## UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE NICARAGUA FACULTAD REGIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARIA DE ESTELI UNAN-FAREM-ESTELI



### **Research Paper**

# Effectiveness of the Strategies Used by English Language Teachers to Teach Listening Skills to Elementary School Students

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#### **Abstract**

This research focuses on seeing the strategies that teachers are using to teach the skill of listening to elementary students; from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The theoretical framework found that many teachers use the following: songs, games and stories. For this research, qualitative methodology was used and content analysis method. Data collection was conducted through interviews and observations made to 3 teachers of the 3 schools that were selected by convenience sampling. Results were analyzed and discussed on the effectiveness of strategies using songs, games, and stories to teach listening in the classroom. Some of the findings were: songs were more utilized and not much stories to teach listening. At the end, there are some limitations presented of the research and recommendations for futures researches and teachers.

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## **Table of contents**

Abstract	2
Acknowledgments	3
Dedicatory	4
Table of contents	5
Chapter One – Introduction	8
1.1. Problem statement	9
1.2. Relevance of the Problem	9
1.3. Background of the Study	10
1.4. Organization of the Research Paper	11
1.5. Key terms	12
Chapter Two – Literature Review	13
2.1.1. Stories	14
2.1.2. Songs	16
2.1.3. Games	17
2.2. Summary of the Review of Literature	18
Chapter Three – Methodology	20
3.1. Research Questions	20
3.2. Research Design	20
3.3. Population	21
3.4. Sampling	21
3.5. Data Collection	22
3.6. Instruments	22
3.6.1. Observation	22
3.6.2 Interview	23

3.7.	Data Analysis23
Chapte	r Four – Results25
4.1.	Contextualization of schools
4.2.	Description of subjects25
4.3.	Findings
Chapte	r Five – Conclusions
5.1.	Limitations
5.2.	For future research
Bibliogr	aphy33
ANNEX	ES36
1.	Activities
2.	INTERVIEW38
3.	OBSERVATION GUIDE40
4.	Letters of permission43
1.	Photographs49

## **Problem**

How effective are the strategies used by English language teachers at some private elementary Schools in Estelí, to teach listening skills to primary school students, during the second semester 2015?

## **Research Questions**

- a. What type of strategies are teachers using to teach listening skills to elementary school students?
- b. How effective are the strategies implemented by the teachers to teach listening skills to elementary school students?

## **Chapter One – Introduction**

Listening skills are essential in any English language learning-teaching process (Demirel, 2004). Listening is a receptive use of language; in other words, listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. For learners, listening is how spoken language becomes input (i.e., it is the first stage of learning a new language). In the classroom, this happens by listening to the teacher, to a CD, or to other learners. It is the process of interpreting other people's messages and ideas (Sevik, 2012).

The skill of listening is essential to develop other skills such as speech. According to Richards & Renandya (2002) when a person hears words, they interpret to understand and come to form phrases, expressions and texts, which all come from the skill of listening. It is therefore required to use different listening strategies in the classroom to better comprehension.

Age is very important in deciding which strategy to use as a listening factor; this is due to the needs and skills that could be used in the case of primary age children. Games and songs are more utilized to develop the listening skills in children than adults (Harmer, 2006).

Teaching English language skills to young learners is different from teaching adults (Klein, 2005). Young learners tend to change their mood every other minute, and they find it difficult to sit still. On the other hand, children show greater motivation than adults to do things that appeal to them (Sevik, 2012). Consequently, teachers are in a constant demand for methods that successfully improve their students' English language skills at an early age.

Some of the benefits mentioned by Harmer (2006) to teach children are: they learn from all that surrounds them, they hear and interact, and they are also willing to talk about them and their situations. However, their attention is limited and they are easily bored. For these reasons, the teacher should implement different strategies to get a good language learning environment.

#### 1.1. Problem statement

The purpose of this research paper is to investigate the effectiveness of the strategies used by English language teachers to teach listening skills to elementary school students in a Nicaraguan context. Listening skills are essential in English language teaching, as noted previously. Moreover, teaching listening skills to young learners is a demanding task. According to Sevik (2012) teachers must be inventive and select a wide variety of interesting strategies and activities to deliver effective instruction inside the classroom. For purposes of this research paper, we focused on three teaching and learning strategies: stories, songs and games.

Research reveals that stories, songs and games can be enjoyable ways to practice and develop listening skills (Sevik, 2012; Ramiro, 2001; Vale & Feunteun, 1995). There are many benefits for using them in educational settings, and therefore they are relevant strategies to be researched in this study, in a Nicaraguan context.

#### 1.2. Relevance of the Problem

Research reveals that teaching English to young learners bring about many benefits (Sevik, 2012). According to Flores (2013) teaching English to young learners helps them become more competitive and to develop their cognitive skills. Buttery (1990) states that listening is one of the most important aspects of children's' learning that impacts academic success. Moreover, listening is a receptive skill that is vital for students, not only in their present academic work, but also in their future lives (Lee Yook, 2012). In addition, the teaching of listening skills is a foundation to the development of other language skills (Linse, 2005).

English language is not a mandatory subject within the Nicaraguan curricula at an elementary level. In fact, this subject is only taught in some private Nicaraguan elementary schools (Bermudez, 2012). Several English language teachers argue that English should be featured into the education curricula in this country, so by the time they finish their secondary studies, students could have a better level of English language skills. According to La Prensa, a local Nicaraguan newspaper, by 2012 there were 1,426 English language teachers in the country, teaching in 10,750 schools, 26 %

of those teachers did not have the required preparedness and qualifications to effectively teach English to Nicaraguan students.

In summary, teaching listening skills to elementary school students is necessary. It is a challenge to do so in a context where there is no focus on teaching English at an elementary level. As the class of English as a second or foreign language at primary level is not taught, no one knows exactly what strategies teachers are using to teach listening skills and how effective they are. For this reason, this research paper aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the strategies used by English language teachers; namely stories, songs and games, to teach listening skills to elementary school students.

