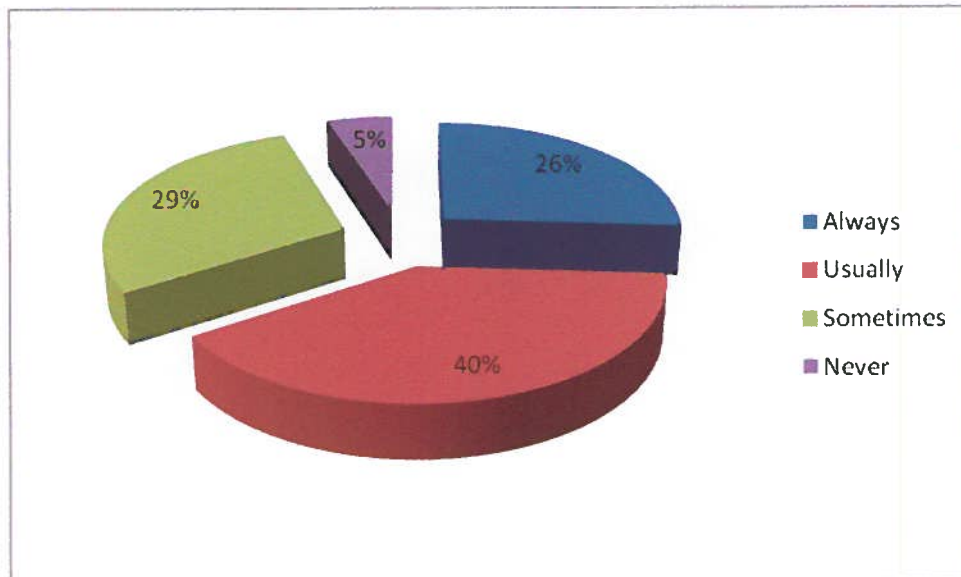
Contrary to that the 3% of students who answered that they never use these metacognitive strategies to improve their listening comprehension skill.

c) Post-listening Evaluation Strategies (Metacognitive Strategies)

21. After listening, I reflect on my problems, such as the key words that I don't understand.

22. After listening, I evaluate how much I could understand.

23. I write down the words I don't know after the listening tests and look up the dictionary.



For, post-listening evaluation strategies, having a large lexicon could help EFL learners improve their listening comprehension. Most of the listeners had problems of

Listening Comprehension Strategies

having poor vocabulary knowledge. When they hear some words they can not figure out, they would feel confused. Knowing to expand the vocabulary is an important issue in language learning. Actually, many English students are used to relying on the teacher instead of self-searching. It is essential for instructors to stimulate students' learning autonomy in problem-solving while designing instruction. Also, it is important that students know the strategies that help them the most in order to improve and achieve a high proficiency level in their listening comprehension ability.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

