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

HOW THE LISTENING ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED IN ENGLISH CLASSES AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR ENABLE STUDENTS FROM INTERMEDIATE INTENSIVE ENGLISH I, YEAR 2014, TO IMPROVE THEIR SPEAKING ABILITIES.

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<p style="text-align:center">The authors.</p>

INTRODUCTION

This document is made up of the following parts:

First, the team presents some research questions related to the research topic, and the answers to these questions which provide important information for the project purposes.

Then, appear the objectives (one general and five specific) which were achieved at the end of this investigation. The researchers focused their attention on the methods that the Foreign Language Department (FLD) of the University of El Salvador applies in the classroom regarding listening activities and how these methods influence students' speaking abilities improvement, as well as identifying which are the best ones.

After that, the team describes the research problem; this description provides important details about the topic, such as some difficulties faced by students when trying to use another language and the difficulties faced by teachers when trying to choose the best listening activity for their students. Also, the team refers to the sample that was taken for the research and the goal the team pursuits, among other aspects.

Later, the team justifies the research by explaining the reasons why some listening activities might need to be improved at the Foreign Language Department, and the impact that such research can have on the students' performance. The researchers also justify with facts the importance that this research project can have in order to improve (if necessary)

the systems and methods that teachers are using nowadays at the Foreign Language Department.

Next, the team presents the theoretical framework; in this part the four macro-skills are described. The first macro-skill described is reading; in this part the team provides a brief explanation about the reading sub-skills; after that, they explain the relationship between reading and writing, and also the differences between written and spoken language, as well as some examples of reading strategies.

The next macro-skill to be presented is writing.

The team then introduces the writing sub-skills and also writing strategies that are used nowadays. The following macro-skill the team deals with is speaking. Here the team explains why speaking, as well as listening, is considered one of the most important language skills; besides that, they mention the different speaking sub-skills and the strengths and weaknesses language learners can have.

Besides that, the research team deals with the listening skill, which is considered one of the most important skills in terms of communication. The different listening strategies and listening sub-skills, the purpose for listening, the listening evaluation techniques used for most teachers nowadays, and other important aspects are also presented in this part.

In the following part the team analyses Krashen´s Input Hypothesis. In this part the research team explains in detail his theory about input as the best way of acquiring a

language, in which Krashen expresses that the best way of learning a language is through authentic language input.

Later, the team talks about the methodology to be used through the research. First, they explain the research approach, that is, the inductive one. Secondly, the researchers write about the type of study that in this case was the correctional one. Next, the team explains how the exploratory research design, which consists of experience and observation, will be used in this project.

The instruments used in the research are then described by the authors of this research; they will consist of interviews (for teachers) and questionnaires (for students). Finally, the team mentions the population and sample to be used in this research.

After having administered the interviews and questionnaires to teachers and students respectively, and having gotten the results, the team proceeds to analyze the data.

The research data as well as their analysis and interpretation are then presented by the authors by using pie graphs. Later on, conclusions and recommendations are show. Finally, the bibliography, references and the corresponding appendices are detailed by the authors.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. General research question

How do the listening activities developed in English classes enable Intermediate Intensive

English I students to improve their speaking abilities in that language?

2. Auxiliary questions

✓ What are the appropriate listening activities developed in Intermediate Intensive

English I classes at the Foreign Language Department?

✓ What are the areas of speaking improved most by listening activities in Intermediate

Intensive English classes?

B. OBJECTIVES

1. General Objective:

✓ To determine the manner how the listening activities developed in Intermediate Intensive English I classes enable students to improve their speaking abilities in that languagein order to establish a relationship between the listening ability and speaking proficiency.

2. Specific Objectives:

✓ To identify the most appropriate listening activities developed in Intermediate Intensive English classes at the Foreign Language Department in order to suggest the usage of these activities in future courses.

✓ To discover the main areas of speaking improved by listening activities so as to identify what are the main contributions of listening to speaking performance.

✓ To find out what English skill do teachers emphasize the most in the classroomin order to know what areas need more work.

✓ To determine the most successful listening activities developed in the classroom that help to improve the students speaking subskillswith the purpose of recognizing which of those activities work best for students.

✓ To determine whether or not listening activities benefit students in their purpose of improving their speaking skillso as to determine how those activities influence the students' speaking performance.

C. DESCRIPTION

The listening activities developed in the classroom have the purpose of helping students to improve not only their listening skills but also their speaking and language subskills such as grammar, and fluency, among others, so that when they face real life situations in which they need to use these skills to communicate with people in the target language (in this case the research group will work with English), they can do it easily, naturally and with no problems. Unfortunately, not all listening activities are effective to help students to improve their language skills. Besides that, sometimes it is hard to know what activity would be appropriate for a group of students since listening activities should be chosen depending on the level students are.

The problem lies on the decision making of which listening activities are the most appropriate to help students to improve their speaking proficiency in English. The results of the activities developed will be reflected in their performance and how confident they feel when speaking not only when they participate in the classroom but also in real life situations. It is hard to say what are the best listening activities that can be used with the students to improve their language skills since, as everybody knows, students have different ways of learning and not all the students have the same intelligence quotient, so, by facing these issues, how can one determine if the listening activities that are used in a specific course are the most effective ones? Of course, by asking students, since they are the ones who have perceived if there has been or not an improvement in this course and to do that the group will choose a specific course at the FLD.

The group will focus the research on the students of the course Intermediate Intensive English I at the Foreign Language Department (FLD). This sample will be used to

give the research group an idea of how effective the listening exercises used by teachers in classes are to develop students' speaking skills and which areas of speaking are improved.

The goal is to determine the manner how the listening activities developed in Intermediate Intensive English I classes enable students to improve their speaking abilities in that language. To do that, the group needs to know how comfortable and confident students feel when using English inside or outside the classroom once these listening activities have been used.

To know if the activities used in the Intermediate Intensive English I course are the most appropriate ones to help students improve their speaking abilities, the group needs to know which are the listening activities that are being used, and then identify from these listening activities which are the most effective to improve students' language skills.

The group also needs to know how the main areas of speaking are improved with these listening activities. Students have the capacity of noticing what areas they have improved, if they had problems with a specific area in the past and now they do not have problems with that area anymore.

Through this research the authors seek to answer the following questions:

What are the most appropriate listening activities and how can they help Intermediate Intensive English I students to improve their speaking proficiency in that language?

What are the areas of speaking improved mostly by listening activities in Intermediate Intensive English I course?

D. JUSTIFICATION

There are many languages being taught in our country´s universities as a second language. However; English is the one more accepted and learned. There are many people learning English and a thousand more in the process of learning this language. The Foreign Language Department on the University of El Salvador is one of several universities who offer this career choice.

Learning English is not an easy process, it requires different mental processes and activities developed in the classes. And through those activities students are expected to learn the language successfully; however, the reality is pretty different since there are students who do not seem to make progress in some abilities. One of the most important English abilities are speaking and listening and they are closely related to each other.

The accurate learning of the English language depends, mostly, on the activities related to those skills which are developed in the English class.However, according to some researchers, the listening skill which is the most direct way to develop speaking abilities has been neglected because most teachers consider that students should acquire that ability naturally within the process of language learning, so listening activities most be designed to develop not only skills such as listening comprehension but also to improve speaking areas including fluency, grammar, pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, and some others.

The importance of this research lies on the following facts:

a) Listening and speaking are the most important skills in the English Language.

b) Listening is one of the main mean by which English language is acquired.

c) Speaking is the main goal of the process of learning a foreign language.

d) Listening provides the opportunity to the learners to reproduce (to speak) in a natural way what they hear from other speakers.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. READING

1. Reading subskills

The written word surrounds us daily. At every turn, we who are members of a literate society are dependent on twenty-some-odd letters and a handful of other written symbols for significant, even life-and-death, matters in our lives.

Reading ability will be developed best in association with writing, listening, and speaking activities. Even in those courses that may be labeled "reading," your goals will be best achieved by capitalizing on the interrelationship of skills, especially the reading-writing connection. The researchers focus here on reading as a component of general second language proficiency, but ultimately reading must be considered only in the perspective of the whole picture of interactive language teaching. There are some differences between spoken and written language.

1. Discrimination among the distinctive graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.

2. Retention of chunks of language of different lengths in short-term memory.

3. Recognition ofgrammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.

4. Recognizing that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms.

5. Recognition of cohesionin written discourse and their role in signaling the relationship between and among clauses.

6. Recognition of the communicative functions of written texts, according to form and purpose.

7. Inference of context that is not explicit by using background knowledge.

8. Distinction between literal and implied meanings.

9. Detection of culturally specific references and their interpretations in a context of the appropriate cultural schemata.

Two of the most valuable reading strategies for English learners are skimming and scanning. Their particular characteristics are presented below **under** the following definitions:

- **Skimming** consists of quickly running one´s eyes across a whole text for its gist. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. You can give students a passage to read in, say, thirty seconds to look through a few pages of material, close their books, and then tell you what they learned.

- **Scanning** consists of quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The purpose of scanning is to extract specific information without reading through the whole text.

Even though reading is also a skill by which students can get vocabulary, grammar and other abilities that are very important in the learning process, this skill cannot provide other important subskills such as fluency or intonation, due to the fact that students do not face

real situations with other speakers. Through being in contact with the reality students experience in the FLD at the UES, the group can notice that teachers pay too much attention to this ability and provide information from the textbooks and other means; however, listening activities are exclusively for exams.

Students from the FLD are very used to reading a lot, which means that they have a lot of theory; however, they do not seem to have enough practice.

B. WRITING

The psychologist Eric Lennenberg (1967) once noted, in a discussion of "species specific" human behavior, that human beings universally learn to walk, but that swimming and writing are culturally specific, learned behaviors. We learn to swim if there is a body of water available and usually only if someone teaches us. We learn to write if we are members of a literate society and usually only if someone teaches us. Just as there are non-swimmers, poor swimmers, and excellent swimmers, so it is for writers.

Written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language, and that written performance is more like oral performance, the only difference lying on graphic instead of auditory signals. Fortunately, no one holds this view today. The permanence of writing, coupled with its unique rhetorical conventions, indeed make writing as different from speaking as swimming is from walking.

1. **Writing subskills**

Writing is a productive macroskill which allows learners of English not only to convey any kind of information but also to communicate with a lot of people without having real contact. The process of writing may include some subskills as spelling and punctuation, also using the correct vocabulary and of course using the correct style whether that be formal, poetic or whatever the occasion demands. What follows is a list of writing subskills which are relevant for the purposes of this research.

- Production of graphemes and orthographic patterns of English

- Production of writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.

- Usage of acceptable grammatical systems, patterns, and rules.

- Expressing a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.

- Usage of cohesive devices in written discourse.

- Usage of the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.

- Conveyance of links and connections between events and communication of such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.

- Distinction between literal and implied meaning.

- Correct conveyance ofculturally specific references in the context of the written text.

Writing process approaches tend to be framed in three stages of writing. This stage encourages the generation of ideas, which can happen in numerous ways:

- Reading a passage

- Skimming a passage

- Brainstorming

- Listing

- Clustering

- Discussing a topic

- Free-writing

C. SPEAKING

The mastery of speaking skill in English is a priority for many second language or foreign language learners. Consequently, learners often evaluate their successin language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on thebasis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency.Listening and speaking are closely intertwined to each other. Speaking is one of the productive skills and the most used in daily life.Everyday people make use of speaking in any context and any time.

Communicative skill can be emphasized based on accuracy, fluency, appropriacy, coherence and cohesion, use of language functions, managing discussions and task fulfillment. Some authors consider that speaking is the process of building and sharing

meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts. Brown and Yule (1983) point out that short and long turns taken by the speakers are closely related to the task type.

1. Speaking subskills

As with listening, speaking can be active or passive. Active speaking is when people speak on the phone or do it face to face and there is interaction between the speaker and listener. Passive speaking is when we speak with no interruptions or feedback from others, e.g., when addressing a speech. s here include pronunciation as well as using stress and intonation in the correct way. There are also more semantic skills such as how to choose the correct word and building an argument, etc. Here are some speaking subskills as suggested by Brown (1983):

- Production of chunks of language of different lengths.

- Oral production of differences among the English phonemes and allophonic variants.

- Production of English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, and intonational contours.

- Production of reduced forms of words and phrases.

- Usage of an adequate number of lexical units in order to accomplish pragmatic purposes.

- Production of fluent speech at different rates of delivery.

- Usage of grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.) systems, word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.

- Production of speech in natural constituents- in appropriate phrases, pause groups, breath groups, and sentences

- Usage of cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

- Usage of facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey meanings.

2. **Strengths and weaknesses of speaking for EFL speakers**

There are a number of factors relating to speaking skill to be considered for effective English speaking performance. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and collocations are singled out as important factors to be emphasized in building fluency for EFL speakers. Providing students with a variety of situations and frequent speaking tasks plays a significant role in the improvement of students' fluency when speaking.