#### 1.3. Background of the Study

Teaching listening skills through stories, games and songs has been the object of research in several countries. Calvo Bragado and Alario Trigueros (2015) investigated the use of stories and songs in teaching English to elementary school students in Valladolid, Spain. They applied the Communicative Approach in their study. They found that both stories and songs are effective strategies to use in elementary school classrooms. They mentioned that those two strategies "provide the students varied and beneficial inputs that create a comfortable classroom atmosphere for both teachers and students" (p. 29).

Similarly, Mubaslat (2012) studied the role of games on learning English as a foreign language in Jordan. The researcher used experimental research using three groups of students randomly. For the relation between educational games and learning a foreign language a correlational analysis was used. The results of the study found that games had a positive effect on improving the achievement for the primary stage. Games were found to promote interaction among students, and therefore they proved to be beneficial.

Oduolowu (2014) investigated the effect of the stories as listening skills in elementary school students in northern Nigeria. She found a positive effect on the behavior of students' listening and attention span. Her studies revealed a significant effect related to

the listening skills used in storytelling; as these facilitated listening and achieved more attention from students. Besides having the opportunity to see and touch the pictures in textbooks.

Moreover, Arellano (2012)in her research work performed in Morelos, State of Mexico; she found the great impact that games had on students' learning. Besides being an innovative strategy, games, aroused interest in the English language. Even her research showed that students enjoyed and longed to know more about the English class. By her experience, Arellano recognized that implementing innovative strategies such as games in the classroom helped develop English skills.

The results of this research showed that the use of these strategies as songs, games and stories are effective to develop the skill of listening, to elementary students. It helped us in our investigation to find out what strategies English teachers are using in some private schools of the city of Estelí to teach listening skills in elementary students and how effective they are.

#### 1.4. Organization of the Research Paper

This research paper is structured in the following way: Chapter One is an introduction to the problem. It states the focus of the research, the relevance of the problem and its background. Moreover, it indicates how this research paper is organized.

Chapter Two is a review of literature. Studies conducted in several parts of the world related to teaching English to young learners through stories, songs and games were reviewed. The literature review is relevant for designing the methodology to be followed in this study, and the analysis of the data obtained from the field work.

Chapter Three is a presentation of the methodology followed in this study. The third chapter includes the research questions, the research design, population and sampling chosen for purposes of this research.

Chapter four is results and data analysis of the instruments. This chapter includes analysis of results and discussion.

Finally, chapter five is the discussion of this research and limitations and recommendations.

#### 1.5. Key terms

- **a. Strategy:** a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose to develop a strategy for dealing with unemployment. The process of planning something or putting a plan into operation in a skillful way (Oxford, 2006).
- **b.** Effectiveness: producing the result that is wanted or intended, producing successful result (Oxford, 2006).
- **c. EFL:** abbreviation (British) EFL is short for 'English as a foreign language'. The teaching of English to people who speak other languages (Oxford, 2006).
- **d. Learning strategies:** Procedures that appear during sequences of actions to achieve a learning objective (Naranjo, 2004).

## **Chapter Two – Literature Review**

#### Introduction

The main purpose of this research paper was to investigate the effectiveness of the strategies used by English language teachers to teach listening skills to elementary school students in Estelí, Nicaragua. For this reason, this second chapter reviews literature related to teaching listening skills to elementary students and the use of three specific learning-teaching strategies: stories, songs and games. The literature review was important at the moment of analyzing the data obtained from the research instruments, which were designed specifically for purposes of this research paper.

#### 2.1. Strategies to Teach Listening Skills

The term *strategies* can be defined as conscious acts that students use to improve learning. Since strategies are conscious, students actively participate in their selection and use. Strategies are not isolated actions but a process in which many actions are combined in order to achieve a learning goal (Anderson, 2005). According to Hearn and Garces Rodriguez (2003), to be effective listening skills in students is necessary for children to be in contact with the new language in specific conditions and for that we must teach the class with different strategies which allow students to listen actively. Strategies must be through various meaningful activities.

The purpose of carrying out the following activities is to promote oral ability: a) listen to discover a story and characters, b) listen to organize different activities carried out in class, c) hear and play, d) listen and act, e) listen and follow directions, f) listen to carry artwork and manuals, g) listen to expand knowledge in different areas of the curriculum" (Hearn & Garces Rodríguez, 2003, p. 97).

Hearn and Garces Rodriguez, (2003) state that there are a lot of resources that teacher can use to help students develop listening skills. Oral resources such as rhythm,

repetition, intonation and body expressions. In addition, the teacher can support the use of audiovisual materials such as movies, documentaries, series, etc.

Indeed, there is a variety of strategies which can be used to teach listening skills to elementary school students. However, for purposes of this research paper we focused on three specific strategies: stories, songs and games.

#### **2.1.1. Stories**

Ramiro (2010) states that: "Tales are one of the most important narrative devices and motivators in teaching English in kindergarten" (p. 52). He also mentions that the use of stories in the classroom should include vocabulary related to familiar topics that are familiar to the students. Moreover, he claims that when using stories in the classroom, teachers should use visual aids such as photographs, drawings or objects to facilitate understanding. Furthermore, teachers can have their students act out the story and that will help them remember what they learn after the classes.

Stories, as a listening strategy, can be used to present and practice the English language preparing questions to explore the students' understanding. According to Hearn and Garces (2003) there are many reasons to use stories in the classroom as a listening strategy. According to him, when stories are used, children feel comfortable and although not all fully understand the story they capture the main ideas. This can increase their motivation to keep listening to the stories.

