

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



**Universidad de El Salvador**  
*Hacia la libertad por la cultura*

**THE USE OF STRATEGIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION  
SKILL IN INTENSIVE INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH I STUDENTS AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
DEPARTMENT.**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this project is to identify the different strategies used by students who are coursing Intensive Intermediate English I to develop the listening comprehension skill. The process of developing listening comprehension is even more complicated in intermediate levels. At this level, the students begin to be in touch with English as a foreign language. The students' vocabulary is limited to get a complete comprehension while they are listening. For this reason, the students begin creating and applying their own strategies and also learning new ones from their classmates, teachers, and so on with the purpose of achieving a good comprehension in listening.

Learning a second language has become an important part of our society because it is the medium by which people have new opportunities to incorporate to society as professionals. Nowadays, English is one of the most widely used languages around the world, and people learn English for educational, economic, or personal progress. Many students try to do their best to learn English as a second language in order to get new opportunities that permit them to improve their lifestyle and become better professionals.

As well as learning English as a second language has its benefits, it also has its obstacles. In this way, when students learn a language, they also learn a different culture; it means different accents, intonation, and other suprasegmentals of the language. These elements can be seen as difficulties for the learning and acquisition of a second language. So, it is necessary to study those difficulties to know how they will be overcome.

Listening in English is an active skill that requires much attention to develop this complicated process. With the experience of the researchers as foreign language learners, the listening comprehension skill was stated as the hardest skill to be developed. It was considered important to investigate how the students deal with this difficulty in their daily-life management of the language. In order to develop this skill, many different strategies have been applied and various activities have been used in classrooms.



There are three types of listening strategies recognized by different authors: O'Malley & Chamot, (1990), Oxford, (1990). These are cognitive (bottom up and top down strategies), metacognitive, and social/affective strategies. These strategies facilitate and improve the learning process of the students. When students put them into practice, they learn English associating their daily activities with the topics studied in the classroom. The more students use strategies, the more effective they are to understand and to communicate in English.

Another purpose is to find out how these strategies are effective in students at the time they are taking their lessons. Students considered that the use of strategies is very helpful because they increase listening, they facilitate listening through practice, they help to understand the topics, they communicate among people and they focus when listening. These reasons require the support from the teachers since they facilitate the learning process using their own teaching strategies.

This project also presents the strategies that teachers use to develop this skill in their students before, during, and after they carry out any listening activities. Teachers play an important role during the listening learning process. They are the first source of information that students have when beginning to be in touch with the English language. Also, teachers have to manage and distinguish different strategies for every type of listening activity inside or outside the classroom.

All these learning and teaching strategies are important and very useful not only for students but also for teachers. The strategies previously mentioned will always be present in both teachers' and students' activities. It is important that teachers and students become a team at the time they are teaching and learning. A good communication depends to a great extent on the comprehension of the message received.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

What are the strategies that Intensive Intermediate English I students use to develop their listening comprehension skill at the Foreign Language Department from the University of El Salvador?

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The development of the listening skill is one of the most difficult situations that students face while learning English as a foreign language. People consider that listening is not the only skill to develop in the English learning process, but it is the most used skill in the classroom and in daily life. First, students face problems to comprehend what they listen to, accent and at the same time the vocabulary of the listening activities. Most of the time, when students are in class, the teachers need to replay the recordings more than once for the students to comprehend a listening activity, since not many listening strategies are used by learners because some strategies are unknown to achieve success in the development of the listening skill.

Rost ( 1994) pinpoints that without understanding input at the right level , learning cannot take place. It means when students are involved in any listening activities and do not understand what they are listening to, it is very difficult to achieve the carrying out of listening activities; students cannot communicate their points of view or ideas. Moreover the majority of the times, students are more focused on writing and reading than on listening. Most of the time students' assignments inside or outside the classroom are more based on developing writing and reading activities which makes students spend more time doing exercises of the book and writing paragraphs. It is important to develop these skills (reading, writing and speaking skills); however, the aforementioned activities do not contribute in the development of the listening comprehension skill.

Listening comprehension is one of the most important skills to communicate. It is necessary to learn and apply listening strategies that contribute to acquire a foreign language. Listening strategies are an integral part of learning strategies. On the other hand, an English listening strategy is a set of operations, steps, plans, routines and learners' actions to facilitate the store and use of information to regular listening (Rubin 1987), because the use of listening strategies is of great significance for learners and it is essential for individual learners to develop their listening comprehension skill ( Tarone, 2000).

In the same way that authors point that the use of listening strategies can help students to develop their listening comprehension skill, the teachers carry a big responsibility in this process either in or out of the classroom. Teachers have a huge impact on their learners, either positive or negative, and it is the teacher's responsibility to create a friendly atmosphere to make the listening activities successful.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **General Objective:**

To identify the different strategies used by students who are taking Intensive Intermediate English I, during semester II-2013 to develop the listening comprehension skill at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

### **Specific objectives:**

To describe the listening strategies and their effectiveness in students while they are developing their listening skill

To present the students' most frequently used strategies to develop their listening comprehension skill in the classroom.

To report the strategies used by the teacher to develop the students' listening skill in the classroom.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this project is to identify the different strategies that students, who are taking Intensive Intermediate English I, semester II-2013, use to develop their listening comprehension skill at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. Therefore, this study will describe how effective the use of these strategies is for students to develop their listening comprehension skill. Besides identifying the listening strategies, it is important to know which of them are the most widely used by students in the classroom.

Nowadays, learning English as a foreign language has become very important for people who want to have success, either as students or professionals. Listening is one of the most difficult skills to develop for some reasons such as limited vocabulary, different accents, and several kinds of pronunciation. It is necessary that students know they can develop their listening comprehension skill through the practice of listening strategies during the carrying out of listening activities in the classroom. In this sense, the teacher plays an important role before, during, and after the listening activities take place in order to help students to become good listeners. Using listening activities is one way to learn a Foreign Language because without proper understanding, people cannot communicate with others. Studies carried out on listening strategies, Vogely (1995), pinpoint students could be instructed in the use of listening strategies to improve their performance on listening tasks.

## **LIMITATIONS**

During the carrying out of this project, the researchers had different limitations that slowed the continuity of the research. First, the researchers did not have a theme they could begin to work with and a project was presented by the members of the group to be approved by the advisor and it was stated as the theme of the research. Second, when the researchers needed to pass the research instrument, it was not possible to administer it because, in some cases, the teachers in charge of certain groups were carrying out some activities that could not be interrupted to fill out the questionnaires. Third, the researchers had problems since their work and study schedules interfered with their graduation work meetings, so they had their meetings only twice a week. Finally, the researchers had problems in the process of collecting data due to the end of the semester since some teachers did not have enough time to receive them due to final exams. Even so, the researchers finished their work on time.



## **CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH**

A number of researches have been carried out to pick out the problem of the development of the listening skill as one of the most difficult situations that students face while learning English as a foreign language. The problems in listening were believed to be caused by the speech rate, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Higgins, 1995). The students have to face these three problems. First of all, the students find it hard to understand proper names as they have never heard them before. In other words, they have no background knowledge about what they are listening to. The second problem is believed to rise from the unfamiliar, uninteresting, and too long listening which makes the students feel strange, discouraged, and bored of what they are hearing. The last one is assumed to be about the sound connections and intonation spoken by native speakers with different accents as Nguyen Ngoan stated in his article *"listening to VOA: advantages, problems and solutions"* (Voice of America) English magazine-2014.

A study was carried out in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador, during semester II-2011. The group that was taken as the universe of this research project was Advanced Intensive English I.

The purpose of this project was to identify the listening comprehension strategies (cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective) used by students, to know how fundamental they are for students to use different listening strategies for improving their English listening comprehension, and to know the strategies that are most frequently used by students to improve their listening comprehension skill.

The finding showed that the strategies that students used most frequently in order to improve their listening comprehension skill were the metacognitive strategies: pre-listening, planning, while-listening monitoring, and post-listening evaluating strategies. Students reported when they use metacognitive strategies their listening comprehension ability increases, not being the case of cognitive and social/affective strategies.

Furthermore Students pointed “the use of listening strategies not only provided knowledge to students for completing any listening task, but also helped them to have control of their own learning process”.

Besides, the research project showed the use of social affective strategies was ranked as the most effective strategies in terms of enhancing learning among students; the majority of the students agreed that relationships between teacher and student are important.

Finally, the study revealed the students of Advanced Intensive English I, used strategies to improve their listening comprehension skill. One more time, it was confirmed by students that the use of listening strategies, as a tool, helps students to increase or develop their listening comprehension’ ability, and it also helps them to become good listeners, developing proficiency and great self-confidence.

## **THEORETICAL BASES**

Listening is one of the hardest skills to develop when we are learning English as a foreign language. That is why there have been several studies on how students can improve their listening skill. Researchers considered Listening an ability that could be developed without assistance, and a deep investigation into the history of language learning reveals this lack of attention to the skill of listening (Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Morley, 1984; Moyer, 2006; Mendelsohn, 1998; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994). This means that learners can develop their listening skill through strategies in which they are responsible to discover them and carry them out. However, past research has revealed that a large proportion of the research findings indicate that listening is the most important skill for language learning because it is the most used language skill in normal daily life (Morley 2001; Rost 2001), and it develops faster than the three other language skills, which in turn suggests that it can facilitate the emergence of the other language skills (Oxford, 1990). For that reason, researchers believe that these kinds of strategies are the best ways to improve the students' English listening skill. These are listed in order. The very best advice is #1, the second-best advice is #2, and so on:

- 1- Look for places in a completely English-speaking environment.
- 2- Do some kind of sports, hobbies, or other activities with a group of English speakers.
- 3- Watch lots of hours of movies, TV shows, and videos in English, with English captions.
- 4- Watch movies, TV, and videos with no subtitles.
- 5- Watch movies, TV, and videos with subtitles in your own language.
- 6- Listen to English podcasts on a topic that's interesting to you (but not on the topic of learning English).
- 7- Listen to English radio shows.

Listening is the most important communication skill that we can acquire. It is the primary way that we understand others and it is a skill that must be developed through practice.

The listening process is complicated; much happens between the reception of sounds and the response of the receiver. The first step is to understand the difference between **hearing** and **listening**.

**Hearing** is simply the act of perceiving sounds by the ear while **listening** is the active process of receiving and constructing meaning. It also requires focusing on other words; it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages (Emmert, 1994).

Taking into account that foreign language learning process requires the development of fundamental abilities that creates an effective communication among people (reading, writing, speaking and listening), listening becomes an important part of a foreign language learning process; listeners construct meaning from oral input (Bentley & Bacon, 1996). Also, according to them, for learners, one of the methods that they can become actively involved in controlling their own learning is by using strategies. **Listening strategies** are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the learning.

To begin with, it is necessary to be clear of what “listening skill” means. To comprehend better the definition of listening skill, it is crucial to have the knowledge from some experts in the area who state many definitions of listening, but these definitions are exposed in different directions that allow us to understand its importance among the rest of communicative skills, (reading, speaking, and writing).