For effectiveness of speaking, there are a number of elements involved, including listening skills, sociocultural factors, affective factors, and other linguistic and sociolinguistic competence such as grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. In order to convey meaning, EFL learners must have an understanding of words and sentences; that is, they must understand how words are segmented into various

sounds, and how sentences are stressed in particular ways. This grammatical competence enables speakers to use and understand English language structures accurately and unhesitatingly, which contributes to their fluency, which, in turn, develops confidence in speaking.

D. LISTENING

Listening comprehension is the receptive skill in the oral mode. When researchers speak of listening, what they really mean is listening and understanding what they hear. In the first language, people have all the skills and background knowledge they need to understand what they hear, so they probably are not even aware of how complex a process is. Here the researchers will briefly describe something of what is involved in learning to understand what people hear in a foreign/second language.

The importance of listening in language learning can hardly be overestimated. Through reception, we internalize linguistic information without which one could not produce language. In classrooms, students always do more listening than speaking. Listening competence is universally "larger" than speaking competence. Is it any wonder, then, that in recent years the language-teaching profession has placed a concerted emphasis on listening comprehension?

1. Listening Strategies

Successful listening can also be looked at in terms of the strategies the listener uses when listening. Does the learner focus mainly on the content of a text, or does he or

she also consider how to listen? A focus on how to listen raises the issues of listening strategies. Strategies can be thought of as the ways in which a learner approaches and manages a task, and listeners can be taught effective ways of approaching and managing their listening. These activities seek to involve listeners actively in the process of listening. Listening comprehension has not always drawn the attention of educators to the extent that it now has. Perhaps human beings have a natural tendency to look at speaking as the major index of language proficiency.

There are different processes in the brain during the listening task involved in the comprehension. They do not occur simultaneously but with rapid succession.

1. The hearer processes what we will call "raw speech" and holds an "image" of it in short-term memory.

2. The hearer determines the type of speech event being processed and then appropriately "colors" the interpretation of the perceived message.

3. The hearer infers the objectives of the speaker through consideration of the type of speech event, the context, and the content.

4. The hearer recalls background information (schemata) relevant to the particular context and subject matter.

5. The hearer assigns a literal meaning to the utterance. This process involves a set of semantic interpretations of the surface strings that the ear has perceived.

6. The hearer assigns an intended meaning to the utterance. A key to human communication is the ability to match perceived meaning with intended meaning. This match-making, of course, can extend well beyond simple metaphorical and

idiomatic language.

7. The hearer determines whether information should be retained in short-term or long-term memory. Short-term memory- a matter of a few seconds- is appropriate in contexts that call for a quick oral response from the hearer. Long-term memory is more common when, say, you are processing information in a lecture.

8. The hearer deletes the form in which the message was originally received. The words, phrases, and sentences are quickly forgotten.

2. **Listening subskills**

the following are the micro-skills are involved in understanding what someone says to us. The listener has to:

- Retain chunks of language in short-term memory

- Discriminate among the distinctive sounds in the new language

- Recognize stress and rhythm patterns, tone patterns, intonational contours.

- Recognize reduced forms of words

- Distinguish word boundaries

- Recognize typical word-order patterns

- Recognize vocabulary

- Detect key words, such as those identifying topics and ideas

- Guess meaning from context

- Recognize grammatical word classes

- Recognize basic syntactic patterns

- Recognize cohesive devices

- Detect sentence constituents such as subject, verb, object, prepositions, and the like

- Recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

- Infer situations, participants, goals using real-world knowledge.

- Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.

- Use of facial kinesics like body language and other nonverbal clues to decipher meanings.

3. **The relationship between listening and second/foreign language proficiency**

As mentioned before, in order to acquire completely a second language, it is very important to fully master the four macroskills (listening, writing, speaking, and reading); furthermore, some prominent researchers Krashen(1992) highlighted the significance of listening in the process aforementioned. Krashen (1992) has argued that language acquisition highly depends on the decoding process of making sense of incoming messages. Language acquisition never occurs without access to the comprehensible language input because in addition to visual learning, more than three quarters (80 %) of human learning occurs through listening direction.

Returning to language acquisition, Nunan (2003) suggests that listening is the gasoline that fuels the acquisition process, in which the main goal then becomes to produce a message that will be understood by another listener. Thus, the main reason experts emphasize the significance of listening in language acquisition is the frequency of listening

in language development. Human beings get any kind of knowledge through listening, even the process of learning how to speak is given by listening since the babies' first contact with the language is the information they can get from their parents' voice.However, much of the relevant research incorporated into listening defines it as an inevitable medium to drive primary and secondary language acquisition.

What is more, none of the researches focuses on the relationship between listening skill and other language skills – speaking, reading and writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The current research study aims to fill this gap by giving information about how listening provides enough tools to develop the other macroskills, mainly speaking, which is the aim of any language acquisition process.

Much debate has continued to prove the increasing influence of listening skill on the other three language skills – speaking, reading and writing. To illustrate this situation, it is proposed three reasons showing the essential role listening plays to improve speaking skill. First, spoken language provides a means of interaction for the learner. Because learners must interact to achieve understanding, access to speakers of the language is essential. Moreover, learners' failure to understand the language they hear is an impetus, not an obstacle, to interaction and learning. Second, authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to attempt to understand the language as native speakers actually use it.Third, listening exercises provide teachers with the means for drawing learner's attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language. Listening and reading have much in common in terms of input processing.. They argue that like reading, listening involves phonological, syntactic and semantic orchestration of skill and the knowledge controlled by cognitive processes at the same time

4. The listening and comprehension process in the second language

While students are developing the listening skill in a new language, they pass through different levels to understand the new speech. According to Wilga Rivers (1968), a description of these levels is as follows:

"The first experience students confront when learning the language is the undiferentiation of sounds. Gradually when listening they perceive these sounds of the speech and begin to discriminating the different elements of a sentence. This is not yet comprehension because this process requires what is really important for the listener from the speech.

"In the next level, students are already familiar with the elements of the speech but do not have the capacity to distinguish the interrelationship within the great number of sounds in the speech comprehension is not yet developed. So the listener is not able yet to reproduce what he/she listens to.

"Finally, when students get used to hear speech in the target language, they are able to distinguish the message; however, the students do not remember what they have distinguished because their attention is focused on form rather than meaning. This level in which they understand everything as they heard is normal in the student process of learning a second language. The aforementioned information must be taken into consideration when designing listening activities since those processes are crucial for being proficient y that ability."

5. Purposes for listening

In real situations, someone rarely listens to somebody without any expectations what he/she is going to hear. This means that listeners usually have preconceived idea of the content and these ideas are based on the knowledge about the heard information.

These expectations are usually connected with the purpose of listening, e.g., if someone wants to know what the time is, it is necessary for him/her to ask somebody. According to Ur, the heard information which corresponds with the listener's expectations and needs is more likely to be correctly apprehended and understood than the information that is not relevant or useful. That is why it is so important to provide the learners with some information about the content before listening.

In almost all real-life situations, listeners are supposed to give an immediate response to what they just heard. To answer to the information, they can use either verbal or non-verbal ways of expressing their opinions. But this is not a case of classroom recordings since they consist of long parts of speech and the response to them is demanded at the end rather than between individual parts, and Ur argues that listening tasks should consist of short parts demanding immediate answer.

In everyday situations, there are a great number of reasons for listening. Brown and Yule divided the purposes into two main categories interactional and transactional. Interactional purpose convey social reasons of communication such as chatting at a party, whereas transactional is used to express exchange of information such as to follow instruction.

Galvin claims that there are five main reasons for listening such as to engage in social rituals; to exchange information; to enjoy yourself; to share feelings and to exert control.

And according to Underwood teachers should prepare their students for these situations:

- Attending a lesson or a lecture. The aim of this activity is to understand the main concept and to be able to distinguish the main information.

- Listening to announcements, news and weather forecast. In this situation listener's objective is to get relevant information.

- Listening to live situation in which one takes no part. This type of situation is usually connected with eavesdropping. The person listening to the conversation is usually unaware of the context so that he or she cannot interfere into the conversation.

- Listening to or watching plays, watching TV or listening to a radio for pleasure. The aim of this activity is to entertain oneself.

- Listening to someone giving a speech. The listener is often interested in views and attitudes of the speaker.

- Following the instructions. The listener's objective is to accomplish the task successfully.

6. **Listening evaluation techniques**

Listening is one of the most difficult aspects of the language arts to assess. It cannot be easily observed and can be measured only through inference. However, there are both informal and formal strategies and instruments that teachers can use to help them in their assessments.

The starting point to administer a test is to take into account the three elements that it should have, i.e., validity, reliability and feasibility, but first it is also important to know how to evaluate the four skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading in a test and what are some techniques to evaluate the students' listening performance since it is a receptive skill which sometimes is difficult to evaluate.

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

The classroom assessment process is usually divided into three major phases: test content and development, administration, and marking. In the test content and development phase, teachers identify skill or subskill areas to be tested, choose topics or themes, and select and write test questions and instructions. In the test administration phase, teachers make decisions as to when to give the test, how to arrange students seating, what equipment and media are needed and what interaction and extra materials are allowed.

This receptive skill implies that the language user as listener receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers, so the listening activities should include, listening for public announcements (information, instructions, warnings, etc), listening to media (radio, TV recordings, cinema) and listening as a member of a live audience (theatre, public meetings, public lectures, entertainments, etc), listening to overhead conversations.

In any case, the user may be listening for gist, specific information, detailed understanding, implications, etc.

In each context, learners have a purpose for listening and a communication task. Listeners may listen to obtain facts or to understand the main idea. They may need to distinguish question words and respond appropriately. They may need to follow or give instructions or advice. Adult learners may need to distinguish facts from opinions or express their own point of view. They may need to relate what they hear to visual materials they are looking at. They may want to connect with other people by sharing personal stories.

Many factors can interfere with listening and speaking to create confusions and miscommunications. Misheard sounds and pronunciation errors, inappropriate word choices or wrongly-used grammatical forms can lead to communication breakdowns. Breakdowns can have significant consequences – embarrassment, unintended offense, missed appointments, inaccurate processes, etc.

EFL teachers have the opportunity to help EFL learners practice listening and speaking in the safe environment of the classroom. Many textbooks contain listening cassettes or CDs which give learners the opportunity to hear voices from a variety of speakers engaged in conversations on a variety of life skill topics. In addition, teachers can facilitate listening and speaking activities that utilize pair work and group work. Every listening/speaking activity should require a response; the listener should answer a question, follow a direction, choose the correct object from alternatives, write a message, and the like.

In testing listening, it is essential to keep items sufficiently far apart in the passage. If two items are close to each other, students may miss the second of them through no fault of their own, and the effect of this on subsequent items can be disastrous. Students should be warned by key words that appear both in the item and in the passage that the information called for is about to be heard.

Moreover, it is important that students should be given enough time at the outset to get familiar themselves with the items. Also, it is important for the students to get easily the information from the listening, that the listening itself must be short in order to get the main ideas in short terms.

There are several activities that can be used to evaluate student's performance in listening and speaking as follows:

- ***Multiple choice:***

In this activity students listen to a passage while they read the alternatives then they must complete or answer the items so they have to retain information from it. If the teacher decides to apply this activity, it is very important that alternatives remain short and simple.

- ***Short answer:***

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

- *Information transfer:*

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

- *Note taking:*

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

- *Partial dictation:*

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

- *Recordings:*

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

- ***Live presentation:***

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

- ***Gap-filling techniques:***

Making a gap-filling test is to give a test-taker the transcript of a spoken text with missing words. Then the test- maker plays a recording of the text and asks test-takers to fill in the blanks based on what they have heard.

E. KRASHEN'S INPUT HYPOTHESIS

In this theory Krashen points out that "We acquire, in other words, only when we understand language that contains structure that is 'a little beyond' where we are now. How is this possible? How can we understand language that contains structures that we have not yet acquired? The answer to this apparent paradox is that we use more than our linguistic competence to help us understand. We also use context, our knowledge of the world, our extra-linguistic information to help us understand language directed at us"Krashen (1982-1985).

Hatch (1978) proposes that as humans first get structures, they practice using them in communication, and this is how fluency develops. The input hypothesis says the opposite. It says we acquire by "going for meaning" first, and as a result, we acquire structure!

The final part of the input hypothesis states that speaking fluency cannot be taught directly. Rather, it "emerges" over time, on its own. The best way, and perhaps the only way, to teach speaking, according to this view, is simply to provide comprehensible input. Early speech will come when the acquirer feels "ready"; this state of readiness arrives at somewhat different times for different people, though. Early speech, moreover, is typically not grammatically accurate. Accuracy develops over time as the acquirer hears and understands more input. ForKrashen the direct mean by which humans are able to get proficiency in learning English or any other language, is a comprehensible input that means to receive understandable information coming from speaker. The listener needs to be

exposed to that comprehensible input that results in the increase of the speaking abilities and then language acquisition.