According to Scrivener (2005) the stories are of great value and can be done for pleasure. This strategy can be used at the beginning of the class, middle or end to give students a mood change. This strategy is real listening because students do not pay attention just to be evaluated or to ask questions, they try really hard to hear the story and understand it. For that reason, there is more concentration and participation from students.

Stories are a way to introduce new English vocabulary naturally. When the teacher uses vocal expressions, gestures and appropriate body language, children grasp easily understanding the meaning of phrases and expressions such as: "I'm happy

/ angry / tired" or "oh no! Take care!!" helping them to imitate and learn the importance of correctly pronouncing and saying those phrases (Hearn and Garces, 2003).

Stories help learning to read. Additionally students can prepare a role-play after a story to dramatize what they heard in the story. This helps them to practice listening, speaking and pronunciation as well (Hearn and Garces, 2003).

Salaberri (2002) said that stories should be present in the implementation of any curricula from Infant Schools and continue through Primary Education, and all this highlights the benefits of using this oral and written tradition in the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the classroom.

For Salaberri (2002), stories are good tools to develop students' listening skills. In stories, vocabulary is presented in a context full of repetitions, this provides students the opportunity to understand and check meanings. He adds also that stories are motivating. They can catch students' attention. According to Verdú (2002), storytelling is beneficial in English language learning-teaching because it presents the language in a globalized mode, and contextualizes the authentic use of English.

It is clear then that the implementation of stories as a strategy of listening is important and has many benefits, but for the stories to reach their goal, teachers must be prepared and know at what point in the class to implement them. Also the environment in which they will tell them (Verdú, 2002).

When telling a story, teachers must be enthusiastic, because enthusiasm is transmitted to children. Hearn and Garces (2003) say: "The voice, pause, rhythm, volume and tone are essential; body, facial expression and movement are basic. We must be sensitive to the small audience, adapting the rhythm and the sensation produced by the story according to the reactions" (P. 133).

#### 2.1.2. Songs

Songs are another listening strategy used in teaching EFL<sup>1</sup> since their contribution is not limited only to aspects of pronunciation; its rhythm, melody and its verses are repeated to help students remember.

When songs join the language and music, they help storing the message thanks to the rhythm. According to Murado (2010), elements of the songs are imitation and repetition, plus fun is implemented and encourages foreign language. He explained the advantages of using songs in teaching English to primary school students. He explained that songs are encouraging to students since they can be repeated many times. Moreover, songs can help students improve their pronunciation. Furthermore, by means of songs, students receive extra motivation when they see the reactions of family and friends when they are singing.

Listening to tunes on the elementary level helps students to learn in a fun and lighthearted way, and develop musical intelligence of children. According to Hearn and Garcés (2003) songs "can be adapted to different linguistic purposes and can be used at any time during the teaching session to remember the classroom language" (p. 157-158). Verdú (2002) in his book mentions that the use of songs adapted to the levels of children, contain simple, repetitive language that makes possible the understanding and memorization.

Moreover according to Utíkalová (2012), there are different ways to use songs as listening activities such as: a) "Listen and respond" an activity which can be used to answer a question. B) "Listen and write" this activity uses lyrics while students are listening. C) "Listen and do" this strategy can make the most of the songs, this strategy is part of TPR<sup>2</sup>, this is when children hear and physically respond to a series of instructions given by the teacher. This popular method can be used as a technique with songs that teach any vocabulary that incorporates movements, which makes it fun for students and to remember the language learned. d) "Listen and states" this strategy involves listening, singing and pointing at objects or the vocabulary of the lesson.

16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> English as a Foreign Language

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Total Physical Response

Although there are many songs that can be used in the classroom, those used as listening strategy, are action songs. According to Hearn and Garces (2003) "you will usually love children because they provide an opportunity to learn English singing, rising from their seats and moving the whole body" (p.174). Performing these songs in the classroom allows students to do the movements of the instructions that they hear and sing.

However, Feunteun Vale (1998) in his work explained that many language teachers use and value the songs only in order to make or practice linguistic content for children to repeat in chorus, leaving in the background the pleasure children experience by singing. When used only for this purpose they may become unmotivated children. It is for this reason that the use of songs in a language class should not be used only for purposes of linguistic content.

#### 2.1.3. Games

Games are another strategy that teachers use primary and agree that through games students get effective learning in a fun and entertaining way. By definition, the word game by the Oxford dictionary (2012) is "something you play that have rules"; and in accordance with Garces and Hearn (2003) games "are fun activities and often a challenge in which you have to guess, join, collect and search" (p.146); and Verdú and Coyle (2002) define games as a "linguistic activity organized, consisting of a specific task or goal and a set of rules that involve some kind of competition between players" (p. 71)

You could build learning through strategies such as games, at the same time learning in a dynamic and fun way. Through games student participation is active; this strategy also improves relations between classmates (Castañeda, 2010). Games are great support in education and motivate students and keep children's interest in learning the English language.

Murado (2010) says that in childhood games are a crucial resource due to be highly motivating, and to acquire new language. Although games generate fun and enjoyment for children, they serve to learn without feeling they are doing it. Another point is that they encourage collaboration, respect and good organization among students.

According to Garces and Hearn (2003) games can help boost self-esteem in students. They explain that games are a great way to stimulate the brain for optimal learning through movement, mime and music. Implementing action games such as card games, guessing games, games with music and movement games in primary education are of great importance because these develop the ability to listen and generate more oral participation and not written, by students.

Also Rubio & Garcia Conesa (2013) discuss the comments of many psychologists who believe that children are motivated and stimulated in English class when teachers use strategies such as games, images and real objects instead of using books and exercises. Another reason is that teachers can use them at any time of the class, to enrich vocabulary, improve grammar and English accents, even to help in group work.