## **DEFINITION OF LISTENING SKILL**

Listening is one fundamental skill in the foreign language learning process since it is a medium in which people obtain fundamental education, information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation, and it is of vital importance for learners to be taught to listen effectively and critically (Bulletin 1952). Also it is known as the ability and the key to receive messages in effective communication and without this ability, it is easy to get a misunderstanding of meaning.

Listening as the ability to identify and understand what others are saying involves four principal characteristics that an able listener is capable of doing simultaneously: understanding of accent or pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and grasping the meaning. A good listening skill benefits our personal lives since we can interchange messages and open a dialog between friends, family or people in general, improving self-esteem and confidence (Howatt and Dakin,1974).

People spend more time in listening. It is said that adults spend an average of 70% of their time in some sort of communication, 45% is spent in listening while 30% in speaking, 16% in reading and 9% in writing (Adler, R. et al. 2001). According to the author, people spend most of their time listening than speaking, reading, or writing; for this reason, listening is the most important communication skill that we can acquire. Listening is the primary way that we understand others, and it is a skill that must be developed, mostly when people are immersed in a learning process.

When students are learning English as a foreign language, it is very important to take all the resources that permit them or help them to acquire the new language because the first skill that is put into practice is listening. But there is also another concept that should not be confused with listening, that is "hearing". Both listening and hearing have a meaningful significance for human beings, but it is important to keep in mind the difference between them.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEARING AND LISTENING?

Maybe many people think listening and hearing mean the same; probably they do not know that there is a big difference between hearing and listening, though these two functions are performed with the same organ (the ear). For this reason it is important to analyze these two processes.

Hearing is one of the five senses of a person, and it is the ability to perceive sound by detecting vibrations through the ear. According to Merriam-Webster (Encyclopedia, Britannica Company, Internet), hearing is “the process, function or power of perceiving sound; specifically the special sense by which noises and tones are received as stimuli”. On the other hand, listening is a physical and mental process of receiving, constructing meaning and responding to spoken and/ or nonverbal messages, as well as listening is known as “active listening”; it is a technique used in communication which requires a person to pay attention to the speaker and provide feedback. Knowing the importance of these concepts, listening is essential in learning language process and establishes a fundamental part of human communication.

The following chart shows the points of differences between hearing and listening:

Point of difference	Hearing	Listening
1. Difference	Receiving any message through ears is known as hearing.	On the other hand explanation of the received message can be labeled as listening.
2. position in the listening process	It is the first step of listening process.	It is the next step of listening process.
3. function	Function of hearing is just to receive the verbal message.	Listening involves decoding or interpretation of the message.
4. consciousness	Consciousness is not required in hearing.	On the other hand listening is a conscious human behavior.

Hearing and listening depend on each other when receiving and transmitting a message. When this process is completed, a fluent and coherent conversation can be performed, but the leader of this success should be listening which is the one that

transmits the codes to the ears. The importance of listening comprehension is huge in daily life since it is the key of communication in the classroom for every English activity.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION.**

In our everyday learning activities, listening takes a very important role in the process of acquiring a new language, in this case, English as a foreign language. Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages" (qtd in Thompson, et al. 1994). Listening is one of the skills that everybody should develop, but most people lack it. Many people do not realize that listening is not only to hear a sound or to pay attention when someone is trying to give a message. Most of the time people think that they are listening, when actually they are hearing, but not even trying to understand what is being spoken. However, past research has revealed that a large proportion of the research findings indicate that listening is the most important skill for language learning because it is the most used language skill in normal daily life (Morley 2001; Rost 2001).

Lack of listening strategies affects not only the student but also the teacher. It affects students because acquiring a new language in our country where the mother tongue is Spanish delays the learning of new words and the ears are not used to the new sounds of words in English. For that reason, students need to have learning tools or strategies that facilitate the listening learning process. It affects the teachers because if students do not have learning strategies, the process of teaching and learning a new language would be slower. Teachers and students are a very important part when it comes to learning a new language because each one contributes an effort to achieve a listening skill in a 100%. Besides, if students realize how much they would benefit from being good listeners, things would change, and the listening skill would become the best tool to improve and increase the English listening learning process.

## **THE PROCESS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION.**

Listening is an important part of the foreign language learning process, and it has also been defined as an active process during which the listener constructs meaning from oral input (Bentley & Bacon, 1996). Besides, listening comprehension means the process of understanding speech in a second or foreign language. It is the perception of information and stimuli received through the ears (Richards, Platt, 1992). Studies have also indicated that listening comprehension consists of several procedures. The following are stages of the listening process: hearing, attention, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding. When the listening process begins, hearing, receiving the words and distinguishing the sound occur at the same time meanwhile the person is speaking.

After, the stimuli are projected in the brain and permit to select only the information that the listener is interested in focusing to understand the phonemes that he/she has heard. The meaning of the stimuli must be perceived and analyzed; the stimuli can be words and sounds. Also, in the listening process, it is important to remember the information, not just to receive and interpret a message; the information is stored in the brain to respond in meaningful words to finally evaluate and unscramble it from what has been heard to respond and achieve a better understanding and an effective communication.

When this process is completed, it is unavoidable that the ears present some difficulties to interpret the phonemes received and be transformed into a message, and it is even more difficult when a foreign language is studied, but it has to be mentioned that some difficulties do not depend on the listener but on the speaker.



## DIFFICULTIES TO ACQUIRE THE LISTENING SKILL

Every day, students face many difficulties to understand the messages due to many factors or difficulties. According to Underwood (1989), there are seven causes or obstacles to efficient listening comprehension, but the researchers have taken into account five of them: First, **students cannot control the speed of the delivery**. It is the greatest difficulty students face in listening comprehension because the listeners cannot force or ask the speakers to speak slowly.

Second, **students cannot always have words repeated**; this is a serious problem in learning English as a foreign language because, in the classroom, students cannot say to the teacher to play the audio once again; for this reason, students fail to carry out their listening activities because there are words that they cannot understand clearly.

Third, **students have limited vocabulary**. In this case, sometimes the comprehension of a listening activity depends on students' knowledge of vocabulary because when students listen to new words, they stop listening trying to understand the meaning of the words. This situation causes students to miss what follows in the activity.

Fourth, the **lack of contextual knowledge**. The teacher needs to share the knowledge about the passage together with students before carrying out the listening task; this helps students to have knowledge of the passage in which they will work on. In other words, when students have previous knowledge about the passage that they are listening to, it is easier to comprehend the message completely.

Fifth, **to achieve the concentration in listening activity**, it is important for students to concentrate before starting it. Concentration helps them to receive, to construct meaning, and to respond regardless the different accents or pronunciation that students hear. When students achieve concentration, they are not distracted by what happens around and have success performing the tasks.

In addition, listening comprehension difficulties such as the speed of speaker to talk, the misunderstanding of the message in the audio the first time it is played, and the lack of vocabulary that avoids the comprehension of unfamiliar topics and the achievement of concentration due to many distractors around are barriers that students

have to face every day in each listening activity, whether in or outside of the classroom. But, if listeners face these difficulties, it does not mean that it is impossible to develop the listening comprehension skill. Students only have to adopt a positive attitude to overcome every obstacle and become good listeners so that effective communication takes place.

To fight these difficulties, there are some strategies that work as tools in making English listening comprehension less complicated. These strategies should be learnt either by the students themselves or from the teacher. Also, it is important to learn the proper use of listening strategies to achieve success in listening activities.

## THE USE OF STRATEGIES FOR LISTENING COMPREHENSION.

In the process of learning English as a foreign language, the listening skill is considered one of the hardest language skills to be developed because when students have a listening activity, they have to face many difficulties to understand the message completely. According to Buck (2001) there are numerous difficulties which can be confronted in listening tasks such as **unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, fast speech rate and unfamiliar or different accents**. As it can be seen, students have to face these difficulties every day in each task in the classroom. Students do a listening activity, but they don't understand the different pronunciations or accents from the speakers. For example, many people who come from different countries speak English as their second language, but they have a particular English accent influenced by their mother tongue, which is hard for people to imitate or to understand. Also when students are involved in a listening activity and they cannot understand the meaning of some words, they stop the activity, lose the concentration and the sequence of the activity. As a consequence, students cannot finish the listening task on time. Moreover, it is more difficult to complete the listening activity when students do not have prior knowledge about the topic because all the information is totally unknown to them. The students lose time trying to complete the information of the task.

But among all the difficulties that have been mentioned before, there is one that causes more impact in English Foreign Language learners, it is the fast speech rate. When students are involved in a listening task, in the majority of the cases, they need the speaker to speak slowly, and the teacher plays the audio material more than once. It is necessary and crucial that students learn how to achieve the development of the listening comprehension skill to acquire the new language and to understand the message completely. The use of listening strategies is helpful to develop the listening comprehension skill; the students overcome all their difficulties to understand. In order to understand better, the learners should also learn and retain information.

## **LISTENING STRATEGIES' OPINIONS AND DEFINITIONS**

According to Vandergrift (1999), Strategy development is important for listening training because strategies are conscious tools by which learners can guide and evaluate their own comprehension and responses.

On the other hand, listening strategies are steps taken by students to improve and develop their own learning; also they are important tools for language learning, Oxford (1990). Oxford identifies six general types of learning strategies: Memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Moreover, (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), showed that strategies and the ability to use them effectively were particularly important in foreign language listening. For (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), there are three main types of listening strategies: Cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies. Mendelsohn and Robin (1995) pointed that listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input.

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. In this project, the researchers have taken into account O' Malley & Chamots' definition to characterize the listening strategies: Cognitive, metacognitive, social affective strategies.

## **COGNITIVE STRATEGIES**

Cognitive strategies are mental strategies that the students use to create sense of learning. Cognitive strategies “operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning. They are used to solve the problems that students face during learning tasks and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or skill (Derry & Murphy, 1986). Comprehension begins with the received information that is analyzed as successive levels of organization-sounds, words, as a process of decoding. The students use cognitive strategies mainly to form, to revise, to receive and to produce messages in the foreign language. As examples of cognitive strategies, the following can be mentioned: Summarizing, connecting new info to old (elaboration), translating to first language, finding main ideas, repeating words, etc.

According to Freeman, (2004) and Lin, (2006) cognitive strategies are classified depending on how the learners process the input. Cognitive strategies are classified in two types: Bottom-up and top-down strategies. Bottom- up strategies are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Also, bottom-up strategies include: Listening for specific details, recognizing cognates and recognizing word-order patterns. Otherwise, top- down strategies are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. The background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Also, top-down strategies include listening for the main idea, predicting, drawing inferences and summarizing.