The team tried to explore the role of input and output in second language acquisition (SLA) by employing Lev Vygotsky's（1896 - 1934）sociocultural theory and contrasting Krashen's input hypothesis（1982，1985）and Swain's output hypothesis（1985, 1993）which hold different and somewhat contradictory view points on the roles of input and output in SLA.

The difference might be solved by applying Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which claims that different processes are implied in the SLA and complex functions in human's brain are involved in, also he proposes that both theories, Krashen's and Swain's are partially correct because the process of learning a new language cannot simply occur without connecting them.

Second language researchers have not reached an agreement about the roles of input and output in second language acquisition (SLA)，although both have been widely studied respectively and separately. Studies on the role of input mainly used Krashen's input hypothesis（1982 ，1985）as their theoretical frameworks, whereas studies on that of output typically based their research on Swain′s output hypothesis（1985，1993） . These two hypotheses, however, hold different viewpoints about the roles of input and output in SLA . Krashen（1982，1985）claimed that only

comprehensible input causes language acquisition while Swain （1985，1993）proposed

that through output, either speaking or writing , language acquisition might occur too.

Their discrepant views about the roles of input and output leave language teachers and learners in a dilemma. Should teachers maximize comprehensible input by providing students with lectures, reading programs , and listening opportunities as Krashen suggested or to arrange considerable speaking and writing opportunities for students to practice as Swain implied? The time in class or the time for learning a new language is limited, and more time and effort on input means less time on output.

Some researchers claim that both input and output are essential in language learning; however, their claim cannot find support from relevant SLA theories. If they cite Krashen's（1982，1985）point to support themthey cannot use Swain's output hypothesis（1985，1993）, because , logically , one cannot believe that output does not cause acquisition and output leads to acquisition at the same time. That is the main reason why Vygotsky processes a combination of them in which both input and output are equally important for the learning process.

EFL students from the FLD at the UEShave serious problems with English listening comprehension due to the fact that teachers pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary. This information can be inferred by looking at the curricula which offer specific subjects that focus on those subskills such as Grammar, Reading and composition and some others. Listening and speaking skills are not important parts of many course

books or curricula and teachers do not seem to pay attention to these skills while designing their lessons.

Most teachers take it for granted and believe that it will develop naturally within the process of language learning. One of the reasons for the opinion that listening is a skill that tends to be neglected is the feeling among language teachers that this skill is automatically acquired by the learner as he/she learns to speak the language. Most teachers also assume listening is synonymous to breathing- automatic. Another reason why this skill is not given serious attention is the fact that incompetence in it is easy to hide through nodding and shaking of the head, which may give the impression of understanding, even there is none.

As part of the FLD, the research team has noticed that students belonging to it are not very used to listen as part of an activity due to the fact that, as it was mentioned before, teachers pay more attention to other activities such as reading or learning grammar and they just use listening to get information from the teacher or to complete other tasks instead of improving their skills. This could explain why they feel more comfortable with written evaluations. As a result of that, when they face a listening activity, they get frustrated. Moreover, the listening activities in the FLD are just taken into consideration at the moment of evaluating students, even though they are not an essential task during the class. The group considers that the moment when listening should be emphasized is at the very basic level of the learning process of English.

However, the curricula of both, Modern Languages and English Teaching majors, do not offer a subject in which listening is the main field. All those factors made students not to develop their speaking abilities since they do not feel confident enough to produce or

reproduce what they hear during the class. As a result, they do not achieve the goal to speak English.

F. AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE INPUT

1. Definition of Authentic language input

In order to determine the definition of authentic language input as precisely as possible, the term authenticity should be considered first. In this regard, there are a variety of definitions of this concept which relate to the foreign/second language (Gilmore, 2007; Taylor, 1994; Nunan, 1999) just to name a few.

These varieties of definitions originate from the debate as to whether authentic materials in the foreign/second language are in fact authentic or not. Considering the concept of authentic language input, Gilmore (2007) defined authentic language input as the language carrying a real message which is created by a real speaker or writer for a real audience.

It is also considered authentic language input as any material in English which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching. In fact, authentic language materials are spoken or written language materials that have been produced in the course of real communication and not specifically produced for the very purpose of language teaching Nunan.

According to Nunan (1999), authentic language input can be drawn from various sources of audio-visual mass media technologies including TV. Linguistically, authentic language input refers to the use of authentic materials from the target culture which is

presented in the target language such as different programs, for example, news, movies, songs, soap opera, and comedy as audio-visual mass media materials provided by various technologies.

Most learners of English, who have little contact with the language environment, are likely to depend mostly on conscious classroom learning to improve their English. The only place most learners are exposed to the language is in the classroom. The kind of language used in the classroom is known as teacher talk.

This has also been studied and its main characteristics are that language teachers usually use short, simple, grammatically correct sentences and general, high frequency vocabulary. Teachers adjust their speech to reflect feedback from learners. If they recognize that learners do not understand them, they too repeat, rephrase or expand the intended message. typical interactions in the classroom follow a very rigid three-part pattern: teacher initiates, learner respond, and the teacher provides feedback to the learner

2. Optimal input

Krashen (1982) says that optimal input should be comprehensible, interesting and /or relevant,in sufficient quantity and not grammatically sequenced. If the learner can be exposed to input having these features, it is considered that acquisition is more likely to occur.

- *Being comprehensible*

According to information of a processing theory concerning comprehension and production if the learner cannot keep up with the rate of exposure and the input content is

far beyond his/her linguistic competence, he/she will fail to comprehend and therefore, to acquire. Therefore, the teacher must ensure that the material he/she chooses is not so demanding on student.

Although some research results show that a large amount of exposure to the language leads to proficiency, some had doubted whether it would help by sheer exposure without comprehension. This point of view was derived from the observation and study of the so called "Motherese"[1] phenomenon in first language acquisition and was extended to second language acquisition theories. Psychological findings have also provided evidence that only when the meaning of an utterance or a sentence is understood and processed, it can be stored in the long-term memory.

Krashen (1978) argues that the learner's brain functions like a filter of the information or input provided by the outside world. Only the part that is understandable can possibly pass through the filter and become intake of the leaner.

Not only does the incomprehensible part fail to facilitate acquisition to occur, but also it will take too much effort on the part of the learner to filter it out. Therefore, the incomprehensible part of the input contributes little to learning but only hinders it by frustrating the learner

Being interesting

It is often found that the input available to students can seldom meet this third requirement. Textbooks are designed to cater the needs and taste of examinations, and almost all English tests at all levels have the following items: listening comprehension, reading

comprehension, vocabulary and structure, cloze tests, error correction, and composition writing with no more than 150 words.

This orientation of the testing system has done serious harm to both teaching and learning. To pass these tests, the student has to do a lot of simulated test papers and have little time to read more authentic and interesting materials. Collections of test papers are often so badly compiled that they contain a lot of errors. Such activities are not only boring and time-consuming, but also misleading and harmful.

- *Being in sufficient quantity*

The purpose of language teaching, in a sense, is to provide optimal samples of the language for the learner to profit from. However, if the quantity of input cannot be ensured, the input still cannot be said to be optimal. That is why Krashen (1982) has claimed that optimal input should be in sufficient quantity.

Actually the quantity of input is the main concern of the optimal input hypothesis, since the big difference between foreign learning in the mother tongue environment and SLA in the target language environment lies in the amount of input that is available to the learner. They usually depend on only one textbook for learning the language.

3. **Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis**

This theory states that a student learns best when he or she is not enduring a lot of stress . The authentic materials methods promote the reduction of stress through using materials that motivate and excite the student, thus lowering their affective filter. The students become happy and animated while learning, instead of afraid and stressed.

This is because the authentic materials method of learning uses materials that promote learning through games, songs and children's texts, which makes learning fun for the students. The class in turn becomes an enjoyable and stress free environment for the young learner.

4. Benefits of utilizing authentic materials

There is an agreement among foreign/second language instructors that authentic language input can be utilized as an essential part of second language learning. According to many scholars, there are many advantages associated to authentic language materials which make these materials pedagogically valuable to expose language learners to the target language. In this regard, it provides a number of sound advantages for using authentic language materials for language teaching.

An important advantage is that authentic language materials provide a wide range of language change of the target language. For example, by listening to songs and stories in the target language, language learner will be able to hear dialectal differences of various countries that speak the target language (Martinez, 2002). This can be used for a class discussion.

According to Brinton (1991), authentic materials and media can strengthen the direct relationship between the language classroom and the outside world for students. Gebhard (1996) considered authentic materials as a way to contextualize language learning. When lessons are focused on comprehending, language learners tend to concentrate more on content and meaning rather than on the language itself.

This offers the language learners a valuable source of authentic language input, so that they are not only exposed to the language presented by the text and the teacher but also to the authentic material offered by social environment. The authentic language offers language learners the opportunity to deal with a small amount language input which contains complete and meaningful messages. Moreover, authentic language materials help language learners to notice the immediate relevance of what they do in the classroom to what they need to do in the real world communication.

It is essential for language learners to listen to and read different kinds of authentic language material because it helps motivate the language learners by bringing the content and the subject matter to life for them, and enable them make the important connections between the classroom world and the real world outside the classroom setting.

Another advantage of using authentic materials is the comfortable environment that these materials create for young children. Authentic language materials are more appealing to the language learners than non-authentic language materials because of their objective to communicate a message rather than emphasize particular aspects of the target language (Gilmore, 2007).

Another advantage of using authentic language material is the focus on every feature of the language. In contrast, the artificial language materials tend to cause continual repetition of certain grammatical constructions, certain elements of the vocabulary, or certain combinations of words. Regarding the use of authentic language materials, some researchers have focused on the use of songs as authentic language input and language learning.

According to Miché, songs are multipurpose resources of authentic language material for different foreign language lessons. Both communication and entertainment are combined as songs provide communication skills entangled with hobby. In addition, pronunciation skills can be strengthened through listening to different songs. Pronunciation variations are provided through authentic language input from songs as well as various dialects of the target language.

Accordingly, authentic language input from songs is a great way to make language learners aware of the dialectal variations from one target language speaking country to the next. Authentic language input from different songs can provide repetition in conjunction with rhythm which leads learners to remember not only the pronunciation, but also the vocabulary (Miché, 2002).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH APPROACH

1. Inductive approach

The group has implemented the Inductive approach since it does not require a hypothesis at the beginning of the investigation. On the contrary, first the team made observations from the population and then tended to develop empirical generalizations.

B. TYPE OF STUDY

1. Correlational study

The research team has selected the correlational research due to the fact that its designs establishes a relationship between two variables and how one of them affects positively or negatively the other one, This means to study whether an increase or decrease in one variable corresponds to an increase or decrease in the other variable. This is the case of the investigation the team is carrying out in which the listening activities are correlated to the students' speaking performance.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Exploratory

The research team has decided to develop an exploratory research; the researchers will start by examining the topic, which is "How the listening activities developed in English classes at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador enable students from Intermediate Intensive English I, year 2014, to improve their speaking abilities". The data collected will be used to create new information about the listening

activities that are being used with students of Intermediate Intensive English I at the Foreign Language Department that have the purpose of improving their speaking abilities, among other skills.

The team agreed to use this type of research because it will permit to discover through observation and experience if listening activities used in Intermediate Intensive English I courses are really helping students improve their speaking and other abilities and, in this way, the team will be able to analyze the problem, come to a conclusion and make proposals.

D. METHOD

1. Mixed Method

The researchers decided to employ both methods since using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data can improve an evaluation by ensuring that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of another. This will ensure that understanding is improved by integrating different ways of knowing. Most evaluations will collect both quantitative data (numbers) and qualitative data (text, images).

D. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

1. Population

The research group has selected as population the students belonging to Intermediate Intensive English I from the B.A in English Teaching major at the Foreign Language Department, of the University of El Salvador. The group has selected those people due to the fact that the investigation is focused on people who are learning that language and are

in the very basic level of the major in which they are acquiring the abilities related to the language.

2. Sample

Non-random Sample

The team has decided to use the non- random sampling in order to select the participants, the process of picking the students is the following: beforehand, the researchers will have the attendance list of the English class and a set of numbers will be chosen randomly, then based on the numbers gotten the researchers will take a look to the attendance list and the people chosen will be given the questionnaire. At the end, the research team decided to use the 50% of the population to be surveyed, because this number can provide a result very close to the reality. The number of students who will take the questionnaire is 56.

E. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

The group has decided to employ the parallel data gathering since a combination of the two methods, quantitative and qualitative, has been applied due to the fact that in this way the team may have numerical data as well as more complex information.