Some advantages of using games in the classroom are that games are constructive, entertaining and stimulating. They generate interest and enthusiasm on any subject being taught. Another advantage is that students learn in a fun and relaxed manner. They also help to improve and strengthen the pronunciation and other language skills. They provide an opportunity to communicate with classmates and students want to participate, which helps to be aware of the teacher's explanations involved in the game. (Rivera & Restrepo, 2009; Rubio & García, 2013)

According to Rubio & Garcia (2013), a classification of some games are guessing games or listening as "listen and do", "hide and find"; drawing games like "picture dictation", "mime" and board games.

#### 2.2. Summary of the Review of Literature

According to studies, developed by some academics, the use of strategies such as stories songs and games are effective at the moment to use with elementary students. The use of these strategies encourage students to learn the new language and promote values in students. They generate participation and enthusiasm, learning in a fun and

dynamic way the English language. Furthermore, these strategies can be adapted to any topic that the teachers teach in the classroom.

## **Chapter Three – Methodology**

#### Introduction

The third chapter of this research paper is a presentation of the methodology implemented. It presents the two main research questions that was answered, the type of research design that has been selected, information about the participants of this study, namely the population and sampling procedures selected. Moreover, this chapter presents the summary of the data collection and data analysis procedures, to be followed in the next stage of this research.

#### 3.1. Research Questions

For purposes of this research paper, two main research questions were answered:

- A. What type of strategies are teachers using to teach listening skills to elementary school students?
- B. How effective are the strategies implemented by the teachers to teach listening skills to elementary school students?

### 3.2. Research Design

The research design used in this study is the qualitative research design. According to Creswell (2009), this design is an inquiry approach in which researchers explore a central phenomenon (or concept), ask participants broad, general questions and collect detailed views of participants in the form of words or images. Moreover, they analyze and code the data for description and themes, interpret the meaning of the information and write the final report that include personal biases and a flexible structure.

Besides, this research features the content analysis method, which follows the qualitative research design. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009),

Content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications. It is just what its name implies: the analysis of the usually, but not necessarily, written contents of a communication. Textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles, cookbooks, songs, political speeches, advertisements, pictures—in fact, the contents of virtually any type of communication—can be analyzed (p. 472).

By using content analysis, we pretend to study the effectiveness of the three strategy resources which are the focus of study in this research paper (stories, songs and games). Given the fact that the participants of this study are English language teachers with different preferences, attitudes and perceptions towards the strategies they implement; the information given by them serves as the basis for our data analysis. Consequently, the data is central in this study.

#### 3.3. Population

The population of this study consists of English language teachers who serve as primary teachers in private schools located in urban areas of Estelí.

The population includes teachers from the three schools with the highest student population which are: School Puertas Abiertas, located in the east of the city of Estelí; Fernando Villa Landa school (FETSALUD) located in the southern part of the city of Estelí; and Nuestra Señora del Rosario school, located in the southern part of the city of Estelí.

## 3.4. Sampling

Sampling in educational research refers to the selection of individuals, units, and settings to be studied. The sampling procedure used in this research is *convenience sampling*, *that* is, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), "any group of individuals that is conveniently available to be studied" (p.106). The sample of this study consists of three English language teachers, which correspond to the number of instructors of three Private Elementary Schools who teach English skills to first, second and third grade. They correspond to 100% of the entire population because there is only one teacher per school, which serves as a primary school teacher in the subject of English class.

In the city of Estelí there are 10 private primary schools that teach the English language, of these 10 schools only 5 have the largest student population with which we

could carry out our research. From these 5 schools we selected 3 because a school located in the north of Estelí did not meet one of the requirements of our research, as only the English class is taught in grades five and six. The other school located in the central area of Estelí was not taken into account to carry out our research because one member of the group serves as an English teacher in that school. It is worth mentioning that the schools met the criteria set for this study because those three schools have the most student population of the ten Elementary schools that features the English language as part of the curricula.

#### 3.5. Data Collection

For purposes of this study, and taking into account the research design selected, we feature two data collection instruments: the observation and the interview. The relevance of these two instruments has been proven good by well-recognized scholars. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), the content analysis method "can be used in any context in which the researcher desires a means for systematizing and (often) quantifying data. It is extremely valuable in analyzing observation and interview data" (p. 473).

The interview was conducted with every teacher of the three schools mentioned above, in order to collect specific information about our research topic.

Besides we made observations for each class developed by each teacher of the three schools of Estelí, to do this we did four observations for each level in the three schools.

#### 3.6. Instruments

#### 3.6.1. Observation

The observation is a data collection method used in the qualitative design. According to Creswell (2002), before conducting an observation the researchers should create an observational protocol, decide on their observational stance, enter site slowly, conduct multiple observations and summarize at the end of each observation. There are then some ethical considerations that we, as researchers, must take into consideration.

Creswell's guidelines will serve as a guide before conducting the observation in this study.

Our observation guide was developed in conjunction with our tutor based on the information found in the theoretical framework.

Some aspects contained in the guide are the following; the material used during the class, student participation, if teachers use stories, songs and games during class and for what purpose. Please see annexes for more information about the instruments!

#### 3.6.2 Interview

The interview is another data collection method used in the qualitative research design. There are several possibilities for interviewing the participants of the study, e.g. individually, focus group, via telephone, via e-mail, etc. In addition, this method gives the researcher the possibility to ask open-ended questions, which allow the participant to create opinions for responding where they can voice their experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2002). In this study, we interviewed each participant individually and face-to-face. An interview protocol was created for this purpose.

The interview was developed in conjunction with our instructor, taking into account information from the theoretical framework. A pilot of the interview was conducted with ten teachers who teach English classes in public and private schools, and based on the feedback we did changes and modifications and were shown to our instructor.

The necessary changes were made and refined in some of the questions of the instruments.