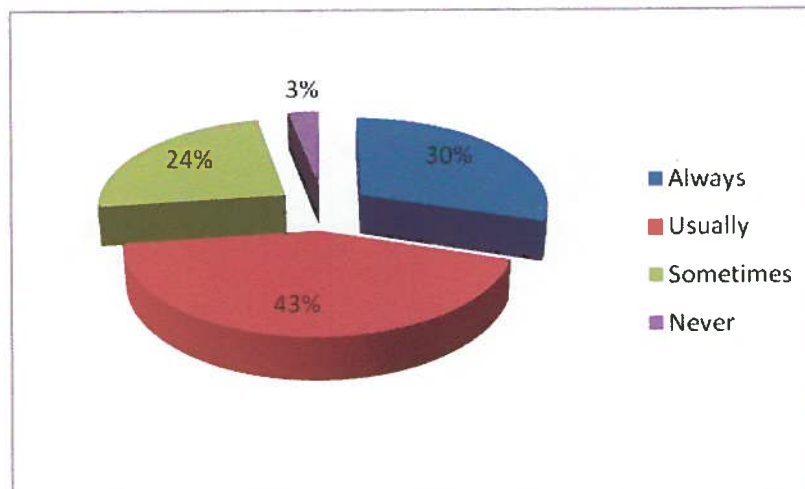
Social / Affective Strategies

a) Social Strategies

24. If I don't understand what someone says in English, I ask them to repeat what they said.

25. After listening, I ask my classmates or teacher questions I don't understand.

26. I hope teachers can teach me more skills to improve my listening comprehension.



Among social strategies utilized by students, they seemed to rely more on teacher's instruction in improving their learning outcome and asked English-speaking persons to repeat what they didn't understand. The 43% answered that they usually ask someone to repeat what he/she is saying if they do not understand something. The 30% of the students said that they always ask someone to repeat what they say if they do not understand and also they hope that teacher can teach them more skills to improve their listening comprehension. And the 24% of the students said that they sometimes ask others; they showed their conservative attitude in actively asking classmates or teachers

Listening Comprehension Strategies

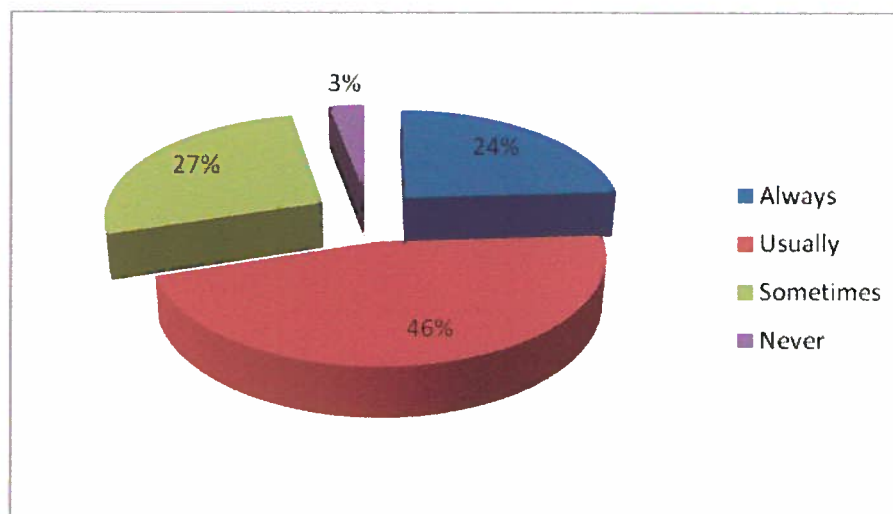
questions when they do not understand. Contrary to that, only the 3% of students never use the social affective strategies to improve their listening comprehension. Teng (2003) found that in social strategy, asking questions from others involved more linguistic knowledge, and the students who are low-intermediate EFL learners find that it is somewhat difficult to use this strategy even after the strategy instruction. Also it indicated that students used more social strategies on cooperating and empathizing with others after they received listening strategy practice.