## **METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES**

Metacognitive strategies are actions we perform consciously to increase or facilitate our learning process and are good strategies when we want to improve our listening skill. According to Oxford (1990), the conscious use of metacognitive strategies helps learners get back their focus when they lose it. These strategies are very useful in the classroom or in the listening learning process. As students with the practice of these strategies it is gotten a better result when putting into practice what the students have learned; since metacognitive strategies have a number of steps to achieve a better learning. Metacognitive strategies are management techniques employed by learners to have control over their learning through planning, monitoring, evaluating, and modifying (Rubin. 1987).

- Planning: developing an awareness of what needs to be done to accomplish a listening task developing an appropriate action plan.
- Monitoring: checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a listening task.
- Evaluating: checking the outcomes of one's listening comprehension against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.
- Modifying: explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion.

Metacognitive strategies involve knowing our knowledge and recognizing our own cognitive skills to evaluate what we have learned and what we need to learn. However, metacognitive strategies become very important tools when we are developing our learning. With the practice of these strategies, we understand, learn and analyze more deeply the development that each skill takes; for this reason, it is easier for us to improve our learning. Metacognitive strategies allow us to learn new things and use our knowledge to solve problems in different situations.

## **SOCIAL/ AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**

Social strategies involve the students' social relation with their classmates; communication takes place in or out of the classroom. The use of these strategies helps to work with other students and at the same time, they help them to learn better. O'Malley & Chamot, (1990) pointed that social /affective strategies create and promote positive emotional reactions and attitudes towards language learning. Affective strategies refer to emotional and psychological situations on students; it means to make both emotional and psychological changes that will help students learn better. In other words, when students are too worried, their affective system does not function normally, and it interferes with listening comprehension (Oxford 1990). It is essential for students to know how to reduce anxiety in order to feel confident when doing listening tasks, and promote personal motivation in improving listening competence.

In addition, the use of social and affective strategies influences on student's success or failure, during a listening activity. Asking someone to clarify what was the meaning of the listening task, working cooperatively with others to do a language task, and sharing answers and questions with others are some examples of social strategies. In the same way, focusing on what students are hearing, not on what is missed, and tolerating/accepting the fact that many things are unclear or cannot be understood are examples of affective strategies.

In a general sense, the use of strategies to develop listening skill is essential in students who are learning English as a foreign language. As Oxford defined (1990), "learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning, and they are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active self - directive involvement; also strategies facilitate learning to become easy, enjoyable and transferable to new situations. In other words, an effective communication occurs."

It's also the teachers' job to facilitate the development of English listening comprehension. An excellent teacher knows his students' needs and knows which strategies he has to use to fight the difficulties that his students have.

## TEACHING STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP STUDENTS ' LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL

As mentioned at the beginning, the learning language process depends on the listening skill to a great extent because listening provides the aural input. The input is the basis for language acquisition and the result of this acquisition is the effective communication among people.

To assist students in acquiring new knowledge in a better way, the teacher should develop learning strategies. According to Harmer (2001, "How to teach English") developing new learning strategies includes teaching students to:

- Use textbooks: This involves guiding students; show them how to work with their textbooks.
- Use the communicative approach. Teachers should not permit students to use the mother tongue during speaking activities.
- Read for the gist. Teachers have to explain and show their students how to mark with texts. This helps students to read only the most important parts from the texts.
- Deal with unfamiliar vocabulary. Teachers are supposed to provide their learners with the suitable context.
- Use a dictionary. Teachers ought to explain how to make the best use of the dictionary.

The teacher has to take into account all these learning strategies to help students to develop their listening comprehension skill. In other words, teachers carry a big responsibility in their classroom; teachers have an enormous impact on their students, either positive or negative. Also a teacher helps students to develop a set of listening strategies and match appropriate strategies to each listening situation.

Oxford, (1990) pinpoints **listening strategies** are steps taken by students to improve and develop their own learning. But talking about teachers, it is important to name the **goals and strategies used to teach listening**.



In the listening process, the teacher develops students' knowledge in listening strategies by asking students to think and talk about how they listen in their native language to permit students to practice the full repertoire of listening strategies by using authentic listening tasks. Besides, when students work with listening tasks in class, teachers show them the strategies that will work best for the listening purpose and the type of text. The teacher explains how and why students should use the strategies and has students practice listening strategies in class and asks them to practice outside of class.

Finally, the teacher helps his/her students to develop both the ability and the confidence to communicate inside or outside of the classroom and, at the same time, gives students the basis for affective communication.

Another important aspect is that the teacher has to integrate metacognitive strategies to teach listening. These happen before, during, and after listening. Before listening, the teacher has **to plan the listening task**, to set a purpose or to decide in advance what to listen for, and if more background knowledge is needed, to determine whether to enter the text from the top down (attend to the overall meaning) or from the bottom up (focus on the words and phrases). During and after listening, the teacher has **to monitor comprehension**, verify predictions, and check for inaccurate guesses; furthermore, the teacher should decide what is and is not important to understand. After listening, the teacher has **to evaluate comprehension** and use of strategy. In this case, the teacher has to evaluate comprehension in a particular task or area, and evaluate the global progress in the listening activity or task or in other types of listening tasks.

## **LISTENING ACTIVITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LISTENING SKILLS.**

Teachers are always looking for activities to develop in the classroom. Students believe that a guide from teachers is essential to develop their listening skill since students with good listening comprehension skills are able to participate effectively in class (Brown, 2001). If students had the ability to listen and analyze what they hear, they would develop an effective performance in communication, not only as students, but also at a personal level. Therefore, there are activities that help the teacher to develop the students' listening skills. These activities allow the students to use what they know in order to become active learners in the classroom. For example, some teachers use the following kinds of activities to improve the listening skill:

**Interpersonal Activities:** One effective way for students to develop stronger listening skills is through interpersonal activities, such as interviews and storytelling. The teacher has the students working in small groups (two or three), and then gives them a particular listening activity to accomplish. For example, the teacher may have one student interview another one for a job with a company. Even a storytelling activity, such as one that answers the question "What was your favorite movie from last year?" can give students the opportunity to ask one another questions to practice active listening skills later.

**Group Activities:** Larger group activities also serve as a helpful method for teaching listening skills to students. The teacher can begin with a simple group activity. First, he/she divides students into groups of five or more and instructs them to share their hobbies and to remember what others said. Encourage them to ask clarifying questions during the activity, and the teacher may allow them to take notes if helpful. However, as time passes and the students' skills grow, the teacher should limit students to only write notes after the completion of the first part of the group activity. Second, the students are asked to sit in a large circle, and then each student shares the name and the hobby of some group members that she or he met. This second part of the group activity can also be the basis for additional listening exercises.

**Audio Segments:** The teacher can also teach listening skills through audio segments of radio programs, online podcasts, instructional lectures and other audio messages. She/he should model this interactive listening process in class with the students, and then instructs them to repeat the exercise on their own. First, students are said to prepare for listening by considering anything that they would like to learn from the content of the audio segment. Once they have written down or shared these ideas, the teacher plays the audio material, allowing the students to take notes if helpful. Once they have gained confidence and experience, this activity is repeated, but instructing students not to take notes until the audio segment is completed. The teacher can use shorter or longer recordings, and choose more accessible or more challenging material for this type of exercise.

**Video Segments:** Another helpful resource for teaching listening skills is video segments, including short sketches, news programs, documentary films, interview segments, and dramatic material. As with audio segments, select the portion and length of the video segment based on the skill level of the students; first, the teacher watches the segment without any sound and discusses it together with the students. The students are encouraged to identify what they think the content of the segment will be. Then, the students watch the segment again, this time with sound, allowing them to take notes, if helpful, according to their skill level. After the completion of the video segment, the teacher can have students write a brief summary of the segment, or you can take time to discuss as a group how the segment compares with the students' expectations.

Apart from these activities that the teacher can make in the classroom, there is a very useful and effective strategy to develop the listening skill. Linguists like Porter & Porter (1987), Brown (2001), and Mangubhai (2002) recommend the use of authentic text to help students to further develop their communicative skills. The use of authentic listening materials is an important factor to take into account when designing listening comprehension materials. By using listening materials, the student is given the chance to develop the skills needed to understand and to use language that is commonly found in real situations. For this reason, it is very important that the teacher carries out these

### The use of strategies in the development of the listening comprehension skill

activities and strategies in the classroom, and it's also very important for students to participate in each one of them. However, it is also important to design lessons and teaching materials to further develop listening comprehension skills since students need to be motivated in the classroom.

## DEFINITION OF BASIC TERMS

**Listening.** Is the process of receiving, constructing meaning and responding to spoken and/ or nonverbal messages

**Hearing.** Is a physical and natural process, is passive, only a simple reception of sounds.

**Listening strategies** refer to decision making operations which a learner employs in processing a listening task.

**Bottom- up strategies** are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning.

**Top- down strategies** are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language.

**Cognitive strategies** are mental strategies that the students use to create sense of learning. Cognitive strategies “operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning”.

**Metacognitive strategies** are actions we perform consciously to increase or facilitate our learning process and are good strategies when we want to improve our listening skill. The conscious use of metacognitive strategies helps learners get back their focus when they lose it.

**Social strategies** involve the students’ social relation with their classmates; the communication takes place in or out of the classroom. The use of these strategies helps to work with other students and at the same time to help them to learn better

**Affective strategies** refer to emotional and psychological situations on students; it means to make both emotional and psychological changes that will help students learn better. In other words when students worry too much, their affective system does not function normally and interferes with listening comprehension

### **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

To answer the research question of this project, the researchers formulated objectives that helped to collect important and concrete information to obtain the expected findings over the investigation. Researchers collected information from thesis projects and articles that were related with the research question and the objectives. Three sets of data were gathered, which are divided according to the strategies in which the research was developed; cognitive, metacognitive, and social / affective.

The study group for this research was a group of 104 students. The instrument that was used to collect the information was the survey. This survey evaluated the strategies that were used the most by the students. The data were collected from the learners who were taking Intensive Intermediate English I, during semester II-2013 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. Also, the researchers designed another survey for 10 teachers who were teaching Intensive Intermediate English I in the same semester, so this would be helpful to know the strategies that teachers used to develop the students' listening skill and to know what teachers think about those strategies.

The surveys were done in order to collect updated and real information from students and teachers that develop strategies for a better learning in every listening activity performed either in or out of the classroom. All the information gathered plays an important role in this research since it is going to answer the research question. The central goal of this project is to identify the different strategies used by students to develop their listening comprehension skill. To obtain this information, it was necessary to work with a large sample of students and teachers to achieve a satisfactory investigation.

## **SAMPLE**

Since the research project took place at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, the researchers had to work with a considerable sample to state the findings to answer the research question and to accomplish the objectives. According to the Foreign Language Department, there were 12 Intensive Intermediate English I groups in different schedules: 6:15am-8am, 10am-12m, 1pm-3pm and 5pm-7pm, but the researchers considered appropriate to work only with 6 groups having 104 students in total among men and women from different ages to be used as sample.