#### 3.7. Data Analysis

The data analysis process includes the exploration of the data codification of data, development of results, a description of the main topics, what represents the description of the main topics, interpretation and validation of the results (Creswell, 2002). The themes were formulating from the research questions which the study aims to answer (see section 3.1).

The data found in the interview and observations were analyzed for each question asked. In the interview saw what the teachers responded to each item and consolidated what was observed during the class taught by the teacher.

Each strategy for stories, games, and songs was analyzed to see if teachers use these methodological strategies in the classroom for the teaching of listening in the area of English.

## **Chapter Four - Results**

#### Introduction

In chapter four the description of the three schools, where this research was conducted, is found. Besides, the names of the three teachers interviewed and general information about them. It is important to note that permission to use their names was given. In this chapter, as well, are the answers to the two questions of this investigation.

#### 4.1. Contextualization of schools

The Schools where the study was conducted are: Nuestra Señora Del Rosario School with a student population of 762; Fernando Villa Landa School with a student population of 162, and the School Bautista Puertas Abiertas with a student population of 120. These are private primary schools, serving children of the urban area in the city of Estelí. These students are considered low and upper middle class.

#### 4.2. Description of subjects

It was conducted an interview with 3 teachers. They are teachers serving in elementary schools in the three schools. They teach first grade through sixth grade. Two of them have a degree in teaching English as a foreign language, one with eleven years of experience and one with eight years of experience respectively.

The third is the principal of the school and teaches English class. He has a year of experience as a teacher. He has a college degree that is related to the English language teaching. He speaks the language but in a basic level because he only has a year studying English.

## 4.3. Findings

With regard to the first question of the research, we found the following in each grade observed:

1. What type of strategies teachers are using to teach listening skills to elementary school students?

The strategies used more by the teachers to teach listening skills to students during the classes observed were: songs, dictation picture game, listen and do, action songs, drawing games, and dictation for specific information.

#### First and second grade

The following strategies were implemented by teacher Jenny Sanchez. The teacher used the same strategies in first and second grade respectively, because she used the same book on both grades, and the same content.

The teacher used songs as a strategy for teaching listening skills. This was done when she came to the classroom, the students sang the song "Good Morning Teacher" and at the end of the class they sang the same song but to say goodbye "Goodbye Teacher". In this way it reinforced the vocabulary of greetings.

Another strategy that the teacher used was a game called "picture dictation." She presented a series of drawings or figures to class after being given the topic of the day, in this case the vocabulary of animals. She dictated the animal's name appearing in the figure and the student had to write the name he heard and saw on the board. She used this strategy to strengthen the vocabulary for that day.

Another game that she used was: "listen and do". The teacher made drawings on the floor, in this case geometric shapes. She explained to students that when they heard the name of a certain shape, the student should move to the shape that he thought right. This strategy was used to reinforce and practice vocabulary and to develop listening skills after giving the content.

The strategies used in first and second grade seemed to prove effective, as most of the students responded to the activities and were engaged. This was because the teacher focused on two types of learning styles: auditory and visual. They not only listened to what they had to do, but also they saw the drawings of the geometric shapes; this allowed them to orient their respond in the right way.

#### Third grade

The following strategies were implemented by teacher Jenny Sanchez. In third grade the teacher utilized songs to reinforce the vocabulary learned in previous classes. She used the action songs at the beginning of the class. These songs corresponded to the strategy of TPR; students made movements or actions when they heard the song. This song was invented by the teacher and called it "go around the circle". This activity was conducted outside the classroom and consisted in singing the song and performing the commands that the students listened to as: jumping, going in and out of the circle, sitting, jogging, sleeping and staying still.

One of the strategies used by the teacher to teach listening skills was drawings games like "picture dictation". She directed the students to draw in their notebooks a house with all its parts; then she dictated the words of the vocabulary of the house and the students had to find the word they heard and place it in their drawings. She used this strategy at the end of the class to reinforce and practice the vocabulary of the house.

This strategy was implemented by teacher Clemente Toruño. The strategy he used was: dictation for specific information. The students went to the whiteboard and the teacher dictated to them a number in English and the student had to write the number he had heard. This strategy is known as TPR. It motivated students to write what they heard. The teacher used it at the beginning of the class to revise the numbers from 1 to 20, which had been given in the previous class.

The strategies used by the teacher Jenny proved effective because of the response given by the students. It was observed that the teacher followed the same patterns of education from first through third grade; because she focus on different learning styles such as visual and auditory. This allowed students to get a meaningful learning. They not only learned the vocabulary taught, but they could also identify and know the content meaning.

On the other hand, the strategy used by the teacher Clemente was very useful and we could observe the learning of certain students. However, not all learning of the students in the classroom because only part of the students were involved in this activity; only those who volunteered to go. The teacher did not implement other strategies for the other students to find out their knowledge on the issue of numbers.

Regarding the second question, we found the following:

## 2. How effective are the strategies Implemented by the teachers to teach listening skills to elementary school students?

As mentioned previously, the strategies used more by the teachers to teach listening skills to students during the classes observed were: songs, dictation picture game, listen and do, action songs, drawing games, dictation for specific information. These strategies proved effective because these increased the enthusiasm of the students and were measured by observing the active participation of students during class.

For example the use of the song "Good morning", the teacher proved that this is an effective strategy to reinforce learned vocabulary. All students' memorized the song which allowed everyone to sing and remember the vocabulary related to greetings they already knew.

Another strategy that proved effective was the game "picture dictation". This time the teacher showed the students flash cards which had the picture of an animal. The teacher dictated the animal's name and the student had to write on the blackboard the name they heard. The effectiveness of this strategy was measured by observing students' performance. When students were watching and listening, it made it easier to remember written vocabulary.

The "Listen and do" game strategy, also proved very effective. To carry out this strategy the teacher drew geometric shapes on the floor and she said the name of a shape and the students had to move to the shape they had listened. The effectiveness of this strategy was observed to see students moving to the corresponding shape but sometimes students were wrong.