1. Interview

First of all, an interview is a formal meeting in which one or more people question, consult, or judge the worth of another person. The team decided to create an interview and administer it to some teachers, because in an interview teachers can talk about the listening activities they use in the classroom and tell the reasons why they decided to pick up these activities. Also, teachers can express what they have observed from their students and their progress during the course.

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

Teachers are the best choice for interviewing since they know their students' behavior during the class. They observe the students' performances and can provide an impartial point of view according to what they have seen in the classroom.

2. Questionnaire

Then the questionnaire, which is a list of questions with spaces for answers, is usually given out to a number of people so that replies to it can be analyzed for usable information. The research team agreed to use a questionnaire instead of using a test or something similar because it will be more comfortable for the students since they will not feel pressed. Besides that, questions will be proper and clear so that students give accurate answers. The questionnaire will be administered to a sample of students who are taking Intermediate Intensive English I at the Foreign Language Department and it will consist of closed- ended and partially open- ended questions.

- *Closed- ended questions*

The researchers chose this kind of questions because they are necessary to get general information about the students. Besides that, closed- ended questions are easy to answer and to be analyzed since they have a limited number of possible answers.

- *Partially open- ended questions*

This kind of questions is the same as closed- ended ones, except for one thing. Students are given several options to answer a question. Then, they have to support their answer, by mentioning the reason why they chose that answer. This is what makes a closed –ended question become a partially open – ended one. This kind of questions will provide general and specific information about the students surveyed.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

A. PROFESSORS' INTERVIEW

1. Which of the four macroskills do you emphasize in the classroom?

Question # 1

- Listening
- Writing
- Reading
- Speaking
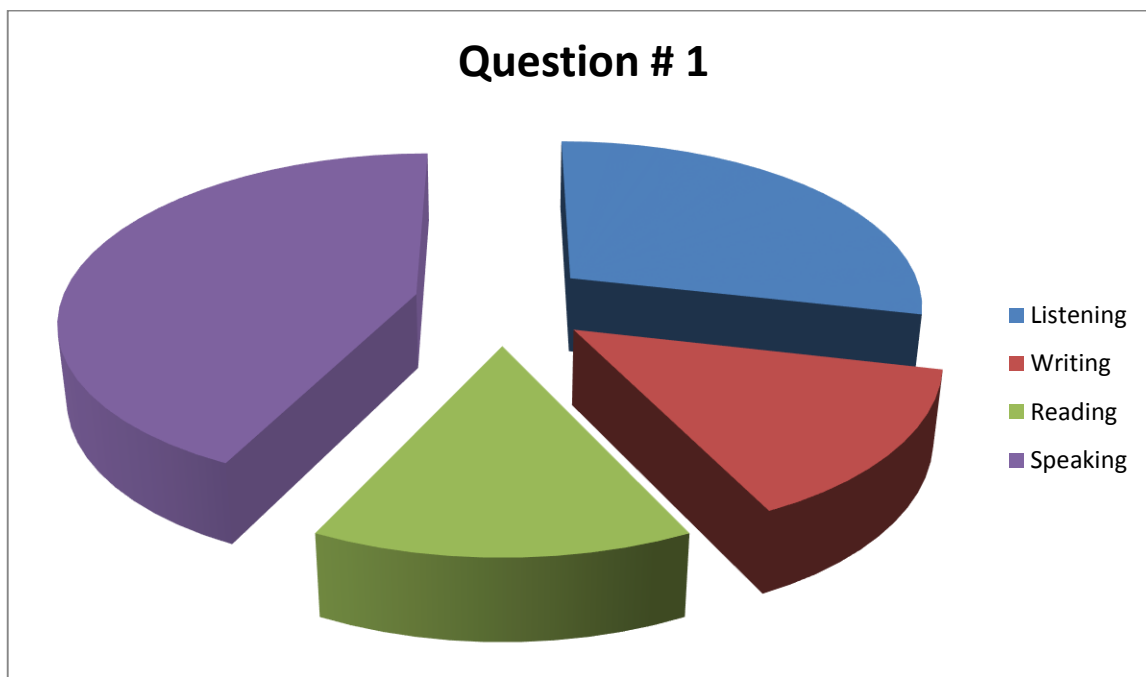
Analysis

As shown by the graph, speaking skill ranks first as states by 42.85% of the interviewed professors; listening comes next with 28.56% of them; finally, reading and writing in the same terms:14.28% each.

Interpretation

There is a considerable tendency on the teachers' part to emphasize speaking and listening in their classes. On the other hand, reading and writing receive a secondary preference as revealed by the data.

Why?
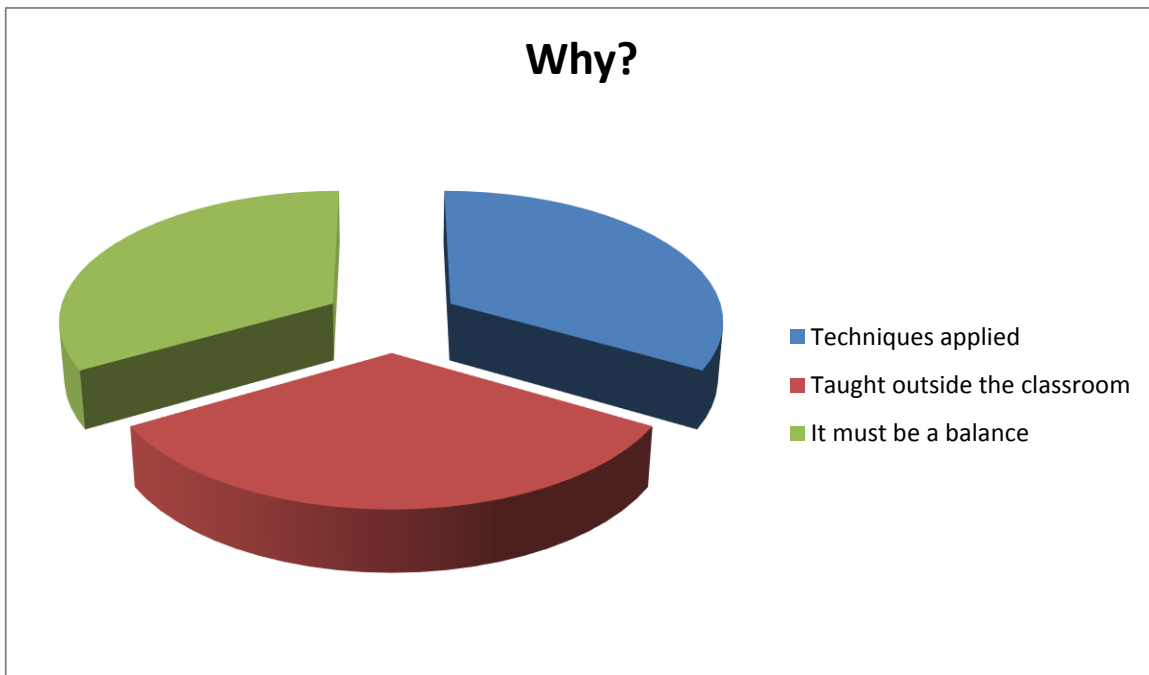
Analysis

Regarding the reasons why they favor speaking and listening instead of reading and writing, the professors interviewed explain that there are three reasons: a) Students can apply more techniques to develop listening and speaking rather than reading and writing; b) Reading and writing are more likely to be practiced outside the classroom, and c) There must be a fair distribution of time and place to develop the four macroskills. Teachers give the three reasons the same percentage of 33.33% each.

Interpretation

It can be pointed out that teachers decided whether or not to apply a macroskill depending on the same factor which is time, since they do not emphasize one of them because the techniques necessary to develop that skill are time consuming and during the class they do not have the time to do it, and this is the same reason why some of the four

macroskills are studied at home without teachers' control.Finally, teachers consider that all

of the macroskills are equally important and they must be studied under the same criteria

2. **How do you consider listening activities enable students to improve speaking abilities?**
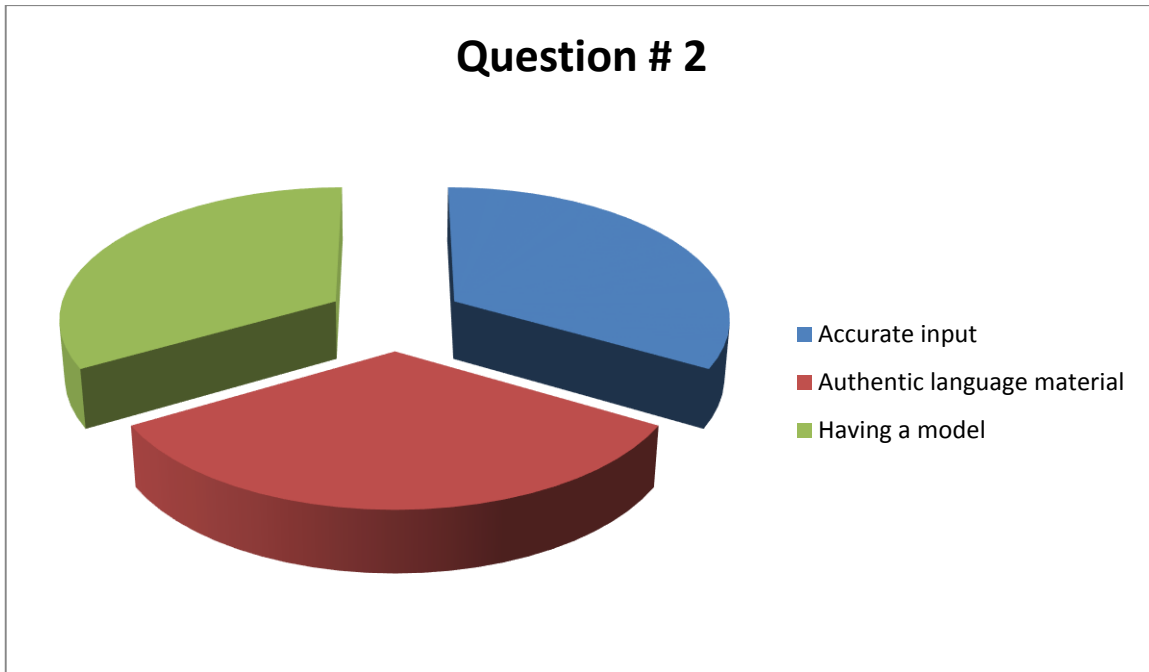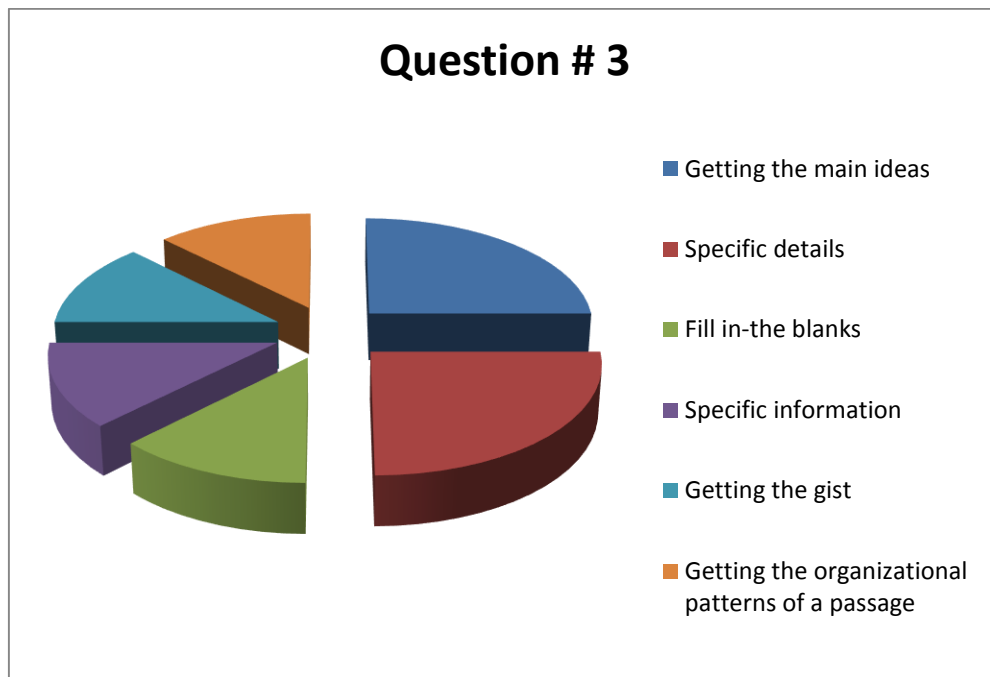

Analysis

According to the data collected, 33% of the teachers interviewed consider that an accurate input through listening activities enable students to improve their speaking abilities; another 33% rank authentic language material as the way to improve speaking performance, and finally, 33% consider that listening activities provide students with a model to imitate.

Interpretation

The researchers noticed that teachers coincide in their answers since all of them have the same root which is input, that must be accurate, but also coming from an authentic source and in this way students would have a model to follow.