The researchers decided to work with the intermediate level since it is then when the students begin to solidify English as a foreign language, so they begin creating and applying their own strategies or strategies learned either from the teachers or their own classmates to facilitate the process of developing their listening skills.

Besides, the research project needed the collaboration from teachers to collect relevant data. The researchers found that 10 teachers were in charge of Intensive Intermediate English I, and it was considered enough to know the strategies the students use to develop the listening comprehension skills before, during, and after listening activities.

Both teachers and students were important to obtain the major findings in this project. They kindly cooperated with the researchers in spite of the fact that they did not have enough available time since the final exams were approaching, so the researchers tried to use a method that is not long, tiring or boring for the participants. The researchers also looked for instruments that could facilitate their research project, and in the end, they got more solutions and ideas that helped them achieve the expected results.

## **INSTRUMENTS OF DATA GATHERING**

The instrument used to gather the data in this research was the survey. This instrument was helpful because it allowed the researchers to collect students' and teachers' information individually and without any pressure. A letter was sent to the different teachers in charge of the Intensive Intermediate English I courses in order to get permission to administer the instruments to the students as study objects. When the permission was given, the researchers passed the surveys to students and teachers at the same time in order to collect and obtain the required results, the researchers were available to respond any doubt if needed.



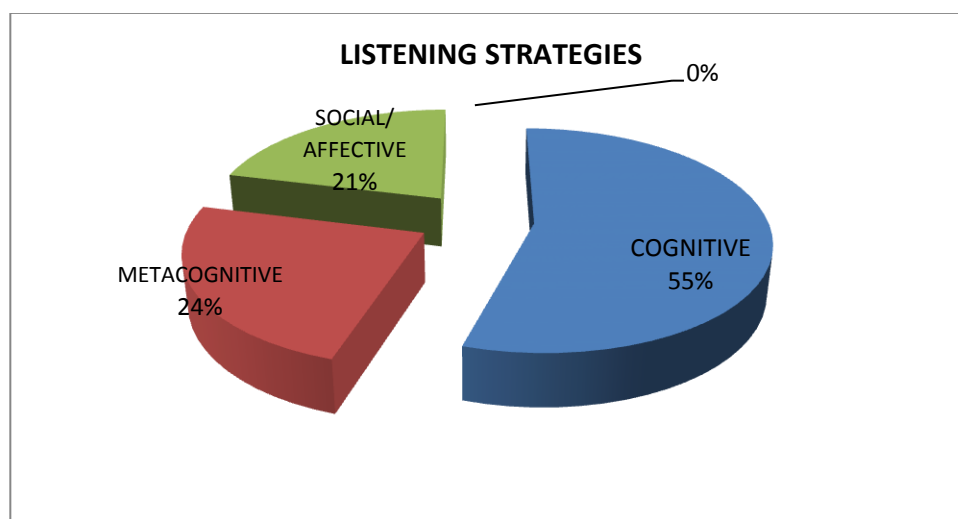
## DATA ANALYSIS

### RESULTS OF STUDENTS' SURVEYS.

The following data present the real and current information from the research done by the researchers. The graphs are based on the responses given by students and teachers from Intensive Intermediate English I. Each graph explains the results of the surveys for a better understanding of the data.

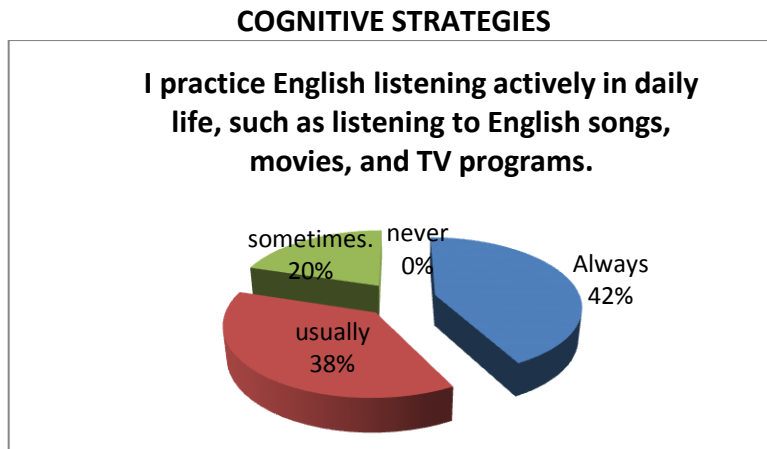
#### STRATEGIES USED BY STUDENTS FOR DEVELOPING THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL

##### 1. Strategies used by students for developing English listening comprehension skill.



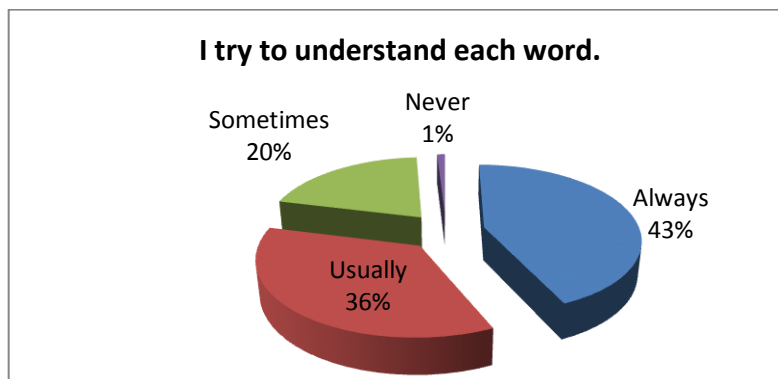
In this graph the three types of listening strategies used by the students are presented. 55% of the students answered that they use cognitive strategies, 24% of them use metacognitive strategies. On the other hand, 21% use social/ affective strategies. This allows us to observe that students prefer to use cognitive strategies such as practicing English listening actively in daily life by listening to songs, or watching movies or T.V. programs, among others.

## 2-Listening strategies frequently used by students.



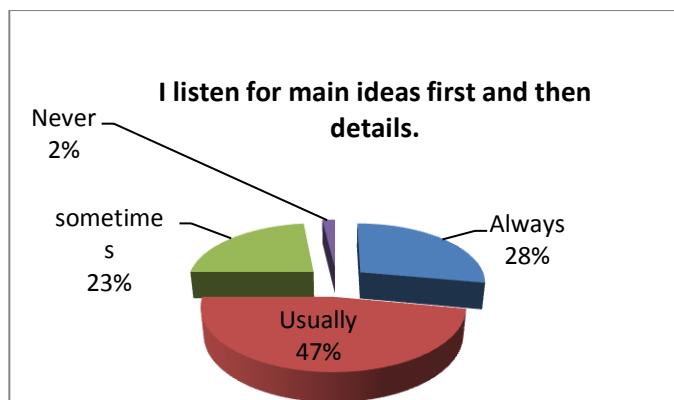
In the category of Cognitive Strategies, the most used strategy is “I practice English listening actively in daily life, such as listening to English songs, movies, and TV programs”. According to students’ results, 42% of them always use this strategy while 38% of students usually use it. 20% of students use this strategy sometimes and 0% never use this cognitive strategy. This graphic shows that most of the students practice English listening actively in daily life.

### Bottom- up strategies



In the sub category of Bottom -Up Strategies, the most used strategy is “I try to understand each word”. According to the results, 43% of the students always use this strategy while, 36% of them usually use it. 20% of the students sometimes use this strategy, and 1% of the students never use this Bottom-up strategy. This graphic shows that most of the students always try to understand each word when they are developing any listening activity.

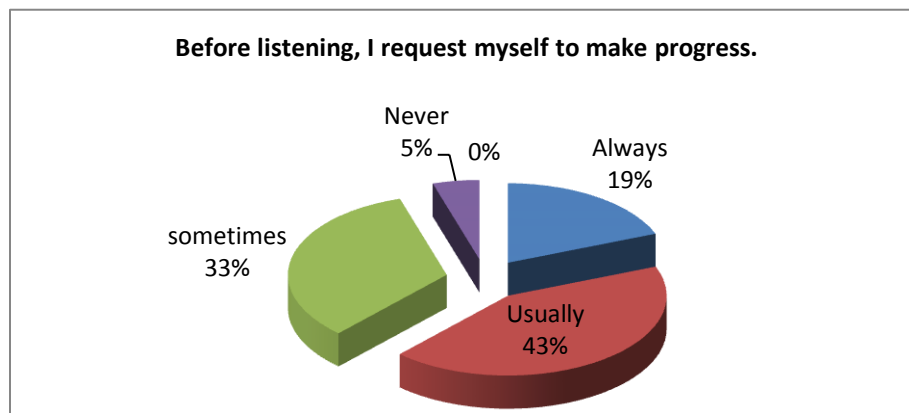
### Top-down strategies



In the sub category of Top-Down Strategies, the most used strategy is “I listen for main ideas first and then for details”. According to the results, 47% of the students usually use this strategy while 28% of them always use it. 23% of the students sometimes use this strategy, and 2% of them never use this Top- down strategy. This graphic shows that most of the students usually listen for main ideas first and then details when they are developing any listening activity.

### METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

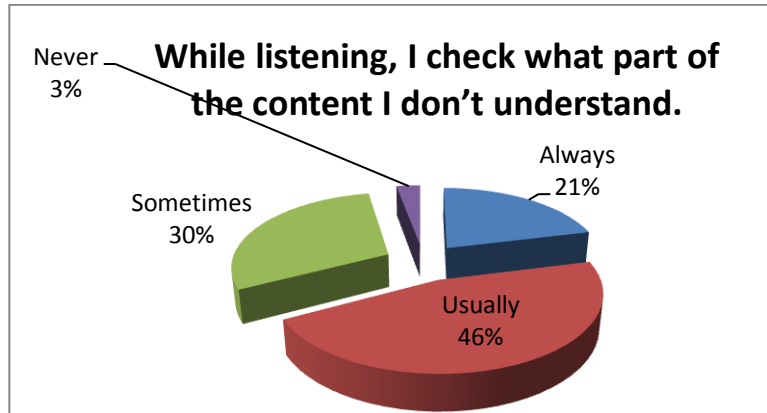
#### Pre-listening Strategies



In the sub category of Pre-listening Strategies, the most used strategy is “Before listening, I request myself to make progress”. According to the results, 43% of the students usually use this strategy, 33% of them sometimes use this strategy, 19% of them always use this it, and 5% of the students never use this Bottom-up strategy. This graphic shows that the highest percentage of the surveyed students, before listening, request

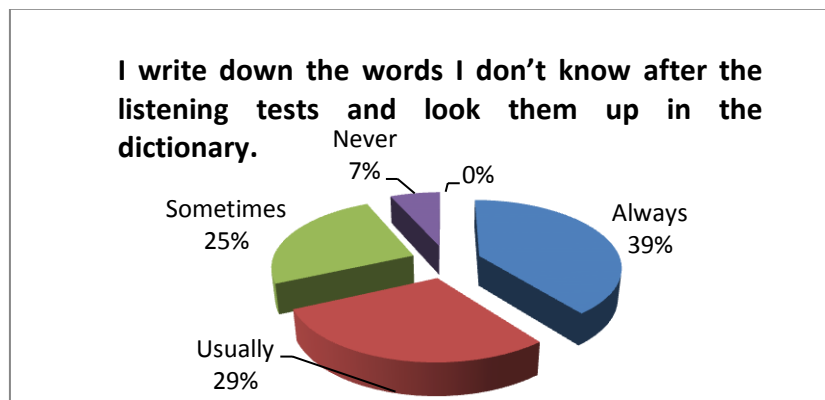
themselves to make progress to clarify the goals of a task and try to propose strategies for development before they engage in any listening activity.