In the action songs strategy, the teacher developed a song called "go around the circle". This proved effective by seeing the enthusiasm and participation of students.

Students expressed that they learned in a fun and dynamic way. In this activity, students performed the commands mentioned in the song.

During our period of gathering information on the theoretical framework we found that the use of strategies such as stories, songs and games are effective to develop listening skills in students.

For example when teacher Jenny used the songs it was verified what Murado (2010) mentions in his research that the components of the songs as imitation and repetition help students improve language and pronunciation, and receiving motivation and likewise students were having fun. In addition Hearn and Garces (2003) mentioned that songs could be develop with different themes and at any time in class.

Another strategy conducted was drawing games. In this, students drew a house with all its parts in their notebooks and the teacher dictated every part of the house and the students had to write the name of each part. This strategy was effective to reinforce vocabulary learned, since most of the students when they heard the word recognized it and placed it in their drawings.

Another strategy was dictation for specific information; it proved to be effective with students who participated. Students had to write on the board the number the teacher dictated. It was observed that the students recognized the numbers very well by writing the correct number. However, only some students could participate in the development of this strategy because only parts of students were involved in this activity; only those who volunteered to go. Another factor was that this strategy was implemented as a review of the previous class and the class period was thirty minutes and the teacher had to develop the assigned topic.

#### **Chapter Five – Conclusions**

During the observations we noticed that only one of the teachers in this case teacher Jenny Sanchez used strategies such as songs and games with the aim of improving listening skills to enhance student vocabulary.

The other two teachers expressed in their interviews that they used listening strategies such as songs and games in order to learn vocabulary and learn English in a fun and dynamic way. Besides promoting interest, practicing the language and promoting values in students. However during the observations they did not develop these strategies during lessons.

For example when teacher Jenny used the songs as listening strategy proved what Murado (2010) said in his research that the songs motivate students because they practice it many times, allowing them to improve their pronunciation. In addition teacher Jenny developed songs with different themes and at any time in class as mentioned Hearn and Garces (2003) in their book.

Also we noted that the teacher Jenny used the games with which it was achieved good results according to Castañeda (2010), through games the participation of students is active, and it motivates students to learn English and creates fellowship among them. Furthermore, according to Rubio and Garcia (2013), in their studies mention that many psychologists said that the use of games in the classroom motivate and stimulate the learning of English.

According to various studies that have been conducted; using stories to teach listening skills is very effective in primary school students. For example according to Salaberri (2002), the stories are very useful because it presents the vocabulary differently and gives students the opportunity to understand the context and meaning of words. And according to Garces and Hearn (2003), using stories helps students to imitate and learn the correct pronunciation of different phrases with the help of bodily expressions and appropriate gestures teacher.

However, in the observations made to the three teachers we did not see the implementation of stories. In the case of teacher Jenny Sanchez, she expressed in the interview that she used stories with the purpose of teaching listening, pronunciation and vocabulary. However, during the observations she did not implement this strategy. Important to note, though, that few observations were made to the class.

As for the other teachers we can infer that Professor Clemente Toruño did not use different strategies because he has little experience as an English teacher. This affected a few strategies that he implemented in the classroom. Although teacher Claudio Rivera has eleven years of experience as an English teacher, he did not implement any strategy to teach listening skills just to reinforce vocabulary. In the interview, he said he did not use stories as a strategy for teaching listening skills. This may it sound as his vocation is not to work with elementary students.

In comments made by these two professors, Clemente Toruño and Claudio Rivera, we could see that the focus on teaching English is limited by just presenting vocabulary and practicing pronunciation of words; sometimes without ensuring that students understood and identified vocabulary. They are generating repetition of words and not understanding them. There was not initiative on the part of the teachers to implement strategies with other subjects taught. At the same time they were not tackling different types of learning styles.

The reason that these teachers had this approach can be influenced by the type of textbook they were using. They focused on solving textbook exercises according to the subject they were teaching. In addition to verifying that students complete exercises and learning grammatical forms, and practicing pronunciation. Teachers should use a text to focus more on the practice of the English language and not just memorizing vocabulary.

#### 5.1. Limitations

Among the, arose, limitations are:

• The few observations that were made at each grade, because there was not enough time to do more.

- The duration of classes taught. These lasted for a period of 30-45 minutes per class.
- One of the limitations that were presented is that students only received English class once a week; therefore 4 observations were made. This is because English language is not a mandatory subject within the Nicaraguan curricula at elementary level.
- Another limitation encountered was that one of the teachers did not teach English class at the scheduled time. This was because he held the position of the principal of the school and 4 of the observations were suspended because he had to attend matters concerning the school's direction.

#### 5.2. For future research

- For the relevance of the topic it would be good for future research to investigate if teaching vocabulary to students helps them later to practice the English language independently.
- How effective it is that teachers focus more on memorization and repetition of vocabulary and not the practice of it. Does it help the students to practice it in later years?

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## **ANNEXES**

## 1. Activities

TIME	ACTIVITIES			
August 24 <sup>th</sup> –August 29 <sup>th</sup> ,2015	Review of introduction and literature			
	review.			
August 31 <sup>st</sup> –September o5 <sup>th</sup> ,2015	Review methodology - defined and			
	description of the place of study.			
	First instrument draft.			
September 07 <sup>th</sup> – September 12 <sup>th</sup>	Review of the instrument draft and			
,2015	revision of introduction and literature			
	review.			
September 21 <sup>th</sup> – September 26 <sup>th</sup>	Pilot interview.			
,2015				
October 05 <sup>th</sup> - October 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	Instrument defined.			
October 12 <sup>th</sup> - October 17 <sup>th</sup> ,2015	We ask permission in the 3 schools.			
October 20 <sup>th</sup> - November12 <sup>th</sup> ,2015	We realized the observations and			
	interviews.			
November 16 <sup>th</sup> - December 04 <sup>th</sup> ,	Analysis of results collected and			
2015	discussion.			
December 05 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	Revision of the draft.			
December 14-17 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	Prepare for pre-defense.			
t eth earle				
January 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	Final oral presentation.			