b) Affective Strategies

27. While listening, I can keep calm and not be nervous.

28. I am confident in understanding the whole contents.

29. I encourage myself through positive-self talk.



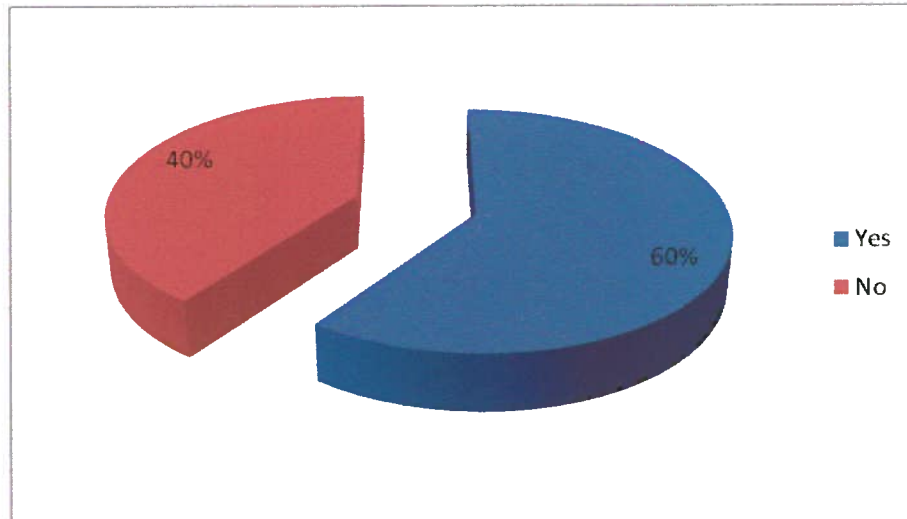
Listening Comprehension Strategies

In affective strategies, the 46% said they usually encourage themselves through positive-self talk and keep calm and are not nervous. While 27% said they sometimes use the social/affective strategies that help them improve their listening comprehension skill. The 24% of the students said that they always encourage themselves through positive-self talk and try to keep calm and not to get nervous. Contrary to that, only the 3% of students said that they always encourage themselves through positive-self talk and keep calm and not to get nervous. Studies displayed that deep breathing, and positive statements had contributed to a great extent in encouraging the students to feel relaxed and elevating their self- confidence (Carrier 2003; Duffy, 2002; Hamzah, Shamshiri, & Noordin; 2009). They believed that as learner's awareness of using strategies grows, students develop more confidence to encounter situations they need to comprehend a listening task in real life.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

1. Do you know the different strategies to improve your listening comprehension skill?



According to the result there is no doubt that strategies play an important role in the students' learning process. The findings of this study showed that the 60% of the students know the different strategies for improving their listening comprehension skill, and they use them in order to complete any listening task. Mendelsohn and Robin (1995) state that listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and the recalling of listening input.

Contrary to that, the 40% expressed they do not know the listening comprehension strategies, in real life situations, there is not always a second chance to get the message in an accurate way, for these reason different strategies should be taken into account in the

Listening Comprehension Strategies

teaching - learning process in order to help students to understand different accents in a clearer way, to discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, understand intention, retain, and interpret the larger socio-cultural context.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

2. Which of these strategies do you know?

Cognitive:

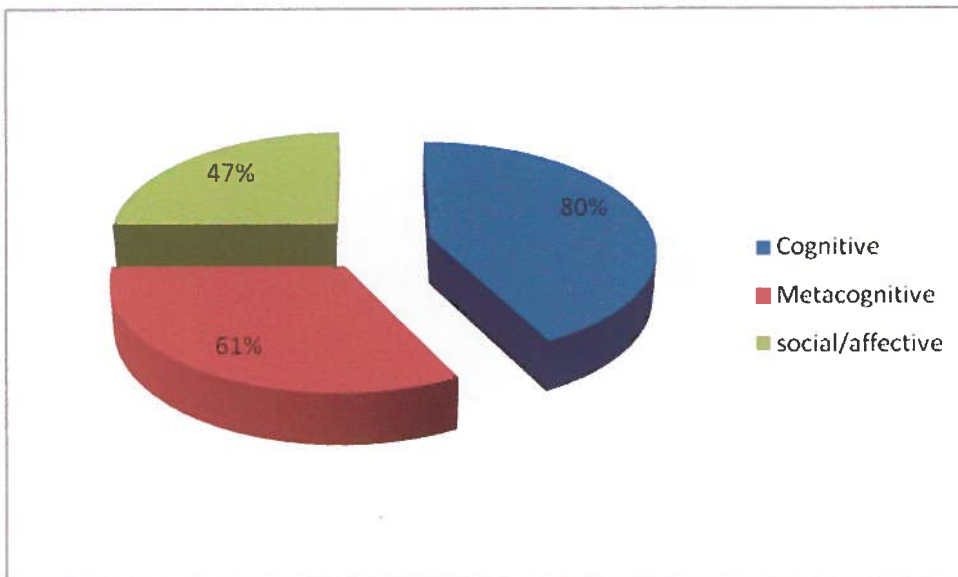
- a) I practice listening English actively in daily life such as listening to English radio, English songs, talking to foreigners.
- b) While listening, I notice the information questions with who, how, when, where and what in the content.