**While-listening monitoring strategies.**



In the sub category of While-Listening Monitoring Strategies, the most used strategy is “While listening, I check what part of the content I don’t understand”. According to the results, 46% of the students usually use this strategy while 30% of them sometimes use this strategy, 21% of them always use this strategy, and 3% of the students never use this While-Listening Monitoring strategy. This graphic shows that the highest percentage of the surveyed students check what part of the content they don’t understand while developing any listening activity.

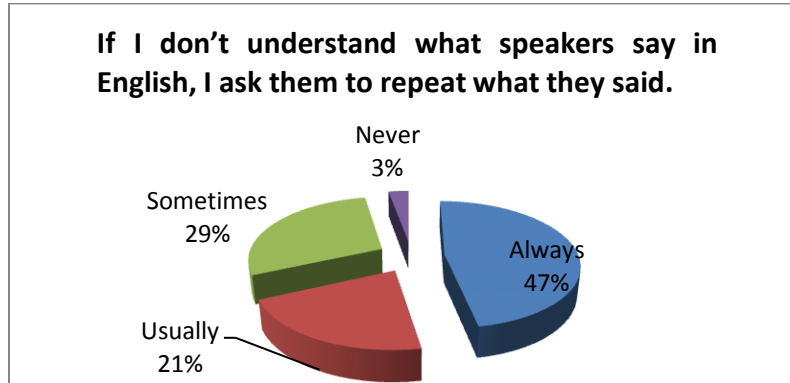
**Post-listening evaluation strategies.**



In the sub category of Post- Listening Evaluation Strategies the most used strategy is “I write the words I don’t know after the listening tests and look them up in a dictionary”. According to the results, 39% of the students always use this strategy while 29% of them usually use it. 25% of the students sometimes use this strategy, and 7% of them never use this Post- listening Evaluation strategy. This graphic shows that the highest percentage of the surveyed students write the words they don’t know after the listening tests and look them up in a dictionary after developing any listening activity.

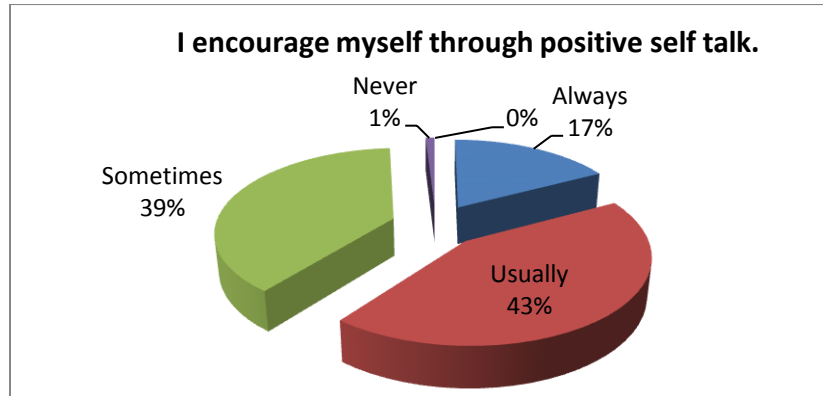
### SOCIAL/ AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

#### Social strategies



In the category of Social Strategies, the most used strategy is “If I don’t understand what speakers say in English, I ask them to repeat”. According to the results, 47% of the students always use this strategy while 29% of them sometimes use it. 21% of the students usually use it, and 3% of them never use this Social strategy. This graphic shows that the highest percentage of the surveyed students ask to repeat if they don’t understand what speakers say in English when they are developing any listening activity.

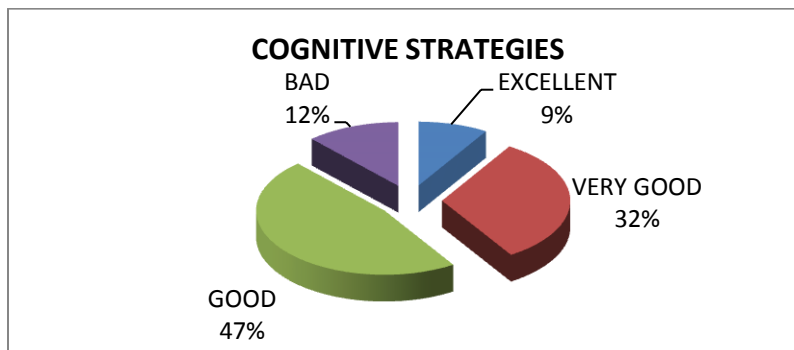
### Affective strategies



In the sub category of Affective Strategies the most used strategy is “I encourage myself through positive self-talk”. According to the results, 43% of the students usually use this strategy while, 39% of them sometimes use it. 17% of the students always use this strategy, and 1% of them never use this Affective strategy. This graphic shows that the highest percentage of the surveyed students encourage themselves through positive self-talk when they are developing any listening activity.

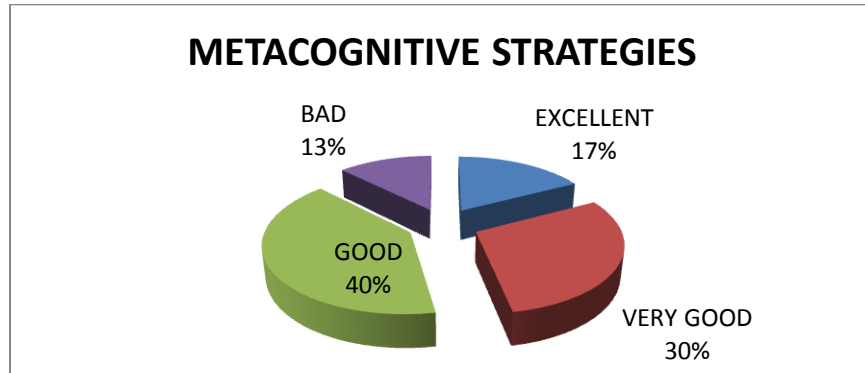
### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF LISTENING STRATEGIES.

#### 4-How do you rank the results of the use of the listening strategies to develop your listening skill?

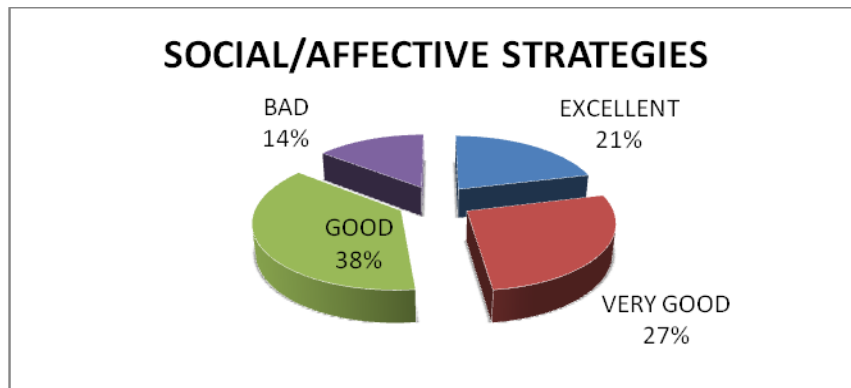


The effectiveness of the use of cognitive listening strategies was graded by the students as excellent, very good, good, and bad. 47% of the students answered that the use of cognitive strategies is good to develop their listening comprehension skill, 32% of

them answered that the use of cognitive strategies is very good, 12% of them answered the using them is bad, but 9% of the students answered that using them is excellent to develop their listening comprehension skill.



Regarding the effectiveness of the use of Metacognitive listening strategies, 40% of the students answered that the use of Metacognitive strategies is good to develop their listening comprehension skill. 30% of them answered that using them is very good, 17% of them answered that using them is excellent, but 13% of the students answered that the use of Metacognitive strategies is bad to develop their listening comprehension skill.



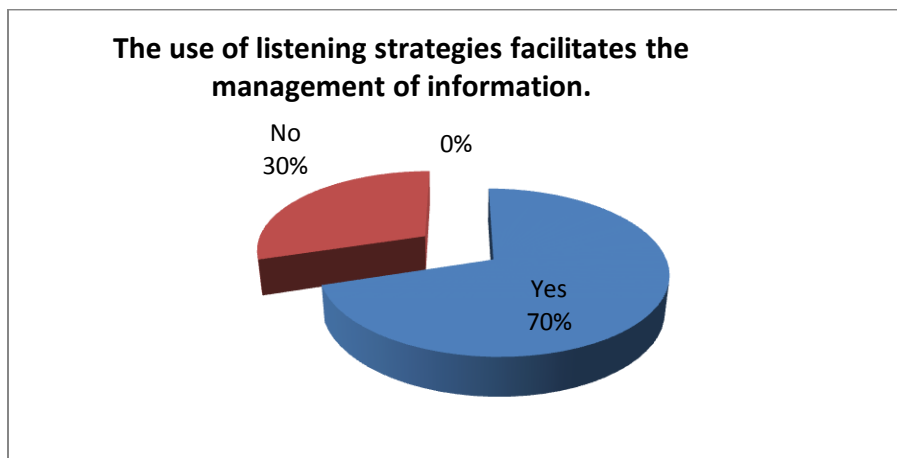
The results indicated that 38% of the students rated the use of social/affective listening strategies as good to develop the listening comprehension skill while 27% of the students considered that the use of these listening strategies is very good to develop their listening. 21% of the students considered the use of social/affective listening strategies excellent, and 14% of them considered the use of listening strategies bad.

**5-In your opinion, how helpful are the previously selected strategies to develop your listening comprehension?**



According to the results, 48% of the students answered that the previously selected strategies are helpful to increase listening, 24% of them answered that the strategies facilitate their listening through the practice, 13% of the students answered that the strategies help to understand the topics, 8% of them answered that the strategies are helpful to communicate among people, and 7% of them answered that the strategies are helpful to focus when listening.