3. Which listening activities do you think help students to improve their speaking subskills?

Analysis

When professors were asked which listening activities they think help their students to improve their speaking subskills, they ranked first getting the main ideas, and getting specific details with a 24% each of them followed by fill in-the blanks, getting specific information, getting the gist and, finally, getting the organizational patterns of passage, all of them with the same percentage of 13%.

Interpretation

As presented by the data, teachers consider that getting the main ideas and getting specific details while applying a listening activity help more their students than filling the blanks, getting specific information, the gist, or the organizational

patterns of a passage. This could be due to the fact that students must focus on more tasks while doing this kind of activities than getting the main ideas or getting specific detail. The group considers that at the level students are, the first activities aforementioned are more appropriate than the last ones.

Why?

Why?

- Students' neccesities
- Students' level
- The purpose of the activity
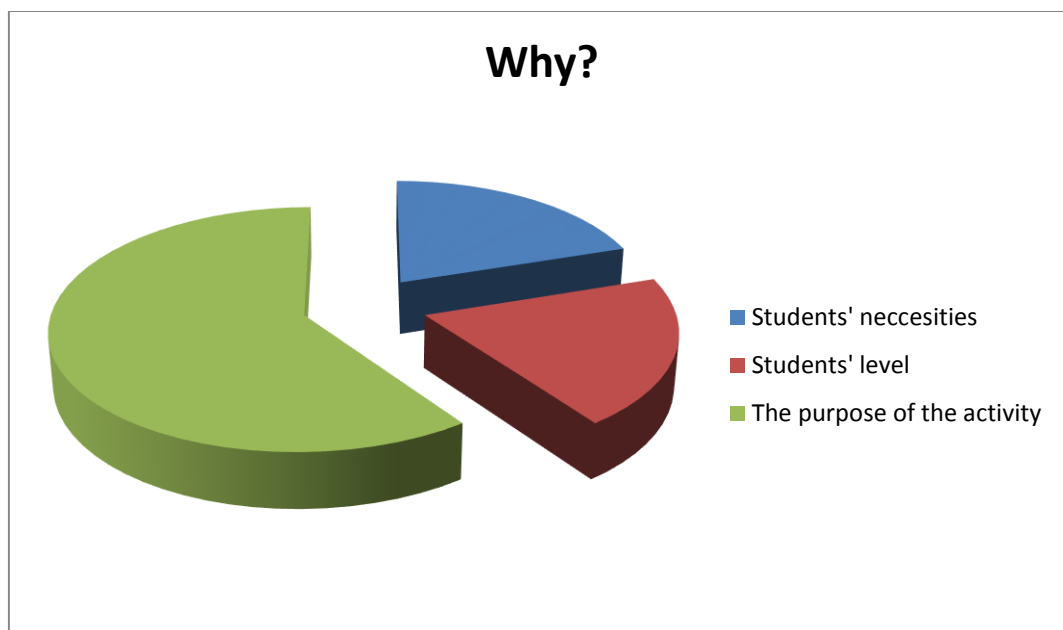
Analysis

According to teachers, there are three main reasons why they apply the activities aforementioned; they classify the purpose of the activity as the first one with 60%, and then they place students' necessities and students' academic level as the second one, with 20% each.

Interpretation

Professors consider that while selecting a listening activity to be presented to students it is necessary to consider first what the purpose of this activity is since in that way they would have a clear objective to go through the activity. Also, they say it is important for them to take into account what the necessities of students and their level are.

4. Do you think listening activities really benefit your students' speaking ability?

Question # 4

Yes
No
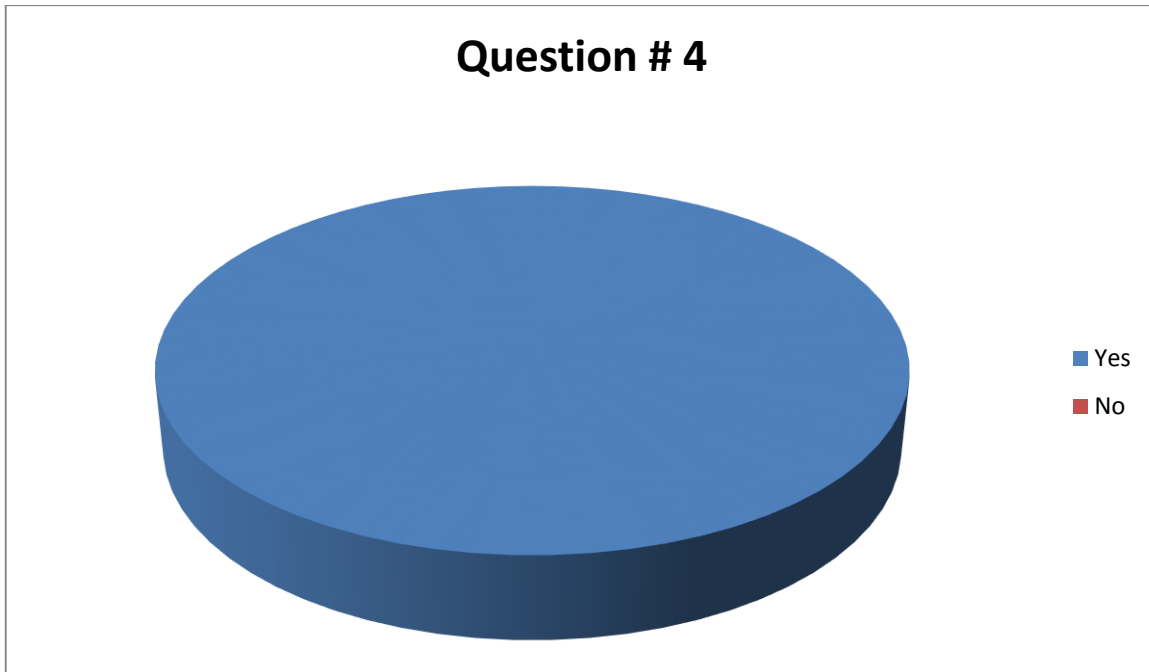
Analysis

As shown by the chart, 100% of the teachers asked consider that listening activities really help students to improve their speaking abilities.

Interpretation

In accordance with the teachers' answers, the only way to get some speaking abilities is listening. In other words, the English learners' speaking proficiency depends on listening activities in the interviewed teachers' opinion.

Why?

Why?

- To have a model
- Exposure to authentic language
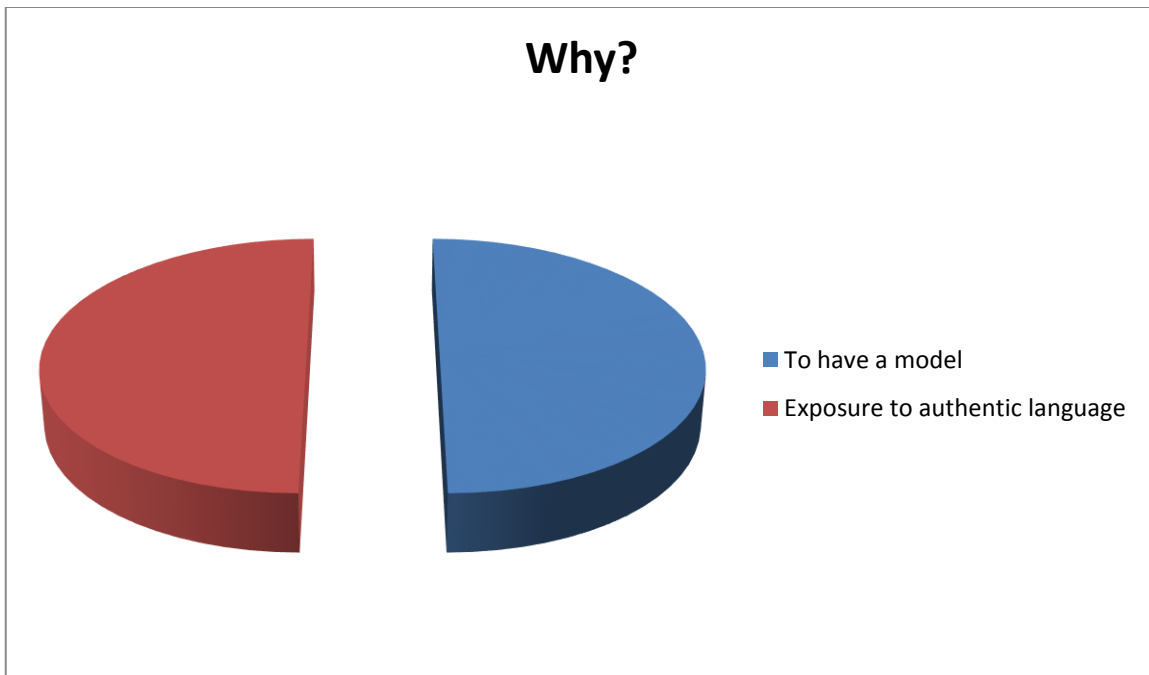
Analysis

The data show that professors consider that listening activities benefit their students because of two arguments, to have a model and to expose students to authentic language material; both are ranked with 50%.

Interpretation

As presented by the data, for teachers it is equally important to have a model which students can follow as well as exposing their students to authentic language material. It can be inferred that one of the variables is connected to the other one since by having authentic language material students will have the chance to reproduce what they listen to from the activities.

5. In your opinion, what are the main areas of speaking that are improved through listening activities?
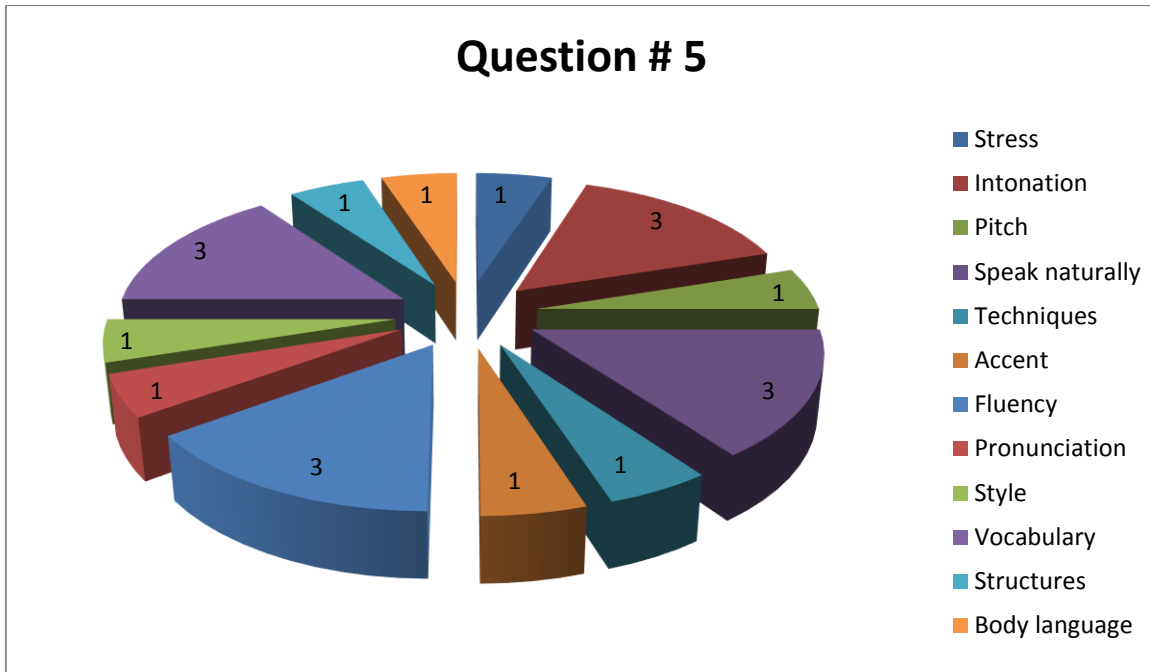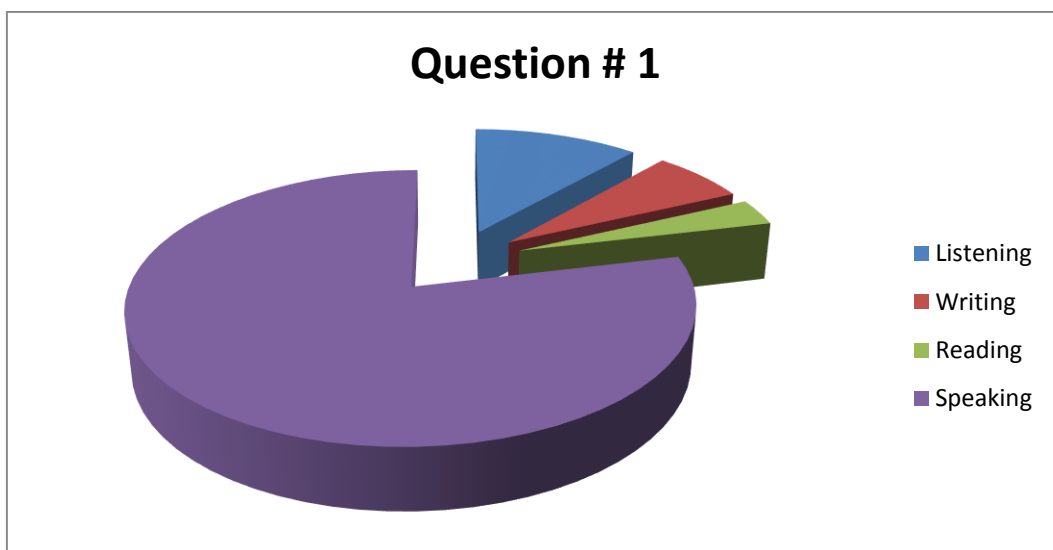

Analysis

As presented by the data, vocabulary, speaking naturally, fluency and intonation rank first with 15% each of them followed by stress, accent, structures, style, pronunciation, body language, techniques, and finally, pitch with 5%.