Metacognitive

- a) Before listening, I prepare my mind to concentrate.
- b) While listening, I double check again for my answer.

Social/Affective:

- a) I hope teachers can teach me more skills to improve my listening comprehension.
- b) I encourage myself through positive-self talk.



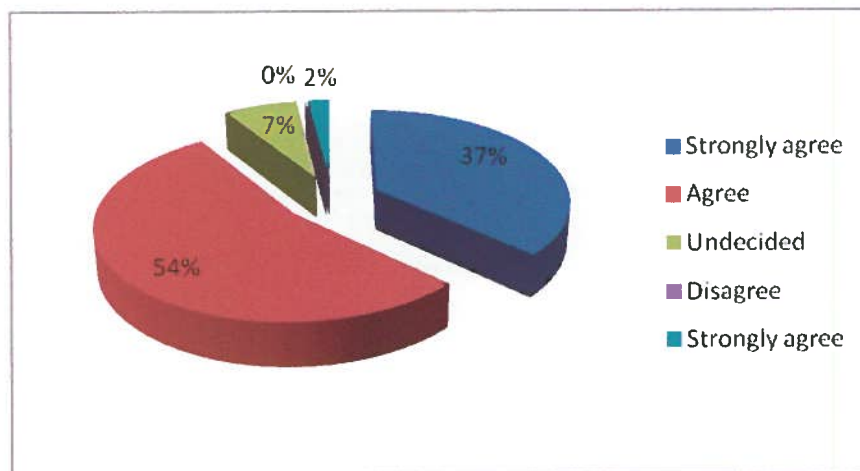
Listening Comprehension Strategies

When students of English Advanced I were asked which strategies of listening comprehension skill they already know, students responded that they know the three types of strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies to facilitate comprehension and to make their learning more effective. When analyzing the results, it was found that 80% of the responders know the cognitive strategies, the 61% know the metacognitive and the 47% know the social-affective strategies. This means that most of the students know about the different strategies (cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective) that they can use in order to improve their listening comprehension skill.

The students responded they know the three strategies of listening comprehension and fundamentally use them in their daily life to improve their learning process. This is also corroborated by O'Malley & Chamot, (1990) and Vandergrift (1997) that state that Metacognitive strategies are fundamental because students oversee, regulate or direct the language learning process. Cognitive strategies manipulate the material to be learned or apply a specific technique to a listening task. Socio-affective strategies describe the techniques listeners use to collaborate with others, to verify understanding or to lower anxiety.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

3. Do you consider that the use of the different strategies mentioned above help you to understand all what you hear?

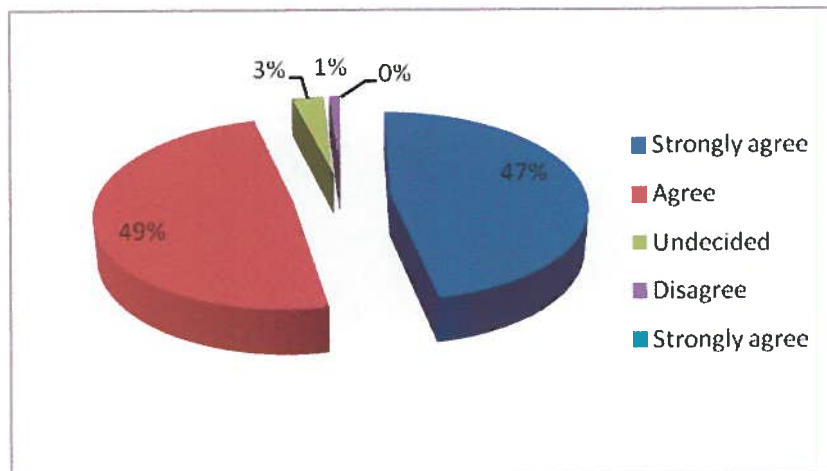


This graph shows that most of the students agree that the use of different strategies help them to understand all what they hear. The 37% are strongly in agreement. Meanwhile the 54% of students are in agreement, contrary to that, the 7% of students that are undecided if the use of different strategies help them to understand all what they hear. And the 2 % expressed disagreement. They consider that strategies do not help them to understand all what they hear.