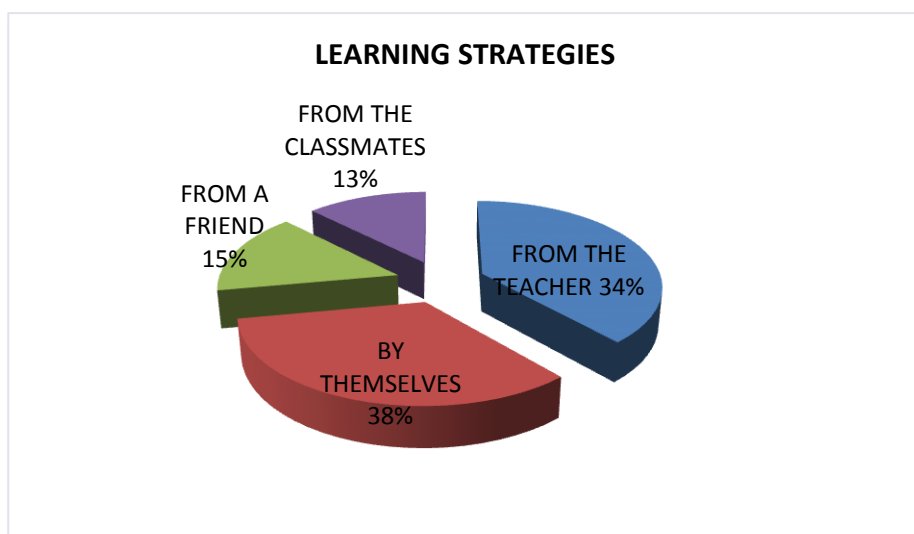
**6-The use of listening strategies facilitates you the management of the information?**





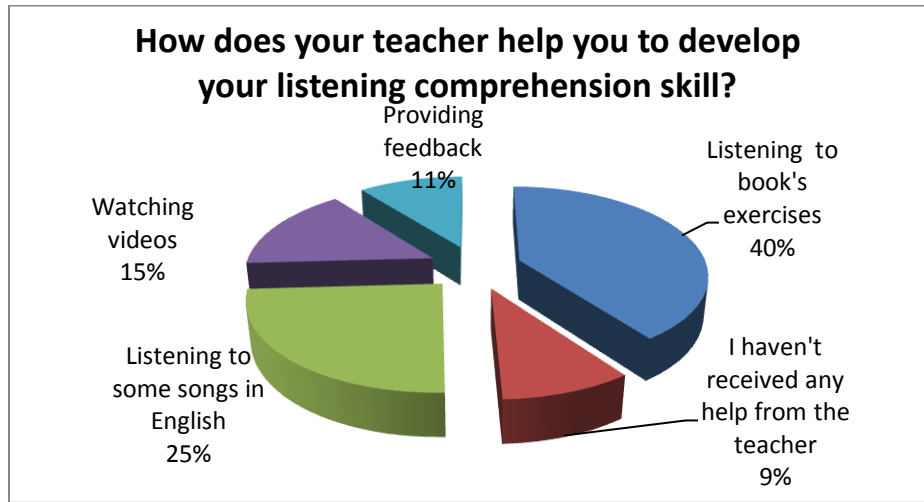
This graphic shows that 70% of the students answered that the use of listening strategies facilitates them the management of information while they are developing a listening activity. On the other hand, 30 % of the students answered that the use of listening strategies does not facilitate them the management of information while they are participating in a listening activity.

### 7-From whom have you learned these strategies?



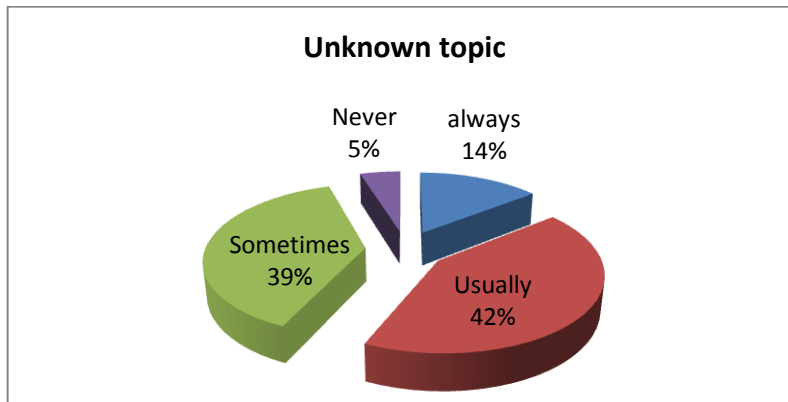
The graphic shows that 38% of students have learned listening strategies by themselves, while 34% of them have learned listening strategies from the teacher. 15% of them have learned these strategies from any friend while 13% of the students have learned listening strategies from their classmates.

**8-How does your teacher help you to develop your listening comprehension skill?**



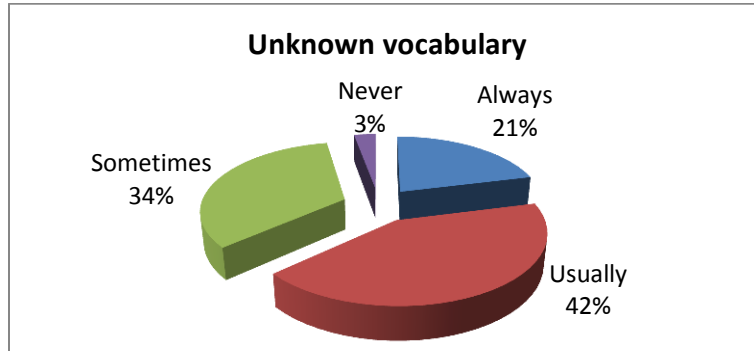
According to the results, 40% of the students answered that teachers help them to develop their listening comprehension skill by listening to books' exercises, 25% of them answered that teachers help them by listening to some songs in English, 15% of the students answered that teachers help them by watching videos, 11% of them answered that teachers help them by providing feedback, and 9% of the students answered that they haven't received any help from their teachers.

**9- How often do you face difficulties during the listening activities?**

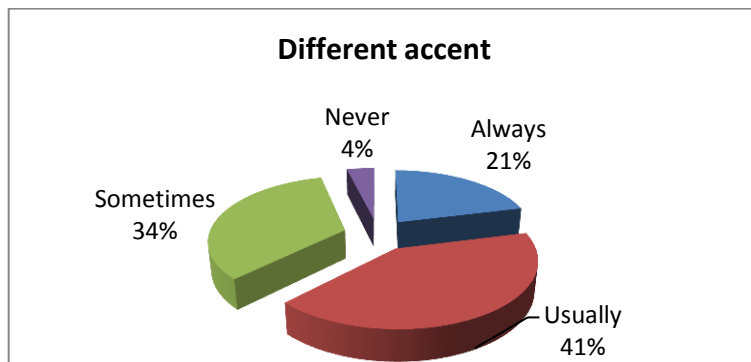


According to the results, 42% of the students answered that they usually face the difficulty of "unknown topic", 39% of them answered that they sometimes face unknown topics, 14% of the students answered that they always face them, and 5% of them

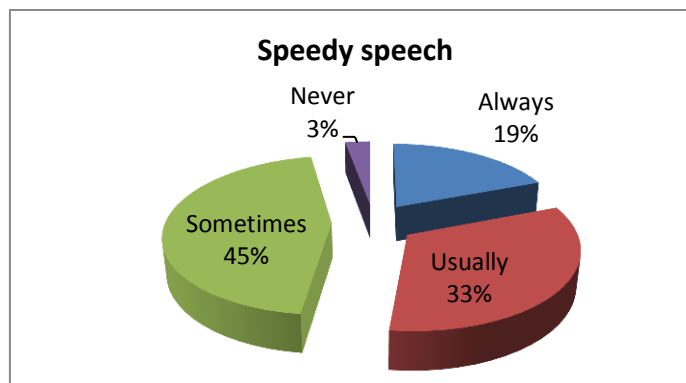
answered that they never face this difficulty. This graphic shows that highest percentage of students usually face unknown topics when they are developing any listening activity.



According to the results, 42% of the students answered that they usually face the difficulty of “unknown vocabulary”, 34% of them answered that they sometimes face unknown vocabulary, 21 % of the students answered that they always face it, and 3% of them answered that they never face this difficulty. This graphic shows that the highest percentage of students usually face unknown vocabulary when they are developing any listening activity.



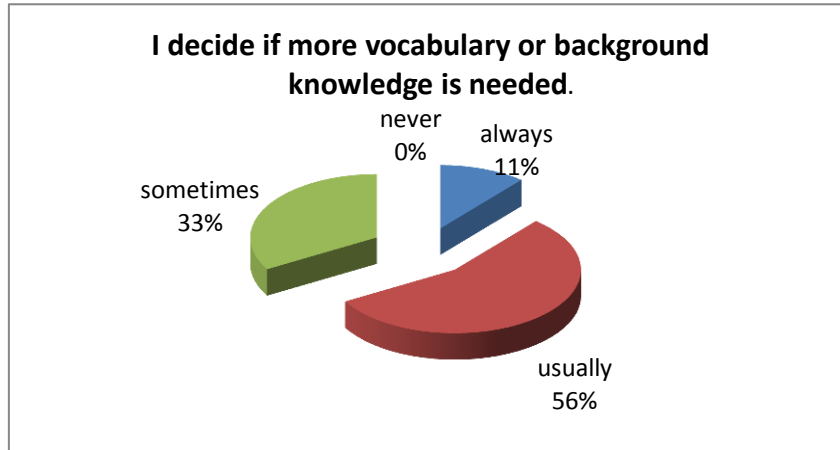
According to the results, 41% of the students answered that they usually face the difficulty of “different accent”, 34% of them answered that they sometimes face different accents, 21% of the students answered that they always face it, and 4% of them answered that they never face this difficulty. This graphic shows that most of the students usually face different accents when they are developing any listening activity.



According to the results, 45% of the students answered that they sometimes face the difficulty of “speedy speech”, 33% answered that they usually face speedy speech, 19% of the students answered that they always face this problem, and 3% of them answered that they never face this difficulty. This graphic shows that students sometimes face speedy speech when they are developing any listening activity.

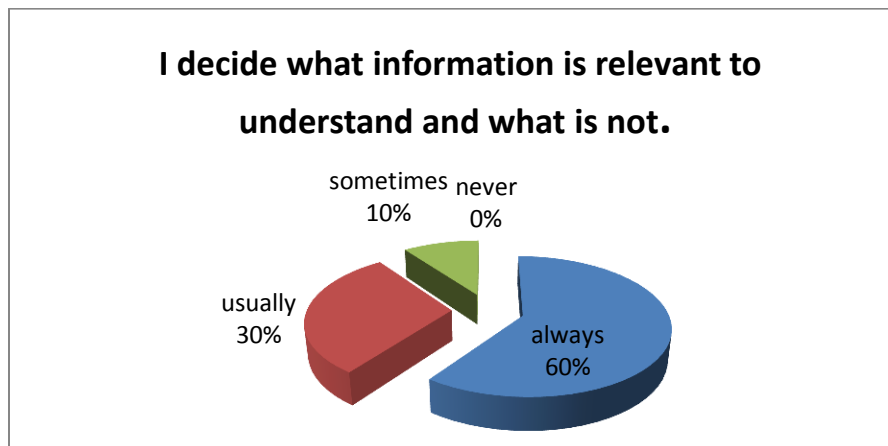
## RESULTS OF TEACHERS' SURVEYS.