Interpretation

It can be noticed that the answers are varied because there are many areas of speaking that can be improved through listening activities and it is curious that the most repeated answer are the ones directly related to listening, which apparently has nothing to do with that skill.

**1. In your opinion, which of the macroskills are more emphasized in this class?**

Analysis

When students were asked about what macroskill teachers emphasize in their class, 79% of students reported that speaking ranks first. Then come listening with 11%, writing with 7% and, finally, reading, which was given 3%.

Interpretation

As shown by the graph, there is a strong tendency on the students' part to admit that speaking is the most emphasized skill in their English class. Then comes writing in the professors' preference. This can be seen as a great opportunity for students because teachers want the students to produce the language and speak in order to improve their speaking skill.

2. **Which of the macroskills do you consider should be emphasized in the classroom?**

Question # 2

Legend:
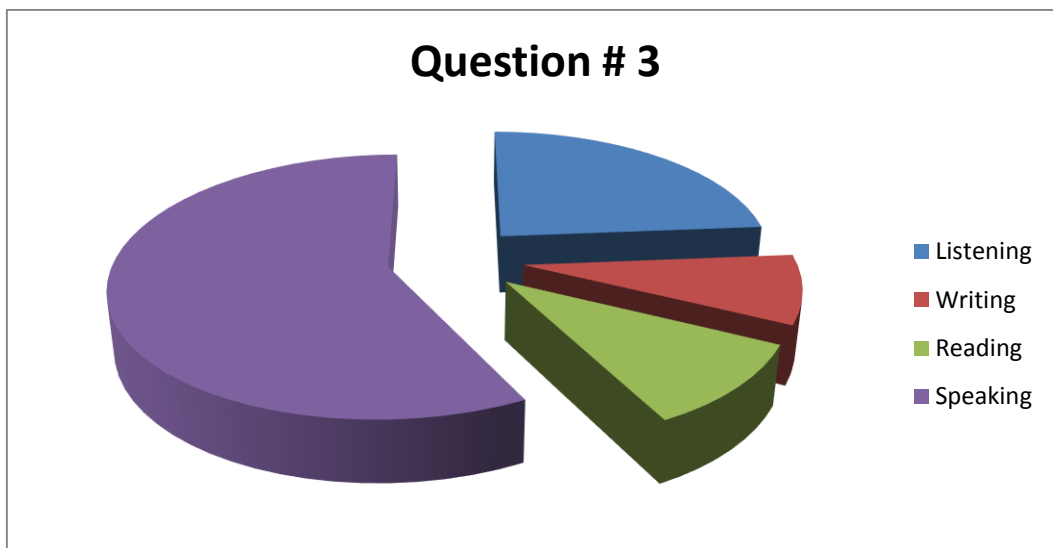- Listening
- Writing
- Reading
- Speaking
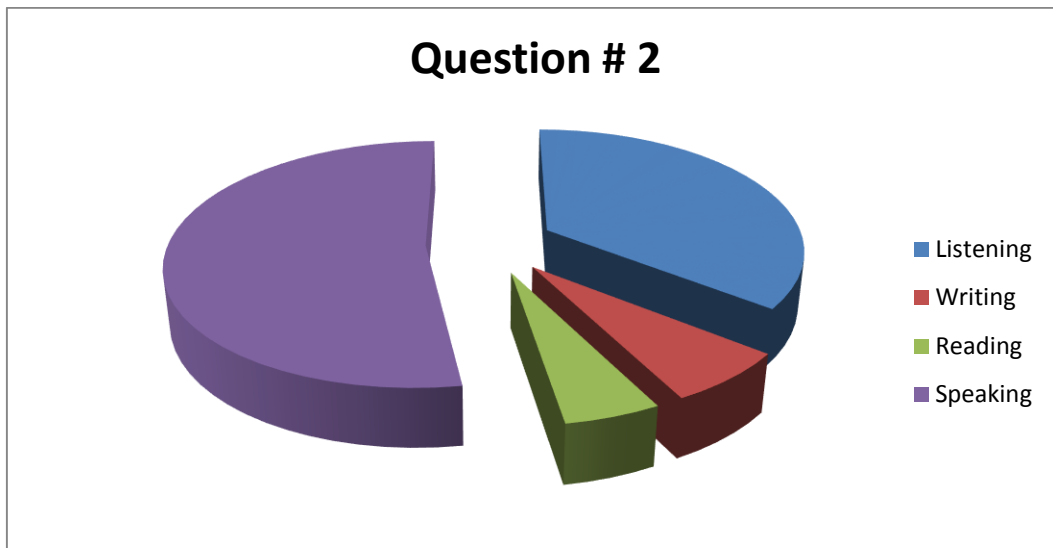
Analysis

When students were asked about which macroskill should teachers emphasize in their class, 53% of students expressed that should be speaking.Following in the students preference, come listening with 36%, writing comes next with 7% and, finally, reading was given 5%.

Interpretation

As shown in the graph, there is a strong tendency on the students' preference to admit that it is speaking the one that should be the most emphasized skill in the English class. This is telling the researchers that students like to participate and practice the language. They want to produce language rather than just receive it.

3. Which macroskill do you consider helps you more to improve your performance while learning English?

Question # 3

Legend:
- ■ Listening
- ■ Writing
- ■ Reading
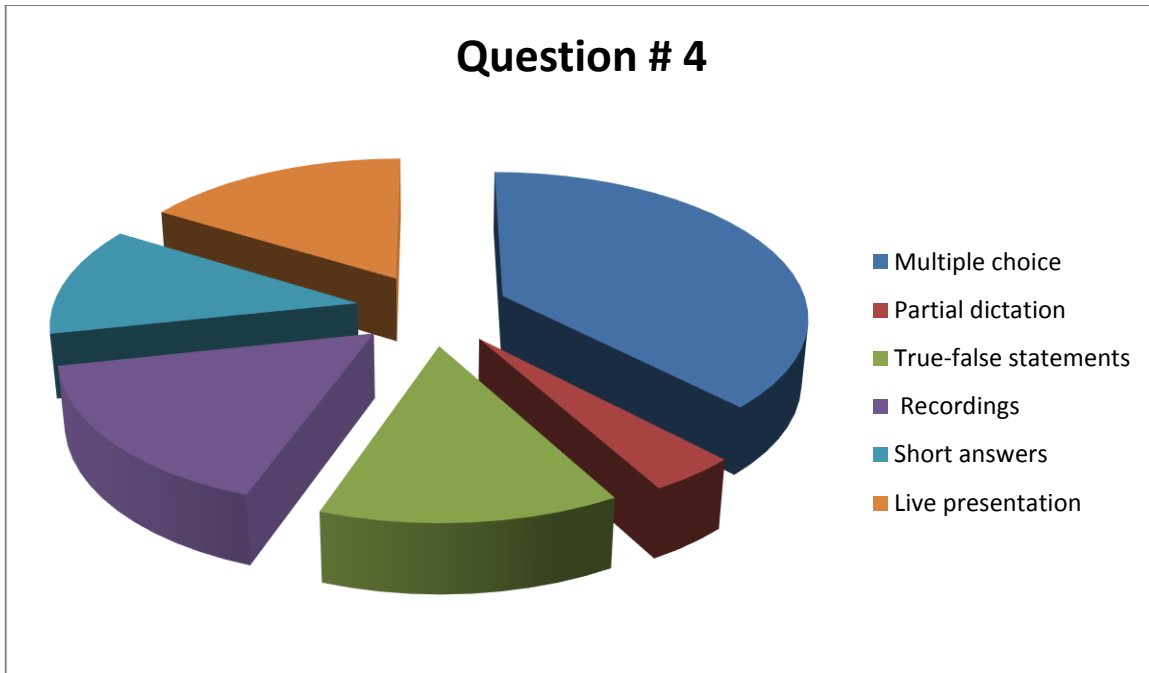- ■ Speaking

Analysis

When students were asked about what macroskill helps them to improve their English knowledge, 58% of them chose speaking. Secondly comes listening with 24%. Reading comes next with 10% and, finally, is writing with 8%.

Interpretation

Taking a look at the previous graph one can mention the following: students consider that it is speaking the macroskill that really helps them to improve their English performance.

4. **What are the listening activities used by the teacher to evaluate your listening performance?**

Question # 4

- Multiple choice
- Partial dictation
- True-false statements
- Recordings
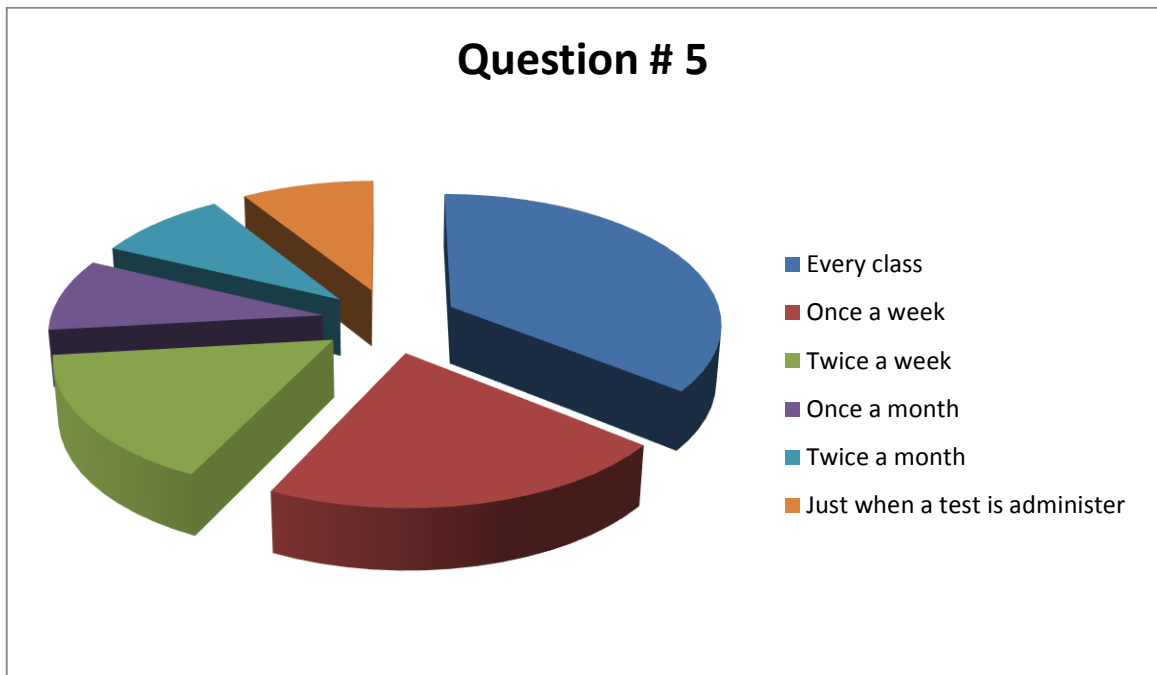- Short answers
- Live presentation

Analysis

When students were asked about the listening activities used by the teacher to evaluate their listening performance, they selected first multiple choice, with 38%. Then they placed live presentation and recordings as the second ones with 16% each. True and false statements was found in the third position with 14%, then came short answers, which is represented with 12%, and finally, partial dictation, presented by 4%.

Interpretation

As revealed by the graph, the students under study favor multiple choice, live presentations and recordings and true and false statements (84%). Little attention is given to short answers and partial dictation.

5. How often does the teacher provide you with a listening evaluation or activity?

Question # 5

- Every class
- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Just when a test is administer

Analysis

As shown by the data, according to the 36% of students asked, teachers provide them with a listening activity every class, then the 21% say that these activities are carried out once a week; this is followed by students who say that the activities are presented twice a week, represented by 16% of students. Finally, students who say that listening activities are scheduled once a month, twice a month and just when a test is administered are represented by 9%.