#### 2. INTERVIEW

**Topic:** Effectiveness of the strategies used by teachers of language English to teach listening skills for students of elementary school.

**Objective:** The purpose of this interview is to gather information to see what strategies are being used by teachers to teach listening skills in the area of English.

General data	
• Name:	sex: M F
• School:	
Grade taught:	
Years of Experience:	_
• Last Degree (specify specialty or field of study):	
PEM:	
Bachelor's degree:	
Master:	
Other:	
Specific questions	
1. How do you prepare before teaching the class?	

2. In the moment to teach the class using teaching materials? (If your answer is yes indicate what kind of educational material used)

3. W	hat strategies do you see that students are more motivated?
•	tales
•	songs
•	games
. Do	you use strategies like games? For what purpose do you use them?
5.	Do you use strategies like the songs? For what purpose do you use them?
	<del></del>
6. D	o you use strategies such tales? For what purpose do you use them?

## 3. OBSERVATION GUIDE

### **General Data**

•	Time of the class:
•	Number of students:
•	Used materials:

	Always	usually	sometimes	never
Speak english the teacher				
during the class				
Do you use handouts in				
the class?				
How active is the				
participation of the student				
in the class				
Do you use the stories in				
the class room				
Do you use songs in the				
class room				
Do you use the games in				
the class room				

Observations:		

## Tales

1. For what purpose uses the stories?

	Submit short sentences
	Intonation expressions
	Strengthen vocabulary
	Others
	Observation
2.	At what point in the class uses stories.
	At the beginning of the class
	Development class
	At the end of the class
	Observation
3.	How is the participation of students?
	Active
	Passive
	Neutral
	Observation
	Songs
1.	For what purpose uses the songs?
١.	Entering vocabulary
	Intonation and pronunciation
	Imitation and repetition
	Strengthen vocabulary
	Other
	Observation
2.	At what point in the class uses the songs.
	At the beginning of the class

	Development class	
	At the end of the class	
	Observation	
3.	How is the participation of students?	
	Active	
	Passive	
	Neutral	
	Observation	
	Games	
1.	For what purpose you play games?	
	Vocabulary introduction	
	practice	
	Strengthen vocabulary	
	Others	
	Observation	
2.	At what point in the class uses the games.	
	At the beginning of the class	
	Development class	
	At the end of the class	
	Observation	
3.	How is the participation of students?	
	Active	
	Passive	
	Neutral	
	Observation	

#### 4. Letters of permission

Estelí 15 de Octubre de 2015

Lic. Clemente Toruño

Director (a) del centro escolar Puertas Abiertas

Su Despacho.

Reciba de nuestra parte un fraterno saludo.

A través de la presente, nos dirigimos a usted en calidad de directora.

Somos estudiantes de quinto año de Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación con mención en Inglés, carrera que ofrece la Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria Estelí, FAREM- Estelí.

Actualmente cursamos la asignatura de Seminario de Graduación, en la cual estamos investigando el tema "Efectividad de las estrategias utilizadas por los maestros del idioma inglés para enseñar habilidades de escucha para los estudiantes de primaria", por lo que el motivo de la presente es solicitar de manera formal su autorización para hacer mención del nombre del colegio y el suyo como directora, así como de las fotografías obtenidas en su centro, para plasmarlas en dicho trabajo, el que presentaremos y defenderemos en el mes de Diciembre del corriente año en la UNAN Managua-FAREN Estelí.

Agradecemos el que considere nuestra solicitud y al mismo tiempo su colaboración.

Esperamos su pronta y positiva respuesta debido a lo apremiante del tiempo.

Sin más a que referirnos por el momento, nos despedimos de usted, deseándole éxito en sus labores diarias en pro de la educación en nuestro país.

Att.

Maritza Pauth, carné universitario N° 11054110

Dorian Urrutia carné universitario N° 11054967

Lesbia Valle Carné universitario Nº 05050811

Yo Clerate Tormo. R he leído la presente solicitud con la cual estoy de acuerdo y apruebo, de lo que doy fe a través de mi firma y sello del centro escolar en la misma.

Lic. Clemente Torvão Rugama.

Maestro de Inglés
Sus manos.

Reciba de nuestra parte un fraterno saludo.

A través de la presente, nos dirigimos a usted en calidad de maestra del área inglés.

Somos estudiantes de quinto año de Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación con mención en Inglés, carrera que ofrece la Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria Estelí, FAREN-Estelí.

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Sin más a que referimos por el momento, nos despedimos de usted, deseándole éxito en sus labores diarias en pro de la educación en nuestro país.

Atte.

Maritza Pauth, camé universitario N° 11054110

Dorian Urrutia carné universitario Nº 11054967

Lesbia Valle Carné universitario N° 05050811

Yo Clemate Torros the leido la presente solicitud con la cual estoy de acuerdo y apruebo, de lo que doy fe a través de mi firma y sello del centro escolar en la misma.

Estelí 14 de Octubre de 2015

Lic. Telma Hernandez Oscano
Directora del centro escolar Ternando vina Landa (FET-solud).
Su Despacho.

Reciba de nuestra parte un fraterno saludo.

A través de la presente, nos dirigimos a usted en calidad de directora.

Somos estudiantes de quinto año de Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación con mención en inglés, carrera que ofrece la Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria Estelí, FAREM- Estelí.