The use of strategies positively impacts self-concept, attitudes about learning, and attributional beliefs about personal control (Borkowski et. al., 1990). Guiding students through the process of listening not only provides them with the knowledge by which they can successfully complete a listening task; it also motivates them and puts them in control of their learning (Vandergrift, 2002).

Listening Comprehension Strategies

4. Do you consider that the use of different strategies in and out the classroom help you to improve your listening comprehension skill?



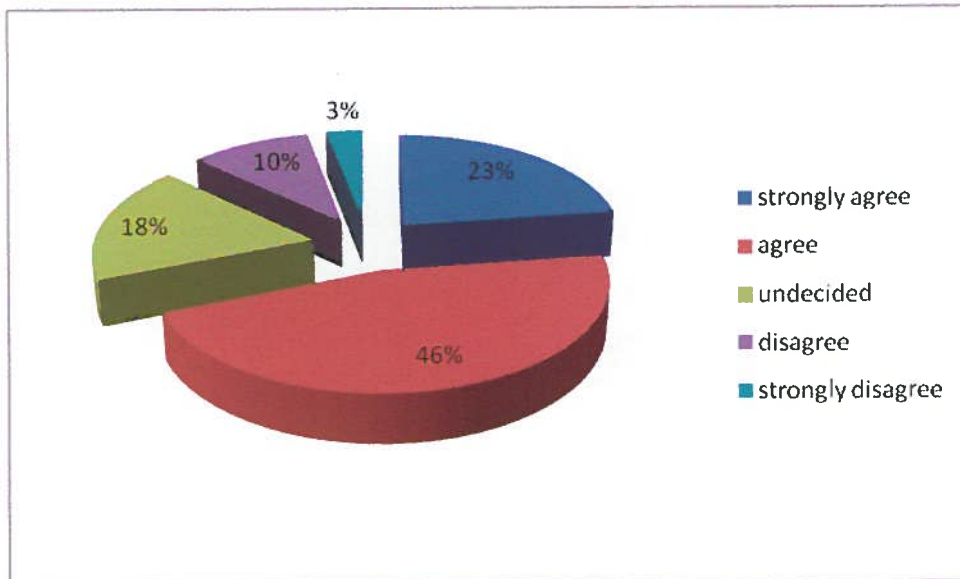
In regard to this question, the 49% of participants agree, and the 47% strongly agree that the use of different strategies in and out of classroom help them to improve their listening comprehension skill. Contrary to that, only the 3% of participants are undecided, 1% strongly disagree that the use of different strategies in and out of classroom help them to improve their listening comprehension skill.

Vandergrift (1999) showed that strategies development is important for listening training because strategies are conscious means by which learners can guide and evaluate their own comprehension and responses. Once students raise awareness of listening skills strategies, they acquire active engagement, and by explicitly teaching listening strategies, instructors help their students to develop both the ability and the confidence to handle

Listening Comprehension Strategies

communication situations they may encounter beyond the classroom. In this way students encounter foundation for improving their listening comprehension skill.

5. Do you consider that the lack of knowledge of strategies have affected your listening comprehension skill?



The previous graph shows that the 23% strongly agree, and the 46% agree that the lack of knowledge of strategies have affected their listening comprehension skill. But the 18% expressed that they are undecided, also the 10% disagree, while the 3% strongly disagree that the lack of knowledge of strategies have affected their listening comprehension skill.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

This result implies that students need to be aware of listening strategies not only to help them cope with difficulties and problems that they encounter when listening in the language, but also to promote their overall language improvement in their listening comprehension skill. As defined by Oxford (1990) "learning strategies are important for language learning because they are tools for active involvement in the listening comprehension skill". Besides, when strategies are used effectively, they help students to develop proficiency and great self confidence.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the listening comprehension strategies used by students who were taking English advanced I semester II-2011; taking as a performance; the strategies stated by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective. And at the same time, to know how fundamental it is for students of the Foreign Language Department to use different strategies for improving their English listening comprehension skill. Also, to describe how students become actively involved in controlling their own learning by using different strategies. And finally, to report the strategy that is most frequently used by students to improve their listening comprehension skill.