### 1-Before listening: Plan for the listening task



According to these results, 56% of the teachers answered that they usually decide if more vocabulary or background knowledge is needed while 33% of them answered that they sometimes do it, and 11% of them answered that they always use this strategy to develop the students' listening skill.

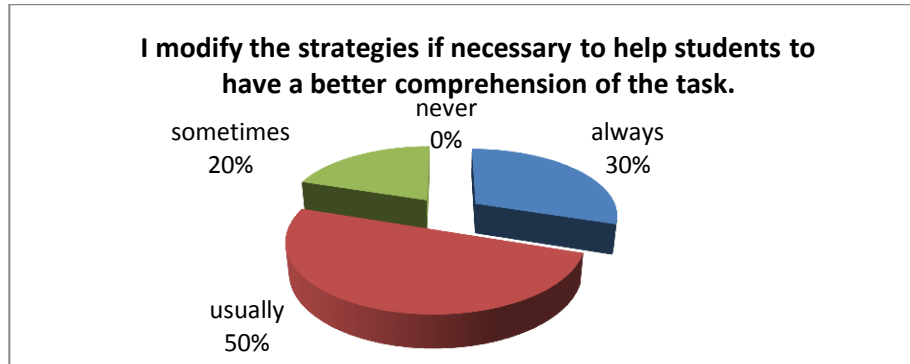
### 2-During listening: Monitor comprehension



According to the results, 60% of the teachers answered that they always decide which information is relevant to understand and which is not while 30% of them answered

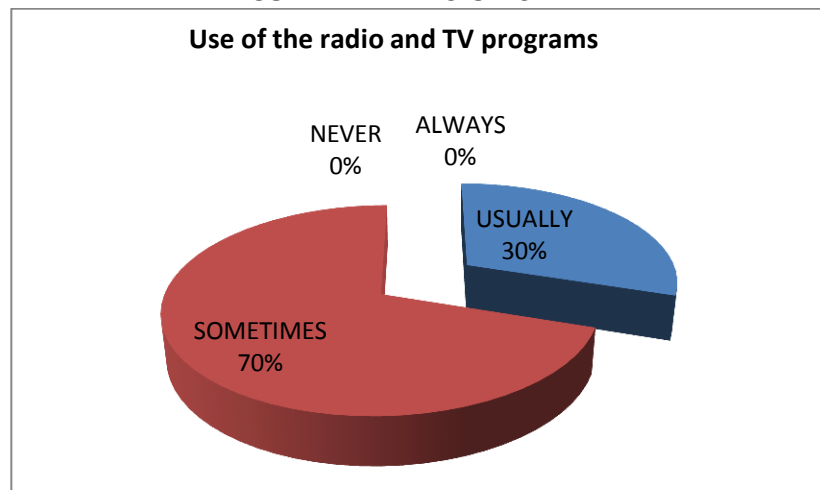
they usually do it, and only 10% of them answered that they sometimes use this strategy to develop the students' listening skill.

**3- After listening: Evaluate comprehension and strategy used.**

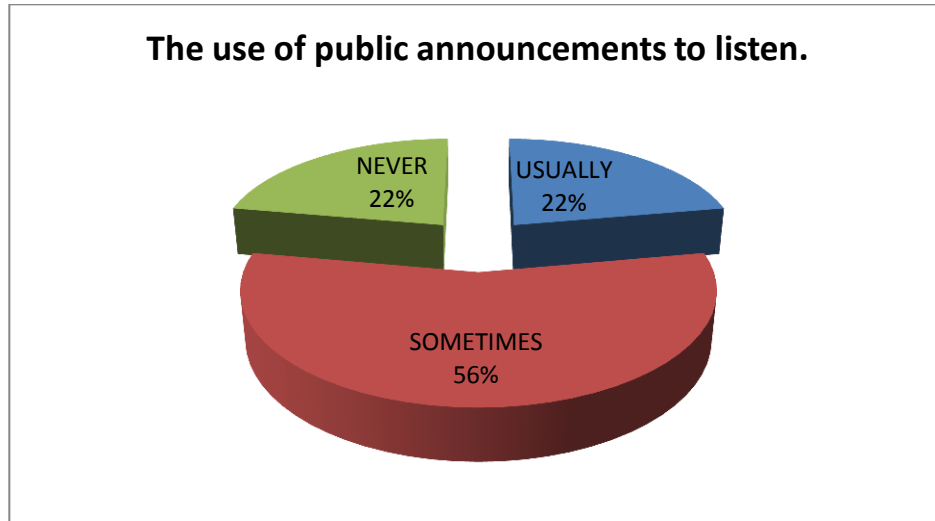


According to the results, 50% of the teachers answered that they usually modify the strategies if necessary to help students to have a better comprehension of the task while 30% of them answered that they always use this strategy, and 20% of them answered that they sometimes use this strategy to develop the students' listening skill

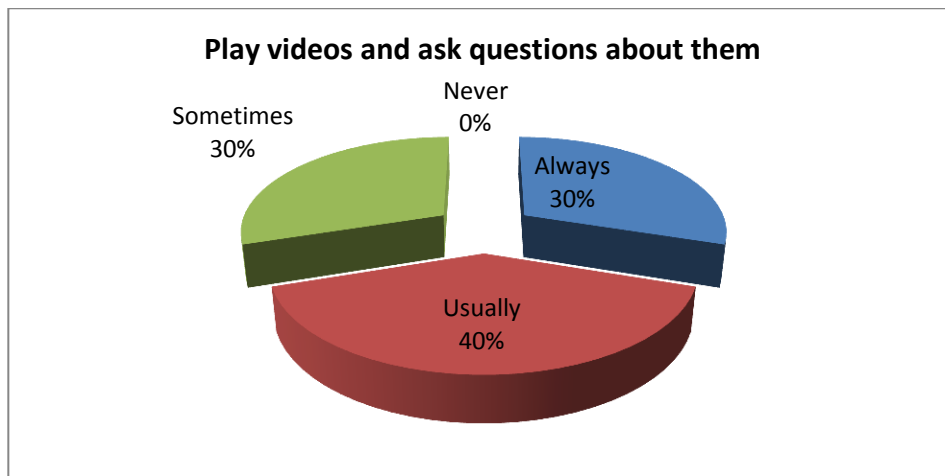
**MATERIALS USED BY TEACHERS TO HELP STUDENTS TO DEVELOP THEIR LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL.**



The results indicate that 70% of the teachers answered they sometimes use the radio and T.V. programs inside the classroom while 30% of them answered they usually use them to help students to develop their listening comprehension skill.

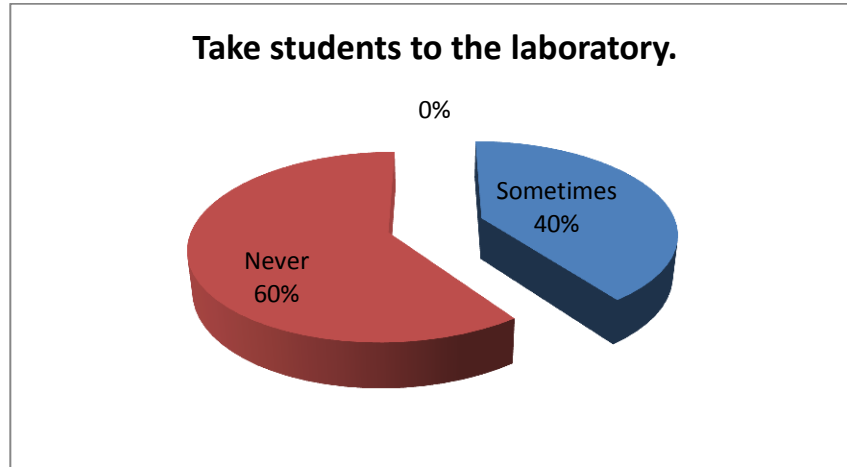


The results indicate that 56% of the teachers answered they sometimes use public announcements in the classroom while 22% of them answered they usually use public announcement in class. Also, 22% of them answered they never use public announcements to help students to develop their listening comprehension skill.



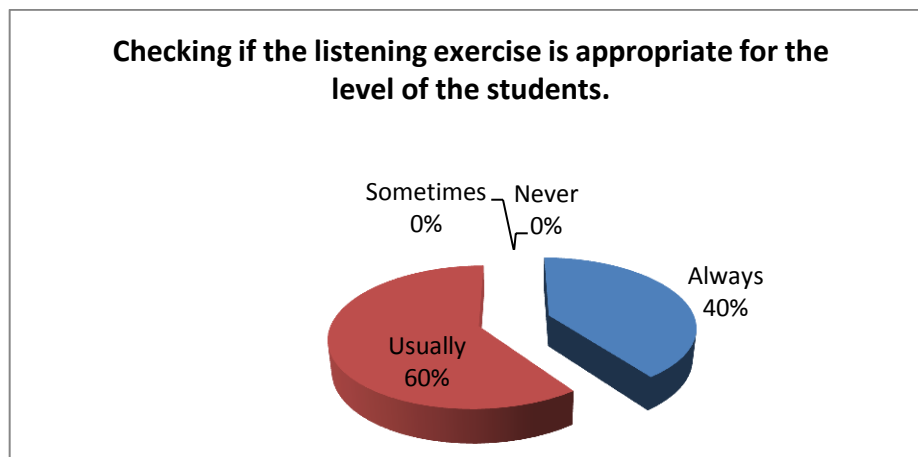
The results showed that 40% of the teachers usually play videos and ask questions about them after the activity while 30% of them answered that they always use this

material, and 30% of the teachers answered that they sometimes play videos and ask students about them.



The results showed that 60% of the teachers answered that they never take students to the laboratory to practice listening. While 40% of them answered that they sometimes take students to the laboratory. It is important to analyze the results in this question. It means that a high percentage of teachers do not take advantage of the resources that the University of El Salvador provides them with in order to help their students to develop the listening comprehension skill.

**In general, which of the following strategies do you use to develop the listening comprehension skill in your students?**





The results show that 40% of the teachers answered that they always check if the listening exercise is appropriate for the level of the students while 60% of them answered that they usually use this strategy generally to develop the listening comprehension skill in their students.

The graphics show the results taken out from the surveys passed to teachers and students in order to collect the data to establish the results of the research project. The graphics show real data that the researchers collected from teachers and students who kindly cooperated in the carrying out of this project. Also the graphics show the frequency in which every strategy is put into practice. These graphics were helpful to discover the major findings that reveal some interesting facts that may be unimaginable for the researchers.

## **CHAPTER 4. MAJOR FINDINGS**

This research was based on finding the different strategies that students use to develop their listening comprehension skills in English as a foreign language as well as the different strategies that teachers use to develop students' listening skills inside the classroom. The main results are subdivided into two groups: the students' results from 104 students of Intensive Intermediate English I obtained from the surveys answered individually, and the teachers' results obtained from surveys administered to 10 teachers which were also answered individually.