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Dorian Urrutia carné universitario N° 11054967

Lesbia Valle Carné universitario N° 05050811

Yo \_\_\_\_\_\_ he leído la presente solicitud con la cual estoy de acuerdo y apruebo, de lo que doy fe a través de mi firma y sello del centro escolar en la misma.

Director(a)

Lic. Jenny Lisseth Sanchez Maldonado.

Maestra de <u>Ingles Fernando Urila Landa</u> (FEF SAND)

Sus manos.

Reciba de nuestra parte un fraterno saludo.

A través de la presente, nos dirigimos a usted en calidad de maestra del área inglés.

Somos estudiantes de quinto año de Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación con mención en Inglés, carrera que ofrece la Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria Estelí, FAREN- Estelí.

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Esperamos su pronta y positiva respuesta debido a lo apremiante del tiempo.

Sin más a que referirnos por el momento, nos despedimos de usted, deseándole éxito en sus labores diarias en pro de la educación en nuestro país.

Atte.

Maritza Pauth, carné universitario N° 11054110

Dorian Urrutia carné universitario N° 11054967

Lesbia Valle Carné universitario N° 05050811

Yo \_\_\_\_\_ he leído la presente solicitud con la cual estoy de acuerdo y apruebo, de lo que doy fe a través de mi firma y sello del centro escolar en la misma.

Maestro(a)

Sor. Martha Ruiz Calero. Directora del centro escolar Colegio Nuestra Señora del Rosario Su Despacho.

Reciba de nuestra parte un fraterno saludo.

A través de la presente, nos dirigimos a usted en calidad de directora.

Somos estudiantes de quinto año de Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación con mención en Inglés, carrera que ofrece la Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria Estelí, FAREN-Estelí.

Actualmente cursamos la asignatura de Seminario de Graduación, en la cual estamos investigando en tema "La efectividad de las estrategias metodológicas usadas por los profesores de inglés para enseñar habilidades de escucha en las escuelas de primaria", por lo que el motivo de la presente es solicitar de manera formal, su permiso para hacer entrevistas y tomas fotográficas al maestro o maestra durante el desarrollo de las clases de inglés en el centro escolar que usted dirige, esto con el objetivo de recopilar información y usarla en nuestro trabajo escrito a presentar en la universidad. Al mismo tiempo solicitamos su autorización para hacer mención del nombre del colegio y del o los maestros entrevistados y el suyo como directora, así como de las fotografías obtenidas en su centro, para plasmarlas en dicho trabajo, el que presentaremos y defenderemos en el mes de Diciembre del corriente año en la UNAN Managua-FAREN Estelí

Agradecemos el que considere nuestra solicitud y al mismo tiempo su colaboración.

Esperamos su pronta y positiva respuesta debido a lo apremiante del tiempo.

Sin más a que referirnos por el momento, nos despedimos de usted, deseándole éxito en sus labores diarias en pro de la educación en nuestro país.

Atte.

Maritza Pauth, carné universitario Nº 11054110

Dorian Urrutia carné universitario Nº 11054967

Lesbia Valle Carné universitario Nº 05050811

Yo hak. MARTHA C. Rushe leído la presente solicitud con la cual estoy de acuerdo y apruebo, de lo que doy fe a través de mi firma y sello del centro escolar en la misma.

Lic. <u>laudio</u> Rivera Maestro de <u>Ingles</u> Sus manos.

Reciba de nuestra parte un fraterno saludo.

A través de la presente, nos dirigimos a usted en calidad de maestra del área inglés.

Somos estudiantes de quinto año de Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación con mención en Inglés, carrera que ofrece la Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria Estelí, FAREN-Estelí.

Actualmente cursamos la asignatura de Seminario de Graduación, en la cual estamos investigando en tema "La efectividad de las estrategias metodológicas usadas por los profesores de inglés para enseñar habilidades de escucha en las escuelas de primaria", por lo que el motivo de la presente es solicitar de manera formal, su permiso para hacerle entrevistas y tomas fotográficas durante el desarrollo de las clases de inglés que usted imparte, esto con el objetivo de recopilar información y usarla en nuestro trabajo escrito a presentar en la universidad. Al mismo tiempo solicitamos su autorización para hacer mención de su nombre, así como de las fotografías obtenidas en su clase, para plasmarlas en dicho trabajo, el que presentaremos y defenderemos en el mes de Diciembre del corriente año en la UNAN Managua-FAREN Estelí.

Agradecemos el que considere nuestra solicitud y al mismo tiempo su colaboración.

Esperamos su pronta y positiva respuesta debido a lo apremiante del tiempo.

Sin más a que referirnos por el momento, nos despedimos de usted, deseándole éxito en sus labores diarias en pro de la educación en nuestro país.

Atte.

Maritza Pauth, carné universitario Nº 11054110

Dorian Urrutia carné universitario N° 11054967

Lesbia Valle Carné universitario Nº 05050811

Yo Laudio Riverahe leído la presente solicitud con la cual estoy de acuerdo y apruebo, de lo que doy fe a través de mi firma y sello del centro escolar en la misma.

# 1. Photographs



Students using the text book





Teacher using the strategy of TPR, through a game.





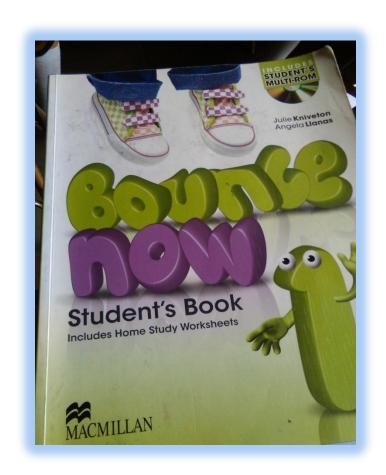
Teacher using figures to make a dictate





Students singing and doing the comments of the song





Text book utilized by teachers on three schools