The findings show that the strategies that students use in order to improve their listening comprehension skill are cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective. This is supported by O'Malley (1990) that defines strategies for listening comprehension as special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information. At the same time, students agreed that if they know the types of strategies they can apply to improve their listening comprehension skill and achieve a high proficiency level; it will help them not only in writing, reading or speaking but also in listening skill. This is described by Vandergrift, (1997) who also adds that listening is not only the rules of language; it also facilitates the emergence of other language skills in order for learners to get a high proficiency level in the English language.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

Furthermore, students from English advanced I semester II-2011 corroborated that the use of different strategies are fundamental for them in order to improve their listening comprehension skill; which is based in the study of O'Malley & Chamot, (1990) and Vandergrift (1997) that state that Metacognitive strategies are fundamental because their use of them oversee, regulate or direct the students language learning process. Cognitive strategies manipulate the material to be learned or apply a specific technique to a listening task. Socio-affective strategies describe the techniques listeners use to collaborate with others, to verify understanding or to lower anxiety while they are building up any listening task.

In addition, students of English advance 1 semester II, also revealed that the use of listening comprehension strategies makes them actively controllers in their own learning process. This is related with Borkowski's (1990) study that pointed that the use of strategies positively impacts self-concept, attitudes about learning, and attributional beliefs about personal active control in learning. The use of different strategies not only provide knowledge to students for completing any listening task, but also help them to have control in their own learning process. This is supported by Oxford (1990) in her study where she affirms that "learning strategies are important for language learning because they are tools for active, involvement in the listening comprehension skill".

Listening Comprehension Strategies

Successful listeners tended to apply self-monitoring, elaboration and inferring strategies in the processing of a listening text (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). This study investigated the listening strategies employed by students at the Foreign Language Department, and the findings implied that for the metacognitive strategies: pre-listening planning, while-listening monitoring, and post-listening evaluating strategies are the most frequently used strategies by students of the Foreign Language Department from the advance English I. In addition when using metacognitive strategies, students reported that their listening comprehension ability is increased not being the case of cognitive and social affective strategies, although they use them during the learning process.

Besides that, Havte – Garv (2006) study shows that the social affective strategies are ranked as the most effective strategies in terms of enhancing learning among students. Her study indicates that the majority of her students agreed that the relationship between instructor and students is important. Contrary to that, in this study the findings show that metacognitive strategies is most frequently used by students of English Advanced I, at Foreign Language Department.

In term of cognitive strategies, bottom-up strategies seem to be applied more often than top-down strategies. Regarding social and affective strategies, it was found that most students are eager to learn more listening strategies; however, they seldom ask questions and hesitate to search help from their teachers. This is based on (Chamot &

Listening Comprehension Strategies

Kupper, 1989) whom define successful listeners as those that apply self-monitoring, elaboration, and inferring strategies in the processing of a listening text. Consequently, the use of different strategies appropriately benefits students not only in participating successfully in listening comprehension exams, but also in dealing with the communication in real live confidently and wisely.

To conclude, this study reveals that students of advanced English I, use strategies to improve their listening comprehension in their learning process to become active listener and the findings of this study will help to give some suggestions for students and teachers who are interested to improve their listening comprehensions skill, to become high proficiency competent listeners.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

RECOMMENDATION

- Applying different strategies in and out the classroom should be taken into account during the teaching-learning process in order to help students to improve their listening comprehension and get a high proficiency level in listening.
- Students should be exposed to a proper training in English listening comprehension for developing their listening skill. Bacon (1992) suggested that learners could use the authentic text to practice their listening skill, and build their confidence in future real conversation with foreigners.
- Teachers should teach students the different strategies in order to facilitate students' development in listening comprehension skill.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

- Teachers should use different strategies in the classroom to encourage students to be aware that the use of strategies can help them to improve and develop their listening comprehension skill faster.