Interpretation

It is curious that students say that teachers administer listening activities in different periods of time. Since the students belong to the same groups, the period of time should be the same.

6. How do you consider are the listening activities conducted by your Intermediate Intensive English I teacher?

Question # 6

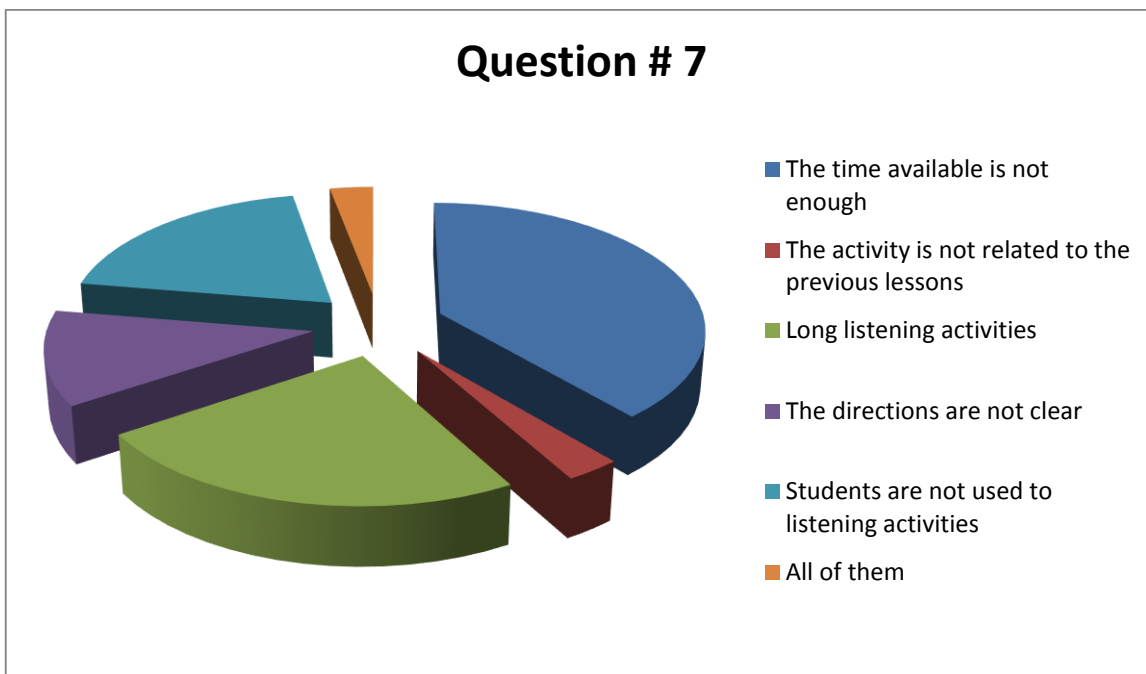- Very difficult
- Difficult
- Easy
- Very easy
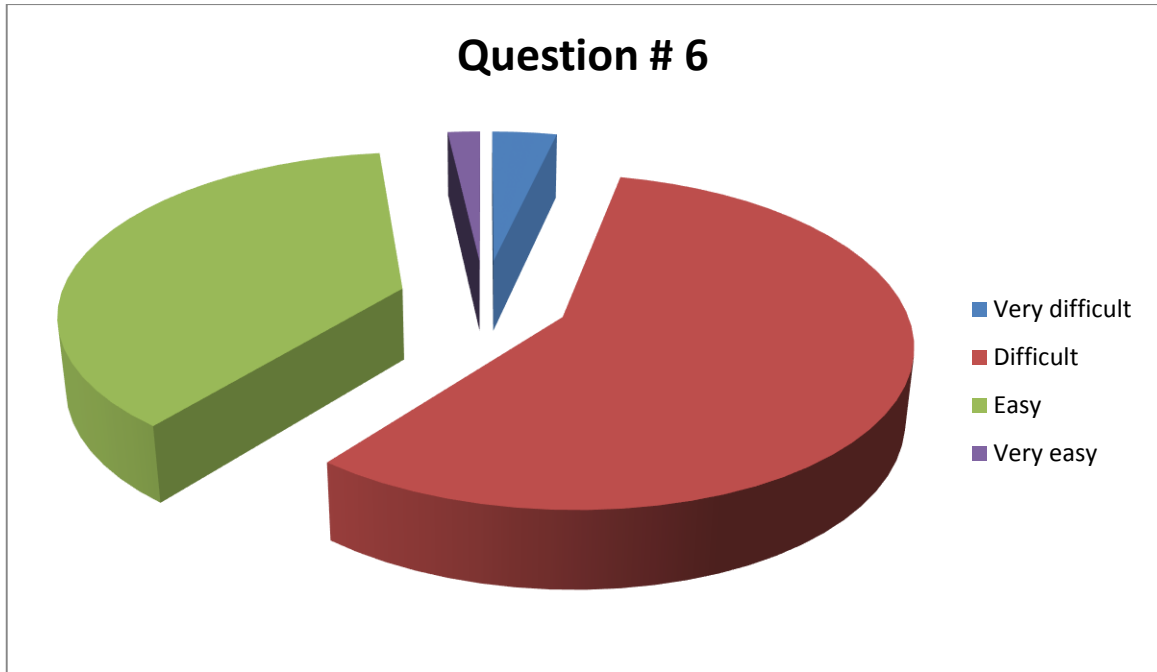
Analysis

When students were asked about how difficult or how easy they find the listening activities, 57% of them stated that the activities were difficult, another 38% consider the activities were easy. Just 4% find the listening evaluation very difficult and a remaining 2% think that activities are very easy.

Interpretation

As shown by the data, listening activities are difficult to the majority of subjects under study. Only four out of ten students consider listening activities easy.

**7. What do you think about the difficulties students face when they are taking listening activities?**

Analysis

When students were asked about the difficulties they experience when they are making listening activities, 38.8 % of them considered that the time available to develop these activities is not enough, while 23.88 % of them stated that long listening activities affect their listening skill development. However, 19.4 % of students think that the problem is that they are not used to listening activities, while 11.94 % of them affirmed that these activities lack clear directions. Finally, 2.99% of the surveyed students mentioned that the activities are not related to the previous lessons, and another 2.99% stated that all of the facts aforementioned create difficulties for students' when a listening activity is administered to them.

Interpretation

According to most of the questioned students, the main difficulties they experience when taking listening activities are the lack of time for these activities to be developed in the classroom, and the fact that listening activities are too long. These two difficulties seem to be related to each other, because if activities were shorter maybe there would be enough time for them to be developed during the class. Some other students mentioned that the problem is that they are not used to these activities.This might be the result of the two difficulties previously mentioned, or simply because their teachers do not like to use listening activities in the class.

8. What kind of listening activities do you consider help you more to improve your speaking abilities?
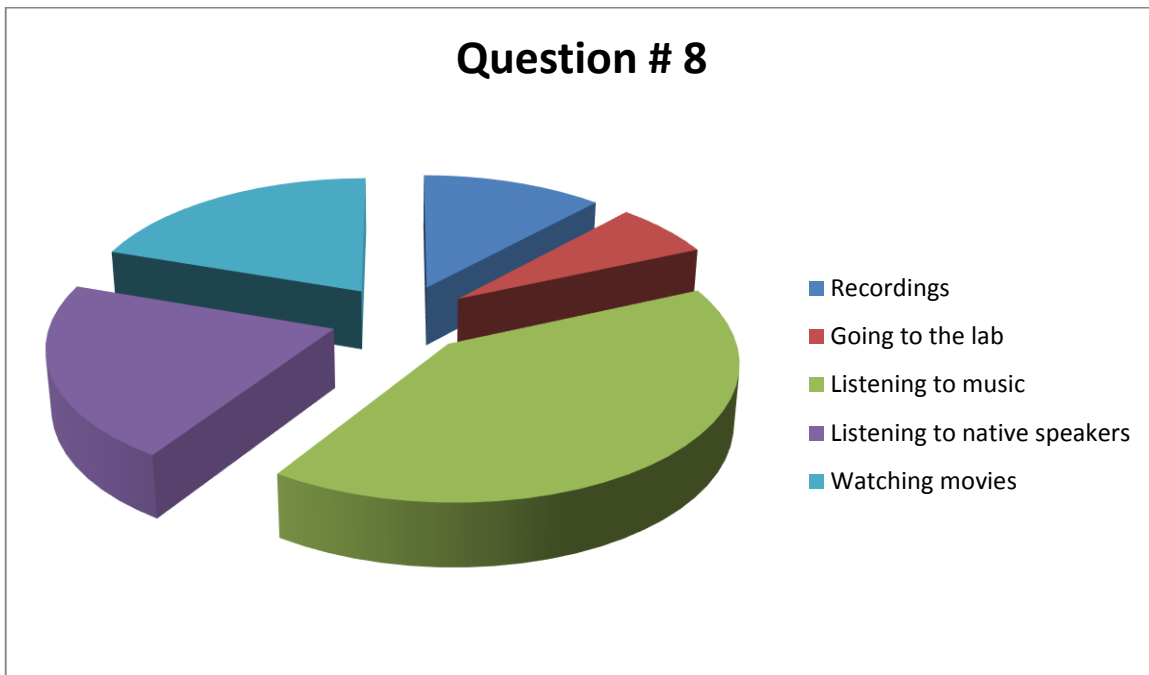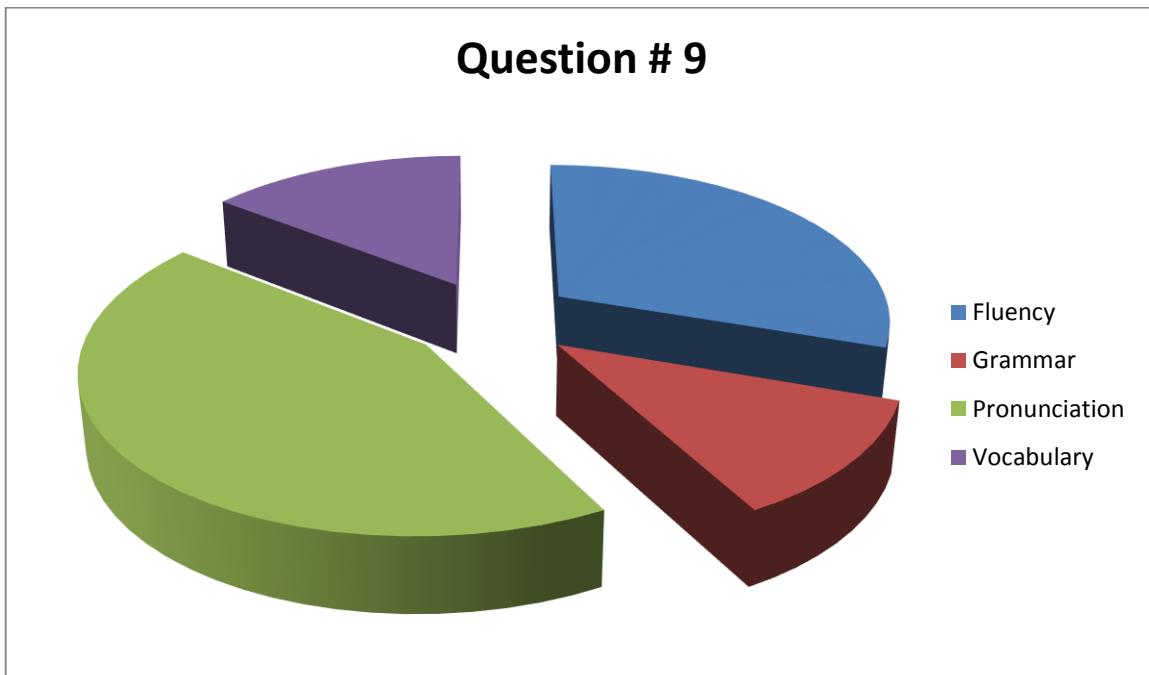

Analysis

More than 40% of the questioned students considered that listening to music is the most beneficial activity for them to improve their speaking abilities, in the second place with 21.05% is listening to native speakers. Next, 19.74% of the surveyed students think that watching movies is the best they can do to develop their speaking proficiency. Finally, 11.84 % stated that recordings help them to develop their speaking skills, while a few students (6.58 %) mentioned that going to the lab was what benefits them the most with their speaking.

Interpretation

      As shown by the data, the students under study favor listening to music, listening to native speakers and watching movies as the most important factors for developing the speaking skill. Also listening to recordings in English and going to the language lab contribute to the purpose in a lesser way.

9.What are the areas of speaking do you consider are improved mostly by listening activities?

Analysis

After having surveyed some students from Intermediate Intensive English I course and having asked them about what areas of speaking they consider are improved mostly by listening activities, almost half of them (43.42 %) stated that pronunciation is the most improved. Many other students (30.26 %) think that listening activities are more beneficial for their fluency than for any other speaking ability. Far away from the first ones are fluency and grammar with 14.48 % and 11.84 %, respectively.