### **STUDENTS' FINDINGS**

The findings obtained from the students' surveys revealed the eight main strategies among cognitive (bottom-up and top-down), metacognitive and social/affective strategies that students use to develop their English listening skill, and they are listed below:

#### **COGNITIVE STRATEGIES:**

I practice English listening actively in daily life, such as listening to English songs, movies, and TV programs.

**2- Bottom- up strategies:** I try to understand each word.

**3- Top-down strategies:** I listen for main ideas first and then details.

#### **METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES:**

**4- Pre-listening Strategies:** Before listening, I request myself to make progress.

**5- While-listening monitoring strategies:** While listening, I check what part of the content I don't understand.

**6- Post-listening evaluation strategies:** I write down the words I don't know after the listening tests and look them up in a dictionary.

### **SOCIAL/ AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**

**7- Social strategies:** If I don't understand what speakers say in English, I ask them to repeat what they said.

**8- Affective strategies:** I encourage myself through positive self-talk.

It is really important to mention that students use the cognitive strategies the most, which means that students prefer to do activities such as listening to songs in English, watching movies or T.V. programs, and translating words or sentences into Spanish, among others. The previously mentioned activities were the ones that students considered efficient or appropriate for their listening comprehension process. Moreover, according to the students' results, cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies present a positive effect on them and are surely helpful to increase their listening comprehension.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF LISTENING STRATEGIES.**

The effectiveness of the use of listening strategies was ranked in four categories: excellent, very good, good and bad, from which students selected one category to grade how effective the strategies they use are. According to the students' findings, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and social/ affective strategies have a "good" effectiveness on them, presenting the higher percentages (47%, 40% and 38% respectively). These percentages show that students consider the use of strategies neither effective nor inefficient, but they were asked to write how the strategies are helpful to develop their listening comprehension and five main reasons were found:

- 1- To increase listening
- 2- To facilitate listening through practice.
- 3- To help students understand the topics.
- 4- To communicate among people
- 5- To focus when listening

Among these five reasons, the majority of the students (48%) considered that listening strategies are helpful to increase their listening, so students surely use strategies as tools in the process of developing listening comprehension. The use of strategies facilitates the management of the information while students are in a listening activity since they have considerable difficulties such as unknown topic, unknown vocabulary, different accent and speedy speech. Also, students agreed that teachers are a fundamental part in this complicated process because they have learned strategies first from themselves and then from their teachers who have worked as facilitators in making this process easier.

## TEACHERS' FINDINGS

The findings obtained from the teachers' surveys revealed four main strategies that teachers use to develop the students' listening skill inside the classroom. They are listed below:

### **1-Before listening: Plan for the listening task**

**Strategy:** I decide if more vocabulary or background knowledge is needed.

### **2-During listening: Monitor comprehension**

**Strategy:** I decide which information is relevant to understand and which is not.

### **3- After listening: Evaluate comprehension and strategy used**

**Strategy:** I modify the strategies if necessary to help students to have a better comprehension of the task.

### **4-In general, which of the following strategies do you use to develop the listening comprehension skill in your students?**

**Strategy:** Checking if the listening exercise is appropriate for the level of the students.

Teachers also revealed the use they give to the materials supposed to be used. According to the teachers' answers, they sometimes use the radio, TV programs, or public announcements. Maybe this material does not have the necessary effect on students and that is maybe why teachers do not use it with more frequency. Meanwhile, to play videos and to ask questions about them turned out to be the most useful material since teachers usually use it in the classroom. Finally, one important material is the University's laboratory. According to the majority of the teachers, they do not take their students to the lab. It is important to pay attention to this because teachers should have the initiative to use the resources that the University provides them with, and it may be a little bit more helpful in developing students' listening skills.

## **CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

To conclude with the research, students who worked as study objects use eight strategies that belong to cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective listening strategies learned by themselves and from their teachers in order to facilitate the process of developing English listening skills. Students considered these strategies have a good effect on them since they help them to increase their listening skills.

Also, the teachers played an important role in this listening process; they also implemented four main strategies to facilitate their students' listening comprehension, and showed availability when clarifying doubts inside the classrooms.

A combination of both teachers' and students' strategies is what will develop English listening comprehension. Teachers teach using the different strategies they have learned, which have a successful impact on the learning of the students. The students' job is to put into practice the strategies learned whether by themselves or from their teachers. So with the responsibility taken by both, the development of the listening comprehension skill will not be a difficult process.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To teachers:**

1. Teachers should teach students to apply different strategies inside or outside the classroom to facilitate the students' development of the listening comprehension skill.
2. Teachers should expose students to real conversation with foreign people in order to help them to get familiar with the different accents and cultures.
3. Teachers should motivate students to use different audio material for practicing their listening comprehension skill.
4. Teachers should spend more time in activities with students to verify if they are putting into practice some strategies to develop the listening skill more.

### **To students:**

1. Students should practice the strategies carried out by the teacher or someone else in order to develop their listening skill.
2. Students themselves should acquire the responsibility to develop their listening comprehension skill outside the classroom.
3. Students have to find their own listening strategies through which they can learn even more. They should not just wait for the teacher to tell them what to do.

## **CHAPTER 6 REFERENCE SECTION**

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# ANNEXES

## STUDENTS' SURVEY TO COLLECT DATA

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

### Objective:

This questionnaire has been prepared with the purpose of gathering information about strategies that student of the Foreign Language Department use for developing their listening comprehension skill.

### Instructions:

The statements below describe some strategies for developing the listening comprehension skill; please mark an "X" in the adverb of frequency that best describes you.

1-Which of these strategies do you use for developing your English listening comprehension skill? Please mark an "X" on the line.

<b>COGNITIVE STRATEGIES</b>	<b>METAGOGNITIVE STRATEGIES</b>	<b>SOCIAL/AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES</b>
I listen to English: music, movies, and TV programs.	I prepare my mind to concentrate before a listening activity.	I ask my classmates or teacher the questions I don't understand.
I connect the new information to my background knowledge.	I evaluate how much I could understand.	While I am in a listening task I keep calm and am not nervous.
While listening, I translate sentences to Spanish.	I usually review several times my answers before turning in.	If I don't understand what someone says in English, I ask them to repeat what they said.

2-Please mark with an X the frequency in which you are using these listening strategies.

<b>COGNITIVE STRATEGIES</b>	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
I practice English listening actively in daily life, such as listening to English songs, movies, and TV programs.				
While listening I try to translate words or sentences into Spanish.				

I apply the new vocabulary, phrases, or grammar I have learned to understand the new content.				
<b>BOTTOM-UP STRATEGIES</b>	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
I try to understand each word.				
I repeat words or phrases softly or mentally.				
I listen for specific details.				
<b>TOP-DOWN STRATEGIES</b>				
I listen for main ideas first and then details.				
I guess the meaning based on the context.				
Taking notes during listening help me to understand the task.				
I form pictures mentally to help me comprehend the texts.				

3-Please check with an X which strategies do you use before, during and post listening activities in the classroom.

<b>METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES</b>	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
<u>PRE-LISTENING STRATEGIES</u>				
I clarified the goal of a task and try to propose strategies for development.				
Before listening, I prepare my mind to concentrate.				
Before listening, I request myself to make progress.				
<u>WHILE-LISTENING MONITORING STRATEGIES</u>	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
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.				
<b>POST-LISTENING EVALUATION STRATEGIES</b>				
After listening, I reflect on my problems, such as the key words that I didn'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 them up in the dictionary.				

<b>SOCIAL/AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES</b>	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
If I don't understand what speakers say 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 teach me how I can develop my listening comprehension.				
<b>AFFECTIVE</b>				
I learn to relax before and during listening activities.				
I try to establish a level of communication with the teacher which permit me to ask him/her for help when I need it.				
I encourage myself through positive self-talk.				

**4- How do you rank the results of the use of the listening strategies to develop your listening skill?**

<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>BAD</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>VERY GOOD</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>
COGNITIVE STRATEGIES				
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES				
SOCIAL/AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES				

**5-In your opinion, how helpful are the previously selected strategies to develop your listening comprehension?**

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**6-The use of listening strategies facilitates you the management of the information?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Not \_\_\_\_\_ Why \_\_\_\_\_

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**7-From whom have you learned these strategies?**

\_\_\_ by yourself

\_\_\_ from a friend

\_\_\_ from a classmate

\_\_\_ from your teacher

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**8-How does your teacher help you to develop your listening comprehension skill?**

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**9- How often do you face difficulties during the listening activities?**

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Unknown topic				
Unknown vocabulary				
Different accent				
Speed speech				
Pronunciation				

## TEACHERS' SURVEY TO COLLECT DATA

University of El Salvador

Foreign Language Department

School of Arts and Sciences

### Objective:

This questionnaire has been done with the purpose of gathering information about strategies that teachers of the Foreign Language Department use for developing their students' listening comprehension skills.

### Instructions:

The statements below describe some strategies that teachers use for developing students' listening comprehension; please choose the strategies that best describe your listening comprehension teaching and mark an "X" the frequency in which you are using before, during and post a listening activity in the classroom.

<b>Before listening: Plan for the listening task:</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>USUALLY</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
1-I ensure the students know the goals of the listening tasks				
2-I encourage students to look for specific information				
3-I set a purpose and decide what the students need to listen.				
4- I decide if more vocabulary or background knowledge is needed.				
5- I ask for predictions about the listening.				
<b>During listening: Monitor comprehension</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>USUALLY</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
1- I decide what information is relevant to understand and what is not.				
2- I play the recorder again to check comprehension.				
<b>After listening: Evaluate comprehension and strategy used.</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>USUALLY</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
1-I verify the predictions and check wrong suppositions				
2-I evaluate students' comprehension in a particular area.				
3- I evaluate the progress in all or particular types of listening tasks.				



The use of strategies in the development of the listening comprehension skill

4- I evaluate myself if the strategies used were appropriate for the purpose and for the task.				
5- I modify the strategies if necessary to help students to have a better comprehension of the task.				
<b>Which of this material do you use to help students to develop their listening comprehension skill?</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>USUALLY</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
1- I use radio and television programs				
2- I bring public announcement to listen (airports, train/ bus stations, stores).				
3- I bring speeches with text.				
4- I bring telephone calls (invitations: parties, shopping, picnic).				
5- I play videos and ask questions about them.				
6- I take students to the laboratory.				
7- I play songs				
<b>In general, which of the following strategies you use to develop the listening comprehension skill in your students?</b>				
Allowing students to hear as much in the target language.				
Providing opportunities for reflection and discussion.				
Checking if the listening exercise is appropriate for the level of the students.				

**As a teacher, what do you do to develop the listening comprehension skill in your students in to the classroom?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**As a teacher, do you consider the use of listening strategies helps students to develop the listening comprehension skill?**

Yes\_\_\_\_\_Not\_\_\_\_\_Why\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_