- Teachers should motivate students to use audio material for practicing their listening comprehension skill.

- To become good listeners, students need an environment that makes them feel encouraged to listen. They can learn by making mistakes and correcting themselves in real situations.

- Teachers should provide to their student more listening activities in order to evaluate students listening comprehension skill.

- Students should practice more frequently the different strategies for improving their listening comprehension skill and become more active controllers of their own learning.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

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VIII. APPENDICES

Listening Comprehension Strategies

University Of El Salvador
School Of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Language Department

OBJECTIVE: This questionnaire has been prepared with the purpose of gathering information about strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department use for improving their listening comprehension skill during their learning process.

Instructions: Please read each question and answer in terms of how well the questions describe you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. Mark an "X" in the answer that best describe you.

1. Do you know the different strategies to improve your listening comprehension skill?

Yes _____

No _____

2. Which of these strategies do you know?

Cognitive: _____

a) I practice English listening actively in daily lives, such as listening to English Radio, English songs, talking to foreigners.

b) While listening, I notice the information question with who, how, where, when and what.

Metacognitive: _____

a) Before listening, I prepare my mind to concentrate.

b) While listening, I double check again for my answer.

Social/ Affective: _____

a) I hope teacher can teach me more skills to improve my listening comprehension.

b) I encourage my self through positive self-talk

3. Do you consider that the use of different strategies mentioned above help you to understand all what you hear?

Strongly agree _____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree _____ strongly disagree _____

4. Do you consider that the use of different strategies in and out the classroom help you to improve your listening comprehension skill?

Strongly agree _____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree _____ strongly disagree _____

5. Do you consider that the lack of knowledge of strategies have affected your listening comprehension skill?

Strongly agree _____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree _____ strongly disagree _____

Listening Comprehension Strategies

University Of El Salvador

School Of Science and Arts

Foreign Language Department

OBJECTIVE: This questionnaire has been prepared with the purpose of gathering information about strategies that students of the Foreign Language Department use for improving their listening comprehension skill during their leaning process.

Instructions: Please read each statement and answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. Mark an "X" in the adverb of frequency that best describe you.

Cognitive Strategies	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Cognitive Formal Practicing Strategies				
I practice English listening actively in daily lives. such as listening to English Radio. English songs. talking to foreigners.				
While listening, I try to translate words or sentences into Spanish				
While listening, I can apply the new vocabulary, phrases, or grammar I have learned to understand the content.				
Bottom-up Strategies				
While listening, I notice the information questions with who, how, when, where and what in the content.				
While listening, I try to understand each word.				
While listening, I repeat words or phrases softly or mentally.				
While listening, I piece things together from the details				
Top-down Strategies				
I listen for main ideas first and then details.				
I can guess the meaning based on the context.				
I try to think in English instead of Spanish				
While listening, I form pictures mentally to help me comprehend texts				
I collect the contents of listening to my personal experiences				
I predict or make hypotheses on texts by titles.				

Metacognitive Strategies		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Pre-listening Planning Strategies					
	I clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening task and/or propose strategies for handling it.				
	Before listening, I prepare my mind to concentrate.				
	Before listening, I request myself to make progress.				
While-listening Monitoring Strategies					
	While listening, I don't understand if I am unfamiliar with speakers' accents.				
	While listening, I check what part of content I don't understand.				
	While listening, I double check again for my answer.				
	I am aware of my inattention and correct it while doing listening test.				
Post-listening Evaluation Strategies					
	After listening, I reflect on my problems, such as the key words that I don't understand.				
	After listening, I evaluate how much I could understand				
	I write down the words I don't know after the listening tests and look up the dictionary.				

Social / Affective Strategies		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
	If I don't understand what someone says in English, I ask them to repeat what they said.				
	After listening, I ask my classmates or teacher questions I don't understand.				
	I hope teachers can teach me more skills to improve my listening comprehension.				
Affective Strategies					
	While listening, I can keep calm and not be nervous.				
	I am confident in understanding the whole contents.				
	I encourage myself through positive-self talk.				