Interpretation

Students have different points of view about which speaking skill is mostly developed when using listening activities in the classroom; however, many of the surveyed

students in this research think that pronunciation is the most developed one. Maybe this is because when they speak they tend to copy the pronunciation they have heard on the audios. For some others fluency is the most developed ability, as in the case of listening. This might be because every time they speak they tend to imitate what they have listened to on the recordings. Finally, grammar and vocabulary were not that popular on the surveyed students' preferences, but still some of them think that listening activities help to acquire a good grammar and learn new vocabulary in an easy and natural way.

10. After a listening activity, do you feel motivated enough to speak or comment about what you just heard?

Question # 10

Legend:
- Always
- Usually
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never
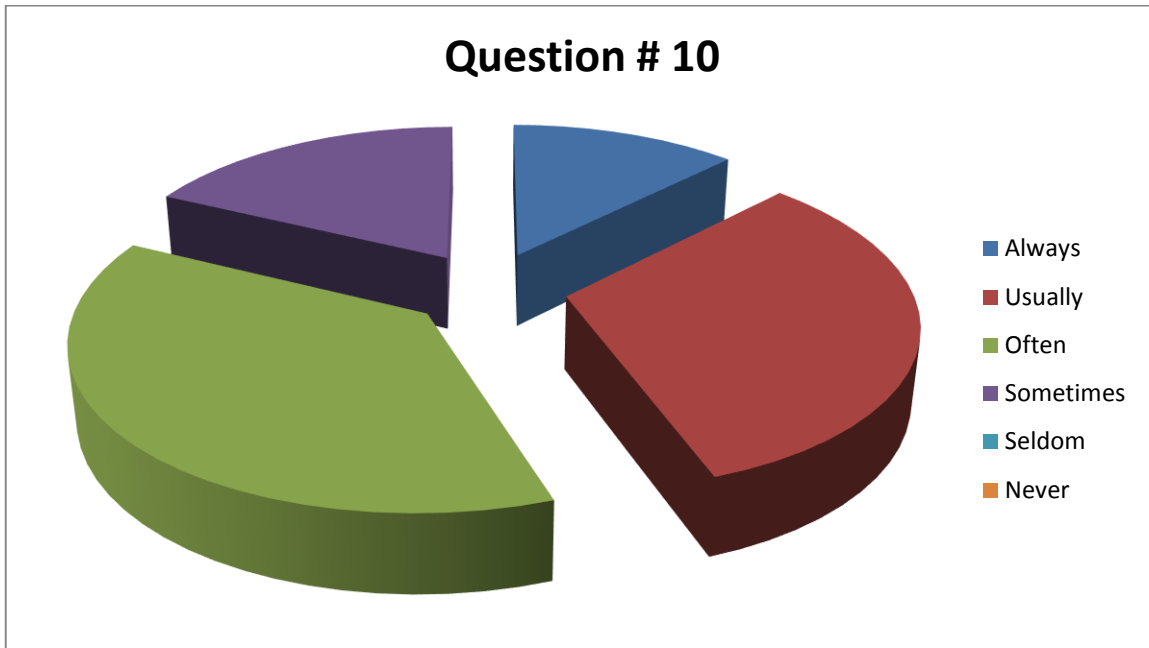
Analysis

The questioned students were asked about their degree of motivation to talk about a particular listening activity after this has been developed in the classroom. Almost a third part of the students (31.82 %) said that they do it often, 27.27% of the students affirmed that they usually do it, and about a quarter of all the students (25.76%) stated that they always do it. The remaining 15.15% of the surveyed students do it just sometimes.

Interpretation

As shown by the graph, students feel motivated to speak or comment about what they have just heard. The figures regarding their motivation are clear: a third of them feel motivated in 75% or more of cases, almost 30% is motivated in 90% of

cases and a quarter gets motivated always (100%) In conclusion, listening activities

motivate the students under study a lot.

V. CONCLUSIONS

- There are three listening activities that teachers claim to be the most appropriate in the class. One of them is getting the main ideas from a listening activity. Students learn to recognize what each listening activity is about. Next comes getting specific details which require students to recognize and write down what is being asked about appropriately. Finally is fill-in-the blanks drill in which students write the missing word in each blank given.

- There are different areas of speaking that are improved directly through the listening activities. According to the teachers' point of view, vocabulary is one of them. There is a bunch of new words that listeners learn and add to their memory that enables students succeed in a conversation. Also, speaking naturally is influenced by the listening activities, which means that students learn to speak without having to think in Spanish while holding a conversation. Finally is fluency. Definitely, this is the area that most students want to develop in order to sound like good English speakers.

- Based on the findings of the research, the group discovered that, according to teachers and students, the main areas of speaking improved by listening activities are very wide since listening activities allow students to develop and improve different branches of speaking skillsuch as fluency, grammar, and pronunciation. The development of these areas plays an important role at the moment of speaking in a natural way.

- The researchers found out through the investigation process that most teachers emphasize speaking skill; however, most teachers stated that they try to pay the same attention to all the four macroskills even though it is difficult to apply this in the classroom due to different factors such as time.

- According to most teachers and students that were questioned, the most successful activities to improve students' speaking subskills are those in which the teacher has the students listen to a recording and then students need to provide specific details and also those activities in which students need to get the main idea of what they just heard.

- All the interviewed teachers and surveyed students agreed that listening activities are important to develop speaking abilities. According to the questioned teachers, there are two reasons why listening activities benefit students' speaking performance. The first one is that by using listening activities students can have a model to follow, while the second one is that students are exposed to authentic language material, helping them to reproduce in a more accurate way what they hear.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should implement those listening activities they claim to be appropriate and that have good results in the students learning process. That can make the difference between a class in which the aforementioned activities are implemented and those in which they are not.

- It is important to know exactly what areas of speaking teachers want to work on before deciding to carry out a specific listening activity in the classroom. And it is the teacher's responsibility to develop different activities so that students become more efficient at the moment of using the language and that can only be possible if all the areas of speaking are worked appropriately.

- It is necessary to concentrate more efforts on listening activities that help specific areas in which students consider they have problems.

- Since listening activities are crucial not only to develop listening itself but also speaking, it becomes extremely important to pay more attention to this macroskill, design the lesson plans focused on this receptive skill and implement more activities during the class.

- A piece of advice from the research group is that professors should continue using those listening activities that are helpful to fulfill students' needs regarding their speaking proficiency's improvement. In that way students will feel more confident not only every time they have a listening activity and need to solve a problem, but also whenever they need to speak or express ideas.

- The advice from the research team for the FLD professors is that they should encourage students to listen to English as much as they can, not only to the recordings played in the classroom, but also listening to authentic English material on their own. In that way students will get more used to the language and it will be easier for them to understand and speak when they have to.

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Appendix

Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

SCHOOL OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

*Objective:*To determine the manner how the listening activities developed in Intermediate Intensive English I classes enable students to improve their speaking abilities in that language.

- Your answers are really important for the research group since it will allow gathering valuable information about the topic.

Instructions: mark the best choice for you with an (X)

1. In your opinion, which of the macroskills are emphasized in this class?

☐ Listening   ☐ Speaking

Reading ☐   Writing ☐

2. Which of the macroskills do you consider should be emphasized in the classroom?

☐ ning   ☐ aking

Reading ☐   Writing ☐

Why? _____

3. Which macroskill do you consider helps you more to improve your performance while learning English?

☐ ning   ☐ aking

☐ ngWriting   ☐

Why? _____

4. What are the listening activities used by the teacher to evaluate your listening performance?

   ☐ Multiple choice   ☐ True- False statements   ☐ Short answers

   ☐ Partial dictation   ☐ Recording   ☐ Live presentation

5. How often does the teacher provide you a listening evaluation or activity?

   ☐ Every class   ☐ Once a week   ☐ Twice a week

   ☐ Once a month   ☐ Twice a month

   ☐ Just when a test is administer

6. How do you consider are the listening activities conducted by your Intermediate Intensive English I teacher?

   ☐ Very difficult   ☐ Difficult   ☐ Easy   Very easy

7. What do you consider are the difficulties students face when they are making listening activities?

   ☐ The time available is not enough

   ☐ The activity is not related to the previous lessons

   ☐ Long listening activities

   ☐ The instructions are not clear

   ☐ Students are not used to listening activities

   ☐ All of them

8. What kind of listening activities do you consider help you more to improve your speaking abilities?

☐ Recordings   ☐ Going to the Lab   ☐ Listening to music

☐ Listening to native speakers   ☐ Watching movies

9. What are the areas of speaking do you consider that are improved mostly by listening activities?

☐ Fluency   ☐ Grammar

☐ Pronunciation   ☐ Vocabulary

10. After a listening activity, do you feel motivated enough to speak or comment about what you just heard?

☐ Always (100%)

☐ Usually (90%)

☐ Often (75%)

☐ Sometimes (50%)

☐ Seldom (25%)

☐ Never (0%)

Appendix B

PROFESSOR INTERVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

SCHOOL OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

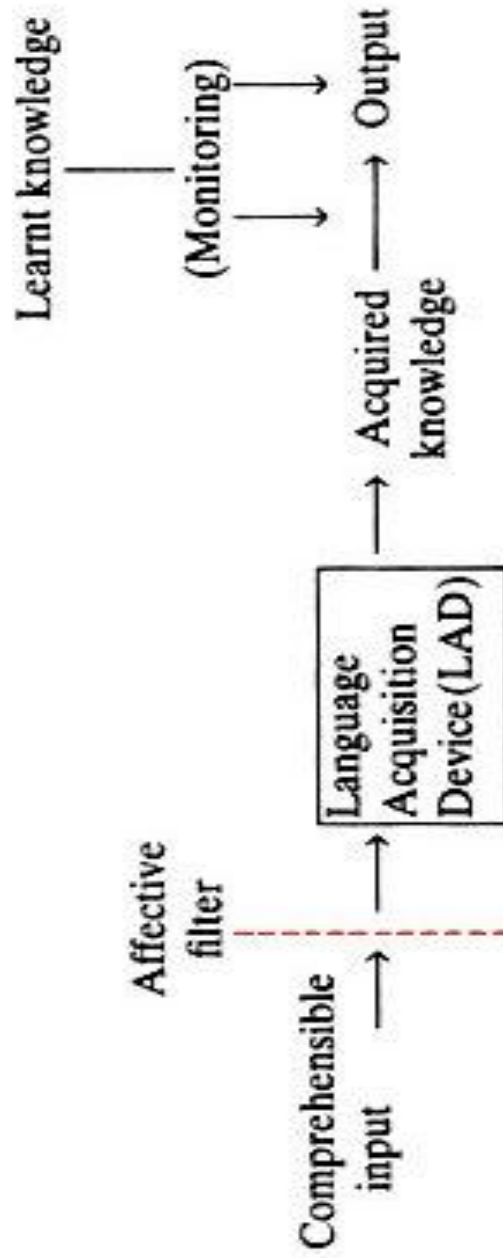**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

*Objective:*To determine the FLD's opinion about listening skill and their role in the English teaching/learning process.

Good morning Mr. (teacher's name), thank you for letting us to interview you. This interview will be related to your students' speaking performance in class and how the listening activities developed in the classroom have influenced their speaking proficiency. The group is very interested in knowing your point of view about this issue, for that reason; let us ask you the following questions:

- Which of the four macroskills do you emphasize in the classroom?
  Why?

- How do you consider listening activities enable students to improve speaking abilities?
- Which listening activities do you think help students to improve their speaking subskills?
  Why?

- Do you think listening activities really benefit your students' speaking ability?
  Why?

- In your opinion, what are the main areas of speaking that are improved through listening activities?

Appendix C

Language Acquisition Device (LAD)

Comprehensible input

Affective filter

Learnt knowledge

(Monitoring)

Acquired knowledge

Output

Appendix D

San Salvador, 10 de octubre de 2014

Licda. Claudia Vides

Presente.

Por este medio nosotros los abajo firmantes, estudiantes de las Carreras Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas especialidad Francés e Inglés y Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés, le solicitamos a usted lo siguiente:

1) Que se nos permita tener una entrevista con usted en el día y hora que le sea más factible para abordar el tema "Howthelisteningactivitiesdeveloped in IntermediateIntensive English I classesenablestudentstoimprovetheirspeakingabilities in thatlanguage".

2) Administrar un cuestionario a sus estudiantes acerca del tema mencionado anteriormente.

Lo anterior es necesario e indispensable para realizar nuestro trabajo de graduación por lo que le estaremos muy agradecidos.

Atte.

_____   _____

Jacqueline Alexandra Gavidia   Antonio Balmore Serrano

                        _____

                                Edwin Tobar

Es conforme:

_____

    Lic. Jorge Homero Llanes

(Asesor de Trabajo de Graduación)